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Dave Fetters' Audio Transcription - 1969 - Tape 11

David Fetters

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Tape #11 Thursday 8 July 1969 Continued

...one thousand, eight hundred dollars. Isn't that shocking? We've gotten most of that stuff in the past year. If we had bought everything that we own now on the outside world it would have cost us eighteen hundred dollars. We paid six hundred and fifty eight dollars. That's about a third of what it would normally would have cost. So we have really saved some money but like the old saying goes around here, you go broke taking advantage of the bargains. I find that very true.

In the last tape that you got from me I said that I probably wouldn't be able to get any mail out to you for about the next five days because I was going on a long operation. Well, the operation was cut short. I was only out for two days and one night. Yesterday was one whole day and we stayed out last night in pouring rain. Today was the second day out. At noon today we called in to camp and told them to come out and pick up a guy that was sick. At the time we were only about a thousand meters from camp. So they came out in the truck, picked this guy up, Sergeant Moss and Ron came out. Of course we were all set up in our perimeter. We had our hammocks strung up and our ponchos for shade and everybody was cooking their meals and eating and sleeping, stuff like that. Of course I had my tiger fatigues on.

I went out to meet the truck and I didn't know it at the time, but Ron started taking pictures of me when he was still quite a ways away. He had his 230mm zoom lens on his camera. So he started taking pictures of me with color prints and the whole time the truck was sitting out there in the field he was snapping pictures of me sitting there reading mail that they brought out and drinking a can of cold Pepsi that they brought out to us thinking that we were going to remain out in the field. Before they turned around to go back I said, "Hey, as long as we have to sit here for a couple of hours, which we usually do anyway on every operation between about 11 and 2 because of the heat, why don't you take Sergeant Lambert and I," he was the guy out with me, "Why don't you take us into camp, and we'll get a hot meal, fill up with water, and then come back out at about 2 o'clock when these people are ready to move?" So everybody said, "Fine, hop in." So we all got in the truck, and while I was standing there in and around the truck, looking through the mail that they brought out to me and drinking my can of Pepsi, all this time Ron was taking pictures of me with his camera, color prints. He told me he got about fifteen shots of me, of course all of them will be with me and my tiger suit and holding my weapon and various junk, cardboard boxes, mail, and a can of pop, all that kind of stuff. I hope they turn out.

Sometimes he gets a little carried away and takes pictures so fast that he doesn't really get a variety. Also he sometimes neglects to focus real critically. He just comes close, but not quite

as sharp as it should be. So, I bought the roll of color prints from him. There'll be about twenty pictures, not all of them are of me. He's got some of a 123 that happened to land while he was on his way out, and one or two of them of the dog, and I don't know what else, a couple other things. I've got that roll here now and as soon as I make up another package to send to you which should be fairly soon, I'll put those rolls of film in there with it.

Anyway, we came in at noon today. I was fully intending on staying until 2 and then going back out in the field for another 3 days or so. But, after we had arrived in camp here, the captain told me that there was a heliborne operation due to leave from this camp this coming Sunday and he was out on the last two, and I didn't go on the last one so therefore it would normally be my turn to go on this one. However, I was out on an operation at the present time. So he said, "Well, I'll probably go." But because of the fact we're short on people, we have one man who's at the B-Team now taking somebody's place who's on leave, we have one man who's sick in the hospital, we have one man that's gone with some CIDG for training. Of course the one medic and the one radio operator we do have can't leave site, and there has to be one officer here at all times. So that only leaves three people who could go on this heliborne who hadn't previously been out on an operation, you know, within the past week or so. They had to pick a fourth man, and they picked Sergeant Lambert because they had no choice. The captain was going to go, and D.B., and McCrea, and Sergeant Lambert was the only one left but because of the fact that he was out on operation with me, that would mean he'd have to spend five days in the field on the operation with me, come back in Saturday, and then turn right around again Sunday and go back out for another three days and three nights.

So the captain called the Camp Commander and said, "Look, what do you say we cancel this operation that's out right now, just cancel it, period, because we're short of personnel and four people have to go on this heliborne, four Americans. A lot of the CIDG that were out on the operation with me would also have to go out on the heliborne and they needed a rest too. So, that's why I'm here tonight making this tape because the operation was cancelled and everybody came in, all the other people came in about 6 this evening. I just stayed in at noon today, which was nice. But now all of a sudden captain says, "Well, Fetters, since you didn't go on the last heliborne, I think I'll let you take this one out."

So Lambert and I will be going out again Sunday with two other people. We'll be going on this heliborne operation up north. It shouldn't be too bad. The last one went up right through the same area and they didn't have too much trouble. They made a couple of small contacts but I'm not really sweating it. You told me you didn't want me to tell you any more about these helibornes and stuff but it just kind of worked into the conversation explaining everything else, that I just thought I'd mention it. Anyway, we'll be going up to, let's see, I've got my little map here, we'll be going up to the 0990 square, 09 is the vertical number and 90 is the horizontal

number. The square to the upper right, you find the 09 line and the 90 line and where they cross you take the square in the upper right hand corner, right there, and that's where we're going. It's a big clearing. We're going to be landing there and then hoofing it all the way back down south to camp.

Let's see, about an hour ago we had another Chieu Hoi come into camp. It was kind of funny because the operation swept right through the area where this guy came from and we didn't make any contact or see anybody, so this guy must have followed our operation in. Anyway, right after the operation came in our civilians were out on the airstrip, or just off the north end of the airstrip, getting a truck load of sand. Of course they never take weapons or anything with them. All of a sudden this NVA soldier steps out of the woods and points his AK-47 rifle up in the air and shoots off his whole magazine. Of course he yelled "Chieu Hoi, Chieu Hoi" and came walking in with his rifle held above his head. He walked up to the truck and threw the rifle in the back and gave himself up.

Here are our four civilians standing around out there dumbfounded. They didn't know what to do. All they had were shovels. So they picked the guy up and drove him into camp here. We've already interrogated him and everything. He didn't have a whole lot of information to tell us. I got his weapon right here sitting in the room. But because he is a Chieu Hoi, he's got to take his weapon with him. He gets paid about 5000p's or something for turning in his own weapon, which is an incentive to get more Chieu Hois to turn themselves in. That makes three of them in the past month or so. Things are looking better.

Where we were camped this afternoon when the truck came out to us was about 800 meters down Logo Road. That's the road that runs to the west off the runway. As you look down the road about 800 meters or so, which isn't quite one klick, you'll see a small clearing on the north side of the road. We were right there. While we were there we saw a VC or an NVA soldier about another klick further down the road, he was just kind of standing in the road. Of course all the stupid CIDG, as soon as they heard that there was somebody standing in the road they all had to go running out into the road to see who was there. Apparently it scared him away but we figured he was probably another Chieu Hoi who wanted to give himself up. When he saw all those soldiers and everything standing around he got scared and took off in the opposite direction. I don't blame him. So maybe in a couple of days or so we'll have another Chieu Hoi coming in. So much for that.

I'm glad to hear that the hat arrived in good shape and yes, most of the people over here do wear scarves underneath their hats, except for the very poor people. Then they just have string. But anybody who's anybody has a scarf. So leave the scarf on. You'll probably have to loosen it a little bit to get it over your head, I don't know. I was going to put it on but the scarf was too tight and I didn't feel like untying it, slipping through, and adjusting it to fit me so I just

left it alone.

I got a notification in the mail today that the camera equipment that I ordered through the PX has arrived. It's at the PX in Long Binh which is right next to Bien Hoa. So as soon as I come off the heliborne I'm going to take a few days and go into Bien Hoa and pick up this camera equipment, and probably scrounge for some food and stuff, just mess around a day or so. Maybe see a floor show in the club, if I'm there on a Friday night. Who knows, we'll see.

I got a notification from PACEX Catalog Company that the stuff I ordered for you has been all paid for and is on its way. You already got part of it, that was the speaker system for the car stereo. You'll be getting a car stereo, you'll be getting two big speakers, the Sansui speakers, and they cost \$61 instead of \$66. For some reason the catalog said \$66, so I paid them \$66 and they gave me a refund of, I don't know, \$20, \$22.79 or something.

