

Dear Mom and Dad

NO DATE

This set of slides was an experiment to see how to take pictures under various conditions. You will see just how bad the light was in some. They will come out good except the last two were over exposed. Some were telephoto pictures. 4 were taken at night and are 3 to 10 second time exposures. Indoor ones were without any flash.

I got a watch and pictures and \$2.50 from the Red Cross. Did you get four rolls of film in two envelopes? Dated 13th also a bitch letter too? That was 125 film. Let me know if you get a big batch of prints I sent as I thinned out my pictures.

We found a small abandoned in haste VC village, In one hut that was well lived in was a bike, a carbine, some clothes, other timing gear, rice etc. I took the chain and head lights from the bike. They damaged it bringing it in.

It is getting dark again, so I will mail.

Ron

PS The 35 mm pictures are of Tiapai. Many were experimental in taking all but two are good.

Dear Mom and Dad  
Wednesday, NO DATE

I'll write a short letter which I have time. It is the 2nd day out. We are in the same area as we were in Attleboro. So far there has been no sign of VC. We beat bush and set up in the swamps at night. They are bone dry. Where the pictures I took in November showed a foot of water.

The pictures I took with the light meter not working. They should be of interesting things. I got the letters of Mar 7 today. I got one set of pictures last night that I sent in March 31.

The fun is starting now because of lack of two and three echelon maintenance and hard use. Tracks are breaking down like mad while just setting there and not moving. Our track made a loud pop. A torsion bar broke leaving one wheel without a spring. Today a transmission went out on two tracks. Many of them overheated and boiled over. Oil is as thin as water.

I have a 2nd new tape now with music the 1st one is the CBS news which is interesting to all the guys.

My pictures with the new camera are excellent. I got some beautiful night time exposure.  
Will Close

Ron

PS no package yet.

Dear Mom and Dad  
21 March

Brigades Worst Day. Right after I mailed a letter with slides, the artillery unit being guarded by 3-22 was hit with a massive VC wave attack that lasted until we arrived. The scene here is incredible, I shot up a roll of film of which are going to be the worst pictures ever taken.

Just as we entered the area, the artillery camp itself was a mess. One gun blew up as we arrived. Some powder caught fire near us and everyone scattered for cover. There was a Huey what was left of it. Slings of airlifted ammo were everywhere. All guns were at point blank with a big pile of empty shells near them.

As we went to secure the perimeter we saw more. Dead VC, *members of the 272<sup>nd</sup>. NVA*, were everywhere. There had been fierce hand to hand combat. The stuff left by the VC was amazing. They had weapons of every description. Many carried recoilless rifles and rockets launchers. The VC carried all kinds of grenades. They had machine guns, tommy guns, AK47 rifles with 30 round banana clips, carbines, etc. Many were Russian and Chinese weapons. It's almost impossible to describe it all.

The place has been hit by air strikes all day now. Recon tracks went out to search around and clear the area. One was missed by a recoilless rifle. That's four days in a row they have received RR fire.

Latest count at 3:30 p.m. is 400 VC bodies with their gear and weapons. There are 28 KIA and 50 WIA on our side. Well. The latest count is 456 dead VC. They say at least 200 more were hit north of here in the air strike, as they fled leaving behind all sorts of equipment all heavy weapons have armor piercing bullets.

The battle itself resulted in the VC hitting all the artillery and heavy weapons with recoilless fire. It lasted from 7:30 A.M. till we arrived 10:30 A.M.. We had an APC hit by a 57 recoilless yesterday on its track. It burned holes in the steel track. The force of the explosion ripped a 2 ft. hole into the engine compartment and damaged the radiator. I got a picture. No one was hurt. 6 p.m., latest count 481 dead VC.

So, I'll close this session of combat.

Ron

*Note, A huge fireball appeared that evening in front of my position. Everyone dived for cover. Shrapnel rained everywhere. A recon patrol had found an unexploded bomb and detonated it. Brigade failed to warn us with "fire in the hole."*

*Later that evening one of the people on watch heard a noise in front of his position. He tossed a grenade. Brigade called and complained.*

*An ambush patrol was ordered out to the wood line by Brigade. As is typical, the line company was not notified that there were friendlies out in front of them.*

*During the night, they detected motion using radar and called in an artillery strike. Results, 3 killed and many wounded by friendly fire.*

*Brigade then had the nerve to order them to come in. They refused. A mounted patrol went out to rescue them.*

*The killed by friendly fire were added to the total killed for the day at LZ-Gold.*

*Coronal Garth was awarded a medal for the big battle. I have no idea how he qualified for that.*

5 April

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well, after securing the engineers it is moving time again to parts unknown. Rumors have it we stay out an additional three weeks. The 5th mech. has been conducting search and clear missions. They have ran into heavy recoilless and RPG fire. Yesterday onslaughts resulted in 17 casualties requiring evacuation. That doesn't sound good at all. We will probably get volunteered to go in the area.

