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Folder: Writings and research on Vietnam and the Montagnard people: Draft titled Jack Rudy, circa 1977.

Series: Vietnam War Service.

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JACK Rudy:

26 Jan '67=

...." Saw about 10 people is all. First day of work today. Doesn't look like much work demanded yet. Will go out to a montagnard village Saturday and look around. Don't worry, it's safe. Am going out with a Capt. Jack Rudy who's been here for about 7-8 mos. - Is a big chief among these villagers. Actually he's a lawyer but helps these people with their problems. He's working to get them some independence from these bastard Vietnamese....

....."The big disappointment so far is that it looks like I'm not going to be overwhelmingly busy - time will drag. Maybe when I get involved in the villages things will improve a little. Maybe I can get the BLC to contribute some medicine once in a while..."

29 Jan '67

...."Many things I've seen and done since my last letter. Will try to capture some of this on paper now before it slips away. Am very tired - no sleep since Fri-Sat nite's sleep

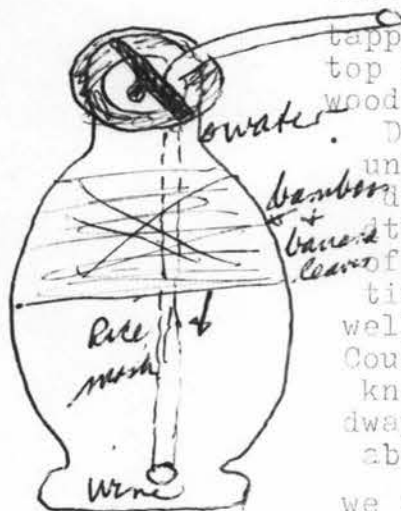
Went to a Montagnard village yesterday about noon to see the old lady. No fault of mine but she's well now. Went with Jack Rudy - the Judge Advocate or base lawyer whichever you prefer. He's quite a guy. He requisitioned some sheet metal for the Montagnard teacher and for Plo - more about these people later. Jack is a big chief at this village - the name is Plei Brill. Want to hurry up and change an impression I gave yesterday that these people are dirty. Those that are are dirty because of the constant dust and dirt around them. Most bathe any chance they get - no running water or wells - they bring water in in gourds from a near by lake. They simply don't have soap or water available. However, most sweep their houses constantly and do the best they can to keep neat. I may repeat myself many times but would like to get these things down on paper for later on.

Anyway, we came back later in Jack Rudy's Honda motor cycle for the sacrifice the teacher and Plo were planning for us to thank us for the sheet metal. We started out at Plo's house. Jack has worked out a deal with him whereby Plo hires 6-7 men to make their famous crossbow - each man making a part - then Jack buys the crossbows from Plo and sells them on the base or in the U.S. by mail. With the profit Jack makes he buys soap and candy, etc. - even blankets - and hands this out to the natives. A great idea that seems to me to be a positive contribution. He's sold about 500 of these crossbows already. I bought one today - \$10.00 - and it's a work of art. Made from mahogany and beautifully hand tooled. Arrows are bamboo. Plo is making a special small one for me as a gift.

I digress a little. These are the friendliest, most honest and honorable people I have ever met. Put us to shame in many ways. They have great courage and, if they like you, will do literally anything for you. They have magnificent posture and carriage - walk with real pride. They laugh and sing constantly. Look everyone straight in the eyes and study you carefully. Any suggestion of dishonesty they detect immediately. They are also very courteous to everyone - I saw men today - G.I.'s (another story maybe later) unwittingly break hundreds of taboos and yet they never flinched and smiled very openly and forgave us (I'm sure I'm still breaking many taboos although Jack has carefully coached me on many of them e.g. don't put your hands on children's heads, don't even touch the children unless the parents or the child comes to you first, etc.) because they knew we meant well.

Back to my story: Jack Rudy and I returned for the thanksgiving sacrifices about 3 PM by motor scooter - a wild ride for about 7 miles down dusty trails. I had by pockets full of medicine and he had his full of cigars, candy, tobacco, etc.