(gap in tape)... I guess he's having a grand old time. He says he is anyway. He didn't have too much to say other than that. I got a letter from Larry(gap in tape). I have a little twig that I might send you that I picked up off the jungle floor last night. It was underneath my hammock. At first I thought it was moonlight shining down through the jungle. As I was saying, at first I thought it was moonlight shining down through the leaves and stuff in the jungle and making all these little bright lights on the jungle floor but then I looked out from underneath my poncho, which was covering me because it had just been raining, pouring rain in fact, and there wasn't a moon or stars to be seen because it was so overcast and cloudy. So I reached down and started poking around in the leaves and dirt and found out that they were twigs. They were actually fluorescent. They glow in the dark just as bright as my watch or my compass ever would. So I picked one up and brought it in with me and it looks just like any ordinary twig. I'm going to send it home to you anyway. I'll throw it in an envelope or something, or maybe in this tape box. You have to get in a pitch black room and hold it out away from you and see if it glows or not. If it doesn't, set it out in full sunlight for the day and that night take it into your room and see if it glows. If it doesn't, then I don't know what's wrong, but this is the same little twig I picked up out there. It was glowing just as bright as could be. That was funny. We have a lot of fireflies buzzing around at night, but this is the first time I've ever seen a stick that glowed in the dark. So I'll send that to you.

Hey, I got my orders to Hong Kong today. I will be flying on a regular R&R aircraft so I shouldn't have to pay my fare and I should have a seat already reserved to come back. I talked to McCrae who went over to Hong Kong last month and he said the flight leaves Saigon here about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. So I got to sit around all my first day of leave which would be the 15th and won't get on the plane until about 4, and he said it takes an hour and 50 minutes to fly there so I'll get there just about 6 o'clock. He says it takes almost a full hour to go through customs because they search everything and check everything. Just a minute. The little button

was out on my alarm clock. He said after you go through customs for an hour then you got to go to that stupid R&R briefing which takes, he said, almost an hour and then after that you're free. He said on the way back his plane left at 6 o'clock in the morning. He had to be there at 5:30 in the morning.

12 July 1969

Saturday

Tonight is Saturday night the 12th of July and Hong Kong is getting closer all the time. I get a kick out of the fact that Bob Fitch started commenting on all those planes that I show in my movies and the fact that he can't keep them straight. I told that to some of the guys around here, how you corrected a one time Army First Lieutenant who spent a year in Vietnam on the correct nomenclature of the Army's planes. They do use C-141 Starlifters over here, but only for mass troop movement to and from Vietnam. They don't use them in Vietnam from city to city at all. They just use them for hops between Saigon airport, which is Tan Son Nhut air base and Okinawa and Japan. They use them for mass casualty evacuation from Vietnam to the United States. You know, all the bad cases, things like that. Of course they use 123s and 130s, and the Caribou.

The numbering system on the Caribou is C-7A. Around here we just call them the C-7Bou, or TONG, as their call sign is. When they fly in here, the Caribou is a TONG. The 123 is a BOOKIE, and a 130 is an IGLOO. And they go by their call numbers. Like in this camp, the only TONGs we get are TONG-453 and TONG-452. We get all kinds of different BOOKIE numbers. The IGLOOs are usually up in the 600s somewhere, 682, 681, somewhere up in there. Those are about the only type planes we ever get. Once in awhile a little U-10 or something like that will stop in just for a minute or two, or the L-19 Cessna's that the FACs use, but that's about it. The number of the Pregnant Guppy is the 124, the C-124. I think those were all the questions you had on planes.

Yesterday afternoon right at lunchtime we took some incoming mortar rounds, about 15 to be exact. It started at 11:30. I was just getting ready to walk outside the bunker to go to the mess hall, a couple of guys were already in the mess hall. Artillery had been shooting immediately prior to the incoming rounds, so when the first couple of them landed it didn't even register that they were incoming. But then it did. It doesn't take too long to realize that it's incoming. Even when your mind is a hundred miles away on a different subject like mine was, an incoming round always registers subconsciously. You just know it, that's all. You're just aware of it. So I just stepped back inside and counted off fifteen rounds. Then when it quit, I ran up to the roof to see what the damage was, where they landed, all that kind of stuff. Luckily at

the same time there was a FAC in the air and he ended up spotting the VC. They were about four clicks away to the north, west northwest of camp. Of course we threw everything we had at them. All four mortars were firing at them and of course three 105 howitzers.

A little later he had an air strike, he called them in on the VC who were still running through the woods. Of course they get in this real thick jungle and the FAC loses sight of them. He just kind of estimates where they are and keeps pumping rounds in after them. We never did get an actual body count from any of the VC. There was a herd of VC cattle, we call them VC cattle because the VC are the only ones who raise cows and herds of oxen and stuff around here. Anyway he saw this herd of about 15 cows and called in some artillery on them and killed two of them and wounded about five of them. We do that every time we see the cows because they are a source of food for the VC so we try to wipe them out.

(gap in tape)...and right after the incoming came in, Colonel Rheault, the new 5th Group Commander and Sergeant Major Bowser, the new 5th Group Command Sergeant Major, with their counterparts, one was some kind of Vietnamese general and Colonel Campbell A-Company Commander and his counterpart and First, or the Sergeant Major from A-Company and all those big wheels landed in camp so we gave them a quick briefing and a little show around camp, nothing spectacular.

In that new Green Beret magazine, the one that Scully's in, I think there's a picture of Colonel Rheault and Sergeant Major Bowser. His name is spelled Rheault, but pronounced "Row", R-O-W. It's French I guess. It sounds like it is.

I managed to get a letter off yesterday to the R&R Office at the Park Hotel in Hong Kong, asking them a bunch of questions and stuff and what their suggestions are concerning your meeting me there and how best to arrange a room and make sure we get the R&R rates. I told them that we were specifically interested in The Park, The President, and The Empress, all on the Kowloon side. So we'll see if I get an answer. Maybe by this time you've gotten your answer. I don't know. I talked to, what do you need? Yeah.

I was interrupted again. Somebody wanted the keys to the supply room and I realized I had left my pants hanging up in the shower room so I had to go get them. Let's see, what was I talking about. Oh yeah. I was talking to one of the lieutenants over at the artillery battery who just came back from Hong Kong. He said that you can buy anything over there. Everything in the world is in Hong Kong. You can buy just absolutely anything. He said the prices are fantastically low. He said he priced the Asahi Pentax exactly like mine. It costs \$299.95 in the United States, one exactly like the one I've got. I paid \$126 for it right here, and in Hong Kong the price is only \$100. He said you can just buy anything you want.

He said to get a good price, a real good price on everything, go to the China Fleet Club.

He said sometimes you can go to some of the smaller shops in Hong Kong and in Kowloon and find the same items still a little bit cheaper. Let me turn this radio off. But in the shops and stuff you have to jew the guy down a little bit. The thing about these Orientals, if you walk into a shop and express some interest in an item, you will have a tough time walking out without buying it, even if they have to almost give it to you because they feel it's a personal insult if you express interest in something and then end up not buying it. So they keep cutting their price down and cutting their price down until you finally almost have to take it from them, not being able to pass up such a bargain. He said another fantastically neat place is that Lane Crawford store that's advertised in that little Hong Kong R&R book we have. There's one other place. It's called Ocean Terminal. It's a great big fantastically large shopping center in one large building, just floor after floor of all kinds of stuff.

He said, concerning the China Fleet Club, it's an ideal place to buy everything because immediately after buying it they will wrap it for you. Like if you buy stereo equipment, they'll pack it, especially for you. They'll put it in a wooden box and put steel bands around it and everything else, get it all ready for shipment. Then you just take it downstairs and there's an APO right there, you just give it to them and away it goes. He told me that whatever you buy there is duty free when you ship it back to the States. I've heard from some people that it is, and some people that it isn't, so I'm still not sure whether it is or not. Even if we have to pay duty on what we buy there, we would be stupid not to buy a whole bunch of stuff while we are there because the prices are so good. So I think what I might do, if by that time my dad has given you some idea of what kind of camera he wants or given me, we can easily buy him the camera he wants plus any and all accessories that he wants, flash attachments and electronic flashes, filters, accessory lenses, gadget bags, anything he wants, and ship it all home. So remind my dad again to think about it if he does want a 35mm camera.

