

3-14-1969

## Dave Fetters' Audio Transcription - 1969 - Tape 03

David Fetters

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/fetters>

---

### Recommended Citation

**Repository citation:** Fetters, David, "Dave Fetters' Audio Transcription - 1969 - Tape 03" (1969). *Dave Fetters Audiotape Transcriptions*. Paper 3.  
<http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/fetters/3>  
March 14, 1969.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Collections at Digital Commons @ Hope College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dave Fetters Audiotape Transcriptions by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Hope College. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@hope.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hope.edu).

## Dave Fetters' Audio Letters - 1969

### Tape #3

I know Dan wants one and the letter I got from him he said he did want one. He said he wanted one like I described. Well, I can't remember which one that I described, you know, the silver one with black face with glowing hands or automatic super-duper gold one with slim lined features and all that junk. So I don't know. If she wants to buy one of those two to send to Dan, sell it to her for cost and have her ship it out, compliments of me or whatever. The other one you can sell to Chuck if you want, or sell it to your Dad, or anybody who wants to buy it, but make a little profit off of it. I think I left the price tags on both of them. I couldn't believe that one for \$21 was only \$21 because that's a sharp looking watch. I'll probably get more to send home. I'd like to have one of those silver ones for myself, maybe keep it for just a dress up watch and keep the one I have on now for just a banging around watch. The band's getting pretty crusty over here, all this dirt and sweat. Everything's all...the plating is wearing off. The watch still runs perfectly. It keeps absolutely perfect time. It's good to have it at night because it glows in the dark so nicely.

I see the tape's just about ready to run out so, despite the fact that you say I waste tape by hitting the automatic reverse button, it's real convenient so I'm just going to hit the automatic reverse now and let the tape play back. I see the volume's a little bit low too so I'm cranking the volume up and automatic reverse. It only took a second. Now the tape's going the opposite direction. It's a pretty nice little item to have. Anyway, did you ever get one of those little attachments for our tape recorder so you could plug it in to a regular socket? If not, I suggest you pick one up; that'll save flashlight batteries.

Oh, now, let's see. I think I'll haul out your two most recent letters and read them over and then comment on any questions you might of had or anything. I can remember one part that you mentioned that was about that one letter I sent you and how it affected you that day and what you wrote back. I'm glad to hear that you feel the way you do about that thing that I mentioned. It's nice. I really enjoy it. Oh boy, Hong Kong, here we come.

On the first tape I mentioned where the landing zone was but now I have my map out in front of me. So if you look in square 1385 in the lower, well, toward the middle and lower right hand corner you'll see a little bare spot with what looks like a little splotch of blue, slanted line blue which is intermittent moisture in the field there. Well that's the field where we landed. We went due west across the river to about 115855 then we cut south along that trail. We camped out overnight right at the end of the trail there. We continued south to where the river makes a

deep cut to the west. It's real marshy in there. We went through there and went west again all the way over straight to the road and then south on the road back to camp. And that was that.

My dad was mentioning another thing about how can I send all this information home to you, you know, isn't it a security violation? Well, it's not a security violation because this information is, well, prior to going out on operation it is classified "confidential" but once we come back in I can tell you where we've been although I can't really say what we did or what we saw or anything like that. I don't know. Things are kind of stupid. No command emphasis or anything is placed on screening letters and tapes and stuff being sent home. That picture of the camp, shoot that's common knowledge. I bet the VC have pictures of our camp that are better than the ones we have. They probably have agents inside the camp here snapping pictures of all the mortar tubes, antennas and everything else, and everything measured off to the foot. That's the way it is in most camps. You can't tell a VC from a regular Vietnamese person anyway. They can easily infiltrate your camp and find out every cotton picking thing they have to know and just let the information go out. There are no restrictions on taking pictures of camp and sending them home and telling people where things are so don't worry about it.

Let's see, I'm going to scan your letters some more so I'm going to shut this off for a second. I came to the part where you're talking about the birth control pills and everything. I would say that if you're going to get back on them to do so immediately and then send me the information as soon as you can concerning when's the best time, you know, for meeting in Hong Kong because as soon as I get that information I can put in for my R&R. I can't put it in, well I can but I can't put down accurate dates until I get that information from you so do what you can and tell me when the best time is. As soon as you get that information here, I'll put in a request for R&R. We have a pretty good chance at getting the exact dates we want so I wouldn't worry about it too much.

Then I see where you want to go down to North Carolina and see Eileen Downing. Well, I'll let you use your own judgement on that I guess. I don't know what our bank statement looks like. I know I haven't been sending home a whole lot because there's so much stuff over here I want to buy and send that kind of stuff home. We do want to get a new refrigerator some time. Just keep those things in mind. I'm sure you can figure out how much you'll spend. Maybe, like you say, \$100 for plane fare, and it would be nice to have a typewriter. If you do go, I would say yes, definitely get a nice typewriter from the PX. Don't get the fanciest model, but then again, don't get the cheapest. Get a good all around kind that's got everything on it that we would use under normal conditions. Don't get one that skimps on asterisks and parentheses and that kind of stuff and backspacing. All of that stuff comes in handy. Trim tabs, you've got to have stuff like that. If you want to buy one go ahead. Use your own judgement on whether or not you want to

go down there, and how much money you want to spend. I know it would be nice to go back and see the old sites and stuff. I don't know. Just use your own judgement. Don't forget that your plane fare to Hong Kong is expensive and we'll be spending money quite rapidly while you're over there.

Or another thing I thought, check and see how much more it would cost for you to, instead of flying from Hong Kong back by way of San Francisco, to just continue on around the world. I think I mentioned that on the other tape, but I've been thinking more about it, and I don't think the air distance as far as air miles would be that much greater. Maybe you could swing it to where you could land in Rome and spend half a day, land in Paris and spend half a day, in London spend a half a day. What the heck? You'll probably never again in your life have the chance to see stuff like that. Since you're so close and since it would only cost maybe a few dollars more, I would say definitely take advantage of it if you can. Take a good camera and take many, many, many pictures. I would personally like to see St. Peters in Rome, but I know you're not allowed to take cameras inside there. One of the sergeants has been there and he's told me all about it. But if you don't do that, maybe after I graduate from college we can take a month off before we finally settle down for good and take a cruise over to Europe. That's way out of our reach right now. That's planning too far ahead, but as it stands now, I don't know. We'd never get over there otherwise. As soon as we start having kids, we're not going to be able to afford to go over there unless we hit it real lucky, make lots of money. It's something to keep in mind.

I don't know what to say about the puppy dog but I would suggest, highly suggest, highly advise you to leave her here, or leave her there rather, than take her down there with you because it'd be quite a strain on her to get a big shipping crate made for her and put her in the thing and then have her going through the air terminal and on to the trucks and planes. She'd probably be in some dark little hole for the flight. She'd be all upset. She'd go crazy down in there. Just think of the poor dog in all that heat down there, after all she's nice and acclimated to the nice cool weather. I don't think she'd really enjoy it, and you'd be doing so much sight seeing and stuff down there, you'd have to leave her all day long sitting in the yard. Besides, that's more money. I don't know how much it would cost to have her shipped down there but you might be able to leave her here with somebody if you did go, or put her in a kennel if you're only staying a week. I even hate the thought of that because she's such a neat dog. I hate to have her ruined or anything by leaving her in a kennel or leaving her with somebody who would mistreat her.

Don't worry about that joke you made at the end of your letter. Shoot, I don't care if you say stuff like that. I know darn well that you wouldn't even consider doing anything like that so go ahead and joke about it all you want. Let me shut this off and put your letter away. You mentioned that when we were still at Bragg that you told me that Tito had a camera that we could

use. I know darn well that it didn't register otherwise I would have grabbed it in a minute and made good use of it to have some pictures of you over here but oh well, that's water over the falls now. I don't see how you could possibly help me out without embarrassing yourself. If anybody else listens to this tape I'm sure they can probably figure out what we're talking about.

