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Dave Fetters' Audio Letters - 1969

Tape #7

5 June 1969

Thursday

...Company, it said that my order, at the beginning of, when did I send that in? May? Yeah, I believe I did. I sent it in in May, has been delayed twenty days because they're temporarily out of stock. So, the things that I ordered will get to you eventually. It will just take a little while longer.

Oh, the guy, McCrea, who went to Hong Kong for his R&R, came back and said that he thinks the best place for us to stay, if we want to spend a little dough, is Hong Kong Hilton. That's the nicest one of course but it's on the Hong Kong Island, and there's less to see on the island than there is in Kowloon. He would suggest that we stay in Kowloon and, the three hotels that are advisable to stay in, or that the R&R center there advises servicemen to stay in are the President, the Empress, and the Park. All three of them are almost comparable to the Hotel Hilton. They all have TV, radio, air conditioning, swimming pools, that kind of stuff, and he said the rates are usually cheaper. He said it's something like, he paid I think \$8.50 a day for himself, so with the two of us it will probably come to about \$15 a day, which isn't too bad. He also said that if you get there first and get, you know, have, make, our reservations or have them confirmed and get a nice room and everything then you can meet me at the airport and we can take the bus together from there to the R&R center where they give me the short spiel. However they won't let you in on the short spiel because they talk about whores and prostitutes and diseases and how much you pay for the girls and where to pick them up or drop them off, all that kind of stuff. They don't allow women to listen in on that little bit. I have to go through customs. It's a pretty thorough search going in. So, you can meet me at the airport by all means. From there we'll just take the bus together to the R&R center where I'll be lectured and sign in and whatever I have to do, fill out some kind of sheet. That'll take care of that, no big deal. He said there's no problem after that. After you get out of the R&R center you're free to do what you want, and we will.

Oh, speaking of PACEX, I sent for another catalog today, for you. I've got one here that Lieutenant Valez left. It's an older model, last year's. I don't know if this year's has any newer stuff in it or not but I still have my original letter with PACEX telling them that I wanted their new catalog so I'm quite sure they haven't forgotten or lost the request. It's just probably a matter of having so many to fill that our name is probably down a little ways on their list.

I saw a Travelogue tonight on TV, on Hong Kong. Boy, it's got some neat places, really

fabulous places. All the stores and knickknacks and stuff. It really carried on to some length about the neat clothes that you can have made for you, usually two fittings. Prices are real inexpensive. All kinds of knickknacks. They said every store everyday is a bargain day in Hong Kong. You can buy just about anything you want. The TV camera went to some of the stores and shops, you know, went inside, camera store, just millions of cameras, and radio and TV store. They had all the tuner amplifiers and speakers and all that stuff, clothing stores, neat restaurants, hotels are fabulous. They have real nice beaches and a cable car that goes up to that lookout. I'd like to go up there in the daytime and again at night, so I can get some nice night shots of the city. That would be beautiful.

We want to go to Hong Kong Island, look around. I guess Victoria, I don't know if that's an island or an extension of the mainland or what, but I think that's where that big lookout is. They have a couple of them, of course all the stores and stuff to see. Be prepared to eat some Chinese food. I'm not going to let you eat American food the whole time you're there. You just can't do it, hon. I just won't let you. You've got to learn to eat Chinese food. Shoot, when you go to India, try some Indian food and wherever else you go. Heck, you'll only be there once, so make the most of it. Don't worry, I'll lecture you on all that stuff when I see you. I'll give you the spiel.

I would say don't buy too many clothes before you come over because, as I was saying, I can just see how you're going to be in Hong Kong. You're going to go by a tailor shop and you're going to want to stop in and they're going to have such beautiful silks and satins and, not clothes, but samples of wools and knits and all that stuff, patterns to look at that you'll just go crazy. You'll dance around from one to another, you'll look through their catalogs for different types of dresses and suit coats and things and stuff that they can sew together for you and you'll just want to spend the whole day there just ordering stuff left and right. You'll just go out of your mind, I just know it. Even when you step into a big store, like Woodlawn or whatever you call that place, you know, a big store that has women's clothes and stuff. You just like to look and poke and push dresses aside and try on dresses and stuff. Man oh man; in Hong Kong you're just going to go absolutely crazy, I can see it all now. So don't buy too much before you come over because I know you'll want to spend a lot of money over here and buy a lot of stuff. You're just going to have to control yourself a little bit.

I haven't been to Tay Ninh yet. I couldn't go while the captain was on R&R. He came back and I went on an operation. I couldn't go. I came in off the operation and he went on heliborne and I couldn't go. He came back off heliborne and it was my turn to take another operation out, which was a farce. I'll tell you about that later. I came back off that operation and now the captain's going out again so I've got to be here for that. Finally when he gets back, he's coming in on Sunday so I think maybe on Sunday's work chopper I'll be able to go in and spend

from Sunday to Wednesday in Tay Ninh and mail three boxes I've got wrapped up here for you. I still haven't wrapped the crossbow. I still haven't wrapped the indigenous poncho liner or the American ponchos that I have here to send home. So I've got at least two more packages here to wrap up. I don't know if I'll get them wrapped up in time to take them with me this time or not. But I've got the three that I've already wrapped. You probably don't remember what's in them, so I'm not going to remind you either. So I have those three to send home. I've got the movie camera to pick up, I've got all kinds of money orders. I've got to get a money order for your watch, which I haven't gotten around to ordering yet, but I will. Just give me a chance. My camera equipment, your birthday present. The film processing costs me \$2.10 for 20 exposures.

One other thing I'm going to order through PACEX and send to you, ASAP. I'm not going to tell you what it is. I'll just have to surprise you, but it's going to be \$200 worth. It has nothing to do with tuner amplifiers, or speakers, or turntables or tape decks or anything like that. It's something altogether different. But \$200 worth. It's got all the accessories that I can find that should go with it. It's for the family, us. It won't get there for, let's see, most of June, probably maybe end of July it'll get there. I hope it gets there before you go on your trip, just so you can see it. Otherwise if it arrives while you're away then it will go to my house and, my dad will pay for it and keep it.

When I go to Tay Ninh I'll get my movie camera. I've already got about six rolls of film already. The film is prepaid. Processing is prepaid, so what I'll do is send it in to be processed and put your address on the return address so they'll send it right to you after it's developed. Just number them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on as I send them to you. I think you'll really enjoy them. There's going to be some fantastic movies.

I took a couple more pictures of planes and stuff in the area today. There was a little birddog plane that dropped in on our airport today, that had engine trouble. So he landed and one of his buddies came over in the exact same kind of plane and they both piled into one and took off, brought a mechanic back and fixed the first plane, took the mechanic back out and came back with the other pilot and they both took off again. So while one plane was sitting out there, I went out there and took a little picture of it. And I'll get some more pictures. Oh, I got some neat shots of jets as they flew over the camp a couple mornings ago. They flew real low, so I cranked off a couple quick pictures.

About Chuck's letter, with that "Pave Vietnam." Somebody took the pin off but they peeled the sticker off the pin and stuck the sticker on the letter. So I did see the "Pave Vietnam" pin. While I think of it, if you will, send me the book, The New Legions. I'd like to read it.

Tie bars and jewelry. I haven't the faintest idea where my tie bars would be. I have that little leatherette case, studs and stuff, it has written on the top, that's where I think I put all that

stuff, in there, but I'm not sure what I did with it. Either that or look in my sport coat pockets. That's where I'm prone to put a lot of that stuff. Also on my ties, sometimes I'll leave the tie clasp clipped right on to the tie. Don't plan on sending me a great big package of clothes because we're not going to be wearing that many clothes. Maybe one additional shirt to the one I've got, you know, nice white shirt, dressy type, one sport coat, one tie, one pair of pants. I've got my shoes and socks here, and oh, bring some white underwear. All I've got is green. I think that's all I'll need, quite sure. I've got my Levi's here, I've got a sport shirt I can wear, I've got tennis shoes. I've got plenty of socks, handkerchiefs, and about everything else I'll need. So if you don't think you can carry that little bit of clothes with you then go ahead and send it in a package if you want, but nobody else has done it that I know of. Of course, well, their wives carry their own stuff but they didn't have to worry about the weight problem like you do.