I've got a real good book here that I used to study on camera equipment. It's called "Photography Directory and Buying Guide, 1969." It cost \$1.50. If he's really interested in buying a 35mm I suggest he get this magazine because it's got almost every brand that's got any kind of name at all listed. It tells you exactly everything about the camera and also lists its price, who makes it, everything, just everything possible about it. It's got a section on, let's see, in the index it's got still cameras, lenses, 8 millimeter home movies that you can buy already printed, close up equipment, exposure meters and guides, electronic flashes, filters, slide projectors, dark room equipment, movie cameras, movie projectors, videotape recorders, films, and suppliers addresses. It's got all kinds of stuff, there's a whole bunch of real nice cameras, real beauties in fact. So, I suggest to my father to get on the stick and let me know what he wants so that when we're in Hong Kong I can purchase it and send it to him. I'm going to bring, I'll probably have about, maybe, \$600 cash that I will bring plus my checkbook and you'll have your traveler's

checks, maybe your checkbook. So I think we'll be pretty straight.

He said that another tip about this China Fleet Club is to spend a day there looking around and deciding exactly what you want to buy, then, the following morning be there right when the place opens, go in and buy it immediately, have it wrapped and then take it down to the APO right after you buy it because after two or three hours, the APO gets such a long line of people that it goes, I don't know, he said it's about a block long. I think that's exaggerated a little bit but he said you have to stand in line maybe two hours to mail the package. So he said the thing to do is just to be the first ones there in the morning when the place opens, immediately go and buy what you want, have them wrap it and everything, pay for it. Take it down to the APO and then you won't have to wait in line at all. He said some people buy so much stuff that they have to bring dollies and carts up to the APO window with all their packages and everything on it. He couldn't believe the amount of money spent and equipment shipped out of that one building in a day's time. He said it's just fantastic. So we ought to be quite thrilled.

He said he spent a day and a half deciding what he wanted, buying everything, having it wrapped and all sent home. The rest of the time he just goofed off while he was there. He bought stuff for his family and friends and people back here in camp. Just everybody, all kinds of stuff. He said he had a great time. He really loved it. He said there's more to do there than we can ever possibly hope to do in a week's time. There's so much to see. He said he just loved walking down the street looking in all these little shops and things like that. He definitely suggested staying on the Kowloon side in one of the hotels there.

He said from any of the hotels down to the ferry only costs a Hong Kong dollar, which is sixteen cents. So no sweat there. It costs a Hong Kong quarter, which is about four cents, to ride the ferry across. Then you get in another cab and pay about a dollar and a quarter, which would be about twenty cents, and they'll take you to the China Fleet Club. Of course anything we spend will be Hong Kong money, and it's sixteen cents American money to one Hong Kong dollar. Most, well, the average good meal, he said, back in America, it would be comparable to a five or six dollar meal, costs about \$1.75 or \$2 in Hong Kong. Mixed drinks and stuff, the most expensive ones run about 40 or 50 cents. The whole time he was there in his hotel room he had room service bring his meals up to him in bed, things like that. Oops, the tape's about ready to run out, got to get ready to flip the reel over.

I ordered different lenses for my Pentax and they have come in. I got notification of that and I think I told you that already. So when I go to Bien Hoa, a lot of people say "Ben Ho," but it's pronounced "Bien Wah." When I go to Bien Hoa, I'll pick that stuff up. And, I don't know whether to keep it here or send it home. I think I'll keep it here for awhile, just a little while, and then send it home to you. Or take it all with me, yeah, I'll probably take it all with me to Hong Kong. I don't know whether I'll give it all to you, or what I'll do. I don't know. I haven't made

up my mind. One thing's for sure, I don't want to keep my Asahi Pentax over here in Vietnam because the humidity is so bad and there's a lot of moisture in the air especially when it rains that minute parts in the camera could rust. I don't want that. Almost every envelope in this place has either no gum on the envelope flap or all the flaps are already stuck to the envelope because of all the moisture in the air. If you leave anything out for a prolonged period of time it gets rusty, like my beret and clothes and stuff, it gets full of mildew and junk like that. So I've got to haul it out once a week and brush everything off. But there's nothing we can do about that.

I'm going to try to get a new beret. I've got this old beat up one that I picked up in the Nha Trang when I first came into country. I think I told you about it. I fished it out of a trash can and I want to trade it in for one brand new one my size. I'll get a brand new flash sewn on it and a brand new liner of some kind. Maybe an embroidered tiger or dragon or something in silk with my name embroidered on it. Then I'll send that home to you to keep for me.

About a week and a half ago, the whole team that was present that day was informed that a special chopper was coming in with some photographers. They were going to take a team picture of everybody. We got the results today. They are, let's see, an eight by ten. Yes, I guess it's an eight by ten photograph. Very poor quality for some reason. I think it was developed by the people themselves instead of having a professional developer. As a result there are all kinds of little flecks and stuff in the picture and it's a little bit overexposed and could have been in better focus. But those are the breaks of the game. Anyway, I got a free print. I identify everybody who was here at the time. We were missing about four people off the team. Our bac-si, Bozeman, was absent. We had another medic here taking his place. This medic was from Katum.

I wrote everybody's name behind their pictures. One of these days when I get an envelope I'll send it to you. I've got two rolls of film to send to you plus a couple of other stuff like a couple more "go to hell" hats. I've got part of the broken watchband off of my watch, the thing finally gave out. I guess all the moisture finally got to it and the thing finally rotted off my arm. The little catch part had my name and 5th SFGA engraved on it so I'll send that home to you and you can polish it up with some Brass-O and save it if you want to. If you don't, just throw it away. So I got to get a new watchband pretty soon.

I'm in the middle of writing a letter to Dan, typing rather. I've been practicing a lot lately with the typewriter. I figure since I'm going back to school I need all the practice I can get. I'm still pretty accurate. Slow but accurate. I don't place all my fingers on the right keys. I do most of my typing with two or three fingers on each hand and you know, just skip around and stuff. I got to look at the keys all the time. It's easy when I just make up a letter and type along like that. It's a lot easier than trying to look at something that's already written, transfer it onto typewriter paper. After I finish one to Dan I'll write one to Sue, and maybe I'll type a letter to my folks. I

don't know.

Tomorrow that heliborne was scheduled to go out but it was postponed one day so I've got a day of grace. Since tomorrow's Sunday I'm going to cool it, just loaf all day, catch up on some reading. I started that New Legion book the day I received it in the mail and I still got a quarter of the book to go. I don't know, I put it down and I just don't pick it up and start reading it again. It's interesting enough. Once I do pick it up I can just continue reading until either I fall asleep, which is usually the case, even if it's in the middle of the day. Like for instance this evening at 4:30 I finished work and I thought "Well, it's not quite time to eat so I think I'll go in my room, sit down and start reading." I read for 15 minutes and then fell asleep. Not that the book wasn't interesting but it's just that I get kind of beat, you know how it is, kind of tired.

I sent away for a couple more catalogs, both of them out of the newest Army Times, one dated the, shoot, I don't know. I can't even remember that. I thought it said the 25th of June, but I think it was a later issue than that. It's the one with that guy looking through the big binoculars on the front page. I cut out a little free catalog thing for scuba diving equipment at military discount prices. I'm very tempted to buy a scuba tank and regulator before I get out of the service because I've always wanted to have one. Shoot, if I can get it for half price I might as well do it now and have it, then wait until I get out and a couple years from now decide, well, shoot, I want that stuff and then go out and buy it for twice of what I would have had to pay while I'm in the service. I sent away for a free Yamaha motorcycle catalog also advertised. That little advertisement said Yamaha motorcycles were available in PX and BX, which I don't know what that is. Maybe Base Exchange, for Air Force base. I don't know. So maybe they'll send me a price list for what it costs at a PX price.