The sacrifice consist of killing a chicken after drinking 3 levels of rice wine, then eating this boiled along with a hot sause (very good) and boiled clams. To explain a level of rice wine. They have a big jug standing about 3 feet tall much like the diagram below. On the bottom is the wine of varying proof and age. We had the best wine they had - came out like a milky substance - like sk~~im~~ milk. They tapped it just for us. About 1-2 months old. They fill the top with water up to the brim and then place a piece of wood across the top with a stick hanging down in the middle. Drinking a level consists of sucking on the straw until the level of the water is under that stick hanging down. That's a hell of a lot of wine! This wine is something else again. It gives a person a special cheerness of thought, almost a euphoria - so much so that by the time I went to bed I was speaking their language pretty well! But it does something else to the coordination. Couldn't walk without falling down. No balance. You know where you want to go but your body goes another way. Oddest feeling in the world. Anyway we both drank about 6-8 levels plus a bottle they siphoned off while



we ate the chicken and clams and hot stuff. We got smashed but didn't know it. I barfed all over the place which pleased them mightly. (if you vomit and/or get smashed this pleases their gods very much - their gods must be

still be smiling today.) Jack acted as our interpreter and did a hell of a job. The Montagnards I met were all very intelligent and extremely eager to learn - They picked our brains dry as best they could. They were also very informative about themselves, their hatred for all Vietnamese, etc. After a while I got so I could talk a little on my own - some of them knew a few American words and knew French very well so I could get along a little bit.

I've got to take a break - I'm exhausted. Will pick this up later.

Jack has a 50 page language book he's compiled - the language has never been recorded officially. He hopes to publish a dictionary sometime. Also is going to write a book when he gets back - ought to be a dandy - best seller if it can pass the censors. I know how to count laboriously now. SA = one; DUA = two; CLOW = three; BA = four; MA = five; NOM = six; JU = seven; P:AN = eight; DUAPAN = nine; PLO = ten; PLO_SA = eleven; etc. DUA PLO = 20; DUA PLO SA = 21; etc.

How about that! FENKARE - Thank you.

30 Jan '67 (9 3a)

....Will tell you a little that I don't think is classified. Saturday afternoon, As I started to ~~try~~ tell you in my last letter, Jack Rudy and I went back to the Montagnard village - Plei Blell - for the thanksgiving sacrifices in our honor. As we were going through there was a large bus full of Vietnamese "good" guys. They have a neat trick of taking a Montagnard hostage and saying, "You V.C." "We shoot" - then they proceed to steal of their fruit and chickens, etc. until they have enough. If the Montagnards resist, they shoot the hostage or take him in for questioning and no one ever sees him again. Mind you, these are the "good" guys - the ones we're trying to win this war for. The Montagnards can't fight back because the Vietnamese government won't arm them - except a few Special Forces that are closely supervised.

Consequently the Montagnards have formed an underground called the FULRO (phonetically spelled) movement and have stashed guns and weapons all over these mountains. Someday, and maybe soon, there's going to be a hell of a war inside the big war up here. The only trouble is that some very nice

Mont

Montagnards are going to be hurt. And, as I mentioned before, they are bound to lose it because they simply don't have the support. U.S. official policy is to support the Vietnamese and whatever the Montagnards against them will force the U.S. to help the Vietnamese cut them down. is a very dirty little war indeed.

As the Montagnards know, they're damned if they do and damned if they don't. By the way, the V.C. are much more sympathetic to ~~the~~ these people. At least they pay (in stolen U.S. currency) for the rice and fruit and nails they take from the Montagnards. What the M's ~~really~~ would really like is everyone to please leave them alone and let them live their life in this beautiful cool mountain country. They are the original people. The Vietnamese are merely displaced persons from North Vietnam after the fall of Dien Bien Phu (the French were thrown out of Viet Nam then and the country was divided.) Those that chose to leave came south along with many V.C. infiltrators.

There is some small arms fire down by the flight line so we may have a mortar attack tonight and an alert. May have to cut this letter short and start a fresh one tomorrow. No danger. I'm up in MACV - if we get attacked and they make it up here it will be a miracle. They will have to plow through the whole 15,000 U.S. army troops as well. Not likely.