Also, in Army Times Magazine you'll find a little clipping every now and then about "how your wife can save \$50 or \$100 on your R&R plane fare to and from your home city or to and from San Francisco" or some crazy thing. I think there's some kind of government program on wives' R&R flights to Hawaii and back, so better start looking into that too. Don't wait until the last minute.

I would say to take both watches to my house and let my dad buy the gold one from you and the silver watch I would say send to Dan because I can get more silver watches like that. It might take some time but I can get them. I promised Dan a watch, and that silver one is a real dandy so, either you wrap it up and send it to him or give it to my folks and let them wrap it and send it. But please, do it now. Don't wait until another two or three weeks go by because I'm going to write him either tomorrow night or the next night and tell him that the watch is on its way. I've been promising him a watch for a long time.

Let's see, flip over another page. Oh yes, I've got a note saying "your watch." I think I told you already. I have to get a money order made out first and the order goes in to Hong Kong and I'm not sure if I can just get a regular postal money order. I might have to get an international money order which takes a little finagling. I'll get it when I go to Tay Ninh, no problem there. But see, in the future, if I have a checkbook, I can just write a check, then it's no problem at all. I can just write a check, throw it in an envelope, and send it off. I don't have to wait until the end of the month to get in, to wait until the APO opens at certain hours, duck in, fill out forms, and spend ten minutes getting each money order. And I've got a whole bunch of them to get. So it's a real problem. Besides that, they're demanding that everybody get a MACV, which is a Military Assistance Command Vietnam, it's not a charge plate, but it's a plastic ID type identification plate. It's got Lieutenant David M. Feters with my serial number and social security number and what group I belong to and what company and all that jazz. The only reason they use that is kind of control so when you get money orders and stuff, they take

that plate and stamp it on the money order or something, I don't know. Starting pretty soon, I think next month, you're going to have to have those to get money orders and it's just going to be too much problem. So get that checking account worked out with your mom, talk to her about it and find out what the best way is to do it.

Let me see, there was something else I wanted to say. Yeah, get the watch mailed to Dan. Let me stop this and make sure it's recording okay. It's kind of late in the game to be doing this but let me do it anyway. Okay, I checked it and it's real good. The volume's way up there. I record mine on about 7 and a half or 8 so I imagine when you play it on your recorder you can turn it way down to about 1, or the equivalent of about 1 or 2 and still have plenty of volume. I still can't figure out how that other tape got messed up.

Anyway, you were right about Sue and Ken. Wednesday when I came in off the operation, see I wasn't due in until Thursday morning. I'll explain that later. But I came in Wednesday night. Your letter and two tapes were here and a letter from Sue and Ken, and sure enough. Sue said they were all set to go out and buy a system, except that I sent them information, not information on Sansui but information on Pioneer and Kenwood and told them what we were getting. So they started doing some research and they found out that Sansui is very highly rated. It's one of the best in the world and they found out that I had access to a Sansui 5000, which is the top of the line of the Sansui, and you know, I told them everything that we were getting. Sure enough, Sue writes back and says, "Well, we sure hate to take advantage of you in your position but we can't really turn it down. So we want a Sansui 5000, we want some SP200 speakers, we want a Teac tape deck, we want this and that," exactly right up the line just like our stuff.

So I'm going to write them a letter and say, "Well, the stuff that I have for myself is harder to get than the regular Sansui stuff, which it is, because I can't order Sansui 5000 through PACEX, but I can order Sansui 2000," which is what I'll tell them. I'll tell them I'll get them a Sansui 2000 and I can get them SP100 speakers, which are a notch below ours, but still, they're good speakers. I'll also advise them that they can also go out and buy their own AR-4X speakers like we're doing, which are also excellent speakers. He wants a Honeywell Pentax. If I can find one in the PX I'll buy him one. There's no big problem there, and send him a Honeywell or an Asahi rather, same difference. But as far as the turntable and all that stuff, Sync-lab 95 turntable, no big deal. It doesn't matter if they have one of those like us because that's nothing particular.

The tuner amplifier and the tape deck are the two big things. Speakers are of lesser importance and the turntable doesn't make that much difference. It doesn't make any difference at all to me if they have a turntable like ours. That's no big deal. But see, the trouble is, finding another one like ours. That's going to be a little difficult. So I'm going to write and tell them that shoot, I'm just going to have problems getting the things exactly like ours, and to tell them to just

settle for a little less, settle for a Sansui 2000. Shoot, that's still got 100 watts, something like that. That's enough to blast a house down, or 180 watts. Shoot, that'd be enough for the Empire State Building. Anyway, we'll have all the power we'll need. I'll just lay it on the line. Tell them I don't particularly want anybody else to have a set exactly like mine. Maybe I am kind of funny, and got funny ideas, but that's the way I feel about it. So there.

Boy, if you'll notice that letter that I typed out to Michigan State, I wrote it out ahead of time of course, I didn't compose it as I was typing it. But I typed it through without any errors at all. That's pretty good for me. When I took typing in school, I was the same way. I was one of the slowest guys in the class as far as speed, but I was the most accurate person in class because right at the end of the class the ol' teacher would give us a problem, you know, homework. She'd give us 45 minutes or an hour to do it. Invariably I'd be the first one done, the reason being is because I'm so accurate. I'm not bragging too much, but that's just the way it turned out. I could hit those keys, you know, hit the right ones every time and not make any mistakes, whereas everybody else would try to zip through real fast and they'd make a mistake, and they'd want to start all over again. So I got an A in the stupid course and I never did get above a C on one of the speed tests. Anyway, I'm getting better at my typing. I'll put it that way. We definitely need a typewriter, so when we're in Hong Kong we'll see if we can pick up a nice one. If we can't we'll just wait until I get around to getting out of the service. When I do get out I'll stop in the PX and scarf one up.

Oh, the operation. We went out Tuesday morning (June 3), real early, 5 am, we ambushed a water hole that one of the FAC's had said there was cart tracks around. Well, we spent a day and a night there, ambushing the thing, nothing showed up. Went out and checked the water hole and found it was as dry as a bone. Everybody in the operation was counting on getting water there, except me. I brought enough canteens to last me for two and a half days. Because they didn't have water they didn't want to budge, they didn't want to do anything, so at the end of the second day, instead of making them stay out there that night and the following day, we just came on in because we were having too much of a control problem. Everybody was out of water, that stupid CIDG. They can carry six canteens but then they have to wash their faces in it, brush their teeth with it, pour it over their heads and faces, and splash in it and play in it and make mud pies and I don't know what all they do with their water but they sure get rid of it in a hurry. They were out there one day, one full night, let's see, 24 hours plus about 4 hours the following morning, and they were all out of water and I still had three and a half canteens left. In fact, when I got back in Wednesday night I still had two full canteens, and I chewed out those stupid CIDG. And I showed them, I took out both canteens and poured it out on the ground in front of them. They couldn't believe I had that much water left. All it takes is a little bit of self control and those people just haven't got it. It would have been worthless out there, trying to get

them to do anything without water. They were just ready to sit down and quit. They wouldn't budge. So I just called in and said, "Look, I can't do anything with these people. I'm bringing them in." The tape is running out. I can see the spool wiggling, there it goes, goodbye love.

7 June 1969

Saturday Night

Okay, alrighty, already, alright. Greetings, hi, how are you? Love you. Miss you. Need you. Want you. And can't wait to see you. I won't put anything sexy on this tape in case you want somebody else to listen to it. Tonight is Saturday night, June 6th or 7th. I forget. I don't wear my watch too much any more, I just carry it around in my pocket because I do so much and I get so dirty all the time. I don't want the thing to get all dirty, and grubby, and scratched up. It's 11:30 in the evening.

For a change, we got a bulb for our projector, so we got our projector running tonight. We showed two movies. The first one was called "Buckskin," a Western of some type, and the second one was called "The Absent Minded Professor." That's that crazy nut who flew around in a Model T. He invented some kind of gooey junk that you could stick on the bottom of your shoes and bounce all over the place. It was pretty good.