Went on an ambush patrol the other night. Boy they sure do make us get up in rotten places. We set up by a river. Actually on a dike as to get to the river involved 100 yards of waist deep water. It rained all night. Everyone got wet and cold. They got to have that night ambush no matter where.

The engineers are clearing out large areas of jungle. Even out here they do hit a few mines.

Well, at 3 p.m. we moved to a position across the river. This is real close to base camp. 2 tracks broke down when we got to the road. We had been delayed a lot and it was getting dark. We got permission to tow them to base camp {Dau Tieng} while the rest of the company went to the battalion camp. We got in at 8:30 p.m. spent the night in camp. Guys tied one on. Went to bed and left base camp at 6:30 a.m.. The one track had an ignition failure. The other one the driver may be in for trouble. He let it boil dry and burned up the engine.

We are on line along the road near the Saigon river. The VC are now inside a tight circle. Small numbers of them have been spotted.

Instead of sending penlight batteries could you invent up a large battery made from size D or larger type? It would have to be wired like this *EXAMPLE HERE* this makes up a 6-volt battery with a 3-volt+ or-connection in the middle. That is how the recorder is set up. It works in play or record. 3 volt to motor, 3 volt to transistors or 6 volt+ and ends messed up or you might ruin the recorder.

Ron

6 April got your small tape today.

11 April

Dear Mom and Dad

Well, we are in base camp. We got orders yesterday to come in for five days. It took only an hour. I got clothes washed up and turned in a torn up pants for DX. I got a hair cut today from the VC barber. Also, sent a package. The package is 25 lbs. so I sent it by boat. It has all non breakable. I sent stuff I've had and never used. There is a new pair of boots, overshoes, two sets woollen drawers, A Fatigue Jacket, Mosquito netting nylon, four maps of Vietnam and where we went, VC bike chain and civilian clothes. It will take a month to get home.

They still are not done moving and rebuilding. They want all bunkers built above ground now and are moving some tents again.

Guys "tied-1-on" again last night. 1:00 a.m. 4 of them raving drunk, woke everyone up.

I saw a very funny article in the paper. A sergeant E7 type back in the states got plastered drunk. He woke up his men at 1:00 a.m. and made them do drill marching. An officer stopped him.

Our company has four dogs now. We have Charlie, the first one. He came from a VC camp in Cedar Falls. The picture of the brown dog in one of my film is Harry. This is a very friendly dog. There is a black and white one found near here and a little bitty one we found last week, its name is Victor.

We leave in five days for "mission unknown" again. The rainy season hasn't made much mud yet but it does rain hard every evening. The rice paddies are getting plowed for planting.

So, will close.

Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad  
26 April

You asked in the last letter about if I received all the packages. Yes, I received all you mentioned the last one being the one with the film.

Finally, they tell us what our surprise mission is. It is a big circle that is being formed by several brigades. Each day we tighten it 100 meters forcing the several companies of VC in the area to concentrate. This was, they either get all wiped out or surrender.

This rainy season is going to be horrid. Last night it rained for an hour then stopped. About 1:00 A.M. it started real hard again for two hours, then steady rain till daylight. As usual the wind blows too so everything got soaked. So everyone was cold and wet this morning.

So, I see Richard has come to the "Armpit of the World." The minute you mentioned what unit he was training in I knew he was coming to Vietnam. The 5th mech. is at Cu Chi. As for me ever running into him, it is going to be extremely hard to do so.

At least we don't have ambush patrol lately, as we are spread out. The land is bushy. I do hear a lot of shooting today. We will probably stay here till noon then tighten up the circle another 1000 meters. We will be out 10 days to two weeks depending on how quickly we rid the area of VC.

Here are the air pictures from Taiwan to Vietnam.

So this is all for now.

Ron

PS, they are still on the ambush patrol kick at base camp. There is no reactionary force as usual.

Dear Mom and Dad  
18 MUST BE MARCH

It sure is hard to find time to write. We are constantly on the go. The last few days have been up at dawn, beat bush all day with no stops long enough to write. Finally set camp at 6:00 p.m., by the time all is set up it is dark out. We are in heavy jungle again. Our date for going in is the 21st of March. Subject to change.

Got a package finally. It had the pictures. Well, a short delay while I went on patrol. While we are waiting to go in, I'll write some more. So we moved out but our track broke down. 4 of us went to be towed directly to the logger area for the night. Now I can finish the letter.

I like the canned bread that you send. How about some more salami sticks they are good. Excuse the dirt but again only limited water to clean up. The pictures came out excellent.

Here is a roll of slides. Some are experimental pictures again. There are some taken at night during a storm. Some have flares dropping. They are 10-15 sec. time shots.

Well, we broke two more torsion bars. That is the reason for the Tow. Then the differential broke down. We replaced the bars in 1 1/2 hours only to find it wouldn't go under its own power because of a broken final drive. So we got towed to the logger area.