About this trip to the village for the sacrifice in our honor - first get smashed on rice wine and cigars and cigarettes - then we start out on the way to the second party. Well, Rudy smashed up his Honda, cut himself all to hell and did something to my left middle finger I'll remember for awhile. Anyway we walk (sort of) to the teachers (Khat) house and get involved in another sacrifice and more wine. As the evening wore on more and more men assembled and Rudy points out leaders from many of the villages nearby. Finally a tall man (Ton) - about 5' 9" - 5' 10" - the average height of these people is only about 5' - 5' 2" - about 45 years old (~~life~~ life expectancy of these people is only 35 years old) came in and sat down in a corner. Eyed me very carefully and I accepted my second bracelet and met me with a ~~piercing~~ piercing stare and only a trace of a smile - these people generally are very gregarious and smile constantly. Rudy tells me he's the chief of the seven villages around here. He doesn't say a thing for 2-3 hours as the conversation goes on and on with everyone talking at the same time like a bunch of Italians. Meanwhile more and more men come in - no women, no children except my buddy GIR (pronounced GLEEL) 40 years old and as smart as a whip. He's teaching me Montagnard slowly but surely, e.g. Y-C (no ~~sweat~~ sweat).

After a while I noticed this guy is talking more and more and the rest of the troops are quiet and listening attentively to every thing he says. He must have talked for about an hour - getting louder and louder until he finally yelling. The just of the thing was that they had had enough of this Mickey Mouse and he thought it was time to do something about it. All of a sudden the meeting broke up and I was lifted carefully up and taken down a trail to Hing's house (GIR's father). Here Jack and I were carefully undressed and our valuables hidden except Jack's .33 which he insisted on sleeping with and we were literally hidden. At about 3:00 AM the base got an attack with mortars and small arms and there were some shots in Plei Brell as well. We were thoroughly awake by this time but Y-C - no sweat. We were hidden and perfectly safe with Montagnard guards all around the area. Jack and I hitched a ride the next morning back to MACV - by 9:30 AM I was at Mass like nothing happened.

The next day we took a convoy out to the Special Forces Montagnard village which is really impressive and impregnable (Plei Breng) - punge sticks, barbed wire, mines, etc. Met a Montagnard "doctor" who seems to know something at least and gave him all the medicine I had. - Taught him how to take care of the common things at least - will check in a week to see if he's actually treated any of these people - or sold the medicine o

the black market. Also want to see their water source and his "hospital" May be able to wrangle up a well digging team from the 295th engineers with the Judge's help (Jack Rudy). Will describe the "hooches" some lother ftime.

As you can see, we've had a busy weekend. Am exhausted. Have a very good teacher in Jack Rudy. He has 2 1/2 months to go here - should be able to pick his brains many times before he leaves. Hope to be able to do something really positive without interfering with their beautiful way of life before I leave....

31-Jan - 1 Feb '67 10af11

...Drank beer all nite with some free lance correspondents (John Value) -talked by usual brand of philosophy. These are starange people by ;the usual standards. Most correspondents sit in Saigon and pick up the local gossip and Air and Army releases on the Battles in Viet Nam. Tfhese guys sactually sit in the trenches and go into villages and get shot down in helicopters, etc. 500 correspondents in Vietnam and about 450 of them sitting on their asses in Saigon. Anyway, we went into a Montagnard village - my home wway from lhome - Plei Brel - saw my old women who is up and kibking - she forced me to take a bunch of bananas which she needs more than I do but would be an insult if I didn't take ot. Also was given a crossbow - no. 10 (values go as follows: (1) no. 1. - very good or Yam Doi; (2) no 10 - not so good ; (3) No ten thoussand) - very bad or Bu Yam d(no good) ; (4) No ten thousand 50 - Not even on the shit list;

these people watch very closely - they a ccept my small efforts to help- but have been hurt many times and are cautious about accepting someone new = a good quality, I think.