Things have been busy. The last two days I've worked my butt off. Did a lot of stuff. Started at quarter to 8 or 8 o'clock in the morning and worked right up until 11:30, worked from 12 to 5, and quit at 5. All of that was manual labor. We had a lot of stuff that had to be done around here. We're putting a peak, a slight peak, over the club portion of our teamhouse because it leaks quite badly. Right now we have nothing but sandbags and plastic and tar and wood and pallets, but it isn't quite waterproof. The portion of the roof over the teamhouse that is waterproof is capped with cement, and funnels all the water down onto the club portion of the roof and it leaks. So, we got real energetic, brought up about two truckloads of empty ammo boxes, and three truckloads of sandbags, and we're starting to build a peak. But we need about another 15 or 20 truckloads of sandbags before we'll get a nice slope. Then we're going to cap the whole thing in cement, so it will be all waterproof. Then, we have to take ammo boxes and fill them full of dirt, and pile them side by side with the ends toward the wall and away from the wall. In other words, a long axis perpendicular to the wall of the club to give ourselves more protection. Right now we've got two thicknesses of filled 55 gallon drums of dirt as the bottom layer, and then from there up all we have is maybe two rows of sandbags. But we took all those sandbags and threw them up on the roof so now we're going to put filled wooden boxes down there which will be about two feet thick of dirt. That'll give us a lot more protection. Also more sound proofing when the mortars and the howitzers are firing, like tonight. I think they quit for

awhile but they were quite busy earlier this evening.

The captain's on an operation down by the bridge. He called up and reported that he heard trucks on the road. The only trucks down there are VC trucks. So they fired a hundred rounds or so down there. We're still waiting to hear the final report. We'll find out probably tomorrow morning what they got, if anything.

I'm so tired I just lost my train of thought. I'm beat, man, I haven't been this tired since I've been over here. All that work yesterday, you know, I worked real hard and I went to bed at about 10 o'clock, 10:30 last night. Shoot, I had three tapes to listen to, two of yours and one from my family. So I listened to those and then I went to sleep. I had to get up at 2 o'clock to 4 o'clock for radio watch, so I spent that time writing a letter to Sue and Dan, one each, rather than my usual carbon copy. I filled up my two hours and hit the sack again. I woke up at 7 and I felt fairly rested, that was this morning.

So I dug right in this morning and worked with Sergeant Moss, the team sergeant, and Ron Ingram, the radio man. We put up a couple new antennas because every month we have to change, besides our call signs and frequencies, we have to change antenna lengths because we have a radio called a single side-band where it uses Morse code and also voice and that has to be changed. You not only can change the frequency by tuning, but you have to change the crystal in the set. As a result, the length of the antenna has to be changed. So we climb way up our metal tower and take down the one that's up there and put up a new one.

Boy, we had a little trouble last Wednesday morning (June 4) when I was out on operation. Apparently, bright and early in the morning, I guess before anybody got up, a generator shed collapsed on our two 10 kilowatt generators. One was running at the time. Luckily that one wasn't damaged too extensively. The other one was just smashed to pieces because the bunker was built out of great big 8 X 8 timbers, and it was a sturdy building. We believe it was sabotaged, but we can't prove it. We had the S-2 officer come up from the B-Team and scout the area and look around for clues and anything they might be able to find that would point to sabotage, but he couldn't find anything. So they scavenged the parts off the wrecked generator to get the other one running and they had to rebuild the whole generator shed. Right now it's just a bare timber building with a roof over it, but no protection from the sides from shrapnel or anything like that so we've got lots of sandbags and barrels and boxes and stuff to stack up there. Besides that we built another bunker.

We have our two generators completely separated right now. Before, we had them in one big one with a blast wall separating them in the big main bunker, but now we've got a generator in two separate bunkers. Besides that we're building a big bunker for the interpreters. We're attaching it right on to the end of the teamhouse. They'll be completely segregated from the

teamhouse. In other words they'll have to go outside of their bunker and then come in the front door of the teamhouse, but one of their walls will be an outside wall of our bunker. In fact, it happens to be the outside wall of my room here that will be right next to their bunker. So that puts me in a mighty safe spot here. I'm glad. I enjoy it. It also soundproofs the place nicely.

Let's see, the tape that I'm using now, as you can see, is a tape that you sent me, the short one in the cardboard box. The second side of this one turned out like a number of my tapes have turned out. The volume was so low that I had to crank my machine all the way up to full blast and then I could just barely hear you. It had a bunch of whines and grinds and squeaks and rattles and stuff in the background. It was really a strain, a bunch of motor noise from the tape recorder that you have, the Aiwa or Akai, or whatever it is. So you goofed too, hon. You aren't infallible with that old tape machine.

I wrote Dan and Sue last night. I told Dan that you were sending him a watch and I explained to him that I didn't know, I honestly didn't know which watch you were going to send because the tape I got from you, you said well, he'd probably enjoy the gold one and you'd like to give the silver one to my dad. But I just sent a tape to you saying well, send the silver one to Dan and give my dad the gold one, so, do whatever you want but give Dan one of them. O.K., as I was saying, please wrap up one of them and give them to Dan. Also include the negatives of those pictures of me on my motorcycle jumping at Fort Bragg. He asked about those. I told him that you would get on that ASAP and that I would keep needling you until you did get it off to him. I think if my dad wants that silver watch, go ahead and give him that one and send Dan the gold one because I told him if he didn't like the gold one then to send it back and let me know and I'll scout out a couple more silver ones here.

When I wrote to Sue I told her what components I could get her and what components I couldn't get her. I told her I might be able to get a Sync-lab 95 turntable. It doesn't bother me at all whether or not they have the same turntable or not. But I told them I could only get them the Sansui 2000, which is true. It's the only one I can get through the catalog and I'm not going to frtiz around hitting the PX every other day trying to find a Sansui 5000 for them. It's hard enough just getting one for myself because they go as fast as they come in. I told them, well the only speakers in the catalog that I can order of Sansui are the 200's, the same ones that I've got. So I told them I couldn't order those. Instead I gave them the ones I could order, the Pioneers, or Nivico, or National speakers. I told them about the Asahi Pentax. I told them I'd keep my eyes open for one, but just keep in mind that it took me three months to find mine. If he would consider a different camera, say a Canon, I could order that for him. And also I told him the best way for them to exchange money would be just to send you all the money and then you could put it in my checking account and send me some checks.

It would be nice, as you say, to have the Chase Manhattan Bank over here have my

checking account, but I think it would be a little too difficult for me to establish an account, sign the cards and everything I have to do and get the money transferred in. Whereas back there, you can take care of it easier, give the money to your mother and have OKB [Old Kent Bank] do it. So what if it takes the company who I send the checks to a week or two longer to check the check out to make sure it's okay. It doesn't really bother me. It's just the convenience of being able to write a check that I'm concerned about. Time element isn't so much of a concern.

Those pictures you were talking about. You said one looked like the shower shed and another one of the fluorescent bulb. Well, that's what it was. I took a picture of I guess the inside the front door of the shower shed and then I stepped in and took a picture. The fluorescent bulb is right next to the shower and the wooden thing you see there is the wall surrounding the shower. I don't know how come I forgot to wind the film. I was in a hurry for some reason. And, that's what happens.

I've been eating pretty good meals lately. That cook's really been cooking some good food. She knows what Americans like. You know, when we have some kind of rolled turkey or something, she knows that mashed potatoes and gravy go with that, and cranberry sauce. It just so happens that we do have some of that stuff. She knew that candied yams, or those sweet potatoes with brown sugar on it goes with ham. She's making some good meals. She's making Jello and vanilla pudding for desert and stuff like that. We've had those cans of that junk, but our old cook never did use them. She's putting all that stuff to work and making some real good meals. I'm really eating heartily. Pancakes for breakfast and real good meals like today. At noon we had, shoot I can't remember, some kind of real good meal, meat, potatoes, vegetables, all that kind of stuff, bread, iced tea. This evening we had Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, beets. So we're doing all right. She's doing a real good job.

