

22 Jan

Dear Mom and Dad,

*In reference to an audio tape sent home.*

WARNING SIDE TWO HAS SOME ROUGH LANGUAGE.

I got the tape today along with a mis-sent Dec. 1st. package of cookies that made it OK and ant free. Connie's package had life savers, cookies, toffee candies and a pocket book and of course it was scattered all over the mail bag.

The tape is side one recorded the Vietnamese song. The rest of this side is a recording of one of the guys talking to some Vietnamese kids that sold coke and beer. One is 12 and the other is 15 yrs. old. They are interested in learning English but of course the language is so different it is hard to understand what one word means. I'll warn you about side two. It was made on Xmas eve and is not censored out very well. So don't just play it to anybody. There is still rough language in it, but I tried to get rid of the worst of it. This is mostly guys of the squad saying what they think of various things. It is really quite funny.

Well will close now,

Ron

PS Why don't you record what you send if you want. As I'll erase after a while what I get and as I have no place to collect tapes.

Dear Mom and Dad  
no date,

Here is a tape I made on the 22-23 Jan. It is mostly a bitch tape as you will hear. I had berm duty last night. So what happens the Battalion CO comes down. Sure the guy is inside pulling guard but he has a bitch because the other two are outside and not in Web gear. So our Lt. gets chewed. And Black Bear gets mad as he gets out of bed in shorts with all the squad leaders. Water Buffalo is the first Sergeant.

Our plans for the future, We leave in a few days for a 52-day mission. No doubt the C.O. will try to run the battalion to the ground. For the first time in four months the tracks are getting some work on. Like wore out wheel bearings, shot shock, leaking seals, new points, plugs, oil change etc. Some already must have a set of new track pins. All need new lights as most have been ripped off by beating brush.

The slides are real nice but of course I am limited by available light of what I can take. I'll send them home in the container, they are in since they are in cardboard holders, no moisture should be able to make them stick by accident.

Well will close now,  
Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
no date.

Our PX has several models of very expensive tape recorders. I don't know who would buy one here. Much of the stuff is rationed as there is only a small supply that makes it here.

Do you remember the little 1\3 box of macaroni? Could you send some? I should be able to get packages on the 52-day mission. I can use the squad stove to cook some up when they feed us lousy or when on the line with C rations all the time. That package of cookies mailed Dec. 1st came through OK even though way late. {Must have gone by boat was not marked S.A.W.?} You can send cookies but not too many.

Well here is another roll of slides. I have a grubby picture of Nesbit and Selenburger both with long beards and hair. There are pictures of one air strike. Also, bomb craters. I took five pictures four in flash inside some huts. The 1st three are around Dau Tieng. All are operations Cedar Falls.

Well, will close now.

Ron

Feb. 1

Dear Mom and Dad,

This evening, I am at Tri Vi, 20 miles north of Tay Ninh on Hy. 23. We are on a 18-day mission Operation Gaston. We will be blocking force along a river again.

Well, on last Sunday it finally happened. The patrol kept going to the hospital, {a village about 230 meters from camp.} I have an army map and am marking all places we go to. I got the big map from home now. A company size force {of VC} attacked them at 8:00 p.m.. Even though weapons jammed, they repelled the attacks till we arrived. We got heavy sniper fire from the village until the VC left. Had we arrived 10 minutes later, the patrol would have been wiped out. When we arrived only three weapons were working. The rest were out of ammo or jammed.

We got two kills, one the VC CO. and captured a Chinese AR of Russian design with eight banana clips of 30 rounds each still loaded. The patrol hit a lot of VC as well as artillery but the VC dragged them off.

We spent the rest of the night and next day searching the area. The patrol had four wounded. Last night one died of shock and lost of blood. Still, they were lucky. The F.O. is getting an award for doing a good job calling artillery and the medic for his job even though wounded himself. They borrowed my flashlight to bandage them up, when I came out there.

Well, the trip here was nice but dusty. Tay Ninh is more beautiful then ever. I saw more then I did on the last convoy.

