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Dave Fetters' Audio Transcription - 1969 - Tape 06

David Fetters

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Dave Fetters' Audio Letters - 1969

Tape #6

31 May 1969, continued

Saturday

...instead of spring term so he's going to have to juggle all the courses around again and make out a new one of those time table sheets of courses. If I'm not mistaken I believe that it will be easier to work out starting winter term because I think at the time he and I talked this thing over I kept saying to myself, "Gee, if only I could start winter term." Because winter term is when they offer some of the courses that I need which are prerequisites for additional courses. So, that will work out just great if I can start right in in January with a full load and just keep working right on through.

So, you've got time to relax and cool it and plan a little bit, but as soon as I give you the word to go ahead, you're going to have to drive down to Michigan State, go to the College of Engineering and go to room, let's see, 164 on the main floor and tell them you would like to see a mechanical engineering counselor for your husband who's in the Army who wants to come back to school and arrange some courses. At that time is when you should take a transcript of my grades so he can look at it and also I guess he can take care of everything else.

They'll probably send you to that guy up on the third floor where I went before and you just knock on the door, walk in and talk to him, introduce yourself, tell him who you are and what you want and explain the situation and he'll be more than happy to help you out. They'll whip out a schedule of courses and classes and everything for me to take and there's one book that I will have you pick up before I come back. This is way in advance. This could be in November sometime, but I'm just letting you know now that I need it, and that's the math book for calculus and analytic geometry because I've got to brush up on that stuff before I can go right back and finish that junk up. Before you go down to Lansing I'll prep you and brief you and fill you in on everything you have to know and what you have to do and where you have to go to do it, what time and who to see and everything like that so you can get it all straightened out.

What you might do is buy a Lansing paper, East Lansing paper, the Michigan State News, whatever it is, and just glance through the classified ads and see what they have to offer as far as houses and homes and cottages and stuff like that. I can tell you one thing, we better find a small house to rent rather than an apartment because apartments are just way too high around there unless you get a dumpy one, or unless you're lucky, or unless you live 15 miles outside of Lansing. I definitely do not want a trailer. We just have too much stuff for a trailer. It just wouldn't fit. No possible way would it fit. So just forget about a trailer. Of course we can't

afford a real large home. So maybe just a one or two bedroom house. Two bedroom with a garage would be just terrific, especially with a basement.

What you might do is call up a moving van place and get a rough estimate of how much it would cost to move all our stuff down there, you know, have them pack it, load it, move it, unload it, unpack it for us. Just give me a rough estimate of how much it would cost. Then what we might do instead is just rent a truck. It might even be cheaper and do it all ourselves, get Chuck and my Dad, maybe Bert to help us out, my brothers to just load the truck and everything with all our own stuff. Then the only thing we'd have to pay for is our own rental for the truck which would be just one day because we could load it all early in the morning, drive down there. It would only take two hours to drive down there, two and a half, maybe three with the truck and spend the rest of the day unloading everything and we could get Norman and Kathy to help us unload and then maybe the cost of just renting a truck would be cheaper than the cost of having a moving company do it all for us. And that's where we stand. Isn't that terrific news? Boy, I can hardly believe it.

I'll only get about a thirty, forty, maybe about a forty, forty-five or fifty day early out but say if school were starting in December, first part of December, then I could have gotten probably a sixty or ninety day early out. But they only let you out ten days prior to the date you actually start back to school up to a maximum of ninety days early out. If I complete ten months over here, it's considered a full tour, so no sweat there. As of, let's see, about December 17th it would be exactly ten months. So that is terrific news. Shoot, for R&R we can meet in November some place, Australia or Hawaii, probably Hawaii because that'd be cheaper and a longer time together, more convenient for you, and besides it's real beautiful. We can get a nice hotel right on the beach and they even have dune buggies you can rent that are also legal in the streets. Everybody advises renting one of those things or a car and cruising around on your own. Don't take any tours or anything, just have a grand old time. So that is some really terrific news. I just couldn't believe it when I heard it.

I think I'll change the subject now and go to something else. I've got, besides my camera to send to you for repairs, I still haven't decided whether I'd like to have it back or not. I really think I would like to have it back because then after I use my Honeywell Pentax here for awhile, I'd like to send that home for safe keeping and keep my Yashica here for just regular pictures. By that time I'll have a movie camera so I can take movies of everything else I see. So when you send my Yashica back I'll have film here for it. I've got four rolls of color slides left and six rolls of black and white prints. So that will last me for quite awhile. So I think, I've got a big stack of stuff ready to wrap and send to you and that film was included so I think I'll take it out and keep the film, send you the camera, let you repair it and send it back to me.

Besides that I've got a Vietnam Service Medal and ribbon to send home to you for safe

keeping. What I'd like to do is get the medals to go with all my ribbons, you know, National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal. I've got the Vietnam Service Medal and before I get out of here I'll probably get a couple more and just have the medals as well as the ribbons, just to have, just for safe keeping, just to keep for, what do you say, posterity, posterity, whatever you say.

Besides that I've got two rolls of 20-exposure color slides from my 35mm for you to develop, they're in those nice little metal round cylinder container type things. So they'll be easy to ship. I've got three hammock ends, about a two foot section off the end of hammocks, so when I send you a full hammock don't cut it up. I'll send you these three ends, so when I send you some more hammocks, you can just take those ends, open up the seam on one end and overlap it about three inches and sew it up, about a double seam all the way around the edges and then maybe a bunch of cross, you know x's, through all the stuff. Then it'll be a hammock big enough for a six-footer like me. I've got a indigenous poncho I'll send you, and also an indigenous poncho liner. So I'll try to get all that stuff wrapped and take it to Tay Ninh with me when I go in. I think I'll be going in on Wednesday. In fact I'm sure I will. I'll send all that to you.

I don't know if I'll be able to get the crossbow wrapped or not. I'm having trouble finding a suitable container for it. I'd like to put it in a good sturdy tube or something. The tube that you sent me with my drawings in it was too busted up so I didn't keep that. So maybe what I can do is find a flat cardboard box that's long enough somewhere and put it in. The crossbow now is disassembled. It's got a funny looking stock. It's just a long, flat board with a funny looking end on it. You'll think at the front end should be the back end, but it isn't. The front end has got a little fancy design on it and it's bigger than the rear end. There's no place to put your shoulder, you know, no carved out little shoulder stock area. But you'll see the hole for the bow to go through in the stock. So you slip the bow in, there's a slight curve to it so that you can tell which side is the front. There's also two tiny little red marks on the back of the bow, so that when you push it in, it only goes in from one direction too, so if it doesn't slide all the way in from one side, pull it out and stick it in from the other side and it will slide right up to those two little red marks. It fits snug enough to remain right there.