Shoot, even tonight I stuffed myself at 5 o'clock but tonight about 8:30 I was hungry again so I went over to the mess hall and ate two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and about two big cereal bowls full of applesauce. I had two cold Pepsi's to drink. So I'm really stashing away the food, but gee whiz, I've got a couple Polaroid shots here of me and boy do I look skinny. Really skinny. I look like a scarecrow. That applesauce, I showed her how to make that. It comes in a can, in little tiny beads. I think I told you about that already. Anyway, I made sure she has a great big bundle, big pot of it in the refrigerator at all times because it's good to munch on. About every meal I have applesauce. In fact, even at breakfast sometimes she'll give me a bowl of applesauce and that tastes good after eating pancakes and all that sweet syrup.

I've got some pictures here I'm going to send you. I don't know if I can get them out tomorrow or not, but they are the most fantastic color prints you will ever see. Man, they are the goriest things you'll ever see. Pictures of VC bodies that are just blown in two, that are just full of holes and guts hanging out of them. There's one picture that a photographer was just lucky

when he took it. It shows a VC about 50 feet in the air, just the upper half of him from the waist up, just blown in two. He snapped the picture just as the guy blew up. Apparently the VC was carrying a satchel charge or something and he was hit by an M-79 round and the whole thing exploded and just blew him in half. You can see the definition of his head and his two outstretched arms and his trunk down to his waist. You can see it up in the air. It's a real clear shot. It shows a couple other smashed buildings and burning bunkers and stuff. These pictures were taken right during the ground attack and immediately after the ground attack. There's one, there's a VC hanging off the rafters. Everything from about his bellybutton up is gone. He's hanging as if hanging upside down from a trapeze or a high bar. His legs are caught over a rafter or something. You can see intestines and stuff just hanging out of his body. Oh, there's some real gory shots. I've got them all numbered and a little note on the back of each one, so mount those in the photo album.

Also, I've got some negatives of me. They're color print negatives, so have them developed. They're all pictures of me and I think four of them are pictures of the truck that hit the landmine taken right where the truck was. Some of those pictures aren't too red hot because Ron Ingram, he'd say, "Hey Dave," and I'd look up and he'd snap a picture. One of them's real goofy, I had my eyes half shut, you know, one of those corny things.

That's that. Let's see, one more thing. If you want, try slowing tape speed down because I can slow mine down to $1 \frac{7}{8}$ ths or whatever it is. So if you want to send me one first, go ahead and try it and I'll play it and see how it is. I was going to do it on this one because I fill it up pretty good with just yakking and everything and it's a short tape but it's quarter to 12 and I'm getting kind of sleepy, tired. So that's why I decided to leave it on this speed. I'll let this finish up.

I still have two of yours here that I'll listen to over and over again a couple more times and fill them and send them back to you. I'll get one off to my folks pretty soon. I owe them a note, letter, something. Your folks too, but I don't know if I'll have time. The tape's running out. I should say goodbye. So I will. Looking forward to your mail tomorrow hon. Miss you, love you, and boy, I just can't wait. Two months. About two and a half months. Then we can really have some fun. Hong Kong's going to be fabulous. That book you sent is really good, although I really haven't had the time to go through it carefully.

10 June 1969

Tuesday

Hi sweet thing. Tonight is Tuesday night, the 10th of June. It's about 10 after 7, looking at my little Westclox wind-up clock sitting on my shelf. It's a nice little clock. It doesn't make

any loud ticking noise. It's real quiet. I wind it up every morning and that way I don't have to wear my watch all the time to see what time it is. I just finished taking a shower and I'm sitting here on the side of my bed with just a towel around me with the fan blowing on me so I can dry thoroughly before putting on my shorts and my Hush Puppies. After I make the tape I'm going to go have a cigar in the club and relax and wait until 9 o'clock and watch Star Trek.

Last three days in a row, that new engineer that we have, new demo man, his name is Wes Holck, he and I have been working our fool heads off doing all kinds of physical labor type work. Most of it has been out on the turn around point. He and Ron Ingram and I policed up the whole thing yesterday. We had two enormous piles of wooden pallets. They must have been pretty close to 15 feet high, each pile. On one pile we took about a half a drum of gasoline, about 20 gallons worth and just drenched the pile and threw a smoke grenade into it. There was one big poof and the thing was burning furiously. On the second pile, we thought we'd have a little fun. It was stacked a little bit higher than the first pile. We poured one whole drum of 55 gallons of gasoline over the whole pile, and we had two smaller drums that were about 1/3rd full. We placed both of those right on the very tippy-top of the pile, left the bung hole tops in the drums, and just set them up on top. We each had a white phosphorous grenade and we stood well back from the pile. On the count of three we all threw a white phosphorous grenade into the pile. Boy was that ever sharp. Some day I'll have to take a movie picture of a white phosphorous grenade going off. It's pretty neat.

Anyway, that stack really went up in smoke. Boy, great big thunderous roar of flame. So we got quite a ways back because we knew those other two 55 gallon drums that were partially full of fuel would burst into flames, or blow up, or I don't know. At the time we weren't sure what it would do. But after waiting about five minutes we found out. One of them blew up, and it just blew the end off the drum and sent it sailing about 50 yards through the air, great big ka-wang, it was a metallic type explosion. The other one, apparently it just blew the bung hole out of it or something, it went whoosh. Just a big whooshing type noise. It burned and burned and burned. It was a lot of hard work clearing up that place so we thought we'd enjoy ourselves by having a little fun afterwards and made a big fire.

Sunday (June 8), it rained quite a bit in the morning so we had quite a few big puddles. We took the three-quarter truck out and about halfway between the camp and the southern end of the runway, along the road there, there's a turn off, a short cut. I don't know if any of my pictures show it or not. I didn't look at them that closely but there are about three real big puddles that come all the way up to, well, they're about two feet deep. We took the three-quarter and we each had on our scruffy old clothes, we had an old pair of boots, dirty socks, tiger fatigue pants and that was all. We took our watches and everything off, and just went blazing through those puddles. We had just a, literally, a wall of water come up over the front end of the truck and just

drenched us all. We spent about an hour just racing around up and down the runway hitting all of the puddles we could find. At the turn around point we had some real big puddles. We just went about as fast as we could. We can't get the truck faster than about 30, 45 miles an hour, 35 or 40 miles an hour in the turnaround point. Boy, when you hit those puddles it sure sends a spray. As soon as I get my movie camera up here I'll take some pictures of that too, cause it's funny.

We've got a metal speed pallet it's called. It's about eight feet long and six feet wide made of metal. We chained it to the back of the truck and two guys would sit on that while one guy drives and we'd drag each other through the puddles. The water would just fly up over the end of that thing. But there's one disadvantage to that. A lot of tar and oil settles in the water and when we went racing through it, that oily, tarry water landed all over us. After spending an hour racing through puddles and stuff we had to come in and spend about thirty minutes each cleaning ourselves with gasoline to get all the tar off and then scrubbing ourselves down with good soapy showers about three each. But it was worth it. It sure was a lot of fun.

Tomorrow (June 11) I'm going in to Tay Ninh. I've got three packages here I'm going to mail to you. I'm going to get about six money orders for different things I'm going to send away for. One of them is going to be your birthday present. I will try to get some food, oh, I'm going to get my movie camera. That's already bought, I'm just going to pay the guy for it. I'm going to take two rolls of movie film with me so I'll take a roll, possibly buzzing around through Tay Ninh, the city itself, and Tay Ninh West which is the base camp where we go to the PX. Of course on the chopper ride back to camp I'll probably shoot up almost a whole roll of film just on that. That'll be some fantastic movies. As soon as I get back to camp here I'll spend one day and probably shoot up three rolls of movie film taking pictures of planes coming in, landing, unloading, taking off, and of us just messing around camp. I'll have to show somebody else how to use the movie camera so they can take some pictures of me. And when we catch a rat and let it go out in the middle of the field, I'll take a picture of that, all the dogs chasing the rat, chow chopper coming in and hooking stuff up and back-loading it, and of course white phosphorous grenades and all our big fires that we set. There's just all kinds of stuff to take movie pictures of.