I really like that last letter you sent, the one you wrote at work and then you continued when you were at home. I'd like to get more of those. They kind of make me feel good. I said I had four rolls of film taken and ready to send home. Well, I've got eight pictures shot on another roll so pretty soon I'll have five. A lot of other guys have taken shots around here so I'm going to try to get some of their negatives. Most of them are color prints but if you want you can get slides made of those you want to keep. Some of them are really neat of jet fighters going over the camp and one is of a great big explosion that our demo man set off one day. He was blowing up some outdated 105 rounds. Boy, they made an enormous crater but one guy had his 35 millimeter camera out there and just as fast as he could cock the next picture and hit the button he took pictures starting with the big fireball to when there was nothing but just a little wisp of smoke left. He got a good sequence of shots showing how some of those 105's went shooting way up in the air and they left a big long column of smoke where the big shells curved up and over and then landed in the woodline with another small explosion. He also got some good shots of the mountain Nui Ba Den and shots from the helicopter. I'm sure my shots will turn out and you can just pick the ones you want, the ones that I don't have pictures of but that you would like to keep and have either prints or slides made from the negatives. If you want, of all of the prints I send home, buy another scrapbook and start a scrapbook of just prints. I think that'd be kind of neat. I'd much like you do it. So as I send pictures home you can just slide them in, maybe make a note as to the date that you received them or the date that they were taken. If I make comments on the back of the pictures maybe you can jot that in next to the picture or anything you want.

I knew I could think of something more to say if I just stop for a minute and walked around. I got up and drank another can of Pepsi. That was about my fifth one today, believe it or not. I took a pill, but I need Contac. I can get it here if I ever get the chance to go to the PX. In fact, I even looked at it the other day when I was in, you know? The first part of this month. I looked at that stuff and thought, "Maybe I ought to get one, you know, just in case I get a cold." But then I thought, "Na, shoot, I've been over here two months already and haven't even got the slightest hint of a cold." No sooner said than I got one.

Well as I said before, I thought of some more to say. Everyday we have either a FAC or what's called an "uptight" aircraft which is a Mohawk twin engine job with about four different types of radar, infrared, people sniffer side looking slanting radar photographs, et cetera, et cetera. It's a real super-duper spy plane. It flies over at about 3,000 feet up. It is so sophisticated

that it can pick up areas on the ground where people have recently been. Not only are, but have recently been. He called in early this morning and said, "Hey you people, I got a reading out here." So naturally we were interested in finding out what he had. So we asked for more information. Well anyway, he said, "Well, looks like about seven tigers." Sure enough, he swooped down and checked them out and it was a pack of seven tigers out in the clear area just romping around the jungle, in the brush having fun. It would have been kind of neat to see them.

I forgot to say that coming in off the heliborne operation, we scared up a little deer. He almost bowled me over and hit the radio man right behind me, and bumped into the American that was two people in back of me. A little teeny shrimp of a deer. Another thing, the airplane was up flying around the border and just over on our side of the border we saw some VC's sittin' there cooking out and had a campfire going. But, we couldn't call artillery on them because it was too close to the border and we were afraid we might land a shell in Cambodia. That's the way this stupid war is being fought.

I see the tape is just about ready to run out so I'm going to start saying my goodbyes now. I hope you get both tapes on the same day. Then you can play the first one first and the second one second. I hope to be hearing some more from you by tapes or by letters. I hope I get some nice juicy ones soon. I enjoy those. You know, the lovey and mushy ones. I haven't had radio watch at night for awhile, that's why I haven't written you too many letters. You'll just have to be satisfied with the tapes. But tapes aren't too bad. At least you can hear what my voice sounds like even though it is stuffed up with sinus trouble and junk like that. You can let the folks listen to this if you want, otherwise just tape it onto your bigger reel or whatever you do with it, erase it and then send it back to me. I should have radio watch tomorrow night so maybe I'll scratch out a letter to you or maybe, or better yet, I should probably write to Dr. VanDyken since you wanted me to write when I had time, and I just haven't made time. I could write a letter to Chuck and Joyce and your folks again. I got a couple letters from Chris which are nice, just general newsy type stuff. Oh shoot, I just thought of something else I wanted to say. I wanted to talk about the guys here on the team...

14 April 1969  
Monday

Today is Monday the 14th, and I've got quite a bit to tell you so that's why I picked the 600 foot tape to start on. I got your package of cigars yesterday along with a letter and a tape. I

still haven't gotten the package with all the goodies and stuff in it but I imagine that went surface mail so it will take a little longer to get here. I was real happy to hear that you got your corsage on time. I told them to deliver it on or about the fifth. I first read your letter and you didn't make any mention of it in your letter so at the time I thought, "Gee, maybe it didn't get there on time." I was just about ready to whip out a nasty letter to the people I ordered the flowers from. But the tape informed me that you got it on time. It's too bad it wasn't the one I picked out. I haven't any idea what the one was that you got but the one I picked out was a real pretty pink one with four blossoms or something. But I'm sure that the thought was there. I mean you know just the idea of getting a flower. You don't really look at what kind it is or anything, but just the fact that you got one and it got there on time. I was happy to hear that.

Oh boy, let's see. Starting about two weeks ago we started having trouble with our electricity. We knew the reason why and the reason why is, well, first let me tell you what the trouble was. The trouble was we weren't getting enough power to even turn on our fluorescent lights. Once we got the lights on, they would burn okay. But once we shut them off we couldn't get them back on because there just wasn't enough power coming through the lines. At first we thought maybe one of our machines was on the blink, like a big refrigerator or something and was drawing too much power. We checked all the stuff out and everything was okay. So, then one night real late we got up on the teamhouse roof and looked around the camp. And we noticed electric lights burning all over the place that shouldn't be. See, we don't supply electric power for everybody in camp. We only have electric power for the Americans, I mean the USSF team, the artillery, and the Vietnamese Special Forces. But later, a couple days later we went around checking all our wires and everything. We found out that right over by the Vietnamese Special Forces teamhouse, they had about 40 wires spliced into their main line. All these wires ran all around the inner perimeters, for each and every little hut in the place and everybody ran had an electric bulb and ran radios off of it. The wire they used was this plain old commo wire. And that stuff is not made to take 110 volts. That was where our main drag was.

Also we checked our generators and the main line coming out of the generator went into about six different switches, you know, the big throw switches like you had on a fuse box. Normally we keep up with what the mechanic does out there but recently we've been pretty busy mixing cement and putting it out on the teamhouse roof, getting ready for the monsoons, and taking care of all the Americans and everything that moved in. We just haven't had time to check everything that we normally check. We found out that the mechanic knew that people were splicing into the line but he didn't do anything about it. Not only that, but he was given money on the side to help connect up some of these people. So one day, in fact, Sunday, yesterday, we decided to go to the generator room and redo all the wiring and cut off everybody who wasn't supposed to have electricity, at the same time, rewire all our switches, generators, run a new wire

over to artillery and also to cut the Vietnamese off entirely because they have their own generator. They're just too lazy to hook it up. So yesterday morning, we got about five team members and we all went over to the Vietnamese Special Forces and we said, "Look. You guys better come over and get your generator and hook it up because later on this morning we're going to cut you off and you're not going to have any electricity for your refrigerators or your radios or anything like that, for your lights." They all just sat around and nodded their heads yes, fine, okay. So we turned around and left.