Then you string it, just put the string on the bow, and you're all set. That cotton-pickin' string, I don't know what kind of glue or stick-um they used, saliva or whatever they used, beetle nut juice. It keeps the end attached, you know where the loop is, they didn't weave it back into the string. All they did is twist it around and throw a little paste or something on there. So when I send it to you, don't string it up until you re-glue that string. I don't know what to tell you to use, maybe clear nail polish or some Elmer's Glue-all, which would probably work, or some household cement. Just put some on your two fingers and twist the string as you apply the glue

and then let it sit until it's good and hard. Then go ahead and string it.

I haven't shot an arrow, and I don't believe I ever will over here, but if you want to try, go ahead. I'm sure that when Chuck sees it he'll want to shoot one. But please, let him only shoot it once, maybe twice, because these things aren't the easiest to come by and I definitely don't want it broken. It's got a quiver of about eight to ten little bamboo arrows with a little piece of palm leaf for the feathers. They're only about six inches long. I don't know if they're fire hardened on the point or not so if he shoots at something have him shoot at a pile of straw or a dirt bank, you know, something it will stick into fairly easily. Don't let him shoot at the side of a house or a tree or a board or the garage or anything like that because I'm sure the arrow may break, splinter, crack, do something. You know me, I'm picky and choosy and I like to take care of my equipment and things. I'd hate to have it broken.

I'm still working on my room. I've got part of a hammock hanging down over my dresser to keep the dust and stuff out. I took one of those four deuce (4.2 inch diameter) illumination round parachutes and tacked that up to my ceiling, so now I've got a nice little circular parachute about four and a half feet in diameter hanging up there. And I've got a little alarm clock something like that one that your dad had that I took apart and couldn't get to work. Well this one I took apart and I got it to work. So now I've got my own little alarm clock in the room here and it's ticking away nicely. Let's see, still got some White Owls left, in fact, quite a few.

Still got one package of apricots, the tea, some of those mints left, and those cookies from Mrs. Fitch. Boy, they turned out to be much better than I thought they would be. When I first saw them I thought, oh great, what a bunch of dried up old hard cookies. Although most of them are not filled, they're just regular biscuit type cookies, I guess that's why the English call them biscuits, there are some that had chocolate on them. There were about two different kinds that had filling. One had filling with a little drop of gooey jelly in the middle and a couple others with some kind of icing or something on top of them. Most of them are sugar cookies, or that type, gingerbread, and they're really good. This tin that she sent me is enough to last me for maybe three weeks, munching maybe ten cookies a night, which I do. I eat about five and then again at 9 o'clock I get pretty hungry so, especially if I'm on radio watch like I was last night until midnight. I munched and crunched on cookies most of the evening. It's real good.

I caught a rat in one of my traps in my room last night. Ever since I plugged that hole I haven't had a bit of trouble with rats, but occasionally one will sneak in through the door that I leave open so I've got a couple of traps set. I put a piece of that hard butterscotch candy on it. Sure enough, there was a little rat stuck in there this morning.

Besides munching on cookies at night I've also got cans of apple sauce, and pound cake and pecan nut bread or whatever, something like that comes out of C-rations, and peanut butter

and jelly and bread, stuff like that I keep around here. It's all out of C-rations though. It's in C-ration cans. Don't think that's what attracts the rats. I have nothing exposed that will attract the rats.

Oh, boy. I'm so excited about getting out of here early. I don't see any flaws. I don't know why we shouldn't be able to swing it. People have done it before so I don't know why we can't. So it's, all we're waiting for now is that DD form 214 and a copy of that letter from the personnel officer to send to me, and as soon as I get that then I'll type up a nice letter to MSU and send it all to you and you can put all that stuff together with my application and hustle it on to MSU. Just dance around and cross your legs and everything and keep running to the john until you hear from them. When you do then hustle everything out to me and I'll hustle it on to the CO of 5th Special Forces Group and then we just wait.

Oh, another thing. When I apply for leave, I probably won't know until about one full month ahead of time, which would be the 20th of July, whether or not it's gone through. But he said that 99 and 9/10ths percent of the time everybody in Vietnam gets exactly what he wants for his leave. The exact dates, times, the whole schmear. So I'm sure I won't have any problems. So go ahead and plan on meeting me in Hong Kong on the 20th of August. Well, my leave starts the 20th so I'll meet you on the 21st. 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th, then on the 26th I'll have to come back. But shoot, it won't be near as hard leaving you then. I mean, it will be tough all right, but I mean, we'll think that in, let's see, September, October, in two and a half months we'll see each other again in Hawaii and then a month after that I'll be coming home. Boy, can you imagine that? Say goodbye for a measly four or five weeks and then I'll be home, for good, forever and ever and ever and ever. Never to leave again.

Boy, that'll be great. I'm anxious to get home. Gee whiz. I haven't even been over here that long yet. Let's see, March, April, May, about three and a half months actually. We're counting all of February so that's February, March, April, May, that's four months. I've got June, July, August, September, October, November and we'll say half of December so that's only six and a half months to go. Shoot, I'm almost half way through. Half way through my twelve month tour. If you want to count it that way. Boy, would that be terrific. Get home in time for Christmas.

I'm going to sign off now and get ready for a busy afternoon of calling in helicopters and food choppers and all that junk so I'll finish it up tonight. Oh, I've got another thing to say. Yesterday, by mistake, they dropped our mail off at Nui Ba Den Mountain. So we didn't get any mail yesterday and nothing came for me Wednesday so I haven't gotten any mail since last Sunday. Today is Saturday and I probably won't get any mail today although they're trying to make an effort to get the mail bag to us today but I'm quite sure they won't make it. So tomorrow I should get a big, big bundle of mail for about three days worth, Wednesday, Friday, and

Sunday's mail all at once. So I hope I can just sit down for maybe one full hour and just do nothing but read that luscious mail from home.

I think what I'll try to do is complete a tape to my folks and send it out. It'll probably just be a repeat of everything that I'm telling you. Don't feel you have to let them listen to this tape. They can if they want to. It's just a bunch of repeat. Oh, I finished up the letter to Dr. VanDyken. I think I told you that on the last tape. Got that mailed all right. If you get a chance, stop in and see him. Also, let me know if you've got the plastic cover for the Garrard changer and whether or not you've got the AR4X speakers and if you did, what you think of them.

That's about it. There's not too much left on this side but I think I'll shut it off anyway and go about my business for awhile and finish talking to you tonight. So, so long, hon.