Well, will close.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
5 Feb.

I hear you had a big snow storm that snowed you in.? I guess there has never been so much snow at one time out there. Some of the guys from the plains say they never heard of so much in one storm.

It is sure dry here. Most trees have shed their leaves now. It hasn't rained for over a month now and shows no sign of any either. The hot weather is also here.

Our mission has been very successful. As usual they are in a big hurry to get there, so lost 5 APC's in Bravo Co. to mines that the mine sweepers missed. We are set up on the Cambodian border. So far there have been a few firefights of small size. Three of ours got injured when they were in a small one. Selenburger and two sergeants were clearing a bunker of two VC. He tossed a grenade in without waiting three seconds. Charlie tossed it out.

He just got some fragments in his arm so not too serious. He will profile for a while then he will be with us again. One of the Sergeants also got fragments in the arm. The other Sergeant got one in his eye. He may go to the states. We were lead platoon that day so that is what happens when they make us hurry.

We use scout dogs now and they do a good warning job.

When we got to the river, we set up a line for the night. The jungle is the densest I've ever seen. There is a clearing for helicopters in our perimeter so we have supplies. We found 25 bicycles, cases of booze, six drums of gasoline, etc. The VC fled to Cambodia in our advance.

Yesterday they sent just our platoon on a patrol by the end of the day half of the battalion and a General was out there. We found a large base camp hastily abandoned in our advance. The VC must have had bad moral as they could have put up quite a fight from the looks of their defense network. We found 25 more bikes. Documents, pigs, chickens and a 4,8,10 bin full of rice. We burned a dozen huts and destroyed the bikes. The Coronal won't allow any VC bikes on the post. It seems foolish as this would be ideal transportation in base camp.

Well, after that they had us clear an area in the Jungle. So what happens we found three huge bins of rice hid there. They were 4'x12' 20. so a huge amount. That will hurt Charlie for food. We blew the bins with C-4 after dumping 50 lb. bags of tear gas powder and 55 gallon drums of diesel fuel all over the rice. Charlie won't be able to get near the rice let alone use it. Today, I am riding TC in the track. I guess they found a larger camp of the N. Vietnamese with documents on how to blow tanks etc. also more huts, drums of fuel, chemicals, artillery shells, mortar shells etc. The VC as usual abandoned the place in haste. We had one firefight with VC across the river but so far no action today. Our artillery got some VC last night. There were fresh blood trails in the old camp today. The VC had visited the camp last night.

Well, just before we left the VC base camp, we hit the jackpot. We found stacked in a tunnel, large generators, radios made in Red China, booze, batteries, commo wire etc. So will close for now. *We kept the booze. Charlie did not expect us to find the good stuff.*

Ron

*Westmorland and all of the top brass flew in for photo ops to take credit for the find. Interesting it was found since Brigade was in such a hurry to move out.*

Feb. 7 66 {67} {I may not have mailed this right away.}  
Dear Mom and Dad.

Well guess what happen today? I'm suddenly squad leader of Alpha Squad of 3rd plt. Only trouble is there is only me. The driver. I got two other attached now. I was attached to Alpha before this happened.

We were reactionary force for Bravo which was sweeping an area on foot on a glory mission for Brigade. They ran into a heavily dug in VC area, which was occupied by VC that didn't want to move out under any conditions. They suffered a lot of casualties, So Alpha had to rush to the rescue. I stayed with the APC as TC. I know now if I had gone out I would be in the hospital with a lot of cuts. That machine gun team got caught by VC mortars.

End of day. We had 14 wounded most of them from shrapnel and one instant KIA. *Ed Shell*. All the WIA should make it OK and soon. I'll let you know the names later. This mission will be in the papers.

Today is the 9th so I will mail.

The KIA is Shell. He got it when a machine gun bunker opened up at close range. I don't believe he knew what hit him.

Nesbit is a WIA. I believe he got shrapnel in the arm, legs. So he is not serious and should be back soon. He and five others were some victims of unavoidable conditions.