And right away, this was about 8 o'clock Sunday morning, we shut down our generator, started ripping out wires and switches and everything. The whole time our mechanic was standing there shaking his head no because he didn't realize what we were going to do. We tore out two big fuses and about thirty feet of wire without doing anything, well, without cutting any electricity that was going out. In other words, we ripped out all that stuff and it didn't have any effect at all on the amount of electricity going through the wires, if you know what I mean. I'm trying to explain it to you. In other words, all the lights which would normally be on at night, would have still been burning. The mechanic just couldn't understand how after ripping out all those switches and wires, everything was as normal as it ever was. We found out the way he had things wired there, things were going in circles and I don't know. It's hard to explain. He had so many wires and splices and everything. It's a wonder we got any electricity at all. Anyway, we spent all day tearing down everything, putting in all new wires, real big heavy duty stuff that they won't be able to splice into and burying a new cable from our generators over to artillery, putting in new switches and it took us all day. We finished up about 4 o'clock that evening. When we were finished, the mechanic, although he stood there all day and watched us, what we were doing, he told us that because of the fact that we weren't using the same number of switches as he had and because of the fact that our three main outlets, one for the mess hall, one for the teamhouse, and one for artillery, came in and went to individual switches, he thought that we were using three times as much electricity as the way he had it set up. He had everything running in to one gigantic switch and about five different connections all spliced into the two wires coming out of that switch. He figured that if we increase the number of wires and the number of switches, that we would also increase the amount of electricity going out. But, I don't know. These people are just too thick headed. We explained it, and explained it, and explained it, and showed it to him and everything, and he still couldn't believe it. So we told him well just leave things alone, we'll take care of it. We also told him that if we caught him trying to splice anybody in we'd fire him on the spot.

Okay, so about six o'clock last night when everybody started getting ready to turn lights on and stuff, the Vietnamese Special Forces still had not come over and picked up their generator. We knew there was going to be trouble, and sure enough, here they come, about five

or six of them. They all come stomping over all hot under the collar and mad, you know. Where's our electricity, et cetera et cetera. So we told them just as calm as we could, "We gave you people all day to come over here and get your lousy generator and hook it up, but would you do it? No, no, you just sat over there, slept all day, didn't do a doggone thing. Now you expect us to do it for you. Well we're not going to." We turned around and walked off. Boy, we left them out there. They were steaming. They were making a bunch of racket, yelling at us and everything. Not yelling at us, but they'd come to the door and knock on the door and say, "Come on out, we want to talk to you about this." We went out again and here four or five people standing around bunkers with loaded rifles in case any trouble started. Their people, that is. Trying to give us a show of power. They were going to back up the Vietnamese. Now all these people standing around with rifles were the Vietnamese stooges. They're just part of the comb recon platoon that lives on the inner perimeter with us and they do all the manual labor for the Vietnamese. See, the Americans do all their own work, like mixing cement for the teamhouse and filling their own sandbags. Everything we do we have to do ourselves. But the Vietnamese Special Forces always have these stooges around to wait on them hand and foot and do everything for them.

So everybody hemmed and hawed a little bit about what was going to happen and we wouldn't back down an inch. They finally realized that we wouldn't. So they got a truck and went over and picked up the generator and took it over to their area. We ripped out all the telephone wires from the switches that we did have in our generator house over to their area and so they had to police up all the wire and run it from their commo shack over to their new generator and of course get the generator started and running. In the meantime we were standing around and watching them, you know, giving them advice and all this kind of stuff and they were still trying to get hooked up into our electricity because they know that we're going to keep ours running and we are going to keep ours in top shape. If they can get a line to our electricity they know they'll always have electricity. But if they have their own generators, they know that they're going to have trouble because all the CIDG and all the different companies will want to tap their line. They can't tap ours anymore. We've got all our cable and everything buried underground. So they know they can't get into ours. So now their only chance to get electricity is from the Vietnamese Special Forces.

Well, they finally got it hooked up and running but while they were working on it, the camp commander was busy talking to our camp commander telling him that they would like to run just one wire for their radios over into our electricity. Of course we knew the reason why, not to run their radios, but to get all their electricity in case their generator pooped out. But we again refused them. After we refused them that time, our commo chief, Sergeant Pierce who's in one of the pictures, happened to be over looking at all the wires and stuff that they've got hanging

around their teamhouses and wondering to himself how in the world they ever get electricity at all because everything is spliced into one jumbled mass on top of a telephone pole. You can't tell what's what. Anyway, he was standing over there by himself and a couple of CIDG casually walked over to him and started pushing him around and punching him. This has happened before. And as soon as an American would take a swing at a CIDG or try to defend himself he'd have about 40 of them down on top of him. Either that or have about three loaded weapons pointed at him. So he just started yelling, so we all ran over there and broke it up and told the LLDB, "Get your people out of here. The next character that tries something like that is going to get killed." Those were the words we put to them. They knew we were mad. So they called off all their cronies, you know, and told them to just cool it for awhile and leave us alone.

I don't know if my explanation is getting through to you. I'm not the most glamorous or flowery, well, you know what I mean. I can't explain myself as exactly the things that happen around here, but you get the general idea anyway. Later on that night after they had their generator running and everything, my mechanic came over to me and said they want, the LLDB, wanted him to spend all night sitting over there by their generator to make sure the thing would run. He said that if he didn't do it, they would make it so rough on him that he'd have to move out of camp. So I told him, "No matter what happens, don't you dare go over there and work on their generator because you're hired by me to work on our generators, you're a civilian, we pay you, not the Vietnamese, so you just stay away from them." I also told him that if he starts running into any trouble, just come on over and come inside the teamhouse and we'll protect him. So apparently, he got through the night last night without any trouble because he didn't come to me at all during the night complaining that they were after him.

Another trouble we had before we went about rewiring all our switches and everything, the power was run at 115 volts or so and the mechanic knew that we weren't getting enough power. So one night he just wandered over there and cranked it up to 150 volts, before telling anybody or anything. At that particular time, we had our movie projector running and immediately that new surge of electricity blew all the fuses out of the projector and the amplifier and it started overheating, I don't know what it is. It's some kind of gizmo that regulates the electricity going into a battery that feeds all of our radios. Anyway, that thing heated up and started the battery boiling over. It also blew out a couple of starters or something in the fluorescent lights. In other words, it generally screwed up all of our electric appliances and stuff. It blew out one of the refrigerator motors too and our ice machine. So everybody was up in a rile about that. This was about last week Thursday or Friday. This was what really prompted us into action.

So we went over and calmly tried to explain to the stupid mechanic what he had done. Of

course he's so stupid he didn't realize what it would do. He just thought, well the lights are dim so I'll just crank it up a little bit more. Because of the fact that it wrecked our ice machine, we weren't getting any ice for any reason. Now the ice machine that we have puts out enough ice so that we can give the Vietnamese some, and on the sly, our Chinese cook has been selling ice or giving ice to the stupid CIDG that live around the mess hall outside our wire fence. He must have been doing it on the sly because we didn't know about it. But last night he came up to me and told me that because of the fact the ice machine was broken he couldn't get any ice and that the CIDG had threatened him with a loaded rifle to give them ice. So immediately it registered on me that our cook had been giving ice to these people, you know, to keep them quiet or to keep them off his back. Because of the fact the ice machine was broken, they were getting upset, so they were coming after him with a loaded rifle. The stupid people wouldn't understand that the ice machine was broken. No matter what the cook said, they wouldn't believe him. They just wanted their ice, regardless. So now the cook's all unhappy and he's going to quit because he's afraid he's going to get shot one of these days. Heck, I don't blame him. But the CIDG around here watched the team members and whenever they know where every team member is, they'll sneak somebody into the mess hall and swipe food or ice from us or sneak somebody into our teamhouse and swipe flashlights and cameras and just whatever they can get their hands on. Oh and into our shower room where I happen to be sitting right now, and steal our light switches and sockets and bulbs and wiring and everything for their own huts.

I might say that the reason why I'm sitting in the shower room right now is because it's a nice quiet place and it's relatively cool. It's in the shade. After explaining something to you like all this trouble we've had with the electricity and the stupid Vietnamese Special Forces wanting to argue with us and show force and all that kind of stuff. I think back on it and I realize I still haven't explained it like it really happened. You just have to be here to see it, to understand it, because these people slink around behind bunkers and stuff, just waiting for somebody to take a swing at them or a fight to start just so they can get in the act or start shooting.