I'm expecting my electronic flash in the mail, my camera equipment, a package from you, another catalog, the newest catalog from that Hong Kong place where I ordered some camera equipment. I've got a lot of mail to look forward to. That's why I'm glad that I don't have to leave here on a Sunday, on the heliborne. I can get my mail on Sunday and enjoy it that day and answer anything, any letters and everything that evening. And then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday I'll be out on the heliborne. I'll come in Wednesday probably morning some time, just in time for more mail. So that worked out perfectly.

Then Wednesday afternoon I'll probably go in to Tay Ninh, grab the work chopper back to Bien Hoa Wednesday, stay there Wednesday night, all day Thursday, Thursday night, all day Friday. Probably Friday night because Friday night in the club they have a floor show and some strippers. I haven't seen a good strip show since I've been over here. Everybody keeps telling me what they're like. So I'll go see one. Maybe Saturday or so I'll see if I can catch a plane back to Tay Ninh and then from there take the work chopper back up here. While I'm there I'll take a look in all the PXs and souvenir shops and see what all the latest junk is, maybe buy some beer

and cigarettes for the team and see what I can do about scrounging some stuff. I've got a refrigerator I should take in with me to get that repaired. So we'll see. We will see.

What I'm going to do when I go on leave to Hong Kong, I'm going to leave here on a Sunday. I think my plane to Hong Kong will leave Thursday afternoon, so I'm going to leave here Sunday, get to Bien Hoa Sunday night and then Monday I'm going to go to that place in Saigon called CLD, Command Liaison Detachment, where I have to get processed for my R&R, and get a hair cut if I need it, and uniform pressed, and all that garbage. While I'm in Saigon I'll spend a day or so looking around. Just looking, look around the city. Supposedly there's a mammoth PX down there so I'll check that out and see what that's like. Just relax before going on R&R. After I get back I think I'll just cool it for another couple days or so, just kind of give myself an extended R&R.

Most of the guys on the team go into Tay Ninh about twice a month for about three or four days, just to goof off and stuff. But I never do. The only time I go in is when I have to like for my funds report and stuff so I feel that after spending five months, let's see March, April, May, June, July, five and a half months out here without really taking any time to just go in and blow off steam any place, I think I'm entitled to a few days to myself, so I'm going to take them. I don't have to ask anybody's permission to do it. I can just take off.

Saw a movie last night, "Psycho." I've got radio watch tonight probably from 8 to 12 so I'll read some more, finish this letter to Dan, or something. Tomorrow I think I'll catch up on my lost sleep because I've got to be in good shape for that heliborne. After that, just come back. Same old work, same old stuff. It's not really getting boring or anything, and don't get all shook up because of the fact that I'm not behind a desk after my six months out here. I'm not really pushing to get a desk job. One of the best things about this job out here is that you're not bugged by a lot of brass and a lot of people telling you you've got to wear your uniform and you've got to keep your boots polished and you've got all this paperwork to do. Stuff like that just absolutely rubs me the wrong way. I just get so sick of listening to that kind of garbage.

Everybody on the B-Team is so phony. They all have girls they take to bed at night. They all have their booze they have to drink and their stupid parties and everything. I just wouldn't fit in and I think they know it too. Anytime I go to the B-Team, they all get together in the club at night and have their evening volleyball game which I play in because I like that. After that everybody goes to the club and starts boozing and playing with the girls and everything else. I just go to my room and read or something. I'm just kind of a party pooper. They see that. I think they realize that shoot, if we got this guy on the B-Team, he'd be a party pooper. He wouldn't fit in. So I'd just soon stay out here. Besides, when Tay Ninh gets hit, usually there are more people injured, killed, there than ever thought of being killed out here on an A-site. The only thing I don't like out here is the operations but those are the breaks of the game. Nothing's a

bed of roses.

I like it out here because the time flies so fast. There's so much work to be done, so many things to be done daily that time passes so absolutely fast. It's fantastic. I don't even notice the days going by, really. That's what I really like about this place. Besides I got a real cozy little room, well protected and everything. I just like it. I don't know. Once I get settled in a place I just like to stay. Good bye, hon. Fini, het roi.

Saturday,
12 July 1969

This is tape number two of the two tapes you should have received at the same time today, so stop this and put the other one on. Okay, you'll have to pardon the background noise, but I very rarely get a chance to sit in my room and just listen to country and western music. Since I have to make maximum use of my time I'm making a tape to you and listening to country and western music at the same time. Let me turn this off and make sure the country and western music isn't so loud that it covers up what I'm saying.

Okay. No sweat. It's real fine. Let me know if my tapes are coming through all right. They should be because I have the volume cranked way up. When I play them back here they sound all right. One reason why I'm making two tapes now is because you're so low on tapes at your end. But see, I've got the one I just recorded, this one that I am recording, the music one, two others, and the two without little boxes. So, I got plenty of tapes and you probably don't have too many so I'm going to try and get a couple of them to you at a time here. Let me turn it down just a little bit, it kind of interrupts my train of thought. Okay.

I had a tape on the tape recorder last night that I was going to sneak into the bar and start taping everybody, but shoot, nobody decided to drink last night. It was a real quiet evening so I never did get to tape anything. One of these nights though I'll get some of the guys in a candid conversation, I think. It's kind of hard to walk in there with a tape recorder and casually place the mic on the bar where nobody will see it and yet have it close enough to pick up their conversation. So if the quality of the tape is poor when I do finally send you one you'll just have to realize it's a clandestine operation because I don't want them to know that I'm taping them. Otherwise they won't come out with their usual flowery speech, talk.

I'm sitting here in a pair of blue Levi's believe it or not. I got them from Top, waist 32, length 30. If I were a little chubbier around the waist like I used to be they would fit absolutely perfectly, but since I'm down to about a 29 waist right now, maybe 28, I don't know, I haven't measured recently, they're a little bit baggy on the hips. We've got a tailor in camp so I think I'll have him take an inch or two out of the seat because the seat of Levi's are always a little bit

funny. They kind of ride up or something, like a little triangle when you walk, stick out a little bit. So I'll have him form fit these things to my flat backside. They'll fit better. These I won't have to worry about keeping so clean like I do my white Levi's. I wear my white ones all the time in the evening but they get dirty so fast because everything around here has just got a layer of dust and dirt on them. With these I can wear them every night for maybe a week at a time before they even begin to show dirt. Besides they wear a lot stronger.

Let's see, let's see. I don't know how I'm going to fill up this whole tape. Oh, I know what I was talking about at the end of the other tape, the fact that I kind of like it out here. So don't go crying to any congressman or anything that I should be transferred to a desk job because I'm quite sure that sooner or later I'll get one whether I want one or not. I don't particularly want one because none of the jobs really appeal to me, none on the B-Team that is. I wouldn't particularly want to go to the A-Team either. That's an even phonier existence because everybody's always trying to please somebody. I don't know. They care more about themselves than they do anybody else. There are supposedly ten people back in the B and C teams for every one person out on an A-site, but I'm appalled at the poor support we get. (gap in tape) I don't know what to think. Most of the people back there are just sitting on their fat asses, doing nothing having a grand old time.

Oh, hey, I know what I can tell you. The night before last, Sergeant Moss went to bed with the bar girl, Co Soung, the first time that anybody did. I happened to be on radio watch that night. I was on from 4 o'clock in the morning to 7. So naturally I went around to wake everybody up at 7 and noticed he wasn't in his room. I immediately realized that last night he was rather friendly with her, had his arm around her for awhile and been drinking a little bit. So I figured, yeah, he's probably in her room. But I didn't go to her room and knock on the door or anything to get them up. I just thought, well, I'll let it ride, see what happens.