Out of nowhere, three rifle grenades hit. I know that had I been on my machine gun team that day I'd be in the hospital with shrapnel in the arm, face, legs and stomach. There were 48 casualties and four KIA totals in both companies. This all happened in dense brush nearing a clear area. *Arthur Sisco died a month later from gangrene at the hospital in Japan.*

Well, our 18-day mission is followed by another one into the Iron Triangle. So while we are there, Charlie will come back here. They won't even let us back to base camp or resupply.

Do you remember the M16 cleaning rod I brought home on leave? See if you can find it in my dresser desk drawer and send it out. I can't get anything from these supply duds.

Well I'll close for now,

Ron

Sat Feb. 11 T-225

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well this has sure been some truce. Patrols are out every day. Yesterday the truce really got violated. A mounted patrol of Charlie company was fired upon with recoilless rifles from the Cambodian border. There followed a 6-hour firefight in which they tried to retrieve 2 KIA's and the damaged APC, believe it or not they had to get clearance to call in artillery. Then the area was later hit by artillery and air strikes with good results.

*All this happened while we were forced to stand in formation for the top brass to have photo ops in passing out medals.*

Our incident of Feb. 6th. is commented in the news that two companies of the 3rd brg. Suffered moderate casualties while trying to break contact with the VC on Operation Gaston. Of course nothing has been mentioned about how we hurt Charlie in all that equipment and rice we found before this.

I was out on ambush patrol last night. We set up just in front of a CP as we thought it foolish to go as far as ordered. A good thing as the area was hit with artillery fire when VC mortars fired rounds into a nearby base camp. Although our fire landed across the river, some of it was mighty close.

Our chow has been quite good and lots of it for once. This is surprising as it usually is pretty skimpy. They have free beer and soda the past few nights. Of course there is a limit on number per man. So things have been fair in camp. We get a chance now to clean up and wash clothes though that will probably end tomorrow.

Well, promises at camp are a bunch of baloney. They got a pool now and other related things but now when we get back, I hear we tear down tents and build wood buildings with cement floors. Oh yes the engineers will build HQ Co. for them, but, I guess we do our own. Boy, the replacements will sure have it nice.

It still is hot and dry here. It seems to be getting hotter here. Tomorrow we start heading back maybe to base camp for a day or two, then to the triangle until the end of this month.

I might take an R&R soon to get away from this mad house for a few days. I might do this in late March or April, whenever an opening comes up. There is a choice of Japan, Tiapai, Hawaii, Bancock Thailand, Philippines, or Hongkong.

They are giving a few three day passes out to Camp Alpha and Dun Tau. Chances of getting one are quite slim.

Here is some slide film you haven't seen yet. I bought some pre paid process and tried one out they take about two weeks total. They were developed Jan. 30 and mailed Feb. 1st. But were held up in the mail. Actually they may take 10 days from here and back. Inc. processing time. Of course some prints are backwards. I'll mark the correct side.

#1 first day on mission, log for the night, 2, oxcarts hay, 3, groggy me with seven day beard, looking toward the Triangle. Also, the mile of rice to the river {tree line}, 4, air strikes on Triangle, 5, no good, 6, high water near the river, 7, our river position, 9, you might recognize this to one of my drawings. 10, me in the swamp. 11, air strikes, 12, a meager supper 13, close air strike, 14, flash of a 500lb bomb, 15, big bomb crater, 16, Dud 500lb bomb, 17, blown APC, 18, some blown APC, 19, blasted rubber trees, 20, no good.

As usual everyone has looked at them, so some have fingerprints.

Ron

Envelope dated Feb. 15, note on back reads.

PS Got a letter dated Dec. 22. It had a wrong APO number so got stashed around the postal lines. Also a package from Perkins, I am out of goodies low on gum and coolade. So go ahead and send them again.



Dear Mom and Dad,  
Friday T-309

Well, I am still out in the field. Today is hot and we are out of drinking water as usual. It rained last night. The radar spotted some Charlies in the edge of the woods. I saw one with the starlight. They could not see us. It was pitch black out.