The day before yesterday afternoon, one of the CIDG was drunk, and he fired his M-16 at a couple of the American engineers who were outside our perimeter. Of course they called up right away and demanded to know what was going on. Of course we didn't know at the time so we had to run around and find out what the trouble was and we can't do anything to these stupid people for being drunk and firing their weapons because the Vietnamese Special Forces will stick up for them. Do you remember those people that we caught breaking into the supply room about two or three weeks ago? I told you we had six of them. We sent them in on a Chinook helicopter with an armed guard and one of the Vietnamese; it was the Vietnamese Special Forces S-2. They were going to take these six people to the B-Team for interrogation and then to be drafted into the ARVN Army. However, they never did get there. I think I told you already that

somehow they snuck off the helicopter and got away. Well, it wasn't that they snuck off and got away, it was that the guard and the S-2 let them get away on purpose because they were buddies and all that kind of stuff. A lot of that goes on.

Okay, now I'll change to a new subject. We have the engineers in. They have their own perimeter and everything along with the infantry companies that are protecting them. They have a berm that is about 200 meters outside of our area, well, outside of our mine field. It's about 500 or 600 meters outside of our perimeter itself. They have their own barbed wire out in front, claymore mines, bunkers and everything. They're dug in. Of course, they're prepared for anything, attacks and all that kind of stuff, which they should be. Last night in the middle of the night, I was awakened by a couple of explosions. At the time, I thought "Man, that sure sounds like enemy rockets or mortars coming in." So I got out of bed and went to the radio room to find out what was going on. I was about the only team member that heard it so I woke up a couple of other people who would be interested, like the commo man and the captain. We went into the commo shack and found out that the area between our berm and their berm had been hit by 3 107-millimeter rockets. Three of their people had been wounded. So immediately we told the artillery to get ready for a fire mission. They sent somebody outside their perimeter to the craters that these rockets made to try to determine the direction from which the rockets came so that the artillery could start blasting the area. Well, they couldn't tell at night, it was too dark and it made such a big crater and they couldn't find any remains like they can on a mortar. You can find a tail fin sticking in the bottom of the crater it makes. From the direction that the tail fin is leaning you can tell where the mortars came from. But with rockets you can't do that very easily so they couldn't tell at night.

So this morning we sent a team out into the tall grass around the perimeter of the camp to see if we could locate the launchers. Sure enough, 250 meters off the southwest end of the runway we found three homemade rocket launchers sitting in the grass. Real early this morning, people, we had a security element down by the bridge which is six clicks south where the engineers go to get the special material [laterite] they need to for the runway. They had an ambush set up that night, last night. They scarfed up two people on bicycles coming down the road from the camp area. They didn't kill them or anything, they just captured them. They sent them back to camp today and after interrogating them today we found out that these two people were pretty hardcore VC. They admitted to us that they had ridden their bicycles up the road last night with rockets tied onto their bicycles. They had gotten off into the deep grass and they were the ones that set up the rockets. At first we weren't sure whether or not these people were, oh, somebody just came in to take a shower. I'm leaving. At first we weren't sure whether or not these people were really VC or not until we looked at their bicycles carefully and found out that they had Cambodian bicycle tires on their bikes. The Vietnamese aren't allowed into Cambodia,

so we figured these were either North Vietnamese or Viet Cong who have been going back and forth across the Cambodian border. Sure enough after our interpreter made a close examination of the bike and the tire and everything, he said that these were definitely VC.

Okay, I'm back up on my usual spot on the teamhouse roof. It's a little breezy up here, I hope the wind doesn't interfere with the recording. Somebody walked in to the shower stall, that's why I had to get out. Let's see, where was I? Oh yes, talking about the VC suspects. Well, after we found out that they had been running rockets up and down the road at night, we had to get this information down to the people who were securing the bridge. So instead of sending a radio message, I went down there with one of the engineering convoys. It only takes about 15 minutes to get down the road. Besides, they're camped out right on the nice river there and I thought it would be a good chance to get a little swimming in. So I went down there with the latest information that the VC told us and told them to be sure to set up good ambushes tonight and see if you can nail some of these people coming up on bicycles. Last night they did have the ambush set up but apparently these people on bicycles knew about it and somehow, I don't know how, but somehow with their bikes and rockets and everything made it through the jungle, went around the ambush, and got across the river and got back on the road and came north. That jungle's so thick down there they must really have some secret little trails running around back in there because otherwise there would be no way for a bicycle to get through that thick stuff.

I said I took a convoy down there. Every morning, the engineers run a mine sweeping team down the road on foot to check for mines and things. Right behind them comes a big convoy of dump trucks and payloaders and everything to go down and pick up what's called laterite. It's some kind of an earthy material that they put on the runway and spray it and pack it down. It packs into a real hard, it almost turns into cement-like stuff. That's a real good subsurface for the runway. Anyway, I got into a three-quarter ton truck that had a 50 caliber machine gun mounted on it, and went down with one of the convoys mainly because I'd never been down in that area before. I wanted to see what was between the camp and the river. Most of the team members have been down there before on operations and such but I want to get as familiar as I can with the area around the camp here. So I went down and I got to the river and met a couple of guys who were from the team down there with about 150 CIDG who were pulling security for the engineers while they spend the day down there. They were camped out under an old bridge that goes across the river that was built by the French when they were here in the 50's. It had since then been blown up by somebody. They were camped right on the river's edge so I enjoyed a couple of cold Pepsis with them that I took down and a couple cans of fruit. Of course, I told them all the latest information.

After that we went swimming in the river. It's about four feet deep and it's real rocky on

the bottom so I just left my jungle boots on and my pants on and just went in. The engineers have a big old truck down there with a big pump and hose outfit. It's a big tanker truck that they fill up and spray the runway with. While we were down there swimming they were filling up their truck, so after they finished filling it up they stuck the hose in the water, in the river and turned the pump on and sprayed us with their hose. It was a lot of fun and that water sure felt good too. Of course my clothes were wet when I came back up the dusty road with the convoy and by the time I got here I was just as filthy and dirty as can be. All that dust and stuff had settled on my damp clothes and on my skin. I was really dirty.

My cold is finally leaving me. I think you can tell by the sound of my voice I still have a little bit of sinus but it's only the leftovers from the cold. My nose has stopped running and everything else. I don't know what it takes to get this junk out of my sinus but it won't be too much longer.

You mentioned before that you thought about taking some of these tapes to Dr. VanDyken and letting him listen to them. I think that would be a real good idea. There's probably some parts that he wouldn't be interested in so what you might do is get the folks' tape recorder and tape just the parts that he would be interested in. Of course let him listen to it. I think he'd really get a kick out of that and also it would save me some time because I owe him a letter. I told him I was going to write him fairly soon after arriving over here but I just never got around to it. I've been busy and everything and it's just kind of hard to sit myself down and write to somebody if I don't have my whole heart in it. I can sit down and write to you anytime, but anybody else it's a little bit tougher.

Oh boy, the past couple of days have been the Cambodian Tet, or Cambodian New Year celebration. It takes three days, yesterday, today, and tonight is New Year's Eve for them, and then all day tomorrow is New Year's. Well, yesterday they came over and bought about 100 cases of beer from us. We really made a profit on that stuff. Tonight we got a little invitation from 356 Company which is by far the best company we have here in camp. They have the cleanest company area with real good drainage ditches, all their hooches and everything are very well built and they're all real neat. Everything is spotless, I'm surprised, the company area that is. I'll tell you what isn't later on. Anyway, we got an invitation tonight to come over and help celebrate their New Year's Eve with them. So, as much as I didn't want to go because I had heard about their food and their warm beer and everything, I thought well this would be a chance to see what it's really like.

So I took my camera over there with me. We went into their club and they had this great big layout, looked like a great big banquet. The whole company was sitting there, just the men.