31 May 1969--Continued

Saturday evening

Only me again. I'm back in my room. It's 9 o'clock at night and I just finished working from 7 o'clock this morning to 9 o'clock at night. It's one of my average days, maybe just a little bit more. I usually end up quitting about 6 and maybe put in a few minutes after I eat at night. But tonight our field element ran into some VC and had to shoot up the works. So I was in the commo room for the past three hours. I still have a little more to do on my funds report. There goes the tape.

I hope I can find enough to tell you on the last half hour of this tape so I can send it out tomorrow. Let's see. What happened this afternoon? The chow chopper came in. We loaded on about 35 people. One of them was a sick woman on a litter. We got some food and some chow and stuff. Oh, McCrea just got back from leave in Hong Kong. He said that Kowloon is the best place to stay. They've got three real nice hotels there that are just maybe two or three dollars cheaper a night than the Hong Kong Hilton which is on some island, Hong Kong Island, I guess. That's what he said, Hong Kong Island. I'm not sure how the city is set up but he said you got to take the ferry across to get to the Hong Kong Hilton. That's also where the, it's called the China Fleet Club. That's where that fabulous building is with all the stores. He said as far as those hotels are concerned he stayed in one of the other three right over in Kowloon which is fairly close to the airport. He said it's a very nice district, somewhat residential. It's got a lot of nice businesses and shops. It's clean and everything, whereas in the Hong Kong part is where all the little shops and the busy people bustling around and everything. It's not quite as clean and neat and everything but that's also where a lot of activity is.

The night clubs, if we ever want to go to one of those, there were some in both places,

Kowloon and Hong Kong itself. He said you take a ferry across and he couldn't describe the Hong Kong Fleet Club. He said it was so fantastic. He said it was really a terrific place. You can buy stuff there cheaper than any place else in Hong Kong and it's all the best quality stuff. He bought a Rolex watch, which is considered everywhere to be the very best watch in the world. He bought his for \$150 and it costs \$300 in the States. I don't know why they're so fantastic but it's got a date and of course it's automatic, waterproof to about 660 feet or so, luminous. It's got a chronometer, I don't know, a way of telling time in different parts of the world and all kinds of garbage on it. It's really nice looking, stainless steel, black faced. I'll just settle for Seiko's and not waste my money on a watch like that. But he said he saw some Rolex watches there that were carved out of a solid block of gold that you could buy for \$400. In the States they run for about \$1200.

But he said you can buy just about anything that you could possibly imagine in Hong Kong. They've got just absolutely everything, you can buy there. He said the prices there are cheaper than any place else in the world as far as the people he talked to over there and people he's talked to since he's been back. He said it's really a neat place to see. He went down and had a couple of suits made for himself. It only took two fittings, and they fit perfectly, made out of silk, silk lining, the whole works. He sent those home. He didn't say how much they cost, of course I really haven't had a chance to sit down and talk to him about everything he saw or did over there. I plan to fairly soon.

We got a new cook in. You know, when I told you our mess hall got blown up, well our cook was wounded that night. He caught a piece of shrapnel through the wrist and it broke a couple bones. He's going to be out for a long time so we just paid him off and told him we'd find somebody else. McCrea, on his way back from Hong Kong, spent time in Tay Ninh and he scouted up another cook. She's a girl. She's probably about 25 or 30, somewhere around there. It's real hard to tell age. She's very good looking, real great for morale around here. Boy, everybody's morale went up 300 percent when they saw her. She's quite a cute looking little girl. Don't worry about anything, but I'm just explaining what she looked like. She's not skinny like most of the Vietnamese women, she's just right, although quite short. She's a little shorter than Flossie, in fact maybe about three inches shorter.

She arrived here about 3 o'clock and I showed her around and let her meet everybody. She speaks pretty good English. Took her into the mess hall and let her meet mama-san and Co Ba, which is the other girl that works in the kitchen. They also do our clothes. Boy, she was anxious to dig right in. She had a meal for us tonight, of course we got some food in too, that helps. We had sliced ham and sweet potatoes with brown sugar on the top and some bean sprouts, Kool-Aid, pears. Up until just a couple days ago we had been eating rice, every noon and every evening along with usually potatoes or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or what little

chicken we had left or rice and French fries, and that's about it. For breakfast we've been having pancakes. It's a mix that comes in a can, you just throw a little water into it and throw it on the griddle. Makes fairly decent pancakes. In fact that would be great to take camping with us, something like that. It comes in a great big can, all you do is just add water and you get a couple good pancakes. They're not the greatest tasting, but shoot, they're plenty good. You can't be too choosy.

Anyway, it got so bad the last couple of days that I'd go ducking into the mess hall about 10 o'clock, find something to cook. I found some pea soup so I whipped up a batch of pea soup for lunch. I didn't tell anybody I was doing it. Then at lunch time everybody said, 'Hey, pea soup, something new. Great!' I kind of chuckled and said, 'Yeah, I'm the one that cooked it.' They all looked at me and said, 'What?' They couldn't believe that I came in and spent five minutes cooking up a bowl of pea soup and I also whipped up some instant apple sauce. The way they tell you to do it in the directions is just to pour the can into a quart and a half of cold water and stir it up, you know. I worked KP one time and had to mix some up and it turns out a little bit gritty that way because the cold water just doesn't break down those little beads of apples or whatever they use. So I thought, okay, I'll show them. So I threw a quart and a half of water in a pan and put it on the stove and heated it up to just below boiling, threw in the can, melted that stuff in nothing flat, poured in quite a bit of ground cinnamon and whipped it up good and threw it the freezer. That night we had some real delicious apple sauce. That was really terrific stuff. I couldn't believe it turned out so well, in fact. Really good. Oh, mama-san, she couldn't get over that. Boy, she thought I was really terrific for being able to come in and cook, me being a male.

She gave me a little tiny bowl, about half the size of one of our cereal bowls, of apple sauce. Boy, it was so good I asked for another bowl and another and another. The first meal I had five bowls of applesauce. That was so good. After that she just knew to put at least two or three bowls in front of me because we don't have anything larger than those little bowls unless I eat out of a big cooking pot or something. So mama-san and Co Ba would tease me all the time. They would just say, beaucoup [many] and beaucoup, and keep on bringing me bowls of applesauce. For dessert, every meal, noon and evening, I either have cold pear halves or cold crushed pineapple. That's about the only two kinds of fruit we have that's good for just eating plain like that. I love them both and they know I do so all I have to do is just form a little bowl with my fingers and they know either to get me pears or crushed pineapple.

If we had an oven I'd try baking a cake too, because the only thing you have to do with the cake mix is just add water. The cakes come out real good, I'm surprised. Artillery cooked some cakes one time while we were eating over with them while we were working on our mess hall. They cooked a real good spice cake. Gee, it really turned out good. I asked them how they did it

and they said, "Well, you just take this whole cake mix here and add the amount of water that the directions call for, throw it in an oven for how long it calls for at the right heat and out it comes."