After I woke everybody up I went into my room and got my shaving gear and towel and everything and went to the shower room and started shaving. He walked in. He looked beat like he hadn't slept too much. Almost every morning without fail he and I are the first one in the shower room so we always greet each other. "Hey Top, how you doing this morning?" And he'd say, "Hi, Trung-uy how you feeling this morning? Get a pretty good night's sleep?" Stuff like that. He walked in, you know, and I looked at him right away 'cause I figured he'd spent the night with her and I wanted to see what his reaction would be the following morning. He gave me a quick glance, looked at the floor and kept on shuffling by, didn't say a word. I didn't say anything to him, I just let it ride. He showered and shaved and brushed his teeth, combed his hair and everything without saying a word.

He beat me into the mess hall. He was sitting there pushing food around on his plate and I walked in, sat down across from him and told Co La the cook what I wanted for breakfast. I

was sitting there taking my malaria pills and vitamin tablets and everything like that. The first thing he said was, "It wasn't worth it, sir." I immediately thought to myself, "You must have a guilty conscience," because right away he's apologizing to me.

All the time I get kidded, you know, they call me teetotaler and all that stuff because I don't drink with them and things like that. When they start drinking and get rowdy I just leave the bar and retire to my room here and either go to bed early or make a tape to you, write a letter, or something. There's always something to do, paperwork. After they get high they come in and bother me. "Hey Sir, c'mon back and have a drink with us." I keep refusing and they don't press the issue. "Aw, c'mon, just this once." I keep refusing, nicely of course. So they call me teetotaler and all that stuff. He must have had a guilty conscience yesterday morning because the first thing he said was "It wasn't worth it." and "He won't do it again," things like that. That's all he said after that.

Well, nobody else had too much to say, well, the other team members of course wanted to know how she was and whether she was a good lay or not. He didn't have too much to say. He just kind of shook his head no. I think he was kind of embarrassed to talk about it and a little ashamed of himself after he did it because heck, she's only 19. She's got a fair body but kind of an ugly face. I don't know if I ever did get a picture of her or not. I forget. But, that's all there was to that.

Shoot, I can't even keep my thoughts straight. I don't know what I wanted to say. Anyway, today I signed a pass for her. She left the team for good. She just didn't work out. She was hired to be our bar girl but she hadn't been doing her job. The bar hours are from 11 to 2 and from, I don't know, 5 to 11 pm at night, mostly for artillery people because they come in off and on during the day to get a cold Coke or something. Rather than have one of the team members interrupt his work to wait on these guys, then we have her there. Shoot, she'd sleep until 11 o'clock every morning. She'd get up, fart around, take showers right in the middle of the day when the girls are trying to wash clothes in there and everything. I don't know, she was just getting under foot. She wasn't doing her job, loafing around too much. So we just said "Heck, we can do with out you, get out of here. Put her on the chopper, Dan. That's the last of her."

Our good old girl Minnie Mouse came back, the one I told you about that we, well, she was chopping meat on the floor, you know, in her little stooped over position. We told her not to chop meat on the cement floor in the dirty old kitchen, chop it up on the table. So next time we walked in, there she was up on top of the table in her little stooped position, chopping meat on the table. We finally got her squared away. She left, I don't know, two or three months ago to have her kid and she's back now. She's a real cute little thing. I'll have to get a picture of her.

We call her Minnie Mouse. I don't know what her real name is but when she was fat, the

Vietnamese word for fat is "mop." When she was pregnant in her eighth and ninth months, we'd call her Minnie Mop instead of Minnie Mouse. So now she's back and she's a real good cook. Not quite as good as Co La but almost. Boy, between the two of those women, we have really been eating scrumptiously. They get meager chow and really doll it up.

Holck came back from the B-Team, let's see, last Wednesday with a whole bunch of meat and stuff. He got a case of steaks and eight 20 pound turkeys. The last few nights we've been really eating good. We've had steaks and mushrooms, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuff like that. They make delicious, terrific, homemade bread, homemade cinnamon rolls with frosting on top with raisins and cinnamon, you know, the kind I like to eat for breakfast. And homemade doughnuts and rolls, just all kinds of stuff, apple pies, cakes, you name it. Boy, they can really cook.

We got our new stove in now. It's a nice Norge gas stove, four burner job with an oven. It's pretty nice, not near as nice as our stove, but it's exceptionally nice for being out here on an A-site like this. So we got that in, hooked that up and, boy, the girls are real happy to see that. They showed us their pleasure by cooking us all these good meals. Tonight for instance, we had hot mashed potatoes and gravy, sliced turkey and cranberry sauce, sweet pickles, cornbread stuffing, apple pie and a cinnamon roll for desert. Boy, that is a meal. I eat until I am absolutely stuffed; I just can't down another thing. I'm putting away a lot of food, believe me. Even before I go to bed, like last night I went over to the mess hall with Ron and he and I downed a couple more of those nice cinnamon rolls and we'll probably do the same tonight. If there's some apple pie over there we'll have some more of that.

Boy, I can't complain about the food. We've really been eating fine. Co La does most of the cooking and Minnie Mouse does most of the waiting on the table. She's fun to tease. She walks around with a real serious look all the time and we tease her, you know, we tease her and she doesn't do anything. All of a sudden she'll break into a big old grin and haul off and whip a couple of sentences of Vietnamese on you. I can understand what the general idea of the sentence. I don't understand very many of their Vietnamese words, just enough to get by. Just a lot of basic words. But I can usually get the gist of their sentences by their inflections, by what the subject is, the subject being discussed is ...and, you know, they can ask me a question like "do I want some more ice" and the only word I can catch out of the sentence is "nuc da" which is "ice," and I know what they mean. All food is "chop-chop." Water is nuc. Ice is nuc da. Of course Co La speaks pretty good English, so I just say "Hey, Co La, I'd like some more meat or some more potatoes or some gravy or something like that." She knows. The same with Minnie Mouse. They understand English pretty well although they can't speak it. So we have no trouble at all conversing, getting our ideas across.

What they've been doing, they've been baking loaves of bread and then trading the bread

for stuff like steaks, roast beef, ground beef, things like that from artillery for the bread. Boy, those artillery guys love the homemade bread. They give away half their meat and eggs and vegetables and stuff to get some of that homemade bread so we're eating real fine. I hope it keeps up. Maybe I can keep from losing weight, if not gain a pound or two.

I had my camera out tonight at the four deuce mortar pit (hic-cough) excuse me and I was taking a few pictures of bac-si. He was out there shooting the mortar tonight, just for fun. I was going to take a shot right down at the base of the mortar tube looking up the mortar while a round was being fired so I could catch the round just leaving the tube but it makes such a horrendous racket in that mortar pit that it just absolutely blasts your eardrums to bits and you just can't stand not holding your ears because it's in a confined area. It's got about a four and a half-foot high wall all the way around the mortar. When you're down in that walled-in enclosure when that thing goes off it's a tremendous shock wave. You can feel, it's like a thunderclap. You can feel it hit you, I don't know what you feel, the sound wave, or what, but boy it sure hits you. I was stooping on my haunches ready to take a picture and the thing hit me and I fell over on my butt. So I figured well, I can do without that picture. So I stood up on the wall when he fired one and double timed the camera shot right when the round was leaving the tube, but it was dark and cloudy this evening so if I did catch the round leaving the tube it will just be a blur, a blurred blob, when it leaves. Let's see, that's about it. A couple planes came in today. The chow chopper came in. Not too much excitement otherwise.

Didn't take any incoming today, just yesterday. Nobody, let's see, all the rounds landed outside the outer berm so nobody was hurt. No, I take that back. One round did land inside. As I was saying, one round did land inside. It landed right on the inner berm road, that little road that surrounds the inner perimeter, right behind a deuce and a half, just off the back tailgate. The guy who was sitting in the truck was one of the guys from artillery. He's a pretty good friend of mine because he comes over here all the time to bum tools and stuff to fix his flat tires. We always talk. Anyway, that was yesterday. He's due to ETS in four days, in fact today he left to ETS out of the Army, to leave Vietnam.