The women don't get in the celebration. They stay in the background. They stay in hooches and everything. They don't even get to serve us. Anyway, we went in and sat down at their table and they had tons of beer. Every bit of it was just as warm as could be, 80 degree beer, bottles of whiskey and everything. They had cigarettes for us and plates and plates and plates of oxen meat, chicken meat, some kind of other gooey stuff and two or three types of hot sauce dips, rice paper, and hot peppers. All kinds of junk to eat. Just the smell alone almost turned my stomach. I took some pictures. I think I have black and white film in my camera. I took some pictures of the food sitting on the table, and I'm sure you won't be able to see the flies on it, but the place is just crawling with flies, worse than a garbage can. Flies are just absolutely all over the food. It's no wonder people get diarrhea from eating it. I almost choked and vomited just looking at it. It's really disgusting. You just can't imagine.

But anyway, we sat down you know with all this food sitting in front of us and it looks bad if we don't participate in their celebration. So I open a can of beer and blew the foam off the top and took real tiny, tiny, tiny sips. That stuff is so pathetically rotten. I don't like beer to begin with, but when it's warm beer, it's that much worse. But to show that I was a friend of theirs and everything I had to make it look like I was at least trying to drink it. I was just barely sipping it. And then when they started eating the food, I had to make some attempt to try to down some of the stuff. So I dug way down in the bottom of a pile of meat and found a piece that looked fairly good and I knew the flies hadn't been crawling on.

I'm back again. I was interrupted by the lieutenant from the artillery who came over and wanted to chat with me for awhile, wondered what was going on and what we had learned from the VC suspects. So since the time I shut off the tape last, I talked with him for about an hour and ate dinner and now I'm back up on the teamhouse roof. Oh boy, I haven't rewind the tape yet to see what any of this sounded like. I'll do it before I send it although I hate to sit there for just an hour and listen to myself yak. But, let me see if I can remember where I left off. I was talking about digging down in the bottom of the pile and getting a piece of meat out. I found a real small fairly well cooked piece of meat. It was probably from a live oxen that we took in yesterday off of an aircraft, had it strapped to a pallet and there goes the tape.

Okay, now we're back on the other side. Again I was interrupted. One of my interpreters came up to me and told me that a new mechanic came into camp today so I have to interview the guy and see if he's any good. One of the older mechanics that I had took off on leave right after he got paid this month and hasn't been back so I figured he's gone for good. Well, let me get back to that single little piece of meat I had. It was a fairly well cooked slab of meat. It looked something like roast beef and it was about twice the size of your thumbnail. I put a little salt and pepper on it and spent a half an hour just munching on that single little piece of meat. Now most

of the other team members dug into the food. Well, I wouldn't say dug in, but they ate quite a bit of the stuff, at least enough to show the Vietnamese that they were really making an attempt, whereas I just took little nibbles off that single little chunk of meat and chewed and chewed and chewed, pretended that I was chewing, and then swallowed. I didn't drink any more of the beer. They brought in some ice later so I got a glass of ice water and pretended that was rice wine because it looks just like water.

I stayed there for half an hour and got up and started taking pictures and wandering around the room, you know. All these Cambodians were smiling at me and jumping in front of the camera trying to get their pictures taken and everything. I only had I think three pictures left on that roll, so after I took the three, I just kept on pretending to snap pictures of all the Cambodians just to keep them happy while I made my way to the door and then casually snuck off. I actually only spent about a half-hour there. I didn't eat anything to speak of or drink anything to speak of so I'm sure I won't get diarrhea, whereas some of the other team members I'm sure will get diarrhea and they'll have it for three or four days. But they don't seem to mind. I just can't get myself to partake of their luscious feast, if you can call it that.

Well, let me get off the subject of camp life and come back to some things that you mentioned in your letter. First of all, you mentioned one of the tapes that I sent back your way still had some of your voice on it. I'm not sure where that occurred, probably at the beginning or end of a reel. I try to cover up everything that you say with the recording that I send back. So if there is some there by mistake, then I'm sorry. I think the reason is, this tape recorder is quite a bit larger than the one you have there, therefore the distance from spool to spool through the heads and everything is longer than the one on your machine. So when I take the tape off the spool and run it through the heads and on to the empty spool, it takes up quite a bit more tape than it does on that machine. Therefore, when you play it on your machine, you think that I waste so much tape when actually I don't because that's about the shortest amount I can wind on this one and get the tape to run smoothly through the machine. When I get a tape from you, your lead in is so short that I miss the first sentence or so. So hereafter when you turn it on, let the spool turn once or twice before you start talking. That way it'll give me enough tape on this end to wind it through the recorder and then still catch your first hello or whatever you say. I still don't know how you address me. Sometimes I hear you say "testing, testing" when before that I know you've said something. But anyway, enough of that.

Let me see. There were a couple of other things that I wanted to mention. Right now I can't think of it. I'll shut the tape off for a second and think. I know. One thing that I wanted to say was about that Super Eight movie film. I think I've already told you once, but I'll tell you again. Do not send me any movie film because I don't have a projector to show the films. And

the one officer who did have a projector on the B-Team has since left, so I don't know of anybody else who would have one that I could show the films on. I know I'd like to see them but I think you're just going to have to save them until I get home. Maybe on the second or third night I'm home we can sit down and go through all the pictures and movies and everything that I took over here and I can explain them all to you, and then you can show me all the movies, slides and stuff that you took while I was gone. Shoot, that will probably take us all night just to cover all that stuff. It will be fun. As much as I'd like to see them, I just have to resign myself to the fact that I won't be able to until I get home.

I forgot whether or not I told you on the other side of the tape that I took a convoy, one of the engineer's convoys, down to the river where they pick up this dirt. While I was there I took a nice swim in the river. It's about ten feet wide and, no, I'd say about twenty feet wide and about four feet deep at the deepest point. So I went in with all my clothes on and everything. Oh yeah, now I remember, I guess I did tell you.

Anyway, the engineers have two big payloaders. Today both of them had something go wrong on them. One of them burned up its motor for some reason or another. I guess it was using too much oil and it just got to the point where it was so low it just overheated the engine and froze up. The other one lost a wheel bearing. I guess a wheel bearing is quite a critical item and hard to get. So both of those payloaders are out of action now. I don't know how long it will take to get them running again but as long as they sit idle, then it's just time wasted for the engineers because they really depend on those two things to get that material up here on the runway for them. So all the time that they spend waiting around for those payloaders to be fixed is a bad time for them that they'll just have to make up on the end of the month. They have a deadline to meet. I think it's the first of May because the monsoons start anywhere around that time. If they don't have the runway completed then we're really stuck. I don't know what kind of a surface they're going to have on it, whether they're going to asphalt it or just spray it with that liquid pentaprime junk. It's like tar. They mix it with dirt or spread gravel on it but whatever they do they have to have it done before the monsoons get here otherwise they'll never be able to finish it. It will rain every day and it won't dry up for them to finish. So they're rushing around trying to get things done. They have these great big old scoops and bulldozers and dump trucks and the whole works up here. Where they live, it's so dry that when the slightest breeze comes up it looks like a dust storm blowing over their area. I'm glad I'm in Special Forces and don't have to live like those poor grunts out there in all that dirt. It's not sand or gravel, it's real fine dirt, almost like a powder. And the slightest breeze whips up just tons of powder in the air. Those people are just grimy all day long. They sweat and then all that lousy dust just sticks to them.

The other day we got a big package from the chief chaplain up in Nha Trang addressed to the company commander of A-323. When he opened up the package it was full of those little packets that has written on the outside 'Refresh both body and soul, sent by Christian Reformed Layman League.' It's got those little wash and refresh things, you know those little moist towelettes. Got about five of them and about four packages of pre-sweetened Flavor Aid and a pair of socks and one of those little booklet things that has the Gospel of Mark and another one with five or six of the most common Psalms in it, plus a postcard saying 'If you need any of the following, please check and send in.' You know, the postcard with a couple little boxes like stationary, pens, socks, and a couple of other things I don't recall. It was kind of neat. I think I shut the mic off by mistake. I wasn't really surprised to see Christian Reformed Layman's League but I'm kind of proud of the fact that they're doing the job over here. We had a Catholic chaplain stop in yesterday. He performed a quickie mass in the mess hall for anybody who wanted to go. We have about five members on this team that are Catholic. I think only one or two went. So much for that.