I thought great, I'll try it, but I found out that when our stove got hit with shrapnel it knocked the oven out. I haven't had time to check it to see what's wrong but it can't be anything too serious. So we don't have an oven. All we have are two burners on the top. We're supposed to get a new stove in, four burners with an oven but it hasn't arrived yet. So, no homemade bread or donuts or cakes or anything like that. Just have to suffer along. It's to the point now where we're really low on food. We haven't had anybody down in Bien Hoa for a month and a half, maybe even two months to scout up food. Everybody keeps hinting around, they want me to go down there again. Shoot, I've got too much work to do all the time.

Right now we've got, well, our policy is when we send an operation out we always have to have one E-6 or above and one E-5 or below to go out on an operation. Right now we've got, besides myself, we have all the E-6s and above out on this heliborne. We have the captain and the team sergeant, Sergeant Moss, the E-8, Sergeant Lambert, an E-7, and Sergeant Brown, an E-7. That only leaves me as a person who can take an operation out. I had the operation immediately prior to the heliborne and as soon as they come back I'll have to go out again, I think. But here another problem arises. I have to take my funds report in with all the money. I have to do that Wednesday and the operation comes in Tuesday, so I don't know what they're going to do about that. Whether the captain's going to decide to send me out Tuesday on the operation and send somebody else in with my funds report and see if that will work or, I don't know. I don't really think he'd send one of the four guys who are out on the heliborne who were just out in the field, out again, immediately. That doesn't seem fair. So, although these are minor problems they are somewhat of a major problem as far as we're concerned because operations sure aren't any fun. It's only right that every man takes his correct turn when the time comes. So we'll just have to see what happens.

Right now we haven't got a place for the new cook to sleep so we brought her into the teamhouse and gave her one of the CONEXs. She was content. All the team members kind'a chuckling about that. Seems to me there's more traffic in the hallway tonight than I've ever seen before and of course every time they walk by her room they glance in. She must have been kind of tired tonight. She went to, she laid down in her bed about 8 o'clock, left her light on until about 9 and then when I came in here to finish up the tape at about 9 o'clock she had turned her light off.

After she finished the meal tonight she went in and took a shower and put on some sexy little silk outfit, kind of blouse and pants type thing made out of silk and orange print, real bright and flowery and gay. Of course that attracted a lot of attention. The guys around here are quite sex starved, girl crazy. Shoot, you can't really blame them. They all stared at her, not really

stared, but you know, glanced at her quite frequently, talked to her whenever they could. Although I haven't made any, well, I can't say passes, I haven't made any conversation with her. I haven't gone out of my way to talk to her or anything tonight because I've been so busy. I came in here right after eating a meal tonight, took a shower, came back in my room and started to work, and I still have some money to count and stuff. I was sitting in my office counting money and she walked in and asked me what I was doing and how I enjoyed the meal tonight, looked around my room and oohed and aahed about how neat it was. Not neat, but how nice, how well kept, that way, that kind of neat. Asked me if I lived here and I said "yes." She asked me what I was doing and I told her I was counting money, getting ready to turn my funds report in. She saw your pictures here on my shelf and she said, "Is that your wife?" I said "Yes, it is." She asked me how long I had been married and whether I had any children. I said, "Three years. No, I don't have any children because I haven't been with my wife long enough." Of course she wanted to know why and I said, "Well, I keep moving around the country and been in the Army for the last two and a half years and we've been separated off and on, that kind of stuff." She said, "Oh." She wanted to know how long I was in Vietnam. So I told her and she said, "Well, maybe when you go home you'll have baby-san real soon." Kind of chuckled and walked away. She's nice and friendly, and shoot, something to look at anyway besides these stupid CIDG around here.

And that about covers all the news. I don't know what to tell you. I don't know what to tell you. Let me shut it off and think a minute.

I don't know if you ever got to read the poems or a copy of the poems that Flossie sent. I have them posted up here on my wall. I think I'll read them to you. The first one is entitled "Vietnam." Here it goes:

It sounds like you are having fun
in the land of sweat and sun.
Guns in your stomach and bombs in the air,
Boy am I glad that I'm not there.
How thoughtful of the Vietnamese
to run for home if there's a noise in the trees.
I guess they only fight when they please
with friends like that, who needs enemies.
If I were Prez, I'd send you home
and let those chickens fight alone.
That would really fan their feathers

but until then I'll send you letters.
How are the Charleys, the naughty Cong?
Awaiting the rains before they do wrong.
If this is the case then needless to say
I hope you guys don't have one rainy day.
From the snapshot that you sent
I sort of know how your day is spent
drinking beer and telling jokes.
If you ask me this war is a hoax.
I guess I better can the verse
for it will probably just get worse.
I've never claimed to be a poet,
but better proof than this to show it.

The second one is entitled "A Tribute to the Green Berets" dated April 18, 1969.

Here's to you, Green Berets.
You handsome son-of-a-guns.
From all of the news I'm hearing,
you're a bunch of scrounging bums.
Yes I hear you're quite the scroungers
in fact I'd be surprised
if there was still a sucker left
that you haven't tried to bribe.
Begging at the bars, crying to the cooks
It evidently did the trick,
but someone sure got took.
I still cannot believe it,
those weights in just one box

and then to stagger through the camp
oh Fetters, you're a fox.
About those tapes you're sending,
I wish I could have heard
that part you made your wife erase
before we got the word.
To you my Green Berets,
this poem I did write.
In hopes that very shortly
you'll stay at home to fight.
I hope this second masterpiece
finds you safe and sound.
And later if I'm so inspired
I'll write for you another round.
Till then, the end
my friend, Flossie B.

That's pretty clever, pretty good, if I do say so myself. She used to write them for me when I was in basic and all the guys used to get a big chuckle out of them.

I know what I forgot to tell you tonight. About an hour ago we took five rounds, enemy, mortar rounds, incoming. All five of them landed outside the main front gate, out near the helipad someplace. Between the helipad and the runway so no damage, no casualties. Nothing like that. Artillery has been firing up to the north where our ground element has spotted some VC. Of course it's pitch black up there now and they can't really tell what's what. They've been pounding the area all around where the friendlies are, after they saw the 4 VC moving down a path. The artillery rounds exploding on the ground have caused some secondary explosions so they figure they've come across a cache or something of possibly enemy mortar rounds or something like that. They requested an air strike first thing tomorrow morning in the area just south of where they are now. So it will be interesting to see what develops, what they find when they go through the area after the air strike.

That about covers what I thought of that in that short little blurb. Let me shut it off again

and see if I can think of something else.