Anyway - the correspondents went out with us to Plei Brel and had a good time taking pictures. I got a look at their water source - very good - comes out of the clay-rock fat several points about 50-75 feet below the village level. There is a beautiful, jungle actually chasm that this falls into and the water is filtered and sweet and coob. Here they bathe.. Women in ~~the~~ a sheltered area, men up on a separate level with the best stream and children all around. Jack Rudy has built them a stariway down to the;water hole - before that this was almost inaceessable.....

Work at the dispensary is interesting but these Monatagnards have really turned on my "on" button as you've probably gathered. Please send those pocket books I had laid o3 t. Especially would appreciate Tom Dooley's books. He apparently had an insight into these people that few have.

Went ot Pleiku today to bring in the Montagnard teacher - Kat - to fill out some more papers. More Vietnamese harassment. Will also have to send Lick - Rudy's interpreter to Saigon andl may be eventually to the U.S. to escape the Vietnamese. They want him to put him in prison "on Suspicion." Last time for 9 months - no charge ever. He's too smart. Knows English, Vietnamese and Montagnard - they want to get rid of him because he knows too much. Aa good man - he's teaching me also. A dirty little war.

Will go to bed now.

Am learning a few words but langu-ages come very hard for me.

3 Feb '67 12b

... Thought you'd be interested in this articl about Jack Rudy. Am learning the language slowly but surely - lose much by staying away just one day as I did today....

5 Feb '67 14 lb f11

This afternoon went back to Plei Brel for a party Jack and I had planned. Pop and sbeer and movies. The pop and beer went over big but the little generator we brought out wasn't powerful enough to run the projec- tor. So we'll have to do it again next w

ok.

tor. So we'll have to do it again next week. The kiks were very disappointed but never complained....

6 feb '67 1a

....Each time I write I worry how you're going to react to what I say- I'm told no wife believes we're not in constant danger so all the reassurance in the world just makes them worry more. Won't go into this in detail, but suffice it to say that Jack Rudy has never shot his M-16 or .38 since he's been here - 9 months - and is constantly out among these people. You have to believe me when I talk about the loyalty of these Montagnards - they will gladly die rather than have a guest they like be hurt in any way. Their loyalty and ability to fight is fierce - no other word for it....

10:30 pm ...Had to take a break. My roommates were talking up a storm and I couldn't write anyway. Had a few beers with Judge Rudy - talked about many things. You know, describing these people is a little like ~~describing~~ describing Dr. Dick Jones to a perfect stranger to the man. Where do you begin@....

12 Feb '67 3a f11

..By the way checked out a weapon - a .38 - good for killing snakes and shooting my foot. Tokoks impressive anyway - Also have an illegal western cowboy- type holster - a great hit with the Montagnards.

Pardon me a minute - have an errand to run - happiness is a dry fart...

Okay - where was I? Came back ;from Plei Bong Bao about 5 pm in good shape despite the rice wine- stopped briefly to see a patient I sent to 13th Surg with appendicitis - at same time saw a dMontagnard who was all shot up - neck, chest, arm, five wounds in abdomen, no BP, wound in leg - part of the "truce" the Vietnamese have over Tet - V.N. New Year's - this is the year of the goat - also another Montagnard was brought in - some more wounds. Both are still alive but just barely.

Left 13th Surg to go to Plei Brel with Jack - had good time as we always do - talked Jarai all nite haltingly - rice wine helps - learned jMany words - left there about 0 pm - Jack slept out in village but I came back because I'm under curfew as I mentioned. Reported back to Bonnie who asked what time I got in - laughed when I told him exactly two minutes under curfew whatever time that was. We'll get along fine. jNext morning (Saturday) worked dispensary until noon - then went with Jack to pick up our interpreter Dick, also took a corpsman who's dying to work with me out in the villages - a good boy, too - to Plei Brel to pick up GGIR (remember him? ten years old, good boy) -- Plei Phong to get my leper-- dPleiku leper colony where talked to Olive Kingsbury and Charlie Long -she congratulated me on my diagnosis, a great satisfaction to me -- dto Montagnard Special Forces to see my boy with clubfoot (no phones here, kmust travl every where over these outrageously bumpy, dusty roads - can't believe this dust - 2-3 inches of it everywhere - later on during the rainy season all turns to mud I guess - 1-2 feet of it. As I write have many more things jto say but the thoughts come to fast ot write down - sorry I seem to skim along - don't know any other way.