While we broke bush yesterday, HQ and recon took the easy way and hit three mines as a result also a small VC ambush sent a recoilless round through the TC turret. We found a hastily abandoned camp it was bombed today

The weather has been scorching hot. Yesterday it was cool and rainy. Today is hot again. So that is all new for now.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
22 April

This will be short. We have been in two days and move out at six tomorrow. So up at 4:30 a.m.. This place is horrid for working one to death. No time to write much. I've been working on the track till 7:30 getting it fixed so it will work tomorrow. Few passed the Red, green, amber inspection. Many are Red and the rest amber with a lot wrong with them. Many are past due overhaul on engines, transmissions etc. Engines are supposed to be overhauled every 200 hours. So are transmissions. Ours has gone 400 hours without any overhauling. The transmission slips a lot and the engine has feeble power. It won't go over 30 m.p.h.. It should go at least 42 M.P.H..

I put in a 1049 transfer to Saigon. A lot of the original guys have done the same. We can put in if we want out after six months. All of us are fed up with all this work and promises that are never kept. Also this business of tear down, move, build again, is got us mad as well as always out in the field.

Ron

PS The fuel dump blew up again. It was not sabotage but some careless handling of a truck. A 3000 gallon tank of rubber containing gas was dropped or ruptured and caught fire setting it all off. Here are the pictures.

I got the other slides today of Taipei by air. I'll send them soon.



Dear Mom and Dad  
23 April

Well, we are set up as a blocking force again. For once we are not always on the move. We are near base camp too. I don't know how long this mission is but it probably won't be more than two weeks.

The Monsoon is here. Most of the day is nice but towards evening it clouds up and storms until late at night. It rains two to four inches each time it does this. Right now the ground soaks it up but soon it will sit on the ground in the paddies. I can see them farm down in the Delta in the morning. They arrive by evening. Right before a rain, it is beastly hot. Then it cools way down as it rains.

Here is a 104 slides. Most are of Tiapai up at Yangmingson Park. The last four are taken today in the flat paddies.

The fuel dump burned up last night. It burned for hours. They say someone dropped a gasoline drum and it broke, catching fire and setting it all ablaze.

I got the string too as well as the pictures which I mailed back yesterday. Can you send another mixture? I would like to see the March 21. The ones of the artillery camp, captured weapons and VC. *Edited out.*

The ones of operation Gaston were real good. The air strike and medic APC and dust off are Feb. 6. The burning huts are Feb. 5.

Well, will close for now.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
May 1

Yes, I have got all packages that you mentioned, including underwear, macaroni, gravy, etc. the usually come marked SAM and come about as fast as regular mail. So Richard is in "The arm pit of the world," I've written to him but so far no answer. Does he get a chance to write home regularly? 5th Mech. is Out here as well. They probably do as much as we do.

The road being rebuilt is going to be a new convoy route to Cu Chi and Dau Tieng. There is a good chance we will run convoys on this road. If we ever stay in Cu Chi and the 5th mech. is in base camp I'll try to find Richard.

As far as packing a package, I can only tell you this. Pack it to be handled rough. I have seen the air men walk all over mailbags which are in huge 2 ton piles in order to get to the rear of the C123. No matter how it is marked, it is all handled the same rough way. I have seen packages come through all busted open. None from home that way. The taped one came through OK.

Well, it happened. Because of the partial pay last month I don't get any this month. I sent home too much which leaves me broke this month. I'm not in Base camp to need it anyway. What I do need you can send in a package.

Here is what I need. Air mail envelopes, film, Schaeffer script cartridges. I have envelopes at camp but may run out before I get back in. Our messed up PX is almost always out. The film is KR or EX 135 20 or 36 exposure. Be sure the film speed is Din 19 ASA 64. The electric eye is not working. Since a different speed requires different settings, it will be almost impossible to set the camera without an exposure meter. When I first used the camera, I had 14 din. ASA 64. so I have memorized the settings needed in varying light conditions. Send two rolls if it is 36 exp. or three rolls if it is the 20 exp. If the meter worked, I would have film enough for this month. I have three rolls I don't want to use till I can get the camera fixed. One film is high speed another is a Kodachrome which is very slow.

The list. Envelopes, film if you can get them at \$10 or \$15 each, some AA batteries. They are sure hard to get here. Lately, the PRC radios come out with a new style battery which has no pen light batteries. I used to be able to get long lasting pen light batteries from used PRC 25 batteries.

I have used up my macaroni. The sauce is very good. Send more of both. I have four cans cheese left. Whenever we get that rare chance to sit around all day and the rest of the home cooking hungry mob is gone I cook it up. It is real good to replace C rations with. Last time I made it up for me and a buddy. I used one package and one sauce. I added C ration chicken to the sauce. I can always use the other C rations meats sometimes. It was a very good meal. The canned breads are very good. So are the salami sticks. I'm over stocked on life savers. I can get all I want from the care packages. Some goodies like spice I can get from the mess hall.

As far as I know ETS is any where from Sept. 1-22.

We moved to a location further south along the river. We took the road around and passed by a village and small base camp.

Well it is chow time so will close.

Ron

PS Yes I get the coolaide and use it about as fast.