Yah, hello. It's me again. I sound like a Dutchman, don't I? I've been watching a hockey game on TV. It's 20 minutes to 11. I go on radio watch at 2 so I best get some sleep. I looked at my little clock in here on the wall or on my shelf and it didn't look right. It said 20 minutes to 11 but I thought, oh shoot, it must be later than that because I'm so tired. But it wasn't. So, I think I'll hit the sack and I've still got some tape to go. I don't know when I'll finish that. Maybe tomorrow morning. I'll be pretty busy tomorrow morning. I've got to wrap up the funds report and get it in on the work chopper. Also at 8 o'clock, 357 Cambodian Company's got two pigs they're going to slaughter. They invited me over so I could take pictures. So I'll watch the gory operation, take a knife and slit its throat and split it down the middle. I don't know what all they do but I'll have some good slides of it.

This evening we had a camp alert so I had to walk around the camp and check all the, we only fired the machine guns, the recoilless rifles, and a couple of the mortars so I had to check all machine guns in camp, there are about 34 of them, and recoilless rifles, watched them shoot their little 60 mortars. That's about it. Took only about a half an hour, just cruised around. I had my full uniform on. I always have to when I go around and see all the companies. Except I didn't have my boots on, I had my Hush Puppies so I looked real cool with my uniform shirt and trousers and then no socks and Hush Puppies. I was dressed more for comfort than for anything.

That's about it. Things have been pretty quiet up north as far as the operation is concerned. That's about all, hon. This long tape is hard to fill up. Maybe you ought to just put a whole bunch of nice music on it, a few albums. You can probably get two full albums on there. Or maybe four half albums, get a nice selection of music. I'll let you pick and choose whatever you want to send me. It doesn't matter if the fidelity's not the greatest. At least I'll have something to listen to while I'm in here working. I don't have a radio and it's nice to just have some background noise when you're in here working rather than, excuse me, I keep burping water, like I said it's nice to have some background noise when you're in here doing paperwork and stuff that's boring. So, if you can, throw a little music on it.

You ought to have about four or five or six of my tapes over on your side. This is the last one I've got, well no, you've probably got three of them in the mail right now, maybe even four, I don't know. I keep forgetting the mail hasn't arrived out here for some time. I didn't get any on Wednesday, and the chopper dropped the mailbag off at the wrong place on Friday.

So tomorrow for sure, I'll get lots of mail. Two mailbags full of mail to sort. That's half the fun, sorting the mail and seeing what everybody else gets. Then I open the mails, my mail, in the order of least importance to the order of most importance because I always save the best for

last. I always was that way even when my mom made sandwiches and stuff for me in my lunch way back when I was going to grade school. I'd get something like a ham and cheese and a peanut butter and jelly. I always figured that the peanut butter and jelly was the best sandwich going. So I'd always eat all the ham and cheese first and then save the best to last, the peanut butter and jelly. So that's what I do with your letters and tapes. I figure the tapes are better than the letters. The tapes are very last. Your letters are next to last. And depending on who I get letters from and stuff, I open the least important first or if I just get some information or catalogues or price lists or something for companies that I send away to then I open that junk first and get it out of the way. Then I start on letters from far away relatives or friends and then closer in relatives and then your folks, then my folks, and then you. I always save the best to the last. I always pick a time when I can be alone and not interrupted and quiet, not bothered so I can just read the whole thing through nicely and slowly and sap up all the good writing that you put in it.

Shoot, I'm completely out of stuff to say. I've got a bunch of new books to read. I've got this book on 36 children, the one I told you about, about the teacher and the little kids he was teaching and the trouble he had and I don't know, I didn't read it at all. I just kind of glanced at the cover. I think I'll include that in a box of stuff that I'm going to send to you. I hear the dog barking in the background for some reason. So I think I'll say goodnight. Maybe I'll finish it later tonight when I'm on radio watch or first thing tomorrow morning. We'll see. Good night. Good night. Good night, hon.

1 June 1969

Sunday

Good morning, it's 10 to 9 in the morning. I've got to quickly finish this up and get it ready for the mail. This morning I got up at 8 o'clock instead of 7 o'clock and enjoyed the extra hour. As soon as I got up I went over to 357, the Cambodian Company, because they told me last night that they were going to slaughter a pig at 8 o'clock this morning. By the time I got over there the pig had already been slaughtered and cut up so I didn't get any good pictures. So maybe the next time. We'll see what kind of luck I have.

Oh, gee whiz, I don't know. It's going to be another hot, scorchy day, I can see that. I still have got some paperwork and junk to finish up. I'm waiting right now for contact with the funds officer at the B-Team over the radio. I've got to talk to him. This morning, somehow, in the trash can in our kitchen, there were ten rats. Most of them were relatively young, in fact all of them but one was. The first thought that struck me was maybe a mother rat had crawled in there and had a litter but the thing is emptied every day. Yesterday I guess somebody dumped some sugar in there, a broken bag or something. It all stuck to the bottom, I guess that's what attracted

the rats. But anyway, they jumped in but they couldn't get back out. It must have been nine babies following its mother. When the mother jumped in I guess all the babies jumped in, and none of them could get back out. So mama-san picked all the trash out of it and I took the tub outside. We have a new man to take Alexander's place. His name is Wes Holck, Spec-5. He's our demo man. He's been here about a week now. Anyway, he and I took that tub outside and one at a time picked the rats out and threw them to the dogs and watched the dogs chase them all over the yard until they got them. Then after they killed them all, we piled them up and burned them so there wouldn't be any flies and stuff attracted to the corpses.

I got around to starting another book. It's a Shell Scott private detective type book. Pretty good. I've got some more to read, one about B-29 Bombers and World War II, two science fiction, one entitled, Lost Treasures and How to Find Them, three science fiction, four science fiction. And of course the old '69 Almanac which will keep me busy for a long time.

I've got a calendar here, it's called a Julian date calendar. For every day in the year, it has a date, a number. Like the first day of January is 001, first day of June is 152nd day of the year, November 6th is the 310th day of the year, August 3rd is 215th day of the year. What I'm doing, I'm using that as my short timer's calendar. Although I haven't done anything to it since April 15th. So I've got about 45 days to cross off. What I'm doing, I'm going to cross off everything from December 20th on, hoping that I can get out of this country by Dec. 20th. Today's number is 152. December 19th's number is 353. So if you subtract the two you get how many days I have remaining in the country. It comes to about 1-2-3-4-5-6 and a half months, or pretty close to 200 days. If I get a box big enough I'll send you one of these Julian date calendars. They're neat. Just to keep track of how many days I've been gone and when I'm due to return.