Have left out a few pneumonias, rashes, etc I saw - everywhere we go a crowd of kids and adults gather - am becoming known here as a doctor and attract a crowd with Jack almost everywhere. A great compliment but somewhat tiring - also frustrating not knowing the language or having sufficient or the right medicine - to say nothing of poor lighting, no lab, etc to make the diagnosis.

Anyway, got back by 4:00 - Mandatory commanders call -- Bonnie. Told us about Beanstalk (visiting dignitaries from the Pentagon - 29 stars in all- will be out at Plei Brel and Ple Bong Bao to see our "model" villages and

drink rice wine - they're going to do all this in about 20 minutes by helicopter - then go back and tell the reporters what they've seen with their own eyes and give their "expert" opinion of the situation. Chief Tung is very impressed and will put on a good show for them. Have been invited to be a Plei Brel for the ceremonies - will wear my 1505's for the first time since arriving in Viet Nam....

14 Feb '67 191a fll.

....Much excitement yesterday at Plei Brel where Jack and I and about 6 chiefs of the surrounding villages met 29 stars - chief of Staff 4 star General McConnell, his staff, Air Force Secretary Vice Chief and many, many lesser generals - they stayed for about 15 minutes - rice wine, crossbow, saw the Air Force ble school house and stairway built by 633 Cmbt Spt Gp Dec '66 -- goes down to their water source. A beautiful chanting song done by the Montagnards. Jack attempted to pick it up with weak batteries on tape - don't know if it sounds okay. Also got individual recordings of many of my friends and chiefs at Plei Brel. Jack and I sang a chorus of Irene Good-nite.

We didn't get out of there till 9:30 pm - much rice wine and boiled cow (not exactly Charlies but okay.) A few jother adventures I'll tell about tonite. Jack and I made it back in time for lobster! (Col Smith- (lewd, lascivious, etc.) picked 700 pounds of these up in Bangkok - very illegal but very good.

Jack just walked in - had some interesting news regarding our adventures last nite- will go into it extensively tonite. May be able to fly up to Knotum this afternoon if everything works out. Want to see that Dr. ~~31~~/ Smith and see her hospital. No more rice wine for awhile I hope....

14 Feb '67 20 4b

....Tried to get this Lt. Colonel Olson whose one of the big wigs in Civic Action in Saigon to see this. (see section of Philosophy and Montagnards 20 1a and fll.) Thus far not one dime has gone to the Montagnards up here - all controlled by the Vietnamese and much red tape. Takes 3-4 months to get anything approved and then generally nothing comes of it anyway - lost in red tape. The troops around here settle for "borrowing" from the base supplies anything they need - and have been able to accomplish a lot. Our meager 2,400 men have done 10-15 times in a year more than the 30 - 40,000 Army boys have accomplished in 3-4 years. (Besides the Green Berets, of course.)

We've put up about 15 spillways and piped spring water in. 4-5 school houses. Dedicated a meeting hall last Friday at Plei Bong Bao - built from scrap lumber and painted by Creek and the boys. All painted Air Force blue with yellow trim by request of the Montagnards.. - no want Army color. We've made many friends in spite of the fact these people are still suspicious of us - know that if they get too dependent on us and we leave, they're sunk. Like they say, "American leave, Montagnards fini."

Enough of the politics. I've talked all nite about this, trying to get this knuckle-head Colonel to cut the red tape and get us the supplies and medicines we need. Jack has given up on him. Says he promises a lot but in the 9 months he hasn't produced one thing that Jack has asked for. The reason of course, is that they know that the Air Force is primarily involved in the Montagnards and the Vietnamese veto everything immediately. Especially when Jack asks for something.....