He was sitting in that deuce and a half, just sitting there on the road when the mortar rounds started to come in and that was one of the first rounds that hit. Landed right smack dab in back of the deuce and a half and flattened four of the eight tires back there. Boy, that poor guy, I'm telling you he was sure rattled after that because he is so close to leaving camp, you know, and then have that happen to him, it just scared him out of his wits. He walked around the rest of the day with his flack jacket and steel pot on. In fact, I didn't see him much after that. He stayed underground most of the rest of the day. But he didn't get a scratch on him, the deuce and a half protected him. But if that round had been, let's see, had been right another meter or so it would have landed right in the bed of the deuce and a half. And you've seen those pictures that I sent

home of the deuce and a half that was hit with an 82mm round. Definitely puts the clamp down on the truck.

He would have been full of shrapnel if not killed. There was also a little Cambodian kid in the truck with him. Needless to say that little kid dove for cover too. In fact he jumped into the drainage ditch on the side of the road and crawled in the drainage pipe over, I mean under the driveway. He stayed there. The water is about a foot deep but he didn't mind.

Let's see, what else do I have to tell you? I'm still pouring through this House and Garden building guidebook, looking at all the advertisements and everything. There are all kinds of free booklets and little booklets for fifteen and twenty cents that I'd like to send for to look at, try to get ideas, but I think I'll wait until I'm back in the States because once I get those little books I'd like to keep them for reference. If I had them sent to me over here I just wouldn't be able to carry them all around because you know me, I'm a junk collector. By the time I got around to coming home from this place I'd have so much junk to take back I'd never make it.

One thing I wanted to get you as a souvenir that I've seen some people have over here is a fork and spoon set hand carved out of some kind of dark wood, I think it's teak, in the Philippines. It stands about three and a half feet high, they're real big things. They're real neat looking. They'd be beautiful to put on the dining room wall or something. I've been trying to get some of those things, they only cost about four dollars, and send them to you as a souvenir, you know, a little gift. But I haven't been able to find any. Sergeant Moss had some in his closet the whole time and I didn't know about it. He had them out tonight because he's leaving tomorrow for R&R in Hawaii. He's going to take them home with him, or to Hawaii with him and give them to his wife. He said he got his from some guy who went to Hong Kong so if we see them over there I'll be tempted to buy them, well, I'll ask you if you'd like to have them or not. We can decide then if you want them. They're really neat; I think they're sharp.

But there's probably so much stuff that we'll see in Hong Kong and want to buy that we'll have to be rather conservative in what we get. We can't buy too many souvenirs because we'll have a house full of nothing but junk, you know. Say we buy ten souvenirs or so, little statuettes and stuff. Shoot, the house'll look cluttered with all that kind of stuff in it. We'll see, I don't know, we'll see.

I just think a lot about how it will be, you know, when you and I go shopping over there. Oh boy, your eyes will be all lit up, you'll just probably go out of your mind looking at everything over there. You'll just grit your teeth and wring your fingers just wanting everything you see because there's so many fantastic things to look at. You know we just can't have it all. You'll have trouble deciding what you want, I think. But it makes no difference to me. I get a kick out of watching women shop anyway. It will be a real pleasure to take you shopping and let you ooh

and aah over everything and gloat over this and that. Buy some neat little item and take it back and finger it, and look at it, and everything in the motel room that night, hotel room, and then ship it home. When you get home you'll have fun opening all the presents and everything that'll be sitting at my folks house. Sooo, it will be quite a shopping spree.

One of the very, very first things I want to do though is get that Noritake china set because that is something I feel is very important. More important than a lot of other knickknacks and stuff that we'll pick up. I want to go to Lane Crawford, definitely, because they have the best watch selection in the Orient. They have every different make that's ever been made, the best and the cheapest up to the most expensive. So we'll get your dad a good watch. Get a couple more good watches to send home, maybe a good one for me. I'd like a Rolex, but I don't know. Rolex is considered probably the best watch in the world, bar none, machine carved out of solid block of stainless steel and oyster perpetual motion or something, I don't know, some fantastic thing. Guaranteed forever. Absolutely perfect time, et cetera et cetera et cetera. Their cheapest watch starts at about \$150, Hong Kong price. It costs about, start around \$350 back in the States for the cheapest watch they make. Their mid-priced watches are about \$800 Hong Kong money, I mean American money in Hong Kong. That would be about \$1600 back in the States. They're really something though. Guaranteed, absolutely guaranteed waterproof down to 660 feet, which is ridiculous. Anyhoo, I don't think I'll get one. I'll be more tempted to spend money on a tape recorder than something like that. We'll just have to see.

I might be crazy for thinking this but if a guy is really serious about having a nice hi-fi set, he always has two tape recorders, or one tape recorder and one tape deck, or two tape decks so when he borrows tapes from people he can play them on one of his tape decks and record them on to the other while at the same time enjoying the music that he hears from the first tape. It's kind of stupid really. That's why they make tuner amps like the Sansui 5000 that can handle four tape decks at the same time so if you want to play three of them and record three and put them all on one at the same time, or two on two, or one on three, or whatever you want to do, you can do it with that gadget. I'd be stupid to do that I think. I don't know. We'll just have to see, that's all.

We'll get over there and look around and see all the different things. You'll probably see Ken and Sue before you come over. In fact another couple weeks or so they should be up there. So talk with them and find out what they want, if they want anything as far as stereo equipment. Tell them if they want something, to deposit the money in my checking account so that I can write checks against it for them. If they give me some idea of what they want, we can buy it for them right there in Hong Kong and ship it right to their home wherever they're living. I don't know, I haven't heard from them in a long time, you know, after I told them that I didn't want them to have, the same exact set that we have, maybe that upset them and they feel hurt or

something now, I don't know. If they're going to take advantage of my being over here and want some stereo equipment, now is the time to order it because I'll tell you one thing, I'm not going to spend the last three months around here just running my butt off trying to chase down everything that people want at the last minute. Shoot, I've been over here five months already and if they don't have some idea of what they want and let me know, then I just can't get it for them. I'm not going to break my neck, bust my you know what trying to locate this stuff for them. That's why I'm doing most of my work right now for the stuff that we want so I can just coast in the last half, and if I see anything spectacular that I missed out on the first half then I can get it then.

I think the way our stereo system's going to be set up now, we've got the Sansui 5000, tuner/amplifier, AM/FM/FM stereo. From there we'll have two of those Sansui speakers, we'll have 2 AR4X speakers and maybe one of those Magnavox 2 in 1 speakers, you know, maybe for the kitchen or some little other room or something where we can still get a stereo effect out of a small speaker system. We'll have that running out of the tuner amp, we'll have the Garrard turntable running into the tuner amp, we'll have the Teac tape deck running into the tuner amp, and we'll have a, I'm not sure what brand yet, probably a Nivico 8-track stereo cartridge player also running into the tuner amp. Now the reason why I'm getting that is because with our car stereo tape deck we'll have these little 8-track stereo cartridges that we can play in the car, but also with that Nivico thing we can bring those little cartridges in the house and play them in the house also, you know, switch them back and forth, or, bring them into the house, play them in that Nivico thing and tape them onto our large tape deck. So whatever we want to do, we can do. Or, we can buy empty 8-track stereo cartridges, put them in the Nivico thing, and then tape a record onto it or tape one of our larger tapes onto the small tape to play in the car. So that means, what I definitely would like to have is an 8-track stereo cartridge of "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly" record. So instead of going out and buying a \$5 or \$6 8-track stereo cartridge recorded with all of that music and everything on it, we'll buy a \$1.00 cartridge that's blank and then tape our "Good, Bad, and Ugly" album onto the stereo cartridge to play in the car.

Ron just walked in the room and he does such a fantastic job of imitating a "fuck-you" lizard, pardon the expression, that I'll have to have him perform for you, so here's Ron.

RI: No, no. I can't do it. Turn it off, turn it off. Oh well, I feel like a fool doing this, but...That's exactly what a phhh lizard sounds like.

DF: I'll play it back after you leave so you won't get all embarrassed again. You want to hear it? That was a pretty good rendition if I do say so myself. That is, without a doubt, the closest anybody will ever come to copying one of those lizards. It is almost perfect.