Dear Mom and Dad  
No date

I'm sending a few pictures home. The reason the monsoons has arrived. It is sticky and hotter then hell out. It poured last night. Tonight it threatens to rain.

The worst part of it is being close to that Hell zone again.  
Will Close.  
Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
11 May

Well, if I have the chance I'll finish the letter today. Got the letter saying you got the goodies. Don't send any more batteries. I got a year supply in penlight now. I got my envelope supply so I am set on them for a while.

I hear Richard missed profiling. He can without glasses.

Well, we are definitely in a bad area. There are only small scattered numbers of VC. But they are armed with RPG-2 rockets. We had two fired at us in one of their hit and run ambushes when we came upon a huge bagged rice cache in a VC base camp. Both missed but we cut loose a hornets nest of lead at them. Along the trail we found a lot of stuff. Total of the day 400 bags of rice, other goodies, such as oil, also 4 oxcarts which we destroyed. The rice we brought in.

The day before we found two land rovers {jeeps} and a small panel truck. They were in bad shape and had been abandoned to be repaired later. We destroyed one and towed in the other two.

Today, back in it again. Now we are finding the oxen for the carts. Also, bikes, chickens, pigs and all kinds of bunkers.

So now we are breaking through the jungle on the usual no find anything that way mission. It will probably be till dark as we end up the last one to drag into the camp for the night.

So will close and mail

Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad  
14 May 67

Well, if someone doesn't get into any firefights I'll be able to finish this letter. A platoon had some light contact so far. We are reactionary force today.

Well, one knows that if we go in early something is cooking. Our 7-day stay in base camp got chopped to two days. We left yesterday for an area near the horrible LZ gold. In getting there we took the back way out of camp. We crossed a gap in the range of hills back of base camp. All near the hills and the Saigon river the land is quite wet from rain and near a creek where the land slopes down to them like quicksand. Most creeks had hard bottoms. Some were hard to cross because of rock bottom. We got to the river by 3:30 p.m. then crossed it on a pontoon bridge that was erected for us. We set up camp on that side.

Well, we were alerted but are staying put for now. The contact turned out to be 1 VC that fired a few rounds and fled.

Here is a big roll of film 36 or 37 slides. I bet you wonder how I can take the extra pictures? Well, you advance the film twice before no 1 is ready. The entire roll is all slide transparencies. The first advance has half of it exposed as a result of loading. The second advance is an exposed part of film yet it is not # 1 yet. Start on the film itself. Of course it is double numbered for use in half frame as well as 35 mm cameras. 24x36 mm on 35 28x28 on instamatic that is what makes the funny shape.

The film subject is rice fields near here. The village near the mountains? Close air strikes, rain storms including one taken while a cloud burst was going on. The hills crossing the hills, and all this mud. Let me know if any come back all black. I think sometimes I forget to remove the lense cap.

So that is all that is new for now. 8 months over and done with. 3 1/2 to 4 to go.

Ron

PS Send some canned tuna fish and some chicken soup bullion cubes. The tuna fish we add onion and sauce and salad dressing to make a good snack. The soup cubes we make with cans of C ration boned chicken, chicken noodle turkey soup etc. to make-up a big pot of good soup. {short time boots and hat here}

Dear Mom and Dad  
18 May

Well, my suspicions are confirmed. We are in that horrible place known as Junction City. 2 area. We saw a little action on the 15th. we found a huge rice cache as we approached the cache we got ambushed by some VC. They fired 2 recoilless which missed and small arms. We returned a hornets nest of lead. No one hurt. I probably told you about this already. 17 May. We spent most of the day beating bush. As we headed for the logger area. Bravo Co. which was already there and had a platoon checking the road to Soui Du got hit. They got 2 tracks hit by RPG also small arms. We had to go evacuate wounded after the fight ended. 58 {maintenance track} of ours hit a mine while taking out wounded. Total 3 KIA in Bravo 20 WIA and 3 WIA in A Co.

18 May. We took the road to Sou Da. We are here for an unknown amount of time. We will head to an unknown area at an unknown time on and an unknown mission with unknown VC forces there. With unknown friendless around and come back on an unknown date. So we listen to Hanoi Hanna to find out what is going on.

This country is as hot as ever. One guy passed out on patrol yesterday. Everyone smells sweaty and rotten. I lost a set of fatigues to rot on the last mission.

Well, here is a film. It is partly about this mission it had the mud, the way out here bridge crossing, dense jungle, the land rovers, rice cache.

I don't know if I told you or not. The day we found the ox carts. The next day 2nd plt. found the oxen for them tied to some trees. I made a tape while on the go breaking brush and of the mission on the days of the 17 -18. As soon as I get a chance to edit it I'll send it home.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
21 May

Well, the mission was changed. We are guarding an air strip by an ARVN camp in the area of Attleboro. It is the ARVN camp of the boonies. Would you believe this place gets mortared every day? And twice on Sunday? We have been here 2 days and the ARVN camp has been plastered 4 times. A few rounds hit on our side. So far no one hurt not even the ARVNs. Yet the VC are zeroed in on their bunkers. I guess they are afraid of a wave attack in the next few days. The VC can chuck up to 30 to 100 rounds in two minutes, Then they pack up before our radar finds them and zeros in their mortars.