....Worked the dispensary as usual in AM. Went out with Jack (by his invitation cum permissio Col Bonneaux) to Plei Brel where we had set up the village for the arrival of 4 star chief of staff Gen'l McConnell (the chief of the entire Air Force) plus 25 other assorted stars, etc to visit; drink rice wine, see the school house, the walkway to the water hole, meet the chiefs, etc. Then (remember the tall quiet man whom everyone listened to one of the first nites I was here? - same-same.) was there with all this

dignity as were 6 or 7 other chiefs from this area. Well the General arrived by helicopter (in a freshly cut area of the forest Plei Brel had cut down just for this occasion) drank wine, etc etc etc and left ~~at 10~~ promptly in 10 minutes!! When you go to a Montagnard occasion you DON'T eat and run, especially when a week or more preparation has been made for the visit. As polite as these people are, they could hardly hold back their anger and frustration at this short visit. Jack and I were the only ones left to try to explain what the hell was going on. Thon invited us to his house (a great honor by the way) where he served us boiled cow and rice wine. We kept saying we had to leave to get back to a big party at Air Base (Nancy Sinatra song) but Thon wouldn't take no for an answer. Besides, he wanted to know what went on with the big noise for 10 minutes - then puff!

Well, Jack and I tried to tell them that he was big man, head of all Air Force - whole world (of course, Thon neither reads nor writes, his world ends north at Khontum, west in hills of Cambodia, south to Bann Me Thuot and east at An Khe. Knows about Saigon but doesn't know where it is. Any talk about United States, France, England, Africa, ~~and~~ even China goes right over his head. Finally we got an idea --- Big general spend 3 minutes at ARVN II Corps (Vietnamese headquarters) and 10 minutes Plei Brel. No go to Pleiku at all, only Plei Brel, then home to America. -- Ah! ~~that~~ got him. Big smile. By this time we've been talking about 4-5 hours - "lapping the hose," as they say here, i.e. rice wine or NUMPAI. Noone was allowed to eat or drink except Jack and I until we were stuffed and smashed. I went out and barfed my guts out one time - Y-C, they not offended in the least. Finally they started eating and drinking a little, too. Imagine if you will a long, low house about the length of our house 5620 Zenith and about as narrow as the front half of our house (living room and our bedroom). Totally dark - no lights with no chimney and the only warmth and much smoke coming from the wood fire. They love that smoke - smell like this all the time - gets into their hide so baths don't even help. Ascribe all kinds of things to smoke and fire - they're gods to them, I'm sure. After a while I get to like that smell myself but at first very offensive and hard on the eyes. I'm smelling a little like that myself, I guess when you get right down to it. Y-C.

We keep saying we have to get home, take Lick (our ever present companion and interpreter) home, etc. When there develops a totally unexpected event. I find that we're being offered Thon's 15 year old daughter to take to bed!! Boy! First I said, very innocently, "how 3 men (Myself, Jack and Lick) sleep one girl?" No problem. Thon produces 2 other girls! I don't know what they looked like with all the darkness and smoke, but I knew I'd better get the hell out of there before bad trouble started. We made all kinds of apologies and finally managed to leave amid much protestations from family, etc. Thought we had really fouled up any chance of working with these people for sure. To my and Jack's surprise Lick told us this morning we had done the perfect thing. Everytime the French, J.V.C. Vietnamese or U.S. Army comes, the first thing they always want is the young women. Usually the Montagnards give in - but very reluctantly and hate the men that do this to their virgins. As I mentioned, these people are very modest, reticent and shy. They hide their young girls most of the time. Only married women with their front teeth (upper incisors) knocked out can appear in public. As I mentioned, you don't talk to children or women, don't touch them, etc. unless the old man says so. And even then you do so as little as possible. For instance, I'd love to pick up these kids, roll around with them, tickle them, etc. - especially I'd like to be able to sit them on my lap when examining the sick ones. No soap. If they had their way I'd be diagnosing from across the room. Had to show them I needed to listen with stethoscope, feel for bumps, etc before they were willing for me to touch the sick. But each time I do you can see these people are visibly unimpressed with my activity.