That about winds it up. I think I'm going to have the same trouble as you are. You look at that tape and say shoot, it's getting real short I better start saying good-bye, and then it goes on and on and on and on. If I wrap up that package with two rolls of film and maybe a poncho liner and that service medal, I'm also going to include just the belt buckle, that NVA belt buckle that I got. It's kind of corroded so what you might have to do is take some Brass-O and shine it up, or some silver polish. I don't really know what it's made of but it's got some rusty spots and stuff on it so maybe Brass-O and steel wool would be the best thing, get it all shiny, (cough) excuse me, get it all shiny and then just keep it some place as a war souvenir.

I think that's about all I have to say. I'll have lots to say between Sunday and Wednesday because I'll have all kinds of letters and stuff of yours that I can answer your questions and your thoughts give me thoughts so I won't have any trouble. I hope I get my first slides back from my 35mm and my flash attachment.

Be sure to let me know if you've received any packages in the mail yet. I don't think you

will just yet because I haven't received a confirmation from the PACEX Catalog Company that the order has been filled. I'm still waiting to hear from them. They say it takes from thirty to sixty days. I only sent it out at the end of April, first part of May. So if you didn't get any packages this month, you will next month, for sure.

Say hi to everybody, my folks included. Tell them I'm sorry I haven't gotten any letters out or tapes or anything to them. I got a postcard off to Aunt Alice yesterday. It'll go out today. Say a special hi to Pete and thank him for his letter. That's about it, hon. I'm going to start saying goodbye. I love you. I miss you. I can't wait to see you. June, July, about two and a half months. That's not too long. Still it's sixty, eighty days away. That's still quite a ways, but I think the time will pass swiftly because you've got a lot to do in preparing for your trip and everything. Of course time goes pretty fast for me because I stay pretty busy. That's it. I love you.

1 – 2 June 1969

Sunday / Monday

Hi, it's about 7:15 or so on June 1st, Sunday night. We got mail today. First time in a week. But the only thing I got was, of course all my business crap, S-4, S-1 junk, newsletters and all that junk, and all I got is one tape from you. That's this tape. I've listened to it twice so far, jotted down notes and stuff and now I'm rerecording because I've got some things I want to say while they're still fresh in my mind.

I got a sample of the letter that Michigan State has to write to me. I'll read it to you and then what I'm going to do is copy down all the information that's in it so when I write to Michigan State, I'll say well, the letter's got to be such and such, got to have this and that. "Directed to the Commanding Officer, 5th Special Forces Group, Airborne, First SF, APO San Francisco 96240. Dear Sir, this is to certify that 1st Lieutenant Tommy Arasco Blah, Blah, Blah, has been readmitted to Texas A&M University for the fall semester of 1969. Classes for the fall semester of 1969 begin Monday, September 15th. The last day for enrolling in the University for the fall semester is Friday, September 19. The next succeeding semester begins on Monday, February 2, 1970. Mr. Arasco is being admitted to a course of study which requires full time attendance and leads to a baccalaureate or higher degree. Texas A&M is a fully accredited university. Yours Very Truly, Charles Lemore, Assistant Registrar."

So, I'll write a note to MSU, ASAP, and get it typed up nicely on SF stationary. That'll be jazzy. I'll have it all ready to go as soon as I get my copy of the DD-214 form, I'll shoot that stuff home to you. You can throw it in an envelope with my admissions statement and we'll see what happens.

I'm sorry about that tape that my folks received with the "Spooky" (a type of gun ship) noises on it. For the life of me I can't figure out what I did wrong, though. I don't know, I just can't figure out what I did wrong. If I remember correctly, I did listen to a portion of the tape to make sure it was recording all right, and I'm quite sure everything sounded good on my machine. So I don't know what the deal was. Maybe I only listened to the first part, you know, the Spooky part, and recorded the rest and shoot, I don't think I could have had the volume that low, but apparently I did. Either that, or maybe my little microphone thing wasn't plugged in all the way. I don't know what the deal is. But, like you said, I should shut it off and check it which I'll do right this minute, so just hang on.

Okay, everything sounds real fine, so now I'll continue onward. I'll also tomorrow write a letter to the US R&R officer, room 110, Park Hotel, Kowloon, Hong Kong, whatever it is, and see what he can tell me on R&R and that kind of stuff. I'll ask for reservations and shoot, I don't know, maybe I'll just let you ask for reservations. Or you tell me what you find out or wait until we find out from him and then decide on what hotel we want to have reservations at. I'll just write for information. I won't ask for him to reserve a room for us.

Today we had quite a bit of action in the heliborne operation starting first thing this morning. I got up at, I don't know, 7, no, I got up about 8 o'clock I think. I went over to see if the people were going to slaughter the pig, which they had already accomplished, so I came back here and ate. Immediately after breakfast I was getting ready to shave and the radio man called me in and said that our unit had spotted some VC and they started shooting at them and everything and called in gunships and medevac because a couple of our people got wounded. Ended up killing two VC. All during the night they had VC all around them. On three different occasions the guys on the perimeter said they saw VC to the east, to the south and to the west.

So the VC were definitely out there and they figure that the VC were running parallel with them through the jungle, which they probably were, because later on this afternoon while they were, after they had just finished the contact this morning, getting the medevac in, getting the people around, calling in the gunships to shoot up the area and artillery, they were moving back toward camp and they were hit by a VC ambush, a Claymore mine ambush. They set off about three Claymore mines, Chinese Communist type Claymore mines which are big circular things about the size of a frying pan, and killed three of our people right off the bat, wounded two others, and Sergeant Brown on the team got three small pieces of shrapnel in his back. So immediately we called in more artillery on them and requested another medevac. At the same time we had a C-130 landing on the strip. We also had the work chopper coming in with the colonel from the B-Team.

Man, talk about a busy day. We were all running around trying to get things coordinated. So the people came in off the operation while the colonel was still here. A couple guys went out

with the truck to the end of the runway and picked up the dead and wounded and brought them in. Since we already had one helicopter on the landing pad and we had to make room for two, well, actually our main landing pad is covered with a rubberized material called membrane with a "H" right in the middle of it. That's where the first helicopter landed, but off to one side we have a dirt area that's real rough, and hilly, and bumpy, a couple tree stumps in it where I had to bring in the other helicopter so I popped smoke for him and guided him in with hand and arm signals. He set down and they loaded on two more wounded and it turned out to be four dead. One guy died on the way in in the truck. Eww, I saw some of the dead. Holy mackerel. They were just shot full of holes. One guy had his whole forehead from about over his right eye all the way to the left side of his head was just caved right in. Right where the wound started, just an abrupt ending of his skull from where the wound started all the way to the left side of his head. It was just pushed right in. I could look at the edge of his skull bone, look right in and see brains and stuff. Boy, that was kind of gory. The guys who were killed were right up in front. They were right in full blast of that Claymore mine. Most of them are just peppered full of holes. So, we got them out of there.