This is the first chance I've had to write. We had a 7000 meter all day patrol and two ambush patrols. The command group fell asleep so we got two ambush patrols. They fell asleep again. They will go out again tonight. Oh yes, someone may get court marshaled for sleeping on guard this time.

I made a tape while riding TC in the APC. You will have to use the big spool in order to have the right speed I had to in order to close the cover. It started out as typical day but then ended up an untypical one.

Oh not again? Now they want everybody on that patrol again tonight. They just cancelled it because of some other deal. {Like an extra long patrol tomorrow}

I got the package with the film.

Well, will close so I can get it mailed tonight.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
T-108 at the most 25 May.

Got a miss sent letter dated the 19th. I hear it is still quite muddy in the fields. The field corn as you say you get should go in ASAP or else the fall frost may get it before it hardens. The mud doesn't stop the farmers here. Of course they use a steel hand plow and oxen. It does a pretty good job for such a primitive method.

So Richard is filling sandbags. HA HA HA Oh well, the longer he can stay in base the better.

I guess I told you about the 25lb. package I sent. It is going by boat so will take a few weeks yet. I mailed it when I was in camp last. It has a pair of good overshoes, a brand-new pair of boots {my size} some wool underwear, nylon netting, rag pants, my jacket and an army jacket. I also put in 4 army maps which I marked places that I've been. Some Lt. or Sergeant left it in the mess hall last December. The pencil writing on the Tri Tam map has an old mission marked on it which was to surround some small villages to check for VC.

All indications, at present, point to an early out of the army. That is, I will ETS out any where between the 9-22 of Sept.

If I leave Vietnam Sept. 1st I will probably stay in Oakland or Fort Lewis till the ninth and then process out of the army. From what I hear since I have served in a combat zone I won't have to attend reserve meetings and the summer training. I would instead be in non active reserve for four years.

If you send pictures by mail and they are separated by plastic there is no worry about them sticking. I have mine and other things in a water proof box. Even when left in the rain stuff inside stays dry.

We are guarding artillery today by the road going north west of Sou Tri {maps here} Tomorrow we go to Tay Ninh for a few days then back to Dau Tieng for an unknown length of time Say 7 except 5 and get 2.

Will close.

Ron

PS There is an ARVN camp on top of the mountain Black Virgin.



Dear Mom and Dad  
29 May

While I got a little time, I'll write. They are keeping us extremely busy. We are camped by the place where the engineers built the bridge for Junction City I. We will leave back to Tay Ninh in a few days.

Well, somebody got caught going over the hill into Tay Ninh so Battalion commander is punishing us. We had a formation at 10 p.m.. They took all the beer and soda off the tracks. Of course we didn't get paid back. We get up at 3:30 a.m. for an extensive police call. We left at 6:30 a.m..

We arrived here by mid afternoon and set up. We are guarding some artillery for five days then take them in.

Yesterday we went on a 5000-meter patrol. We ended up going 10,000 meters. Have I got the A-----S-----S-----. The battalion commander is making us take 90's. This is the most heaviest, useless weapon to take on a patrol. Oh yes it was all jungle too.

Today starts a company size ambush [another battalion idea] Oh yes, the 90's goes too. It is going to be a long one with a patrol afterwards like three meals of C's go along. So that is what is happening. I have another tape to send as soon as I can finish it.

Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad  
6 June.

If I don't get time to write, don't worry. They are over working us so we don't even have time to shave. The only reason I got to write was because we set up on a day light ambush in small groups and I snuck out the writing paper.

We are on a 7-day round the clock mission. It is a search and destroy affair. However we walk all day and ambush patrol all night. And that is every platoon every day. Good bye rest. It won't be long before we smell like the VC. It is raining a lot now so lots of mud and always wet.

Today is the 3rd day, four to go on this mission of gun ho. They made us carry 90's I'm not going to take it any more. We are too short on people.

We had a 5000-meter patrol all in heavy jungle on the 4th. We found a small base camp. The VC abandoned it as fast as they could. We even spotted a few. They took everything they could carry. We found some ammo and several claymores. We destroyed the camp. C company also found a VC camp. Had an ambush that night all three platoons.

Yesterday we had an awful patrol. That is the woods were horribly thick. Much of it was bombed by B 52 strike so it was a tangled mess of fallen logs. It rained a little so everything was wet. We were more soaked in sweat than rain. That's what happens with high humidity. We set up along a trail waiting for the tracks. 4 VC came down the trail unaware of our presence. Then one of the mascot dogs which had decided it would tag along, saw the VC and barked at them. We could have got all four. Instead the VC fled. But we did capture one with his carbine and 80 rounds also, two bikes loaded down with food supplies. *This was a Chinese advisor.*

Change of subject. I got both packages. Now I hope I can find time to enjoy more of the goodies.