With this in mind you can see we were being given a great honor by Thon's offer - at the same time it was a great test also. They wanted to see what kind of men we were- same-same V.C., French, ARVN, U.S. Army? - or wre we really there to help them? We passed with flying colors. Sometimes morals are a good thing to have.... got interrupted by Rusty Shields coming in drunk to bid me goodnite and ended up telling me what a great guy he is and how he'll help me out and like that. Jack doesn't like him - goes out in the villages to impress everyone what a great humanitarian he is - talks too much, etc, etc. All kinks of people make a world, don't they?

Went to tell you about their interkpretations of dreams, chickens, dogs and fish, - their reverence for the wind and the air - many words for these things - all mean something or possibly someone to them. I could already write a book about them, but don't know them very well at all. Saved some faro seeds for Dad to grow - need acid soil - but in the confu-sion of getting out of there last nite - must have lost them. Will try again soon.

17 Feb '67 22 5a

...There's a big sacrifice coming up next week at PleiBrel - a water buffalo or two I guess. Doc Asendorf, Jack and myself are invited. Will have to get over the C.I's by then or I'll be in rough shape.

19 Feb '67 24 2a

.... Just checked Jack's bed - it's empty - must be spending another nite out among his people. Does this 2-3 times a week. Says he gets more sleep out hthere than he does here at MACV - so close to the officers' cluband all. He showed me the rough copy of his language book - very well done. He's a good one.

This Shields character (Major - I mentioned him before - the one with all the advice, etc.) has been bugging me to go out with him to the villages. - "for political feasons" whatever the hell that means. Don't want to get mixed up with him but may be can't avpid it. he talks out of bolth sides of his mouth. Jack doesn't like him it turns out - didn't say a word to me bout him - just let me figure it out by myself. When I made a comment about him the other day, he finally said, "jSo you got the word on him, did you?" and let it go at that. The personalities ~~are~~ and the devious ways of the people here are really something. Al lot of people wearing these wrist bands aren't really "friends" of the Montagnards- just looks good to wear a band and good publicity - maybe even wins them a medal later - I don't know. Anyhow - lots of phonies and publicity seekers. My motive? Damned if I know. Happen to like these people I guess. Also would probably be bored to tears here and depressed if it weren't for them. Each time I come back feel I've done something ~~good~~ good, possibly constructive and have certajinly gained 10 times more than I've given. Pretty selfish, isn't it? It's better than drinking yourself to death or counting the days, etc.....

7b ...Would like to supply them with this for the blankets they make. They have an art of weaving that is beautiful but a lousy thread from some jplant - maybe a linen type, I don't know - anyway it doesn't keep them warm. Jack plans to pick up a pedal-type loom in Bangkok (can't spell that damn word) when he goes. Could maybe us some money you collect if you do to byy some. I'll let you figure that out. Not wool, though. We've tried that. They pull it apart with their hands, throw it away - num-be ten thou! (10,000 - very bad).

24 Feb '67 23 71a

Dear Folks, Feel like I've been here much longer htan I have. Everynow andl then forget whreer I am until leave the base and see strange looking faces all around me - little people going about their business. Then I realize we've only intruders in a land settled many thousands of

years ago - with their own customs, laws, taboos, language, etc. Makes me wonder sometimes what the hell we're doing here anyway. Of course I know why we're here. There are huge battles going on just 20 miles west of us - the 4th Division took 100 KIA's (killed in action) and 200-300= wounded last week, the 7th Corps has been taking it on the chin and my montagnards are also getting a beating out at Plei Djerling (about 15 miles from here). Saw a 2 cell (each cell is 3 50's) B52 raid on the radar TV 2 days ago - they dropped 232 tons of bombs 20 miles west of here. An awesome sight. Am involved as you know in these Montagnards. Am invited along with Jack Rudy and 3 others to a water buffalo sacrifice- very sacred- in honor of Hing's grand parents next Tuesday. Should be very interesting. Much bizarre sickness here by U.S. standards - have had to dig deep into the textbooks around here to find the diagnosis and treatment of many of them..

25 Feb '67 29 1a

..... Jack's out at Plei Brel again tonite. Have been looking for him all nite - when I can't find him have to assume he's out in the village. like that son of a bitch, learn many things from him.....