Today we moved a short ways to guard the artillery while the straight legs moved out by chopper to another area. They don't tell us anything anymore. I have 15 slides taken, as soon as I finish the roll I'll mail it home. My mail must be taking a long time to get out of here. Because where we are it takes six to seven days from postmark to get here.

Well found out about tomorrow. We are going on a straight leg operation by chopper. It should only take part of the day. I finished the slides, am using a new roll for tomorrow's operation.

Yesterday we went on a patrol with APC's. It was slow all the way and we didn't go far as a result. One of our tracks threw a thread in heavy brush. They were able to run it back on. Our APC over heated smashing brush when the transmission oil got low.

I have no idea when I get back to base camp again. Develop the slides and send them in a packages. I have stamps with me to send them back in a letter all at once.

Here is some propaganda paper that is always laying around. Also, here is the Chu Hoi pass. There are two things are really hurting Hanoi North Vietnamese regulars. So far 20,000 VC have come through this program. Have been a good source of information and are leading free peaceful useful lives in S. Vietnam.

Well, for now that is all I can think of to write. All night long artillery is firing, mortars are shooting near the perimeter and in the morning air strikes pound an area 3 miles from us where there are VC. Oh yes the 109 section goofed up. One day I was going to the CP to mail a letters, when a sound like a low flying jet, then an explosion 50 ft. from me. It was a white phosphorus round that by luck landed in an empty area in our base camp. Had it been H.E. or landed 100 ft. in the other direction it would have raised a lot of Hell. *Or, had I taken a direct route to the chow line, I might have been history. I watched pieces of that explosion land a few feet from me.*

Well that is all for now. I will write whenever I get a chance again.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
20 Feb.

Well I guess I'm going to get Macronied silly from what I hear your sending. I have no trouble getting soap and other toilet articles. They even bring them free for us. I'm stocked up on film for this long mission. I couldn't get any tapes here. Right now I can't tape anything as I have three rolls taped up of Feb. 6 which I'm keeping and two other good ones of home. They are trying to get a PX run so I'm trying to get more batteries. If I have to, I'll rig.

*I was able to use penlight batteries from discarded PRC-25 battery packs. The penlight were used to power the light in the radio and seldom used. That changed when the batteries started coming with all C-size cells. I warned the RTO to make sure that he tore the used battery apart and shorted out the good cells so Charlie couldn't used them to detonate mines .*

The engineers are building a base camp out here. They are blasting huge trees all day and are leveling ground and extending the perimeter. Some convoys come through to take supplies to the clearing where the artillery unit that guards the border is. Still, most stuff is airlifted there.

We are finally getting beer and soda rations in more often. Also there is ice and we had ice cream twice yesterday. Some days there is two of each for sale or one beer, two sodas or one of each. Usually there is left over soda and the heavy drinkers get it or trade some for beer from those who don't drink it. There had been ice which is nice as it is very hot here.

Well, I guess there are still mines on the road. A 3\4 ton truck just got towed in with the front wheel blown off. They are small mines out here and if a track hits them usually just bends the road wheel.

It is good for once not to be chasing Charlie, but rather just securing a perimeter or riding guard for engineers. I believe we still have a big mission here yet then we will dust secure roads and convoys during the monsoons.

There is a nice river here for once. It is chest deep, a sandy bottom with large rocks to wash clothes on and a strong enough current to make it impossible for river leaches to come in.

Well, will close for now.

Ron

Dear Mom and Dad  
23 Feb.

Well they have let up on us for as far as search and clear missions go. As far as I know we will be securing a new base camp area for 48 days yet. Then we go into base camp. It is true about lots of action by the border. This is because most of the forces are going in that area to block VC supply routes. A great deal of leg units have been setting up along the roads in our area. All I can say is this is the longest we ever sat in one place.

Well, I need another watch band. The pins are OK but this sand just wore the band all to pieces. I got one package already. I may not be able to cook macaroni right away. So it should last me quite a while. Coolaide is getting low.