How is Richard getting along? I found time to write two letters but he hasn't written back. He probably can't get enough time to write anyhow. See if you can find out if he got the 2 I sent from here and the one I sent to Ft. Knox?

What do you mean two or more? No, I don't plan on buying any more horses. It is going to be hard enough to take care of two when I may have to keep them apart most of the time. See if you can get Kenny to build that corral for me.

I might get a transfer to Saigon security on the 90 day plan. Of course now I find out about that when probably it will be less than 90 days when that 1049 goes through. They always let one know about stuff like that when it is too late to apply for it without re-upping.

RE-UP, NOT HARDLY!

Ron

PS T-109 or less. I know there is a big war in the middle east now. I hope we stay out of that and let Israel and the UAR both blow themselves off the map.

Dear Mom and Dad  
Post marked June 15

Tuesday RUSH, RUSH, RUSH, RUSH, PUSH, DRIVE ON. No rest, wash, shave, letter writing, missed meals and it still goes on and on. This is by flashlight.

In eight days, walk 30,000 meter, five night ambushes four of them in a row with rain all night, 4 days of wet clothes and feet and can't change them or dry out. They went crazy last week. Battalion extended us two weeks and made everyone mad. Few VC and small rice caches. Oh yes, 30,000 meters was all dense jungle or knee-deep swamp or both.

The film 1-5 night attack by choppers, also Pric Loc and our bunkers. Road security by Nui Ba Den, The bridge site area by Trin Di and out here in the rice land and dense jungle. Snellenburgers picture. Oh yes, he got a DR on R&R

No more time

Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad  
no date postmarks June 19

Well, finally a small break, We left that area and set up along the road to Pric Lac. So after cleaning weapons I can write.

We are still in rotting clothes but since it has rained a lot, I am a little cleaner from being soaked by down pours. All the weapons were rusty and dirty.

We got a modified part for the M16. It is a heavy weight recoil spring rod. It will slow the cycle of fire so as to allow. The cartridge, time to contract before being ejected. They say this should stop a lot of jamming. *Being caused by using Remington Arms ammo.*

I think the last letter summed up all the over working of us they did. Well, 2nd platoon did capture that one VC alive. A few days later our gung ho LT charged a VC base camp and got one. The other two VC escaped. We found some papers, two squirrel rifles or civil war rifles and other goodies. While going back to set up an ambush, we surprised a VC coming back, he took off running.

So it has been till now all kinds of patrols every day and ambush all night. They finally dropped to one ambush every three days but now they want LP's too so not much gain there. We found some huts hidden in the bamboo by the rice paddies. One had rice, the VC ID card and some ammo. His ass is grassed. We also found some oxcarts and other hidden rice. Don't send any more goodies that require cooking. I'm having a hard time finding time to cook them at present. I have a good stock of things that need cooking.

Boy, this company makes one mad. They sent out a bunch of clothes to distribute. Well, it seems thought in order to get them, they went through all the bunks and loose bags. From guys coming back from Dau Tieng They say all their stuff is piled in one corner. Also, lots of it is missing. Good thing I sent that package. Did you get it yet?

I got a couple of VC machetes and knives that I'll try to bring with me. Here are some of the shapes [drawings here]

I found a deer horn that could be used for a handle or perhaps Jewelry. In the VC base camp I found a 3\4" rope. Made of split bamboo that is used for ox yokes. It had not been used and is as stiff as catgut, yet flexible enough to bend in a circle.

Well, it is only a little over three months or 2 1\2 months left in this horrible place. Guys are filling out short timer calendars.

So, Will close for now.

Ron *Dirt and sweat on the paper.*

Dear Mom and Dad.  
22 June

Well, a chance to write again. More of the usual rush, rush, push, push, never let up stuff. Oh yes the going in on the 12<sup>th</sup>. never came off. Next try tomorrow at Tay Ninh shooting for two weeks at a time. IG inspection. We have been guarding artillery north of Sou DA at the French Fort. If you can call a ???-----??? artillery is seldom being there. We search and destroy all day long ambush at night but only 1 per company now.

Well, the battalion commander came out with some new harassment. It is known as "wear the heat stroke coats when in and around an APC, moving or not." So we sweat more now. There is a crack down on 16 cleaning now. Still, shy of cleaning kits. We got a replacement part. It is a new heavy buffer designed to slow the cycle of fire. I might have told you before.

Today we cleared an area which the army tested a new fangled idea. It works but some of them didn't go off. They dropped from a plane some boxes full of grenades that scattered out over a large area and exploded on contact. Those that broke open makes a nice pattern of depressions. Some of the boxes didn't open so we are running around finding them to blow up. However, it is a better bomb then the larger mini bombs.

I am getting another R&R. I will go on a shopping spree of things that cost too much back home. But sell for ridicules low prices in the countries. No, I won't spend \$300 the way I did last time.

Got a package but haven't had time to open it yet. Will try by moonlight tonight. I read the letters by moonlight.