I've got radio watch tonight from 4 am to 7 am, so I think during that period I'll listen to the tape and as much as I've recorded up to now and then I'll see if I can think of some more to say and finish the tape up. And then if anything happens tomorrow, I'll just write you a quick letter so everything will go out Wednesday. Let's see. That's about all I have to say right now. That's about all I can think of. I'm kind of tired so I think I'll just take a shower and hit the sack early tonight. When I get up at 4 am, maybe I'll have something in my mind that I can tell you about. So good night.

15 April 1969  
Tuesday

Hi hon. This afternoon is Tuesday afternoon. I meant to finish last night but too many things happened. I was supposed to have radio watch from 4 am to 7 am, but so many people came back drunk from the New Year's Eve party at 356 Company that I pulled a radio watch from 8 to 12. During that time we had an ambush set up and they were busy calling in artillery on some people down there so I was quite busy. At 12 o'clock I went to bed and then the guy whose place I took from 8 to 12, took my place from 4 to 7 this morning so I didn't have time to listen to the tape. Oh no. Oh, wait a minute now. Wait a minute, now, let's see. Oh yes, everything's okay. For a minute there I glanced down at the tape recorder and I thought that the thing should have been running in reverse but I did flop the reels over so I guess everything's okay.

Let's see, I got another case of the Alpha [ass]. In other words, I'm PO'ed again. Last night before I went to bed, I went outside to see if the LLDB had their lights on, and sure enough they had lights burning. But their generator wasn't running so immediately I knew something was wrong but it was so late at night I didn't feel like checking it out. So this morning, the first thing I did was check our electric lines again, and I'll be darned if those stupid, doggone, idiotic people didn't sabotage their generator. They deliberately broke a piece off of there so that they could legitimately tap our electric lines to get their electricity. Man, I was so PO'ed I didn't know what to do. It's a good thing I'm not camp commander. I would have personally walked over there with an axe and cut their wires off and start a revolution in this camp. But they deliberately broke a piece off the generator so that the thing won't run now. Of course we have to give them our electricity so they can run their stupid radios and stuff. So they're tapped into our line and no telling how long it will take to get their generator running. Oh well. It was a mistake. See, we had the cable running from our generators over to artillery right through their area. As soon as we laid it we should have buried it but we just don't have enough people to do all that work ourselves so it was just laying on top of the ground. I'm sure they saw it there and realized that they could tap it if they wanted to and they went about conniving to do it.

I don't know if I told you about the VC suspects we picked up but yesterday evening in one of our ambushes we nailed two people on bicycles coming down the road from this area, that was right after the rocket attack. So we policed them up and brought them in camp and questioned them and found out that they are probably hardcore VC. It was probably those two people who fired the rockets into the camp. So we took their bicycles and took them and blindfolded them and tied them up and sent them into the B-Team. They'll put them on a polygraph machine and see if they can get some more information out of them.

Last night while I was on radio watch between 9 and 12, we had another ambush set up in the same area down south where we caught these two. Three more people on bicycles walked into the ambush, well, they weren't quite in the ambush, otherwise they would have been shot. They were just outside the ambush at an intersection of two dirt roads and they decided to stop and talk. Instead of trying to spring the ambush and maybe giving themselves away, the man down there called in artillery on them. But here's a big gripe that I've got. Believe it or not, they've got a stupid, cotton picking rule from the artillery headquarters that no matter if you're in contact with the enemy or not, the very first shot that they shoot for you has to be a 200 meter airburst. In other words, they shoot a white phosphorous shell over the location where you want the high explosive to land so that it'll burst in the air 200 meters above the ground so that you can see whether or not it is where you want it. And if it's not, then you can make corrections. But in a case like last night, where there were three VC's standing in the road, we wanted the artillery to shoot high explosive rounds in, right on that intersection, their very first rounds. If they shoot an

air burst, they have to wait for a "yes" or "no" from the man on the ground as to whether or not to shoot the HE. It only takes 30 seconds or so, but as soon as that air burst goes off, the VC know that the HE is soon to follow so they scatter. Well that's what happened last night. There's no way we can get around that stupid, cotton-pickin' rule. Artillery won't budge. The only thing we can do is just call in an air burst and it burst right over the intersection. The three VC dropped everything they were doing and just took off. Thirty seconds later when the high explosive rounds came in and blew up the intersection, they didn't get any kills because the VC had made it. The only thing they got was a bicycle. So, much to the discouragement of the team and the people down there in the ambush, we had lost three more VC. It's a lousy rule. They do it for the safety of the troops on the ground because a lot of times when you're out in the dense jungle, it's really hard to tell exactly where you are. If you want artillery and you say fire it in such and such coordinates, you may or may not be correct. A high explosive shell could accidentally land on you. But the way everybody around here feels, that's the chance we'd gladly take if we could get high explosive in the first round that they shoot rather than an air burst which, of course, gives us away.

Last night, just before midnight or right at midnight, every mortar in camp fired about ten rounds of flares up in the air and the whole sky was just cluttered with these 500,000 candle power flares. The place was so bright it was just like daytime. All our Cambodians started yelling and screaming at midnight and throwing smoke bombs all over the place. It was really crazy. All the team members came in just smashed out of their minds. They had been drinking warm beer, warm whiskey, and of course there's rice wine that'll knock you on your can.

I'm sitting in my room now. I just finished this morning filling sandbags and filling some long, wooden ammo boxes that artillery shells come in with sand and stacking them on top of our demo bunkers and stuff. Mixing concrete again for the top of the teamhouse, a whole bunch of other odds and ends. My hands are rough and callused. They're about as rough and callused as I've ever seen them. It's from all the digging and pawing around and everything I do around here. I enjoy doing that kind of stuff much more than sitting inside here and going over payroll records, and requisitions for the S-4, and all that kind of garbage. That paperwork I can do without.

That package that I told you would get in the first week of April was the flower. I guess I ought to just quit giving you hints and stuff like that. Let everything surprise you when it comes because when I tell you a small package is going to arrive, you get it confused with something else. When the flower did arrive you probably didn't even figure it was the small package I was talking about. But you will get one big package sometime soon with the turntable in it. I haven't mailed the watches yet because I haven't had a chance to get to the B-Team and the APO, but

when I do go in next, which will probably be at the end of the month when I take this month's payroll back in, I'll have the watches to mail, I'll get a money order and order something from the PACEX (PACific EXchange) catalog. And I may buy a couple more watches if I have the money. We'll see. I've got the money, but I don't know whether I want to spend it now on watches or save enough until I get the amplifier and tuner and speakers and everything we need for our stereo system at home. Then maybe a couple of other things like the seven Japanese gods or whatever they are. There's one little set carved out of ivory for about \$12.95 in the PACEX catalog that we can send for if we want to.

After I finish up this tape I'm just going to sack out for a couple hours this afternoon. It gets too hot to work around here from 11 to 3. It's so hot, it's oppressive. You walk outside and it feels like somebody took a 100 degree blanket and threw it over you. If I don't work, if I just stand out there, even in the shade, sweat will break out all over me and just trickle down my stomach and back and drip off my ears and nose and everything. It drips off my upper lip now too, now that I've got a little hair on it. I think I'll wait until I've got a pretty good growth before I send any pictures home to you but it's not too bad. I'm rubbing it right now. It's about a week and a half long. I'll let it go probably until the end of the month and then shave it off before I go anyplace. I just wanted to see what I looked like with one. As far as I can tell, I don't think I look very sophisticated with it but I'll take some Polaroid shots and send them home to you and then you can look at it and decide for yourself.