There is a possibility of leaving Vietnam after July 28 th. Some of the guys know their rotation dates. Only thing is they may have to fill their complete 24-month obligation. If this happens there will be a lot of guys trying for leave afterwards.

One of my buddies got a letter from Selenburger. They say they are getting along fine and he and Nesbit and the others are having a good time there *in base camp*. The 2nd. member of the machine gun team is still in Japan *Arthur Sisco*. Oh yes, I have been put back in the squad so I lost squad leaders' job.

There is a giant V W around here. It is a 52 ton scissor bridge tank. It was used to put in a track bridge.

I got some extra poncho liners and some other things. As soon as I get time to I'll mail a package home. I hope we can get in town when we get back then I can get a few souvenirs.

As far as clothes go, I am all set for a while. I have plenty of socks as we get issued a pair every few weeks. I could use some green underpants. Otherwise, I have plenty of underwear. The underpants would be to replace some that are wearing out. I have plenty of towels, undershirts etc. Of course while out here I have three sets each. Now I have more socks than needed.

*All underwear is dyed green or brown or some drab color so as better blend with the jungle when we are not wearing our jackets.*

Laundry service has ceased. We do our own. The civilian laundry had degenerated to being so bad as to be hopeless. Everyone is losing laundry there.

Well, I am running out of things to write so will close for now,  
Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad

I hear Co. A finally got in the news. That was Snellenburger that threw the grenade that was tossed back out.

Boy, this has been some mission. I guess the new battalion commander is trying to wipe out everyone. So far equivalent to a company has become casualties from this mission alone. We are getting replacements from other battalions. Did you know that 2-12 { a leg unit over here as long as us } has had only one fire fight? We average at least one every two days.

If the paper is dirty, it is because we are grubby again. The last two days have found the battalion beating the bush in the jungles. C company ran into some sniper fire. An air strike was called in close. Too close. One pilot got his smoke mixed up. A 500lb bomb was dropped on C company resulting in 19 casualties. This gives them a total of 39 casualties, 6 KIA for the mission. They had two tracks hit by 57 recoilless rifles. Most of our wounded are back at base camp profiling. Some are still in the hospitals.

We are guarding a bridge site on an old road. The engineers are building a heavy duty temporary bridge. I guess Mech. units will be down here quite often now, as they intend to have it here for a few months or longer. Otherwise, they would use a pontoon bridge. It will take three days to construct a 150 ft. bridge.

Well, that is about all I can think of for now. C company found a large weapons and radio cache of the VC while we were heading here,

Ron.

PS you mention about a Saginaw guy in a hospital in Japan. He is from our company. He *accidentally* shot himself in both legs *and his private* with his 45 while riding in the APC last December.

*The Colt 45 uses a floating firing pin. It has the nasty habit of resting on the primer if there is a round chambered. A hard jolt can cause a round to fire. This is what happened to the guy that got shot through both legs.*

Dear Mom and Dad  
28 Feb.

I lost in a draw of cards. So I got KP today. It isn't too bad though and I'll have tomorrow off. I got my fingers in the goody box so that is why the ball point pen and paper.

This *letter* is from a ration supplement for guys in the field. Contents are per 100 men. 50 bars of soap, 200 pieces of candy, 100 pieces gum, 100 cigarettes of five brands, two packs cigars, four pipe tobaccos, two plugs chew, one razor set, a dozen blue blades, toothpaste, tooth brushes, lighters, plenty of matches. But only three tablets and packs of envelopes. And one pen and two cans shaving cream. The platoon had the morning off but are running convoys now. The base camp at Dau Tieng had been attacked resulting in a lot of WIA's and lots of killed VC's. They got mortared twice. Most of the brigades is out here and only a skeleton crew there. So the VC mess with them there. The artillery shot a lot of shells last night. I don't know what happened.