Well, will close by saying we have seen no action out here. There are no big missions in war zone C. All the actions near the DMC and so all the leg and airborne units also most of the VC.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
25 June

I got delayed in finishing this. We went to Tay Ninh on the 23. We were told we would be in 14 to 21 days. So today we left on road security. While we spent the brief stay there, they worked us solid on weapons and tracks. So it is OK to be out here as the berm guard and patrol would have started the next day.

The Tay Ninh PX sure has a big variety of stuff. From Refrigerators to Wax and even carbon paper. Yet it has nothing. No writing paper, envelopes, etc. They were even out of 135 film.

I lost my watch. The pins had broke on the new band and it fell out of my pocket on a night ambush. It was getting in bad shape from this climate and was not keeping accurate time anymore. I won't get one till I'm ready to leave Vietnam. If you send me a watch don't get anything costly as anything could happen to it over here.

Today while coming through Tay Ninh, We are going to be on the road security for several days. Then go back to Tay Ninh, maybe I'll get time to write again. I got the joke tablet. How true.

Ron

PS

Dear Mom and Dad  
28 June T-83

You wouldn't guess where I am writing this? But we are in the east side of Tay Ninh. We are here waiting for a truck to come pick up some stuff to take to the camp. As usual, connections are messed up, so here we sit. Oh yes, every one is roaming through the immediate area. I got some real good village pictures, some on this roll.

So, we still have ambush patrol etc. But now things are tolerable. We run convoys on certain days and hold strong points on others. There is also a chance to write once in a while. I bought a cheap watch yesterday. It is a \$12.95 Timex, which cost \$9.75 at the PX and has the usual Timex features. Still, no envelopes at that dud place. So send envelopes and some film next time you mail a package. If you can send the high speed [23 din, ASA 100]. Let me know how the pictures come out in that last 36 pic roll. Send some of those night slides so I can see how they are turning out. I can mail them back. In spite of dampness the prints and slides are still in excellent shape.

THIS FILM, Paddies by Sou Da and road clearing trip to Tay Ninh camp. Strong point area with the barber cutting hair. Flooded rice paddies, Tay Ninh, a village near there where we set today.

Well, my goodie supply got raided by the drunks. They got most the macaroni. They must have enjoyed it good, as they heaved it all up over the track. Did I raise hell about that? Send a small 1\2 pint jar of salad dressing with the tuna fish or other meats when you do send a package. I'll have a jar to put the army mayonnaise in when it is gone. Then I can make the stuff up on LP or night ambush patrol. Instead of in front of a squad of hungry wolves.

So will close for now.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
T-80 2 July

We are in Tay Ninh for a while. I don't know for how long though. The 3rd platoon takes turns of berm guard, laterite pit guard and night ambush patrol. So we have in reality got it easy finally. We had laterite pit guard yesterday. All we do is set up a position all day to keep the kids out of the pit. At night we set up an ambush to keep the VC from putting mines in it. Laterite clay is a gravelly like clay found all through Vietnam. It is used as road fill as when packed a lot it dries out to be as hard as cement. That is if you used it at the right time of year. Otherwise, it makes a lot of dust or slick gooey mud. However, it does make a good hard road surface that is slippery when wet. I saw a 5 ton loaded with crushed gravel go sliding sideways.

Well, that PX still has a lot of nothing. The ambush patrol was miserable. It rained all night. We came in wet and full of mud.

Here is a small tape. It has the recording of some Vietnamese singing. They are kids from 8- 12 years old. Oh, the watches peddled by the gooks are actually worth \$5.00 that is all the peddlers paid for them.

I may get a chance to ride shot gun with supply or some other personal to Saigon for six days. It is in effect like a pass. So I may get a chance to tour Saigon and maybe get TPX pay too.

So, If I can find some time I'll do my laundry. If not, I'll have to use gook service.

So, will close for now.

Ron.



Dear Mom and Dad  
11 Thang Bay 76

I got the tape  
Get my drivers license renewed too.

I'm in Dau Tieng with the company. This place is on 15 minute alert all day and five minutes at night. The 101VC regular or about 2000 of them are on the prowl in our base camp area. They are scattered. An attack is expected soon. The two bridges at Dau Tieng are under heavy guard. 2-34 was hit again last night.

The two slides of the tracers came out real good. The setting was F 1.8 on ASA 160 for 15 seconds. The wide lens opening and fast film made the tracers and chopper tail light nice and bright [pictures here]

So, I will go to Saigon in a few days for a few days, then back to this old grind. Good bye for now.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
Saturday 15th

Did I miss a fight. Last night, 1st platoon was nearly wiped out. They were set up as a strong point. Part of the 101 VC regulars hit them. All 4 APC's were hit some with as many as 8 RPG's One track had the entire side blown off. Those guys lost all their gear including cameras, tape, recorders, weapons etc. They even had a lousy ambush patrol out. Those guys got hit but four did not get hurt. Of that Patrol 3 KIA's 23 WIA's In other words a bad night. So instead of a company of 2-22 and 34 cav. there are two battalions out there tonight. Wouldn't surprise me if this place gets hit now.