I don't know if I have enough light here in my room to take a movie picture of my room, but I'd like to. I've got it fixed up real neat. Today I spent a little time and hooked up a double fluorescent lamp in my room and it's real nice and bright. It's a much cooler lamp than one of these stupid 100, 120-watt bulbs. They put out an awful lot of heat. It's a much nicer light, much easier to read by. I've got the on off switch right next to my bed so when I get ready to go to sleep after reading in bed for 15 or 20 minutes, I can just reach out and flip it off. I've got a couple more pictures hanging up on my walls here. I cut out a picture of a Pontiac advertisement

but it has a couple of dune buggies in the background, so I've got that up on the wall. I've got Sandy's picture and little Chucky's picture, and I got a little card that's entitled "A Prayer." Let me read it to you: "Give me the serenity to accept what cannot be changed. Give me the courage to change what must be changed, the wisdom to distinguish one from the other." The guy who wrote it's name is Reinhold Niebuhr. That's about all the changes I have in the room here. I strung up a wire to hang my towel on. That's about it. It's a real sharp room though. Much nicer than anybody else's, I'd say. I'm not trying to brag too much, but my room is about twice as nice and comfortable as anybody else's room.

I'm not going to have time tonight to pack another box but I've got another load of stuff to send home to you. I've got a couple of American ponchos, an indigenous poncho liner, and let's see what else. I know there's something else. Oh, a book on weapons used in South East Asia. It shows a 122mm rocket, and a 107mm rocket, the kind that we get hit by occasionally, and the guns, small arms, rifles, and pistols and everything else that the VC and the NVA, the Russians, and the Chinese Communists use, plus the American weapons like the M-1, M-2, and I don't know if it's got an M-16 or not. I didn't look. And a bunch of submachine guns, 9mm type made by Belgians, Swedes, Israelis, Russians, you name it. It's got all that junk in it.

Everybody's real surprised because this is the monsoon season but we've had very little rain so far. It rains daily, but just short little showers maybe 10 or 15 minutes. It doesn't come down near as hard as everybody says it's going to. So we're kind of disappointed because the days are real hot, uncomfortable. The last three days I really got a good burn, sunburn. It's still red. It seems kind of funny with this kind of sunburn, it seems to fade so much faster than a sunburn that I get back home. I don't know why, it just does.

Anyway, this type of weather is real bad for us, in that it breeds a lot of flies. Man, I'm telling you these flies around here aren't normal flies. You can chase one away and he'll come right back. Three or four of them will land on you at one time and just crawl all over you and you can swat them away and they'll come right back. Same way with your food. I have to hold my hand over my drinking cup so they don't land on the rim. They'll land on a piece of meat and swat him away, he'll fly a foot away and turn right around and come back and land on it again. You can just keep waving your hand over your plate and the flies will still come in and land on your food. They'll land on a fork full of food on its way to your mouth. They're really something. We haven't got enough screen wire to put around the mess hall after it got ventilated by the shrapnel. I sent in lots of requisitions for screen wire but the support out here isn't as good as it could be or should be.

We haven't gotten any replacements for the two trucks that were blown up so now we're just operating on one three quarter and one deuce and a half and it's a strain sometimes. Not a strain, but you know, it causes a lot of problems. Like all day yesterday we had the three quarter

truck out at the turn around point all day, all morning, then we came in for lunch, and then all afternoon. We have a radio mounted in the truck, and we can take care of any planes landing or anything like that, but shoot, the mechanics need a truck to come out there and pick up drums of diesel fuel for the generators and gasoline for the trucks and we have a detail of about ten CIDG everyday to either fill sandbags or stack ammo boxes or clean-up details, anything like that. And they need the truck to haul bags of cement or whatever they're doing at the time. The yardmen that we have that clean up our trash and stuff need the truck to empty their trash. So every time we come in and drop the truck off there's always two or three people standing around wanting to use it. The poor truck sure gets a workout. It's going from 7 am to 7 pm day in, day out, 7 days a week, all day.

Let's see, I've got rain, mud, weather, heat, flies, and rats. Not too many rats around here lately. Very few come in my room anymore. I catch about one every fourth night or so. That's about it. Boy, when it rains around here you ought to see the mud. This place turns into one gooshy mud hole. You can't walk in shower shoes because the shower shoes will stick in the mud and you'll either pull your foot out of the shower shoe or pull those little straps out of the holes in the sole of the shower shoe. It perturbs everybody when they're walking through mud to have their shower shoes stick in the mud and they take another step and they can't stop in time, their bare foot comes down in the gooshy stuff. Of course it oozes up over the shower thongs anyway. And of course our poor combat boots: The mama-san, everyday she cleans them and polishes them but only stay polished for maybe an hour at most, then they get all scuffed up. We step in puddles or mud or something, carrying bags of rice or sandbags or something, drop one on your foot. Every night they're just gross and grody.

Oh, tell Chuck I think I might be able to get him a couple, or a set of those camouflage fatigues. Not the tiger fatigues but the good kind. What I'll do if I get a good pair, or a couple of good pairs, is I'll send them home to you. You keep them for me and give him that first pair I sent home because they're not the best. They're a little bit raggedy and torn, used, but I think I can get two brand new pair. In fact, if things work right I'll get them tomorrow. I called a guy on another A-Team who's coming over here and I knew he had a couple so I told him to bring some over and I'll trade him something. I'll see what he wants. Maybe I'll have to trade one of my grease guns for it. I don't know, we'll see.

But I've got about 15 grease guns stashed away in the supply room, got them hidden. Nobody knows they're there except me and Alexander who left the team. So when I want something I can trade a grease gun for it. I haven't got a whole lot more to say.

I shut it off just then to check to make sure the volume was okay. Then when I started it up again I had the volume turned way down to about one or two because when I play it back through, well, when I record I have it set on eight. But when I listen to what I've recorded, I've

got it turned way down to one or two because otherwise it will blast me out of the room. I forgot to turn it up while I finished the tape but all I said was if you haven't sent the red candle, don't because I'd hate to have to leave it here when I come back home because of having too much weight or something. The green candle is enough.

Then I went on to talk about I'd have to pay my own fare to Hong Kong and back. That's the policy for taking seven days leave. But as far as R&R goes, they'll pay my way to Hawaii and back, so no sweat there. I could possibly fly from here to Hong Kong on standby status, although I will have to reserve a seat on a flight back from Hong Kong here, probably paying full fare.

I looked at my pile of notes again. I see "slow speed tape" written down there. I was going to tape this one slow speed again but I really haven't got that much to say on this tape. That was Wes. He just came in to tell me that we are going in on the work chopper tomorrow instead of the food chopper. Oh, as I was saying, about that tape speed. I was going to slow this one down to 1 7/8ths and try it but I don't have enough to say this time. So if you want to, if you want to spend the time, take that one hour tape and slow the speed down to 1 7/8ths and see if you can tape, let's see, it'd probably be one hour on each side of the tape, tape two hours of music on that thing for me even if the quality is somewhat poor. At least you'll be able to get on about one, two, three, four different albums, if each album is about thirty minutes. That'd be great. Because when I'm sitting here in the room, like I did this morning, doing some paperwork and stuff, I'll just throw that on the tape recorder and listen to music.

Also, did you send my Hitachi or whatchamajiggy, whatever you call that thing? That old radio of mine, that AM/FM job? I forget whether that takes big batteries or little batteries. You know, medium sized. If it takes medium sized batteries, would you please buy some for me and include them with the radio? Buy a bunch of brand new batteries and just put them in the radio before you wrap it and send it. If you haven't, I mean, if you have wrapped the radio already, then don't worry about it, because I'll get somebody who's going in to get me a couple of those little batteries.