Hey, I'm down to, let's see, one, two, three, four cigars. So maybe someday if you think about it, you might want to pick up another box for me and hustle it out. Blowing dust off my

gun, I mean, my rifle. I go on radio watch right now so I'm going to cut this short and finish it up tomorrow morning, probably show a movie night or something. So, xin loi, goodbye. Arrivederci? Phooey. Who cares. Goodbye. See you later.

Sunday
13 July

I don't know if I told you or not, we got another Chieu Hoi in, let's see, the day before yesterday, Friday. No, wait a minute. This Thursday, Thursday evening in fact. The civilians went out to get a truckload of dirt. I think I told you. Anyway, before he left on the work chopper he gave me his Ho Chi Minh sandals and a couple of VC grenades. So I'm going to have somebody in camp deactivate both of those grenades and then I will probably have them refinished, maybe have the metal part chrome plated and the handles redone, sanded and varnished, stained, whatever they do, shellacked. We'll have those for real nice souvenirs. They make neat paperweights or something to that effect. They're pretty crude looking things, but they're nice war souvenirs. Right now they're still armed and loaded. I've got to have some CIDG in camp who knows how to take them apart to do it. I know how but I don't like to mess with those things. Why risk myself like that when I can have some stooge do it for me.

This is Sunday morning. I slept until 8 o'clock, got up and ate breakfast. I just finished typing a letter to Dan. I got your first tape all wrapped up. to keep these tapes apart. Oh, never mind. It won't do you any good if I tell you before you open them, I mean tell you on the tape, "Look at tape number one," because you can't open it, listen to the tape and say, "Oh. Tape number one is supposed to be the first one." Understand what I'm trying to get at? Okay.

Anyway, there was a rat in my room last night. One of the frogs was sitting right next to the wire cage. Apparently the rat grabbed his foot and started pulling him out through the wire screen. Of course the frog died in the process. I did hear a squeak and a little rustling last night. I sat up in bed and turned the light on and couldn't see anything so apparently he got away. But I'll get him. So now I'm down to three frogs. Of course the frog he got was quite small. He could get his head almost out of this hardware cloth, but he couldn't quite get all of the way through. The other three frogs are big. Maybe they learned their lesson by losing their little brother, I don't know. If I can catch that phhh lizard I'll keep him and my three frogs. They do a good job cutting down the flies around here. In fact I haven't had any trouble at all since I got them. That's about all I have to say, hon. I hope your package with the batteries comes today so I can finish up this roll in my movie camera, take some more, and that's about the tape, that's it. Love ya, good bye hon. Miss you.

Okay, I just finished making a complete side of a tape, it's that little fifteen minute tape, the one with real poor quality, real lousy tape. I got right to the end and I thought, well, I better check it to make sure. I had the volume on this thing turned all the way up to eight. When I played it back I couldn't even hear myself with the volume cranked all the way up to ten. I got POed, took the spool off, ripped all the tape off of it, and now I've got this one. I'm going to have to get some more of that tape from Ingram and put it on the spool and send it to you. So, now I got to start all over again and say everything that I have said once already, but first I'm going to check this tape to make sure it's recording all right. Boy, there's no comparison at all. I'm recording at the same level as I was recording the other tape. When I played this one back I had to turn the volume all the way down to one so it wouldn't blast me out of the room. At one it was just comfortably loud. So, I don't know what kind of tape that was, but it sure was some lousy stuff. It came in this Ampex box, 1/2 mill tensilized polyester, quarter inch, three hundred feet.

“No, I don't yet. Okay. Have you got that room unlocked right now? Hey Matt? Oh well. Hey Matt? You got that room unlocked right now? Have you got the operations room unlocked right now? Yeah, I'll get it later.” I have to get my map ready for the operation tomorrow. Let me see.

Oh yeah, refer to my list here. I got your two letters, tape, package, a letter from Floss, and a letter from my Mom today, plus some crap from the Army, a bunch of S-5 junk, and circulars, and ARs, amendments, addendums, and changes, and everything else. All that garbage I got to pour through. I was glad to hear that the speakers arrived in good shape. I thought you'd be quite excited seeing them, of course. You've seen pictures and everything of them already so you knew what to expect, but when you see the real thing, it's still a nice surprise because they are a real nice piece of furniture, and believe me they sound real good. To get anything of comparable value back in the States it would cost about \$150. When we go buy our AR4X speakers sometime in the future, you check around, and you see if you can find some speakers that look that nice. When you do, if you do, you check how much they cost. That's without even hearing what they sound like. Believe me, these speakers sound just fine, magnificent in fact. They have five individual speakers inside the cabinet from a 12 inch woofer all the way down to a 2 inch tweeter or something.

For your information, the word that you keep referring to considering headphones is impedance instead of impotence. No sweat, you don't have to check on the Magnavox because of the system we're building we certainly don't need a Magnavox. So forget it.

I'm glad to hear that you made room in the house for the speakers and not put them in the garage. That would have been an unforgivable sin to put those nice speakers in the garage regardless of how well they were packed or protected because moisture can get through just

about anything no matter how good you protect it. Moisture would certainly do damage to those speakers, in fact it would ruin them. So whatever you do, don't put any of that electronic stuff in the garage or any place where moisture and bugs and all that stuff can get to them. If you have to, if you run out of space in our little house, take it into Grand Rapids and put them in your closet upstairs or something, lock the closet, lock your bedroom door. Do whatever you have to do to safe guard it.

I'm glad you got your Seiko watch, although I was a little disappointed to hear that it ran so slowly for you, so erratically. But please, hon, don't beat on it, pound on it, step on it, sock it, swat it around to try and keep it running. Watches aren't built to withstand treatment like that all the time. If it quits and just absolutely will not run, take it off and put your other watch on and bring it with you to Hong Kong and we'll take it back. I'm quite sure that if you leave it on your wrist and wear it normally in a nice lady like manner it should continue to run, even if it does run erratically for awhile and then it should smooth out. If you remember correctly, my Seiko was the same way. The jeweler I took it to have the time set told me, "Well, wear it a little while until it settles down and starts running right." And as you know, it started keeping absolutely perfect time and it still has been. So just give it a chance, and the same with my dad's watch. If his runs fast or slow just tell him to wear it for a little while until it settles down and begins to get broken in properly.

But like I said, if you have trouble after quite awhile, then just bring it with you to Hong Kong and we'll take it back and exchange it. I'm quite sure the watch itself has some kind of warranty from the Seiko company and also the specific mail order company has a one year guarantee on all its products. Although I lost that stupid little paper saying when it was sent, from where, and everything like that, my receipt in other words, I'm sure we can take it back without having any trouble. Yes, I am a dope for losing it. I don't know what I did with it but I looked around for it today and I couldn't find it, so I'm sure I don't have it.

Oh, I have my Corcoran jump boots here to wear, and, oh, I found that little blue Presidential Unit Citation to pin on my uniform. What I need though are those green little epaulets, however you pronounce those things. When you see me next I'll have probably two ribbons, that Vietnamese thing, that award[RVN Gallantry Cross]. That goes on the same side as my Presidential Unit Citation. I'll have two new ones over there with the Presidential Unit Citation. I'll have the PUC, the purple [actually it's blue] thing, I'll have a red one which is another kind of unit citation,[Army Meritorious Unit Citation], and then I'll have that Vietnamese metal on my right side. On my left I'll have my National Defense, my Good Conduct, my Vietnamese Service Ribbon, and one other type of ribbon I can wear [VN Campaign Ribbon], my jump wings and my CIB. I don't know if I'll wear all that junk. I might just wear my name tag, my unit citations which are mandatory to wear, and my wings and just leave all the rest of that

junk off because it's kind of bothersome trying to keep it on straight and shiny and all that garbage. So I don't know if I'll wear it or not. We'll see.

I've got a note here written to myself saying, "If you don't see all that stuff then you're stupid." That means that I didn't like the comment you made on your tape concerning the fact that you might skip India and Turkey and fly right from Bangkok to Athens. If you do that, I think you're stupid, hon. I think you're a dummy, because your ticket's already paid for, I guess, regardless of how many stops you make. You've got all the shots you need or you will have by the 14th. Let's see that's tomorrow. That's on a Sunday. You can't get a shot on Sunday. Anyway, you will have had all your shots, your passport and everything, and you've got plenty of time. You've got most of August, all of September, and October if you need that much time, which I'm sure you won't. If you do pass up seeing thing like that I think you're making a mistake.