The two machine gun team members of the one I would have been on Feb. 6 are still in Japan. They are going to get medical discharges. The one from New York *Arthur Sisco* had his leg amputated below the knee. The Michigan guy is losing one eye. Otherwise, both are recovering. Lt. Likens went to see them. I'll have to see him when I get to base camp again.

2 March Well I was supposed to stay back but they made all of 2nd. squad go to secure engineers, So a good thing I washed clothes last night. I got a new pair of boots to replace the ones I lost heels on. There is a possibility that we lose our easy job and go beat bush again. Seems though 10th Cav. found out how rough it is and I guess they can't take it. So they want to trade places with us.

I might and I might not get an R&R on the 28th of this month. I believe another guy got it. I got paid my usual \$111. this month.

I still haven't got a definite date on rotation. I do know it is during July. A few are leaving in June. They will be using most of us for short timers' NCO, Sergeant E5 to train troops that are coming here. This means I should be stationed at Ft. Lewis or Ft. Polk. I'll put in the 1044 for Lewis. I'll also try to get the 30-day leave.

I haven't taken many pictures lately as there is nothing to take and I'm holding on the film. We will be on this mission until mid April. That's a long time from base camp. We are helping secure area for the construction of the 5th Mech. division new base camp. An entire division of tracks will take some of our work off of us.

Well, will close so I can mail.

Ron.

Dear Mom and Dad;

Here are the parts of the army erector for bridges. They build a 160 ft. bridge in two days. We are guarding the area for an unknown length of time. It is for certain now that we will be out until the rain comes and that could be 52 days.

They promise no patrols while at this spot 10 miles north of Trin Bi. But they will have something waiting to harass us.

Here is a rough sketch map of where I've been. The film is a variety of things, 1-2 the 6th of Feb., 3-7 air strikes, 8-9 decoration medals, 10-14 Jungle bombed up, 15-19 bridge building, 20 swimming hole.

11 March 67

Dear Mom and Dad.

From the last three batches of film here's what you can send me so I can see how the come out. Send some of the burning huts. The Jets bombing a few of the bridges. And the last 2 in the second to the last roll you got. They are the VC equipment with all the guys around. Then, you can pick some to make 20 pictures for a box. Also, send some of the bombed out area of the woods. They will come through OK as it will be dry for a month yet and I don't want all three sent anyhow. After that batch, you might as well keep them home as the bad weather is due soon. I also have some prepaid processors that I buy. I'll have one on the way soon. That was taken in Tay Ninh.

Well, we are in the deep woods again. We found a VC village yesterday. The VC had taken all their stuff with them so there was nothing to find. The trees are enormous here and so thick with brush that it is hard to get through. Some spots were hilly and had stones, also, a big tree close together. The tracks had to squeeze between this spot. Several threw tracks there.

Well, one of the wounded of that machine gun team died a few days ago in Japan. He was the one that lost part of his leg. *Arthur Sisco*. He got gangrene in it and in his back. His dad had just come to Japan from New Jersey to see him. So that makes three in our platoon.

We are getting a few of the minor wounded back. Many are at base camp profiling. Still, others are in the hospital through the country. I know a few that will be discharged.

Boy, I'll be glad to get out of the place. We are living like animals again. There is hardly enough drinking water and none for washing so we are smelly and dirty.

I'll profile for a while in base camp when we get back. I got to get come back teeth filled. There are two upper wisdom teeth that suddenly under this climate are going fast. Our hair looks like the beetles again and hanging over our ears.

So that is all that is new from here, There was no place for a helicopter to land, So we knocked a hole in the jungle so one could bring in chow. It also took out a guy that was hurt when a tree fell on a track.

Will close,

Ron

PS, Sometimes, the VC get this paper before we do. Hanoi Hanna knows more about our mission than we do. She even knows well in advance where we are going and what units are going. The VC have poor communications, so don't always know we are coming but when they do they vanish and leave a lot of mines behind.

*Exception, was the time that I found the operation's maps laying on a table in the company base camp mess hall where Vietnamese civilians could have access to it. I got the maps, they didn't. We weren't bothered much that week. I wonder why?*

Monday Feb. 27

Dear Mom and Dad {out of sequence}

Would you believe 143 days short? Read and find out.