They wouldn't have near as much trouble except for the fact that the camp commander screwed up so badly out there, all four Americans told him to his face that he was a dud, absolutely worthless, no good, couldn't control his troops, didn't know what to do, and we would never go out in the field with him again, he was so screwed up. As soon as we got back in to camp, he started telling Major Ben, which is our B-Team commander's counterpart at the B-team, our camp commander, VN type, started telling him how badly the company commanders, Cambodian Company Commanders, screwed up out in the field and all the Americans vouched for the company commanders. They said that those guys were terrific; they were the only ones who knew what they were doing, were in control of the troops. The camp commander just had no control whatsoever and didn't know what to do and he was running scared the whole time, didn't have good security out. Every time, as I was saying, the camp commander did a lousy job out there. He had no security out. That's the main reason why they got hit. When they did get hit, he had no control over the troops. He just didn't know what to do. So the camp commanders stepped in and started controlling their men, doing what they were supposed to do, putting them on line, returning fire, setting up a perimeter, all that kind of stuff.

Oh, I know what I was saying, anytime a VNSF goes out in the field, all he carries is a pistol belt with an ammo pouch and one canteen. He has these goofball cronies, his right hand stooges to carry all their other stuff for them, all their food, their hammock, and poncho, and all that stuff for them. So when he moves through the jungle he's completely free of all this garbage you've got to carry on your back. Of course everybody else has to carry all their stuff. He was moving so fast through the jungle that nobody could keep up with him. That's one of the reasons

why everybody was so, in such a poor fighting disposition when they were hit. They were so tired from rushing through the jungle like that. The captain just did everything in his power to make the guy stop and rest, set up a perimeter, slow down, let the troops have a rest, put out security, be careful for VC, and he wouldn't budge. He just wouldn't do it. Not only that, but twice when they stopped to get a map check the Americans told him where they were in the jungle and the VNSF said, "No, we're here." Both times he was five or six hundred meters off because they had a FAC flying around above them who can pinpoint their position at any time. So the captain, just to prove his point, signaled to the FAC, had him mark their position and give them their exact coordinates, right where they were standing. The camp commander just shrugged it off and continued onward. Shoot, being five or six hundred meters off, if he ever called in artillery, he could very possibly have wiped out his own people.

Boy, I'm glad I wasn't out there. I got upset just hearing those poor guys out in the field trying to tell that stupid jerk what to do and just not have him listen. They were fed up. Boy, they were just short of giving up. If they had a chance to come in off the operation they would have left that guy standing out there holding the bag. What gets me, first chance he gets back in camp, he starts throwing the blame on everybody else. Boy oh boy, I'll be glad when I spend my four or six months out here on this A-site and then be jerked back in to the B-Team or the C-Team, or wherever I go, to finish up my tour. After that much time I'm just going to get so fed up with these people I just won't be able to work effectively with them. We don't anyway. I'll start losing my cool and haul off and slug somebody one of these days.

So another three or four more months out here, maybe even only two more and they'll see fit to find me a job at the B-Team or the C-Team. I'm not going to complain. It's, aside from operations and stuff, it's not too bad being out here because you aren't bugged by a lot of baloney of running around with your full uniform on day in and day out despite the heat, all that crappy paperwork that goes with an office job. At least you won't have to be out here pulling hair and pulling teeth trying to get these stupid people to do things correctly.

Remember last time I told you when we made contact, that was April 25th. Sergeant Moss was out there. We made contact and they were moving down the trail, coming back in and they were ambushed also. The exact same thing happened today. I told you then, that no matter how often it happens, the stupid CIDG just don't learn a lesson. Cambodians know what to do but the VNSF just say "Okay, we're going to head to the road and we're going to move right down the road," which is what they did, and zap, they were hit. So I told you then on that tape a month ago that it would happen again and they just don't learn their lesson. Sure enough, it happened.

That's where we stand tonight. Kind of a sorry state of affairs but there's really not that much we can do about it. We're going to have a pretty good investigation because the colonel

was here when that operation came back and the captain told him what happened out there. Our colonel's got a little more weight than their B-Team commander's major so they're going to write up a full report and send it up to Nha Trang and see if anything comes of it. Probably not because they're afraid to raise a ruckus while the Paris Peace Talks are on. They're afraid to let it be known how sorry the people are, how sorry the Vietnamese are.

I read in the paper tonight that the Vietnamese Prime Minister of Defense or something said, "Oh, we can't let the Americans go until 1970 because we don't feel our troops are ready." Shoot, that's right. His troops aren't ready and they probably never will be, they're so sorry. The sooner we get out of here the better. They are so bad. They just won't learn either. Oh well. Somebody just ducked in my room to talk to me so I'll finish this up in a little while.

Now it's 2:15 in the afternoon on Monday (June 2nd). I found out tomorrow I'll have to take out the next operation. I was planning on going to Tay Ninh on Wednesday to take in the money left over from my funds report, but the captain said he'd be glad to take it in. I just remembered he can't leave the camp while I'm out on operation because that will leave no officer in camp and we're required by regulation to have at least one officer in camp at all times. So, he thought he'd be real fine to volunteer to go to Tay Ninh for me so he can police up a couple more girls and spend the night with them. But, I'll break the news to him in a couple minutes, "Sorry about that captain, you're going to have to stay here while I'm out on operation." So I think I'll go to Tay Ninh after I get back in off operation. Just take a couple days rest and relaxation, mail your packages, get money orders, stuff like that, shop at the PX, get a haircut.

Oh, by the way, the operation I'm taking out is going to be ambush operations. We're going to be north of camp, only about three clicks, but we're going to be right up there where the ambush was yesterday that hit our patrol. So if we're lucky we'll get some VC. If we are unlucky, they'll hit us. We're going to take it cool and careful and quiet. I'll try, I mean, I won't try, I know I will be careful. I'll do my best to get some of them without them getting some of us. So don't worry, and I'll let you know how it comes out. Let's see, I'll be back in Thursday morning and I'll have mail waiting for me I hope, more than this last time. I only got one tape, no letters from anybody else. That's okay. I'm not chewing you out. I realize you've got work to do and you're busy. Shoot, can't expect miracles all the time. Anyway, you probably don't have a whole lot to say to me besides the usual "Hi," "It's rainy." There goes the tape.

*a portion of this transcript has been moved to preserve chronological order.