Even if you do think it's a little out of the way or a backward country or full of scum and slime and everything, I think you'll be quite surprised when you see how modern some of these places are, even New Delhi, India. I'm quite sure they aren't as backward as you imagine them to be. Not all places in Vietnam are as backwards as I describe them as you've seen in pictures and everything. A lot of the cities are quite modern and things like that. Sure, you'll be hitting all the biggest places like New Delhi and Izmir, Turkey, and Athens, Greece, and Rome and everything. Heck, they're just as modern over there as we are. In fact in some places they're even better than a lot of places we live.

I'll bet you didn't know that the Turks only eat with their left hand and the reason that is, is because they don't use toilet paper and they wipe their asses with their right hand. So there. You can pick up neat little tidbits of information like that stopping in the various cities. Heck, even if it's only for a day or two, at least you can take a look around. Heck, I wouldn't mind at all having a picture of that big old Turkish temple, Mohammed's temple or whatever it is in Turkey. I don't know if it's in Izmir or where it is, but you know, that great big dome shaped thing with the pillars all around it that the guys climb up at night and sing their songs to Allah or whatever they do. They all bow toward the temple and all that stuff. Heck, I think that'd make some fabulous slides to get pictures of places like that. So if I were you, I would plan on seeing all the stuff you can and after you spend some time in the Netherlands and with Eljo, you can ask her what are the good places to see in and around the Netherlands and Germany and the Rhine, places like that.

Ask around, maybe you'll see more Americans over there, ask them what they've seen, what they're going to see. I would say go see Glasgow and London. I don't know. I wouldn't mind having a picture of the London Bridge or what's left of it, if there's anything left of it, and Parliament, and a couple of those guards standing around, you know the guards in the red coats

with the big furry hats and all that stuff. Heck, some of that stuff is interesting. If you have a mind to, go over to Ireland, look around. Check into Irish wolfhounds, find out how much they cost in Ireland. Find out what they cost to ship home, you know their six-month whatever it is before they can come into the States. I can't think of the word I want right now, but find out about all that kind of stuff.

Shoot, you've got plenty of time, and, I wouldn't say plenty of money but you've got enough money. Everything is paid for already except for odds and ends like your food and motel bill, but your big expenses like your plane fares to and from different cities and stuff. So go ahead, hon. Have a ball. Blow it all. Take some pictures. Have a good time. Phew, boy, I just let a smelly one.

I've got a little pamphlet here: 'Change number 1 to AR635-100 copy 1,' entitled "Personnel Separations, Officer Personnel" and it covers what officers have to do to get out of the Army and general provisions, relief from active duty of officers and warrant officers, separation certificates, retirement, maximum age, voluntary retirement, mandatory retirement, just stuff like that. It ought to be interesting reading. I'll look at that when I get time. Still haven't gotten my letter from Michigan State, although I look forward to the mail eagerly every time that it comes in, hoping for packages and things like that.

'Ain't got sales slip,' oh yeah, that refers to my Pentax. I haven't got the sales slip for that either, hon. I goofed. I thought I had it. I thought I stapled it inside that little Pentax book I have here but the only thing I stapled in was the guarantee and the lens number and the body number and some stuff like that. So I don't know if that will do any good or not, but don't worry about the duty, it can't be that much. I don't know. Heck, when you go through customs you can say that your husband bought it back in Vietnam back in such and such time and just explain the situation. Who knows? I think because of the fact you bought it overseas, and then used it while you were overseas and then brought it back into country, you can declare it as a used camera, the same way you do a car. Buy a car in Europe and drive it for a few miles and then claim it as a used car and you can bring it over for half of what you normally have to pay for a new car being shipped over. I think the same thing applies to the camera. But I will give you my Pentax to use when you go around the world, and I trust you with it. I know you're careful with that kind of stuff. All I have to do is teach you how to use it and we'll have plenty of time to do that.

I don't know what lenses I'll give you. Probably nothing but the standard lens because I'm sure that you'll have enough questions and confusion just learning how to use the camera as is without worrying about switching lenses and what difference it makes in coverage, things like that and F-stops and all that stuff. So I'll just probably keep all my extra lenses and stuff here and wrap them up and send them home eventually. Oh, I don't know what I'll do.

Anyway, I suggest you bring my Yashica back. I hope they can fix it for a reasonable price. It certainly shouldn't be, I wouldn't think, over even ten dollars. If it is then we're getting gypped because it doesn't cost that much to take it apart. I took it all the way apart except for a couple of tiny screws that had some kind of stick-um on them to keep them from coming loose. I didn't have a screwdriver small enough to fit it otherwise I would have done it myself, fixed it myself. I know it doesn't take that much, certainly no twenty dollars worth. But I definitely want that camera back because it's a real good little camera, and just what I need over here. It's a little unwieldy; I can't take pictures quite as fast as if I had my 35mm, but no problem. I would much rather have that over here and take a chance of that getting rusty, then on my nice Pentax which I've been drooling for since I had first heard about 35mm. I'm quite pleased, I'm very, I'm absolutely, excellently pleased with the camera. It's a lot, not a lot, but somewhat more compact and smaller than most 35 millimeters. It doesn't affect its operation in the least, in fact it's handier to use, especially for a woman, because most other cameras are just a little bit larger, maybe a fourth again as large as my Pentax. They operate almost exactly the same, every one of them, so there's no problem there at all.

You know those frogs I had in my room? Well, last night while I was sleeping I heard this squeaking noise. Of course I quickly sat up in bed and flipped the light on thinking there was a rat or something in the room and I didn't see anything so I looked at my frogs and thought, "Shoot, you dumb frogs, quit making so much noise," and I went back to sleep. This morning when I got up I looked in the frog cage and one of them, the smallest frog of the four had been pulled by the hind legs part way through the screen. One hind leg was chewed all the way off and laying on the floor beside the cage. Needless to say he was dead so when I saw that I realized that apparently there was a rat in the room last night and he must have grabbed the frog's leg while it was next to the cage and start pulling him through. Rats are bold, to say the least.

When I walked into the mess hall last night to get a snack about 9 o'clock and there were some rats running around and one ran behind a big chunk of plywood leaning up against the wall. So I thought, "All right for you rat," and I kicked the bottom of the plywood board as hard as I could. There were two of them back there. One got away but I killed the other one. Mashed his head in, good big old rat. I got a private war against rats.

Right now I'm having the carpenters put hardware cloth all around the bottom of the walls in the mess hall and tin on top of that, so now the hardware cloth comes up about three feet off the floor. It's nailed right to the two by fours on the inside of the walls but when I go in the mess hall at night the rats run around trying to get out and they run up electrical wires and behind the refrigerator and stuff and jump over the wire and then climb down the wire. So what I'm going to have to do is get them to put more wire on up to the first vertical crosspiece between the, let me start over again. Put the wire from where it ends now up to the first horizontal cross brace

between the vertical two by fours that hold the wall together. That way they can't run up the screen wire between the wire and the wall and get over the top because of the two by four brace will stop them. That should keep most of the rats out.

There's still holes in the plywood floor. What I've been doing is taking these tops off the number ten tin cans, you know, the big ones, and nailing them into the floor over the holes. It's doing a pretty good job, but there's still about three or four holes that I haven't covered up yet. That should pretty well take care of the rats. Eventually we hope to put that hardware cloth all over the inside of the mess hall from the floor up to the ceiling, then across the top of the ceiling too to keep all the rats out, but boy, it's a tough job. Those rats, they find the slightest little hole and they get in and out of it without any problem at all. Of course they appear all over the place in the teamhouse at night. Usually you don't see them but sometimes they're bold; like everybody's sitting in the club making a lot of noise and a rat will just walk right in the doorway, right into the bright lights and people walking around making noise...and they just...