Came back from Saigon today. We stayed with the trucks in Tent City B. Had a steak dinner at the Tay Son unit U.S.O. and saw two latest released movies while there. Of course most of Saigon is off limits to 40 W personal.

Came back today.

I going to buy a single reflex camera like the ones that sell for a ridiculous \$200. back home. I got my eye on a Yusheka. It is the most complicated one sold. And has an interchangeable lens of which I'll try to get a telephoto of medium size or a zoom lens. It features the built in light meter which because of interchanging lenses has to work independent of them. Has shutter speed from 1-1\1000 sec. and the others like my Petri only one can see through the lens and whatever is attached.

When I buy it, I'll send it home for safety sake. Bring it to Washington with you. If you can master how to use it, take some pictures on the way out. Ask Ralph how it use it. I'll never be able to find a bargain like that back home. This climate is sure hell on cameras. I hope I can get this Petri fixed back home. That is the light meter as it is completely damaged now.

Well, my complaint of Saigon. Those guys stationed there are drawing combat pay???? I never saw such feather bed jobs. Nothing but eight hours of guard, paper work, usual civilian type work, etc. and they are sleeping in wood barracks. There is a monstrous three stories billets being built for them. They have all kinds of clubs near by with entertainment and bands every night. There is a movie, pool and even flush toilets in the latrines. Also, some have access to army staff cars. Most guys have their own bikes and motorcycles to run into town with. They don't even know a war is going on. Can't wait to get out of here.

Ron [pictures here]

Dear Mom and Dad

Let me know when you get the camera? 17 July

By the time this arrives you would have probably received an insured air mail package. I sent home a new camera probably the most complicated camera you'll ever see. You can go ahead and use it after mastering the instructions. There is a battery powered light meter to make it foolproof to operate. I'm going to try and get a zoom telephoto lens over here. I should be able to get one well under \$100 through the PX. Otherwise, the same lens is a horrible price in the states. I think Ralph has got one like it. If not, then he has the older model. This one is the J7. Oh yes it and the cannon XL are the best 135 camera. I got an extra attachment lens sheet so I know what model lens to fit the new camera. This attachment I'm going to try to order looks like this [picture] I know a guy in our company that priced a 600-mm telephoto lens at the PX. It was \$75. It is about 2 feet long.

I sent another 25lb package home. It is going by boat. Contents are, 1 wool blanket new, nylon net, 34 rope, rope, the VC bamboo rope. There is a VC chisel, two Vietnamese clothes. I also sent the little radio and the set of camera lenses for the Petri.

Well, I got sent to Tay Ninh to meet the company. Tomorrow back on another lousy search and destroy mission in the swamps and jungles near Sou Da for 2 days then more stuff. I guess I'll be doomed to suffer being always in the combat field till 11 days before ETS. [picture here]

Brady was driving, even though he got hit by a blown panel he is not hurt. The ARVN camp near Tay Ninh and the ARVN out post by a bridge were run over. All ARVN killed that same night.

Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad  
23 July

Well, between the harassment I'll try and write.

I'm out in the field again. We are up around Sou Da. We will be running road security where we once had it before up here. Oh are they ever on the ambush patrol kick again. Every night one patrol per platoon.

The road to Dau Tieng is still as bad as ever. There was another tangle with the VC. The 10th cav. got a position attacked and another one later that night was harassed. The gunships picked several targets last night. The roads are under heavy guard now. The VC have blown, in the past week, all the culverts between here and Tay Ninh.

We will be out for a week yet then?

The brigade commander is on another morale boosting mood. He had cancelled all second R&R. Of course all passes were cancelled long ago.

July 25 T-56

We are set up on the Tay Ninh to Sou Da road. We are searching it while the engineers are repairing the roads.

Tonight they are going to make us patrol the road all night to keep local VC from mining it. That sure sounds like Russian Roulette. I think I'll have a pocket full of grenades tonight.

We are set up in the paddies. There is a flowing creek here so I did my washing today. Now I hope I can dry it before the afternoon showers hit. So that is about all for now.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad,  
26 July I stuck in same envelope.

You may wonder why two letters but it is because I didn't get the other mailed. We spent half of the night on the road. At 4:00 p.m. while it was raining a VC put a mine in a mud puddle hidden from our view. He thought he'd blow up an ammo truck. A convoy of dump trucks hit it and had a rear axle blown off. Due to a little setbacks from fullback 6 [he messed up getting a wrecker out in time] We were out till midnight. A crane mounted on a tractor that had four giant tires came out. It lifted the dump truck and put it on a trailer truck. We escorted both in. We saw some ARVN patrols out on the road too. To make it miserable it rained half the night too. PATROL, PATROL, PATROL, Every night we have an ambush patrol. And I got one again tonight.

So, Will close.

Ron

PS [On the envelope] July 26 7:00 p.m.. It finished raining and would you believe we're freezing? It was hot today too.