How's the little poochie doing? She must be a little bit confused now that she's in heat, wondering what's going on. I hope she doesn't make a mess out of the living room rug. Of course it would be hard to spot on that rug anyway. Of course that works two ways. It would be hard for you to spot if you had to clean it up. If you did miss a spot it wouldn't show up. I'd hate to have little spots of blood all over the place. I keep looking at her pictures, or pictures of her. She sure is a nice dog, well trained, obedient, smart, good looking, big, ferocious when she wants to be. That was neat. I told the guys here how she stood between you and that other guy and would turn around and check to make sure it was all right to growl at him or bark at him or anything. They really thought that was something. I do too. Smart puppy dog.

Let's see, today's the 10th (Tuesday, June)? Shoot, in another 20 days I'll be going into

Tay Ninh again. So that time I'll have the crossbow wrapped and ready to send, and I'll have this other box of fatigues and poncho, poncho liners and all that stuff wrapped and ready to send. I'll probably have some more film for you by that time plus the slides here, slides from my 35mm. I'll send those to you, first roll. I should have maybe one or two more rolls of 35mm slide and I'll probably have three or four or five or six rolls of movie film for you to develop. Oh, by the way, no, I won't either. The film I buy over here is about \$3.50 or \$3.75 a roll, but that includes processing. So after I shoot a roll, I'll throw it in an envelope and send it to wherever it goes to be processed and put your address as the return address. So right from there it will go right to your house. All you have to do is throw it on the movie projector. You don't have to worry about it getting developed or anything like that.

There's something else I want to say but I don't know if I'll put it on this tape or not. I think I'll put it in a letter to you because it's just for you and I, not for anybody else. So if you're going to let anybody else listen to this tape don't worry. There's nothing embarrassing on it. I can save that for your letter when I get around to writing one.

I've got a little book of jokes here. I'll send you that too one of these days. Your tapes to me are neat because you don't talk in a monotone like I do. You tell a joke or something and you laugh at your own joke and just laugh occasionally and fool around with the cat and make funny noises and all that stuff, which is nice. I like that. My tapes to you are probably boring and dull, not information wise but just the sound of my voice. It's just a kind of monotone. I don't put very much inflection into it. I sit here and go, "Oh, what am I going to say next," and "Uhhhh." I do that a lot. I don't have to speak very loud into this thing. If I spoke louder it would be clearer but then everybody on the whole team would hear what I'm recording. Which I don't appreciate.

Let me know what everybody's reaction is to those pictures I sent. Probably be a lot of, show them to everybody, Chris and Floss, my folks and your folks, and make sure Chuck sees them. He'll get a kick out of them. It's too bad I can't get the negatives. He'd probably like to have a copy of the prints, but no can do. The guy who took these pictures is really making money because he charges \$6.00 a set and he's sold about 50 sets already. He's still got the negatives so anytime he gets low on sets, he just sends the negatives in and asks for about 10, 15, 20 more sets. Shoot, they only cost him about \$2.00 to have a set made, something like that. So he's making some pretty good money.

There's a guy from artillery leaving in about 18 days. So he's going to come over here the day before he leaves and throw about a \$50 party for everybody. That'll buy about eight cases of beer. In fact there are two of them leaving, so both guys will come over. Each man's going to spend about \$50. So it'll be \$100 worth of booze and stuff for everybody. Most of the team will get wiped out. That reminds me of something.

Captain took me aside yesterday and told me not to call anybody on the team by their first name and not to have anybody on the team call me by my first name. The same old run around, you know, between officers and enlisted men. I told you about that once before when we were at Bragg and how I think that's a stupid rule. The two guys that are doing it are Ron Ingram and Wes Holck, they're both E-5's. Shoot, we're the ones that do most of the work around here. We go out and meet all the planes, load up the truck, bring it in, unload it, all that kind of stuff. We spend a lot of time doing it. I hate to say "Sergeant Ingram" all the time, or "Ingram" all the time, so I say "Ron." I know he gets sick of saying "Hey, Lieutenant," or "Lieutenant Fetters," or "Sir" all of the time. So I just say hey, call me Dave, no sweat. It doesn't bother me a bit. But it seems to bother some of the guys on the team, I guess they complained about it. They thought it wasn't proper and all that baloney. So he said to cut that stuff out. So I told the two guys, well, can't call me Dave around the teamhouse. Just when we get away from everybody else then you can. After the captain got through telling me that, I told him that's another real good reason for getting out of this doggone Army, because the Army frowns on fraternizing with the EM, you know, getting real friendly with them. I don't know why. They're men, same as us. But they just frown on it and I think it's a stupid rule. I don't abide by it, and neither does Ron or Wes. I don't say anything to them. So phooey, we're going to continue doing it. We just won't let anybody else hear us, that's all. I told the captain, shoot, that's a dumb rule, that's a stupid rule. That's one reason why I'm getting out of the Army. He didn't have much to say to me after that.

Splat, just nailed a fly. I don't know where he ended up. He was in a bad way anyway, he was kind of flopping around upside down. He couldn't fly too well 'cause I sprayed the room with fly spray.

I want to be nice to you and give you some hints about your birthday present but I don't want to give it away, and I don't want to give you hints that don't pertain, so I really don't know what to say about it. It's used in only one room of the house, either the bathroom, the living room, the bedroom, or the kitchen. I'll limit it to those four rooms. One of those four rooms. It's going to be your present, but we can both use it. Let's see. What else can I tell you? It will be unique. I know of nobody else that's got one. None of our friends, relatives, acquaintances, neighbors, nobody at all that I know has one. Not only that, it's going to be peculiar, not just by the fact of what it is, but also for two other reasons. One is an extra that I requested for it and the other one is something else. I really can't tell you what that is. It's not an extra but a choice of eight different hmmm. And I chose hmmm hmmm. So you'll just have to wait and see what it is. It'll probably come in a package about six inches high and maybe two feet long and two feet wide, I think. Something like that. It'll be coming from Chicago, so it won't take long to get there after I send in the money order. I won't tell you what the name of the company is. Let's see, how much does it weigh? Probably about, I don't know, five pounds maybe. I'm not sure.

It's going to be weird, excuse me (yawned), different. It should work nicely though.

Just because no one else has one doesn't mean it won't fit in with what we've got, because it will. In fact it will fit in very nicely. We will use it quite often. Let's see. I was going to try to think of which of the five senses would be most affected by it. Nah, I better not say. I don't think I really know anyway. Yeah, I guess I do too, but I'm not going to say. That's all I'm going to tell you. So now you're just going to have to fret until you get it, which shouldn't be too long because I'll get the money order tomorrow, or Thursday, or Friday, send for it Saturday, it'll go out Sunday. They'll get it a week from this coming Sunday, and you should get it maybe a week or two weeks after that, depending on how long it takes them to pick it out, wrap it up, dress it, and send it to you. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. You'll get a good chuckle out of it. It's neat, no doubt about it. It's really neat. That's all I'm going to say.

From what my family says, you'll be able to see my Aunt Alice, and Dan, and maybe Sue and Ken all around the end of July and the first part of August if you're still there. You probably won't be leaving until maybe the 15th or so of August. At least for the first two weeks you'll be there. You'll probably see them and show them the neat stuff we've got. Of course by that time you'll have a lot more stuff I hope. And get all the latest news and everything from them. Maybe take some pictures of them before you leave.

I ran right off the end of the tape without saying goodbye. I was rattling on about taking pictures of them and stuff like that before you come to, oh there it goes. Goodbye, hon. I love you.

13 June 1969

Friday

Greetings to my wife, the woman with the sexy bathing suit. Jeepers creepers, you were right about that thing. Boy, that is a sexy looking suit. Those pictures of you are real nice. Oh yeah, I would say the close up does look like you have a chubby tummy. Of course, you've always had a little pot down there anyway but in the picture, what'd you do, take a gut full of air just before you snapped it? Doesn't matter. Like you said you'll send me more. The two that you did send I put up on the wall. I'm proud of them. Boy, I show them off to everybody that comes in the room.

My room is, I'm brushing off my bed, my room is getting better and better every day. Coming back from Tay Ninh, I brought with me a straw mat to put on the floor. I explained that in the tape that I just made my folks. In fact, I'm not going to cover what I told them. Just kind of general information. I'll let you go over and listen to their tape. Those will be some subjects that I won't have to cover again on this tape.