See 5-25 through 5-31

5 June 1969

Thursday

Good evening. Tonight is Thursday the 5th and it's about 10 o'clock. I've got about two full pages of notes here to start talking about so I'll dig right in. The first thing I want to say is, by the time you get this tape you should also receive an envelope containing the letter that I want you to send to Michigan State. However, don't send it until you get a copy of my DD form 214 to send with it and be sure to include my application. Now, on the application, be sure to change the term that I want to go back to school from Spring 1970 to Winter 1970, which will start sometime around 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th of January, something like that. So, before you forget, right after you listen to the rest of the tape, or right now shut the tape off and go get the application, cross out "Spring," cross it out neatly, and print neatly above it or next to it, "Winter 1970."

I got my first roll of pictures back from my new camera. They turned out beautiful except for two. It was kind of a peculiar, not peculiar circumstance but, at the time I wanted to experiment a little bit. As a result it cost me two blurry pictures. They were pictures taken of the inside of the mess hall after it was blown up, of the messy food and stuff. You don't understand all about cameras yet but I'll explain it anyway. I wanted to get maximum depth of field. In other words, I wanted everything to be in focus from where I stood all the way back to where the farthest object was. In order to do that, I have to have a real slow speed with a very large F-stop. No, that's not correct. It was a slow speed, and let's see, and a high F-stop. Anyway, the higher the F-stop, I believe, the more depth of field I would have. Anyway, I didn't have enough speed on the film so when I took the picture I jerked the camera and it turned out blurry, otherwise it would have been just beautiful shots because the exposure was perfect even though it was dark inside. The rest of the pictures are all quite nice. I think you'll enjoy them. So I'll wait until you send me the slides that you took, I'll look them over for awhile and I'll send them back plus the other two bunches of slides that you sent plus the new bunch of slides that I have. I'll send them all back to you and by that time I should have another roll or two of film.

I enjoyed hearing your tapes about the dog and how she has fun playing around on the beach and also how she protects you when you're out there, and guards you, and growls at any intruders. That makes me feel good because that's what we got her for, to be a watch dog. I'm glad she's trained so nicely and it seems like you're carrying on the good training, at least she seems to respond nicely to you. There was a guy in my room today from artillery and he saw a picture of the dog and boy he oohed and aahed about that. Thought that, boy, she looked mean and nasty and he asked me about, you know, is she a watchdog and how well does she guard and everything and I told him how she would stay about half way between you and that guy on the

beach and turn around and check to see if it was okay to growl at him or not. Boy, he thought that was phenomenal. I do too, I think it's really good, really good, really, really good.

Banner, no, Young Calvinists, yes. I have not received a Banner in the mail yet but I have received a Young Calvinist. Brander from Cal. Oh, do you know a minister named Brander? Not a minister, a chaplain named Brander from Calvin College? Well, he was a classmate of a protestant minister who is here right now visiting the team whose name I have written down here some place. Oh yes, Hepner, Chaplain Hepner. Anyway, this Chaplain Hepner knows Bob Fitch. He met him when they were both at Fort Hamilton, New York. The Chaplain was going through the chaplain's school and Bob Fitch at the time was a captain there. Let's see, I think he said last August or sometime, he didn't say exactly when. It's kind of a small world. I told him how Bob Fitch and I are friends and how he's dating your sister and all that. We both had some good laughs about that.

Oh, I've got a movie camera. It's still down at the B-Team because I haven't gotten down there to get it yet but Vanderplow picked it up for me. So what I want you to do is when I send my Yashica home is get it fixed and send it back here ASAP. As soon as I get it back I'll send my nice Pentax and all the other equipment home, so it doesn't get broken or dirty or dusty or anything over here, and I'll have a good camera when I get back home. Here I'll use my Yashica and the movie camera. I ought to get some real good shots.

The team was taking a vote a couple of days ago and I happened to be the last one to get asked this question. The whole team turned out to see what my answer would be, they all kind of knew what it was going to be before they even asked it, but they all had to stand around and kind of giggle and chuckle and wait to see what I was going to say. Here was the question. The whole team decided that it would be nice if once or twice a month, on the chow chopper that comes up on Saturday, if we imported from Tay Ninh about ten whores for the team so that they would spend Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday here and Wednesday morning and go out on the chow chopper Wednesday. Do that maybe twice a month. While they're here, one guy can pick one girl and stay with her for that period of time, or they can trade off, you know, just do whatever they want. They asked me what my vote would be. I looked around at everybody and they were all kind of smirking and giggling, giving me their shit-eating grin. So I told them how I felt about it. I said that I'm not going to, I won't participate, but I told them, if that's the kind of fun you want to have, go ahead. I'm not going to fight them, but I told them I wouldn't participate. Everybody said, "Yup. We knew it. We knew you'd say that." And then they said, "Oh, you just wait, after a couple of, after a month or so you'll get to lookin' at one of them and you'll decide to try her out, or you'll find one that's especially cute and you'll take her to your room one night." I said, "Well, the more you guys talk like that, the more stubborn I'll be." So everybody shut up and I honestly don't know how serious they are about this program. They

claim that this coming Saturday a couple of them are coming up to see what the situation is like, a couple of girls. If they find it pleasing or attractive or financially gainful, then they'll go back and recruit about 10 of them and have them ready to come up the following time. So we'll see what happens. If they do come up I'll have some juicy stories for you I can tell that, because all of these guys'll brag and brag.

We sit around the morning breakfast table and usually talk while we're eating. We eat maybe 20 minutes and sit around for the remainder of the hour and just chew the rag. Everybody drinks coffee and everything. I sit there and drink grapefruit juice. They all tell their stories and stuff. It will be interesting to see what they come up with.

We're starting to get kickbacks from the team fund from selling beer and cigarettes and Coke to the CIDG. This past month was the first time that we decided on kicking back some funds. The amount came to \$100 for each man. So that's a real nice tidy little sum to have coming in every month. We figure this coming month if we can get the beer and the cigarettes we'll have about a \$150 at the end of the month for each man. We're paid in piasters so we got to get them converted. The normal exchange rate is 118 piasters equals one American dollar, but to go from piasters to American dollars, the black market jacks the price way up to 150 piasters for one dollar. So the \$100 I got in piasters is 15,000. So we are actually getting the exchange rate of 150 piasters for one dollar, which is good, because if I can find an outlet that will trade me 125 piasters for a dollar, then I'll come out with maybe \$110, \$115. So, anyway you look at it, it's money in the pocket.

That brings my total to about \$600 that I have in cash right here to spend on stuff. I'll have to pay out \$94 for the movie camera but when I come back home at the end of the year I'll unload that for about \$90. I'm sure I can get that much out of it. I'll have back everything that I spent for it, so no sweat there. Don't worry about the money; I've got it locked in my safe here in my room. It's a four digit combination lock and I'm the only one on the whole team that knows the combination. So nobody's going to get in and steal my money. Besides, there's a chain welded to the safe and that's bolted to the floor. Nobody's going to walk off with the safe either.

I got a little note from the PACEX...