I've got a real small tape here that I found. I don't think it's one of those mailing tapes because it's just in a little cardboard box, and it's only seven and a half minutes on each side, fifteen minutes total, but I think I'll tape something on it and send it to Dan. Wrap it up good in tape and see if it gets to him in one piece. Then if it does, it will save me from writing a letter to him. It'll probably go a little quicker. I'm sure he'll listen to it a few times and then record something back to me. I think he answered a letter I sent to him faster than anybody has ever answered a letter to me except possibly you. He must be interested in what's going on so I'll do my best to keep him informed, even if it is just trading one tape at a time. After I finish up the 600 footer I'll finally begin to work on the one to my family that they sent me. After I listen to the newest one from you a couple more times, then I'll record something again. Tomorrow is the work chopper day, so I'll probably get, if not another tape from you, at least a couple more letters. So I'll have the 600 footer ready to go out tomorrow and another one ready to go Friday and another one ready to go Sunday again.

But I like these tapes. I not only get to hear the sound of your voice and our crazy little puppy dog and the cat meowing in the background and everything, but it's just as fast as letters, and it's easier to make a tape letter than it is to sit down and handwrite out everything. I know I

get sore fingers from writing so much, especially if I have a lot to say like on this tape or those two tapes that I sent you at one time last week. Man, it would take me 15 or 20 pages to write out everything long hand. By that time my fingers are about ready to fall off. Oh, as far as I can tell, I don't need anything that I can think of, other than what I've asked for already like my shades. I got the cigars now. I'm not an avid smoker or anything, but just after dinner at night when I take a shower, change, and relax, I just haul one out and puff on it. Don't think I'm going to pick up the habit or anything. I'm not. Just for some reason I like to haul one out and puff on it. Those are big long things. When everybody saw the first one around here they couldn't believe how big they were. But it's kind of fun.

I've got a whole bunch of those little P-38 can openers I'm going to send to you. I've also got a couple of indigenous hammocks that I think I'll put in a box and send to you. They're made out of real thin nylon but they're real strong. They're a little bit short for me like they are, so the ones that the team uses are about one and a half times the length of the normal sized hammock. But I think you and anybody smaller, like maybe Robert's size or Pete and Paul's size, could have a lot of fun with a couple of these things. I'll see if I can get maybe ten of them and send them home. We can make a couple of large ones for them, I mean with them, for us, when we go camping and stash that aside with our tent. Maybe I can get some mosquito nets and American ponchos and all that kind of stuff. By the time we get around to going camping ourselves, we'll have enough stuff to really make it worthwhile. But I'll send you about a dozen of those P-38's if I can. They're good little gadgets to have around. Once I get out of the Army I'll never have a chance to get another one.

Oh, I found out something. If I can find an M-1 or an M-2 carbine over here with five serial numbers or less, I'll be able to bring it back home with me for nothing because these things are getting outdated and the government just wants to get rid of them so instead of giving them away to just anybody they'll let Americans take one home if they want. So what I'm going to try to do is get one of those adapters that will make it an automatic and send it home ahead of time and let you hang onto it. When I do find an M-1 carbine that I can bring home with me, I'll do that. If I can I'll switch it back into an automatic and let you fire it and know what it's like to shoot a machine gun type rifle. If I do get an M-2 which is an automatic to begin with, then I'll have to take the automatic adaptor off in order to bring it back to the States. You're not allowed to have an automatic weapon like that in the States unless it's registered. If we want to take it out and fire it, I'll put the automatic adaptor on, we can take it out and shoot it a couple of times. It's going to have to be way way out some place where nobody can hear us and report us. Then when I come back in, take the automatic adaptor off so in case anybody looks at it, they can tell that it is not automatic. The M-1 originally was not automatic. The M-2 was built with a selector on it so you can change it to automatic if you wanted to, but they do make adaptor kits where you can

change an M-1 to an automatic. They're neat little weapons. I think it's the same kind that Chuck had. They're not a great big heavy duty job that will knock you on your can when you shoot it. It's real light. In fact it's even smaller than my .22 rifle. So I think you'd get a kick out of seeing me shoot it and trying to shoot it yourself, so I'm going to try my best to get one to bring it back home with me when I do come home.

I think the next time I record something to you I'll borrow somebody's radio and put on some Vietnamese music in the background. It's kind of weird stuff. I don't know if you've ever heard it or not, but it's Oriental type music but it's different than Japanese or Chinese. It's kind of a conglomeration of both I guess. It's kind of neat to listen to. I don't know if I've mentioned what that red piece of paper with that Oriental writing on it was that I sent you in the envelope last week with a couple of pictures. It's just a piece of paper I found laying around. I don't know, I just threw it in just for the heck of it just for you to look at it and see what you think.

I've got five rolls of film completely shot and ready to be developed. I've got one more roll of slides that I just put in the camera. I think after I shoot that I'll have an even six rolls of film to send home to you. By the time I get back into Tay Ninh to send the watches, and get money orders, and take my funds report in, I'll have those six boxes of film all wrapped and ready to send. So about the first week in May you should be getting a box with those six rolls of film in it. What I do, I take the exposed roll of film out of the camera and put it in the empty box, empty film box, of the roll I'm going to put in the camera. So some of the boxes will say regular black and white 127 but it may have a roll of color slides in it and another one, the roll of color slides may have a Tri-X Pan super fast black and white roll in it or something, so don't pay any attention to the boxes themselves. I don't know if there are different prices in developing or not but you can tell when you take the roll out of the box and look at it which one is black and white and which one is color slides.

I don't think this tape was very well made, or at least not as well made as the other tapes that I've made. I was interrupted too many times yesterday and there was so much going on that I couldn't keep my thoughts straight. A lot of times when I was sitting up on the roof talking into the microphone, somebody would walk by and ask me a question and I'd answer by shaking my head and try to keep both trains of thought going at the same time, what they'd ask me and what I'm telling you. When I did shut the tape recorder off I lost my train of thought and came back in and may have repeated myself. I don't know yet. I'll soon lay down here on my bed and listen to the tape and I'll find out how bad it is. You can listen to it and rerecord it onto a larger roll and let Dr. VanDyken listen to it. I'm sure he'd be interested. If you do see him, tell him I'm sorry I haven't written yet but there's just so much to do around here.

I spend all day, every day, working outside, filling sandbags, doing all that kind of manual labor. I come in and take a shower and eat at night. At about 7 o'clock I go into my office and I've got an hour and a half, two hours of paperwork that I've got to do. Then finally I get an hour to myself and I probably read the latest newspaper or magazine, watch an outdated TV program. The only TV programs that we see over here are all taped. I see a lot of, what's that girl on Monday night that we used to watch? The big mouth you know? I can't think of her name. [Carol Burnett] I can picture her clearly but I can't think of her name. Anyway, I watch her shows and a lot of them are shows that I've seen already, same way with Red Skeleton and Mission Impossible shows are all the real old ones with that first guy they had on the show, same with Star Trek. I try to watch as many as I can at night just for the relaxation purposes.

Looks like the tape is getting fairly short so I'll start saying my goodbyes now. Good talking to you and I keep thinking of Hong Kong. It's getting closer and closer. I'm going to need those times from you, you know, the dates. So send them as soon as you can. If you can't get them to me by the middle of May or sometime we may have to move our R&R up to September. But even if we do, we'll be over the largest hump and we'll have the shorter amount of time to go. So anyway you look at it, it's going to be great. I can't wait. It sure is going to be fun. I'm going to try to buy as much stuff as I can before we do go there so that we don't have to waste all our time looking around for stuff to buy. You can study your catalog ahead of time and figure out what we want to get so we can spend maybe just half a day spending all our money and getting what we want to get and the rest of the time sight seeing, just lounging around and enjoying ourselves. Let me know as soon as you find out anything about plane fare, reservations, and hotels and prices of hotels, and anything at all that you find out because I have no access to information at all over here. I'll be waiting anxiously to hear from you. Good bye hon. I love you. I miss you.