Let me stop this to make sure it's recording okay. Yeah, it's recording real fine. In fact I've got the volume sitting on 8, out of a possible 10 and when I played it back on this tape recorder, boy it almost blasted me out of my room. But I've got the door shut so no sweat. It's kind of funny, the tape I just made my folks didn't turn out near as good as this one, fidelity wise. I can't figure it out. I guess it's what the tape is made of. This stuff seems to be recording real nicely. It does a pretty good job. But that tape I just made my folks, it felt like thicker material and maybe that has something to do with it. I'm not sure.

Anyway, anyhoo. Getting back to your sexy little bikini, definitely send me some more shots. If they're only slides, then all I can do is look at them and send them back but if they're nice photographs, like these Polaroid shots, I guess they're Polaroid. Maybe they aren't, I don't know. No, I guess they're probably color print. Anyway, if you send me more like that I'll stick them up on my wall here. Also, that neat little card that you sent, you rub me the wrong way. Zowie, it turns me on. I put that up on the wall locker at the end of my bed, underneath the picture of the 1911 Crawford, that old car postcard that you sent me. I also cut off the corner of that envelope that you sent it in, that little guy holding up a sign that says from T. Fetters. I cut that out and stuck it up on the wall. And that little cartoon of Trudy that you sent. I'll look in the June 11th or June 14th issue of Army Times, and again cut out your little article, you with the headlines. Put that up on my wall too.

Let me glance on my list here and see what I want to talk about. Ah yes, long hair. Mmmhmmm. Number one. You look real nice with that long hair. Boy that will be fun to play with when we get to Hong Kong. I love to see you with one little ponytail, you know tied with a little silk scarf, or two little pony tails or pig tails, whatever you call them, you know with a little scarf on each one or a little ribbon on each one. They don't have to be braided, but just little bunches. That's neat. I like that. So continue to let your hair grow long, and I'm glad it doesn't bother you, because it surely doesn't bother me.

I've got some chopsticks to send you. They're nothing more than little chunks of bamboo. I swiped them out of a little restaurant. There were a whole bunch of them there. When I was cruising around Tay Ninh with Wes Holck, that new guy on the team, we were scrounging for food and stuff and he knew one of the girls down there that works in B-32's bar at night. She happened to be around when we bummed the jeep, so we took her along so she could show us around the town and she ended up showing us that Cao Dai temple that I told you about, well, that's on the other tape, my folks' tape. On the way back, she stopped us at a little restaurant and we had a bowl of Chinese soup. Boy it's a great big mammoth bowl, about twice the size of one of our bowls back home. They give you a porcelain spoon. It's a funny looking spoon, it's got a flat bottom so you can set it down on the table and it won't tip over. They also give you chopsticks. So you eat the noodles and the chunks of meat with the chopsticks and then you

slurp up the rest of the juice with that big, hairy spoon. Shoot, that's pretty good stuff. One bowl is more than a woman your size could probably eat. I don't know, you could probably get just one bowl down and you'd be stuffed, because I ate one bowl and I was comfortably full. That's a pretty good meal. Pretty tasty, too. I was surprised. It cost about ten cents American money.

I also got you another little present. Now, it's not too little, it's pretty big. It's hard to handle so I'm going to have to wrap it real carefully, make sure it's in a real sturdy box so it isn't crushed and send it home to you. It won't go out of here until the end of June, the next time I go to Tay Ninh, so don't look for it immediately. I think you'll like it though.

I also got another crossbow. This one is a little bit larger and fancier than the first one I got. I think I like the first one better because it looks more rustic. The second one, though, has a crack in the bow part so I think I'll just keep it for trading material and see if I can get another one just like it. I'm quite sure I can. I talked to the guy who gave it to me and told him, you know, the bow is cracked he said, "Well, I'll see if I can get you another one." I didn't get any arrows with this one, although this one's got a real nice string. But the string is too long to fit the first one. Anyway, I found out that I can't send them home to you because they're classified as a dangerous weapon, so they'll have to be hand carried. So I'll just have to hang on to them here until I come home in December, not De-zem-ber, December, and I'll hand carry them on the airplane with me. Also if I get a VC rifle or a Chi-Com rifle or something, I'll have to hand carry that. A lot of people over here are collecting what's called an SKS. It's a semi-automatic, Chinese Communist rifle and they're getting them chrome plated and all that kind of stuff to hang up on their walls when they get home. So if I get a chance to get one, I'll hang on to it and bring it home as a war souvenir.

I'm also trying to get a VC flag and I think I'll try to get a Vietnam flag, you know that cruddy yellow one with three red stripes on it. It's kind of a worthless flag. They make it out of the cheapest material you ever saw, but, what the heck, might as well try to get one. Twenty years from now I'll say, 'Yeah, this is a stupid old flag of the country we fought for but now it's under Communist control.' No doubt, ten years after we leave this stupid place it will be under Communist control.

Anyway, forget it. I got the movie camera. It's a real nice one. It's got a five power zoom lens whereas ours is only four power. It's got a fade in and fade out type dealy. I doubt if I'll ever use it, but it's a handy little gadget. It's got a real nice carrying case with a long strap on it. You can put the camera in it and it's got a space for two rolls of film, besides the one that's in the camera, and another place for what's called a teleconverter. It's an attachment that you can put on the lens so it'll give it, shoot, I forget, an eight to ten or something power zoom rather than five like it is. It's quite a contraption. So, at first, I decided to sell it before I came home, but it's a real nice camera and you might like it better than the one we've got. So I think I'll bring it home

and we can sell which ever one we don't want. The price of the one we have now, new, is \$200. The price of the one I have over here now is \$189 or something like that. I got it for \$94. Shoot, that one we've got, the \$200 camera we only paid \$40 for it. That's quite a deal.

Anyway, I didn't get a chance to take any movies coming back on the work chopper because I had my hands full with the movie camera, my AWOL bag that I took with me, my rolled up straw mat, the present that I got you, which is kind of unwieldy and hard to hang on to, and also that other crossbow that I've got. So my hands were really full. I just swatted a fly. So I really didn't have time to manipulate a camera and hang on to everything else that I had in the work chopper. So, better luck next time. It's too bad, too, because we flew into Katum and there was that burned up C-130 sitting in their turn around point. It's got one wing entirely burned off, there's a little stub left. Other than that it doesn't look too bad. They took all the motors off of it and send them back and they gutted the inside of it, but the outside looks new. That plane had only flown one other mission in Vietnam. It was almost a brand new plane and there it is sitting at the end of the runway. One lousy bullet hole did all of that. Oh well.

I mailed three packages to you. One of them contains your ao-dai. It's not an ao-yai, it's an ao-dai. I think you'll like the colors. I hope it fits. That's also in the same box with the stereo headphones. Besides that, let's see. Oh, I sent you my Yashica and the other box contained some film, my VC buckle, that paperback book on that student, or that teacher who had 36 Negro students, or something, in the ghetto school. You might enjoy reading that. It's got a couple of hammock ends, you know, about 1 1/2 footer, 2 foot ends cut off so when I send you a whole one, you just sew those ends onto one of the whole ones and it will be long enough for me to sleep in.

Let's see. I've got all the money orders I needed, six of them in fact. One for Kodak for the pictures that I had developed. One for your birthday present which will go out tomorrow, a request. You'll probably get it in maybe two weeks. So you've got one package to look forward to. One is the something in PACEX catalog that I ordered. Again, for you. I won't tell you what it is but I'll tell you it cost quite a bit. It'll be nice to have, don't worry. Let's see. Another one was to Hong Kong for your watch. Another one was to Hong Kong for my gadget bag for all my camera equipment, plus a lens case for the lens that's on the camera, plus a cable release, plus a little attachment that I can hook an electric flash to, slip on my camera. Let's see. One other one. Oh yes, to Teac Corporation to purchase two microphones for our Teac tape deck that I haven't purchased yet. Hey, don't sweat it. If I can't get them here, we can get them in Hong Kong. That's no big problem. We'll buy the Sansui 5000 and the Teac tape deck over at the China Fleet Club and have them shipped right home, so no big deal. In fact that might be easier and more convenient than doing it here, although we might have trouble getting wrapping equipment near the China Fleet Club, whereas here I have the wrapping paper and the tape and string, and whole

schmeer. So we'll see what happens.