Here is my tax statement so you can see how much Uncle Sam paid me last year. I guess I could qualify for a poverty program. Only no way to spend it here.

Here is a paper I picked up with some 3rd brg news. It also has a picture of 3rd. Plt. And the scout dog attached to us Feb. 4th. There is an article of Feb. 6th fighting. There is also one of the truce violations. The paper is wrong about the bombing of C company. It was not a short round. The pilot bombed right on the smoke which was released by C company at the wrong time. They bomb on smoke released by the spotter plane. They are going so fast they cannot see us until way after they release a bomb.

I wonder how this RTO of B Co. 3rd Dragoons rated according to the paper. He got the company a VC horse and had it airlifted back to base camp. That's pretty good. They're around here too. One of the road clearing teams found what was left of one also two oxcarts when they stepped on mines in the road or else was shot at by 20mm cannons. The road shows marks made by that as well.

We are still in the convoying business by day and guard at night. We have the running water to wash up in at night.

I don't know if to believe it or not. I rotate on July 20th along with all the married guys. Just me and Ross are the only single guys that got on this. All that extra stateside work pays. This will mean that I get reassigned till Dec. 8. However, I can get a month leave in between. I may be able to request my place of reassignment. This I don't know yet. Most will rotate in August and the AWOL's in Sept. finally the extended men in Oct. So I will keep you informed as I find out.

If I can get assigned to Ft. Lewis,

Ron

PS we are attached to the 25th Inf. From the 23rd of Sept. on there shouldn't be any tax collected on my pay as far as Federal Tax goes.



Dear Mom and Dad

Monday 13 Malaria pill day. 5 1\2 down maybe 4 1\2 to go or less.

I got your tape today also a letter. I had to tear apart a used 25 battery to get pen lights for the tape recorder. All my others' no good. How about recording the WKNX top 60's instead of the soothing Sunday music. The guys don't like it. Oh well it gave me a tape to record on. If I can find Snellys recorder, I'll tape parts of the live combat on this one.

While I was on LP last night our well-thinned out perimeter {there was two ambush patrols out as well} got a scare. A VC shot a rifle grenade into camp. It exploded in a tree. You never heard ramps go up so fast or hatches and 50 bolts snap so much. That sure had everyone scared. The VC was across the creek and vanished into the night.

Did you send the macaroni with the underwear or was that separate? So far to date I have received the one with the two socks and one package of macaroni. I cooked that a few days ago in a peanut butter can. I drained it and added C rations' cheese. It was pretty good and I had a mob sampling it. Right now I'm having some instant chicken noodle soup. It's from the mess hall. They never cook it anymore and only toss it out.

They no longer bring soda and beer out, by order of the gung ho battalion commander. Yet they still bring out ice. So in the evening we can have ice cold milk and make ice coolade or even cool down a can of fruit.

Well, I love this organization. They yell out "get ready for a patrol". Now we are waiting for the word where to go, when to go, how far we are going, who is going, and finally, if we are going at all. All it amounts to is a waste of our time to make up their minds. Yesterday, we never got non potable water to shave. Today we got the water but there's no time to shave. Now, they call the squad leaders, now, they want us out 8000 meters? Not hardly! It is a short one to use up some time of ours. Then, ambush tonight. Oh goodie, no patrol, instead, some of us are down on 2nd plt perimeter.

There are a lot of rumors going on rotation dates. One fact is for certain. Wounded and married first then regular troops and last the AWOL's.

No one is certain of any dates yet. They vary from the 28 of June to July 20 for first rotation. They say mine is on the 15 to 20 of July. One troop, an E5 who doesn't start rumors says he was shown his rotation date 26 of June. Until I see mine on paper, I don't know for sure.

So that is all that is new for now,

Ron

March 16

Dear Mom and Dad

This will be a quickie before formation. I need you to send \$125. as soon as possible. The reason, I got an R&R on 26th of the month and I have no money. All I can get is \$110. which isn't enough. I thought I could get that by a loan by finance but I find out they don't do this anymore.