16 April 1969  
Wednesday

Hello honey, how are you doing tonight? Well, it probably won't be night where you are when you hear this but it's night for me. Tonight's Wednesday night the 16th and it's exactly 9 o'clock. I got a letter from you today and a tape. I loved the letter, and that's the one with the blue pillow stuff in it. It's really a sharp little pillow that you're making. So it ought to match our furniture real nicely. Before I forget, any word on the chair yet? I haven't listened to your tape yet because I always save that before I go to bed. I like to lie on my bed at night after a hard day and just relax and put your tape on and just listen to it a couple of times before I go to sleep. I

think that's the best time of the day for listening to tapes. It's quiet and I can listen to it without being disturbed. But the reason why I started this tape so soon is because I have so much to tell you that I thought I would get it off my chest and then listen to your tape and wait another day or so. I may possibly even have two tapes for you, Friday when the mail goes out.

Today besides your letter and your tape I got a package from Bob Shaver. I didn't know what it was at first but I figured it was probably a book if anything. Sure enough, it was a book that the title of it is Letters of a Leatherneck by Cornelius Vanderbruggen, Jr. It's about a soldier in World War II who wrote letters home to his family the whole time he was in basic training and OCS and during quite a few battles in the Pacific. It's about, let's see, let me read a little bit to you. Okay, "It's a collection of letters written during the course of World War II. It tells the story of a U.S. Marine at war. It tells how they trained, how they thought, how they fought, how some fell in action, how some came through alive. However this book relates the story that most Americans do not know: The story of how the Living God, even in the midst of war, brought deep abiding peace into the hearts of those fighting men who knew or came to know His son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as their personal savior." Well it ought to be an interesting book and I'll start to read it as soon as I get some time. I haven't read a book in about a month. For some reason I just don't have the time to just sit down and start a book. I think once I start a book I'll have enough interest to finish it. It's just getting started. I always have something else to do at the time. I just never get around to it.

I don't know what to tell you first. I was telling you about what I got in the mail. Besides that book I got a letter from Sue and Ken. I guess they're having a great time. Ken isn't teaching yet but he's working in a railroad office as a billing clerk or something. She said he doesn't especially like the work but they like the money. She's also working as a nurse in a fairly good sized hospital but she doesn't really like it there either because there's not enough of a challenge. She said they do just run of the mill operations. Nothing spectacular like she was used to at the University of Minnesota hospital or wherever she worked before. She said that during the month of August, they plan to take the entire month and make it a vacation and travel and camp out. They're going to start north from Minneapolis St. Paul and go through northern Minnesota, northern Michigan down through Michigan, of course stop in and see the folks for a few days and continue on down toward the East Coast. Go down the East Coast possibly to I think she said Florida to where his folks are and visit with them, swim, and fish, and hunt, and water ski and whatever they're going to do. Then they'll work their way back up to Minnesota. They plan to do this in a month's time and camp out, and just do as they please, when they please. That'll be quite exciting for them. She also said that they plan on getting a stereo component system like the one we're working on. Of course she was drooling over the prices and the range of equipment and everything that I can get over here. Also, Ken was quite excited about the cameras and things I

might be able to pick up here. Possibly they might order a camera from me. I'd be glad to get it for them just as long as they send me the money.

This morning I went out with 100 Cambodians, my interpreter, and one other Special Forces man, with a company of mechanized infantry who are camped here at Thien Ngon with us. Well, the company of mechanized infantry is composed of about 16 Armored Personnel Carriers. We also had a couple of extra ones. We had an ambulance carrier and a mechanics carrier. We left this morning at 6:30. They met us on the runway and I piled all my people on the APCs and I got on the fifth one back from the front with the captain and with the Vietnamese Special Forces man who went with me and our radio men. Nobody rides inside an APC because it's too dangerous so we all ride on top. You know, in case we hit a mine or were attacked or something we can immediately jump off and dive for cover. The reason why nobody rides inside is because the VC don't just shoot at you with small arms. They've got these fantastic RPGs they're called. It's a rocket-propelled grenade and those things will blast through about 60 inches of reinforced cement and sandbag bunker walls or about 16 inches of steel. So the three-inch thick APC steel certainly wouldn't keep out one of those things.

Well anyway, we left with 4 APCs moving out in front of us and everybody else behind us. The mechanized company commander was a captain and he was in charge. I was in charge of my hundred people. We went down the road leading west southwest from the camp toward a little town called Logo on the Cambodian border. If you look at the map you'll see the little town way down right on the border. We never got that far and we hadn't planned on going that far but, excuse me, aftermath of the cold. But anyway, we started down the road. Of course we don't ride the APC's right down the middle of the road for fear of mines and booby traps and stuff. So we're off in the jungle, just off the road and we follow the, let me get my map out here and I can explain it better. Okay, we went down the road to where that little black dotted line crosses the road. That's a trail. We turn north on the trail until we hit that clearing or semi clearing and again went parallel to the road about a half a klick off the road. We stayed in as much clearing as we could all the way down to about 0379 in that great big open area there. We stopped there and deployed all the people because we had reports from the helicopter who was flying around over us that there was movement in that area earlier in the morning. So we got off and deployed into the woodline, into the jungle rather, and searched it.

Before we even got started, my people found 2 AK-47s which is the main weapon of the VC and the North Vietnamese. It's a Chinese Communist weapon. It's a copy of the Russian assault rifle. These rifles that they found were quite old, possibly a month old, with a lot of rust on them and corrosion, dirt and everything in them. Of course they were real excited about finding them. Naturally they were looking them over and playing with them, unfolding and

folding the bayonet, which is attached to the weapon, just generally playing with it. And I was standing about five feet away. I saw one guy rest the muzzle on his foot and start to take the weapon apart. So I looked around for my interpreter and he wasn't handy at the moment because I was going to tell the guy be careful. But he was all excited about finding the rifle and he wanted to get it to work so he started taking it apart, you know, to start cleaning it up. He got about four pieces off the weapon when all of a sudden I heard a little pop. I looked down, and there was a hole right through the middle of his foot, right through his boot, blood oozing out the top. It didn't make very much noise and I was really surprised to see that the weapon had fired after he had taken four pieces off of it because of the fact that it was so rusty and dirty. But, fire it did, and it put a bullet hole right through his foot.

Immediately we took his boot off and sock off, checked the wound and cleaned it, wrapped it in a bandage and called in a medevac. I looked at the wound and it wasn't very bad. It was in his left foot back about an inch from the webbing between the big toe and the second toe. Luckily it went right between both bones there. If you look at your foot you can feel a little valley between the two bones. Well, it went right through there. It didn't hurt him too much. It bled a lot. The report I got from the hospital was that it didn't do any permanent damage at all. He'll heal up perfectly normally. Well, after he shot himself everybody else was careful in handling the weapons, of course pointing them at people and things like that, but it had to take a stupid accident like that to teach the people to be careful.

Well, we got started into the woodline and we only went 200 meters and we came to a complete halt because the jungle was just so thick that we couldn't move. So we stopped and ate, turned around and came back out. After we got out we started scouting the edge of the woodline and all of a sudden, excuse me (I coughed), all the Americans and CIDGs started yelling and pointing and making all kinds of noise so I got my interpreter to find out what was going on. He said they started finding VC graves. So I walked over there and sure enough. I rounded a corner of some shrubs and stuff and there stretched out on a great big field were all kinds of bomb craters and mounds of dirt. And I mean all kinds. We had stumbled on an ambush site or something, an enemy base camp that had been bombed. We still haven't determined exactly what it was but it had been hit real hard and the North Vietnamese soldiers who were there which at the end of the day numbered to be about a hundred, well, we counted about a hundred graves or bodies strewn around about a three or four hundred meter square area. There were both signs of B-52 bomb craters, smaller size bombs like 250 pounders or 500 pounders plus 105...