At Tay Ninh we used to be able to go into the Filipino PX. Of course, those characters didn't care too much for Sansui's and all that stuff. That's where all of them were bought by the Americans. Since then, we've been banned from going to their PX, and they've been banned from going to our PX. So now, the only way we can get them is through the American PX and shoot that place is packed, day in and day out, seven days a week. Whenever something comes in, you have to be just about right there when it comes in to get what you want, otherwise they're sold just immediately. While I was down there I saw a real nice Smith Corona Typewriter. I considered getting it but I didn't see any price on the outside of the box and it was too packed to ask somebody what the price was so I forgot about it. I figure we can get one back in the United States PX for about the same price. Then I won't have to worry about shipping it home and all that stuff, wrapping it, getting insurance for it.

When I got back here yesterday morning I found out that I was invited to another one of those stupid Cambodian wedding feasts. Luckily I was wrapped up all afternoon with that Chieu Hoi that we got, that VC who turned himself in, asking him questions, interrogating him. We didn't torture him. Don't sweat that. We're not like what you read in The Green Berets book. Since this guy gave himself up voluntarily, we just got all the information we could out of him and then shipped him on to the B-Team. Anyway, I was wrapped up with him most of the afternoon. The party started about 3 o'clock, and I didn't get over there until about 5. By that time all the food was consumed and most of the beer gone. They managed to scrape together a few noodles for me, and a bunch of doggone pig meat that still had the hair growing off the fat that covered the meat. I had to peel that off before I could eat it. I only ate ti-ti, so I won't get sick. I had about a quarter of a can of warm beer and almost heaved, so I quit that. Everybody was pretty well drunk by that time so I slipped out unnoticed. Those things are so stupid. Anyway, I sent you that wedding invitation also. It's worded kind of cute, so if you want, paste it inside the album with the other stuff.

Also sent you a picture of me with my beret on. The trouble it's a Polaroid picture with one of those thick stick-on backs or whatever it is with one of the lesser Cao Dai temples in the background. I was standing in one of their gardens. Of course they have Vietnamese dumb-dumbs running around with Polaroid cameras to take your shot in front of all of their fabulous scenery. So I broke down and had them take a picture of me. Next time, though, I'll take my movie camera.

Sounds like somebody's banging on the door, incoming rounds or something. Let me check. Artillery was just putting a few rounds all around camp into the woodline. They do that about once a week just to keep the VC out of the woodline. One of these evenings I'll walk over with my movie camera and take some movie shots of them doing it. It's kind of neat to watch

them loading rounds into the guns and shooting and glancing over at the woodline and seeing puffs of smoke appear and the hearing a thunderous roar. It's real loud. Oops (burped), pardon me. Hmm. Let's see.

When I got back from Tay Ninh, I left on a Wednesday, so I missed my mail coming in on Wednesday, and when I came back on Friday, I came in with the mail so I had Wednesday's and Friday's mail all stuffed into my box and I had four small tapes from you, four letters from you, one from Larry, one from Floss, and I had eight other letters and advertisements and things that I send for occasionally, something from Asahi Pentax, something from Akai tape recorder company. I don't know, all different places. Just general, oh, one from Fisher Radio Company, just junk that I send for, all kinds of free literature. So I had a lot of mail to go through. I took my time going through it all and enjoyed every minute of it.

I got your big package and you did send the red candle after all. So, no sweat. Let me know if you want the glass back after I burn the candle down. You probably will so I guess I can wrap it up and send it back to you. Candy, and tape, and all that other nice stuff. Thank you. I appreciate getting stuff like that.

Oh, that nice Home Magazine. That looks like an interesting magazine to read through, and I will read it very carefully and get some good ideas. Who knows, maybe some day we'll both see a house plan that we both really crave and would like to have and then shoot, I can send for the plans. They don't cost too much. Go over the plans and see how we like them and maybe change a few things. Find out how much it costs to have it built, find a place to build it, and start to work. We'll see. Let's see, you sent me a dune buggy magazine and that Better Homes magazine and whatever it is. I bought myself a Cycle World magazine and a Car and Driver magazine. Oh, and I bummed Photographic Annual Buyers Guide magazine from Vanderplow, so I've got five magazines here to read sometime. Cripes, it'll probably take me two months to read them. Besides some science fiction books that I've got, that came in, some new ones. So one of these evenings I'll just have to lock myself in my room and turn the fan on me and my light on and just lay here and read and read and read, instead of working.

Just a minute, somebody knocked on the door. Okay, all set again. One of the guys was in my room, I dug out my chocolate chip cookies. So I'm going to start munching on them, they make my mouth water just looking at them so I can't resist. So I'll see what it's like to tape while munching on a cookie, and I hope it comes out okay at your end.

That tape of music was real nice, sounded pretty good, too. You made a nice selection of records. Shoot, I got it yesterday. I played it once last night and twice today already. I'll probably play it again tonight before I go to sleep. I'll probably play it two or three times everyday. Then at the end of three weeks or so I'll be so sick of it I'll have to send it home to you

to re-record one. Next time you make a real long one like that, see if you can't slow it down to 1 and 7/8ths and record it, and see what it turns out to be. I like those Hugo Montenegro songs. They're real good. The songs of, let's see, what's that guy's name? The newest album I bought, you know, "Running Scared," and "Pretty Woman," and "Evergreen," anyway, that album, there's one side that is particularly good, that's better than the other side. You just happened to pick the wrong side, but that's all right. You played "Mama," and "Evergreen," and "Candy Man," which are not too bad. "Mama," and "Evergreen" are good. "Candy Man" is so so. I like "Running Scared," "The Crowd," you know, all the songs on that side are better than the songs on the side that you played. So, next time, play the songs that you didn't play the first time, okay?

On the chopper ride back, it was real windy for some reason. I couldn't figure out why. I had a heck of a time trying to hold everything I owned to keep from blowing around, because that crazy gift that I bought you is kind of flimsy. So I had it in a big old box and I was trying to hold it in and all this wind kept blowing through the place. I had my hands full holding that. Then the mat, I had my crossbow rolled up in the mat and I held it on the floor between my feet. Everybody was kind of looking at me. They thought I was some kind of a nut bringing all that junk with me but shoot, I like doing that stuff for my wife. Nobody else around here seems to care too much what their wives, or families, or girlfriends, or anything get. I do. I see all this neat stuff. There's probably about one out of every ten things that I see that I buy to send home to you, there are so many neat things to get over here. But I just don't have the time or the money. We don't have the space at home to keep all this stuff. So that's the way it goes.

Let's see, we flew from Tay Ninh to Katum, dropped off B-32 commander, Lieutenant Colonel Hilling. Flew from Katum up to Nui Ba Din. Of course when we set the chopper down, the elevation is still about 3700 feet. That's neat though. I've got to definitely get some movies of the chopper coming in to Nui Ba Din on a clear day because the sides are so steep, it's really fantastic. Then from Nui Ba Din we flew to Tay Ninh West and gassed up, flew to Tay Ninh East, dropped off a couple of people that we picked up at Katum. From there we flew out back out to Katum, picked up the colonel, and then we flew to Thien Ngon, dropped the colonel off for 20 minutes, picked up the captain, dropped me off. The captain went to Bien Hoa for a few days. I think he's taking advantage of me. I get out of this homely place about once a month for two days, he goes out once every two weeks for about three or four days. Oh well, he's the boss. That's the way it goes.

I've got "Chieu Hoi" written down here but I've already explained that on the tape to my folks so I won't go into that. I'll let you listen to their tape. Also, the fact that we got hit twice in the past three or four days. Once last night, once about three nights ago. That was the first time I'd seen VC tracers. It's nice to know that they're a different color than ours. So if you ever really got in a mess at night, at least you'd know where to shoot. But if you had red tracers coming at

you from the VC and you were shooting red tracers, it'd be kind of difficult. You might be shooting at your own troops... (gap in tape)