My R&R is to Tiapai. Believe me, I'll take my good ole time to get back here. The company will be out on a mission then.

I don't imagine I'll spend all that but from what I have heard many guys have spent more. Of course they get drunk every night too. Still there is a lot one can buy and mail home.

So, I'll close and mail this. I can cash it at the post office or finance,

Ron

16

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well, here is the second letter today. I'm writing this while waiting to get a hair cut. This place is a mad house today. Everyone is trying to find all their stuff. Get it re-packed, dried out, Wash clothes and prepare to move out tomorrow to the field again. On top of that they stuck an ambush patrol on us that is sure dumb.

It took us one day to get back in. We took all morning to travel 5 miles to reach the big clearing, then it was four hours to Dau Tieng. We made a long detour around Tay Ninh. The trip was extremely dusty. Everyone came in filthy black.

The mines must have been bad along the roads while we were gone. One place along the road had a big crater and the blasted pieces of what was left of a 2 1/2 ton truck. Those guys never felt it. 2 trucks had tires blown off when we first went out. There are all kinds of tank road wheels along the way and pieces of tire.

Change 99. I checked the rotation. It changed when they decided to send a large number of troops to other units. I am on the first 50 to rotate. I will go anytime from August 1 to 28. That will be a big day. My R&R starts on the 26th of this month. I hope you can get the money order here in time in case the other letter didn't get there sooner. That is for \$125. The R&R is to Tiapai. I'm going to take plenty of slides. This will get me out of the field for a few weeks.

Well, it was a wild one last night. We had a barbecue of steak, which was good for a while. The beer was flowing freely. These guys are no longer toughened to lots of booze. So when they drank their usual basic loads they really got sick. All the trays were scattered about many with uneaten steaks. Guys heaved all over the place. Other guys got raving mad. Many just got so sick they had to be carried to bed

Well, all but a few guys are back from the hospital. I saw Selenburger and Nesbit. The supply, however, nicely lost all their gear for them. All their gear had been packed, tagged and flown back, from there it was lost for them.

I guess only valuables and personal items are sent to those that go to the states. All other clothing including civilian is claimed by supply.

I wonder what there is to do other than what the other jokers go to do on R&R for. I'll have to find out what sights there are there. . There should be a lot of bargains on things sold there. Guys buy many normally expensive things that are low priced in foreign countries. The air tickets are free and the schedule given, also, transportation to and from the airport to an R&R hotel from there it is as one wants it. So I'll close for now,

Ron

PS I got the maps. It even has a town named where we set up on the river. I got a package with the macaroni.

Dear Mom and Dad

*{postmark is March 7<sup>th</sup>? Out of sequence, this was written after my R&R}*

Well, we sweat out the next few days. If there is no VC activity north of Sou Da, we will be all set. There will be no mission for us for 60 days. The other two companies will secure Dau Tieng during personal change over. And we will secure Tay Ninh.

To answer a question about *the photo of the* guy with the meager ration. His name is Corporal L. Denes. He lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado and is married. He is also an E6 so he is not this lost guy. He is in the 196th now.

I got lots of envelopes and film now so I am all set there for a while. Can you buy empty 2 1/2" tapes reels? The 3 I have here are getting broke up real bad. They got crushed in the box by accident when it was dented by stuff in the track.

I am looking for a Vietnamese camouflage uniform. The peddlers sell them but so far they are too small. I found one with a large shirt but he had medium pants which are too small.

Oh yes I did get the three slides of Tiapai, can you send me an assortment of Vietnam slides so I can show the guys how they came out. Send a box of 20. Have some of Tay Ninh archways, also the night one with the traces. One with the lightening flashing at night also with flares. There is one in the last roll of film with a black sky that I liked to see. Some of the mountain and a few others of Tiapai and the close air strike. When I ride shot gun, I'll take a lot of pictures around Saigon.

Well, that is about all for now.

Ron