26 Feb '67 30 6a

.....Am a little apprehensive about the water buffalo sacrifice coming / up at Plei Brel Tuesday. They've already made 100 large jugs of wine, beaucoup food and Judge has been elected to beat the thing to death at sunrise Wednesday morning. They keep insisting I come- apparently will feel very insulted if I don't. Am a se - should be a memorable occassion...

27 Feb '67 31 1a

.....Wdrked the dispensary today for al Asendorf who flew with a buddy of his today. It was a welcome break - have gas and G.I's and nausea all day probably from the food at Plei Wan yesterday. Have a great time out there but that wine really got ot me. Have another session to look forward to tomorrow nite at Plei Brel - a water buffalo sacrifice at dawn aWednesday and drink all nite the nite before. Jack and I will look out for each other - also our friends will take very good care of us - Y-O. A special honor to be invited - only myself, Jack, Asendorf and 3 others invited except the village. 100 jugs of wine - special - for the occassion already. Was going to bring out a hundred pound bag of rice and 50 pounds of salt but Ton told Jack last nite that Montagnards not like Vietnamese - not beggars, we proud people - no need charity. Is afraid that continuous jgifts by us will spoil his people - make them grabby, liars and greedy - steal - like Vietnamese. Think I'll bring the stuff out after the sacrifice as a gift fro the good lparty.....

28 Feb - Mar 1 1967 321a

...As you can see I'm back from Plei Brel - got back about 1/2 hour ago. A ffantastic sight which I will describe in detail with pictures later on. Wouldn't habe missed it for the world. Am going back early this morning after a short nap. TRhey will sacrifice 7 water buffalo this morning at sunrise. Would have stayed there all nite & the party goes on all nite) but promised I'd come back to the base tonite - onel thing I've relearned: from the Montagnards, if you give your word you'd damn well better keep it.

Am very tired as you can imagine - but not in the least bit sick or drunk from the rice wine. We "danced" for hours - round and round the tomb- "dancing" consists of joining hands in a line and shuffling sideways slowly while swinging your arms up and down to the beat of lthe drums. The most unsexy and modest dance I've ever been involved in. The festivities didn't start till about 10 PM - when the moon came up. An unforgettable scene of fire, kettle drums with their continuous beating - all different rythms and pitches & but somehow in unison to makek a unique and awe inspiring sound -

happy, reverent, fearful, sad, weeping, solemn and wild all at the same time. The teenage girls were allowed out for a change - they had quite a time dancing and making merry - something like aspirants at St. Ben's high school would act on their night out. They were dressed in their very best clothes, ear rings, sandals, blouses, even lipstick and perfume and seemed to be having a very good time in their very controlled manner. Even some giggling and flirting with the young studs I haven't seen before. This thing goes on for 3 days/ A real fortune is spent in water buffalo, food, wine - anything. And all for the sake of one man who died apparently some time ago. There were over 1000 people at this thing tonight. Came from everywhere in the seven villages that Ton is chief of. And tonight just starts the "funeral" - the real feast starts after the water Buffalo are sacrificed tomorrow. You can see how honored the seven of us Americans were to be invited = NO ONE else was invited from anywhere including other Montagnards, Vietnamese, generals, Army men, etc. In a way, a very humbling experience for me because I really haven't done that much for these people. Judge Rudy has, of course - he was enjoying himself immensely when I left him at 1 AM - he'll stay out there all ~~the~~ night with the party going full tilt till the sacrifice at sunrise.

Thursday night 2 Mar '67 ⁽³³⁾ 2b fll.

...Got permission to go back to Plei Brel today to get my sick man from yesterday. Wanted to bring him to hospital last night but he wouldn't come - some taboo about the big celebration. Took him by stretcher to our dispensary and got an X-ray. His entire ~~right~~ right chest is obliterated by fluid and/or pneumonia. Got him over to Special Forces hospital where I hope we'll be able to save him. He's only 28 but can't take a deep breath. May be TB but who knows out here what the hell it is.....

... Think I told you about Tuesday night. Well, got up about 5:30 AM Wednesday and made it back out of Plei Brel by 6:30 AM - missed the killing of the water buffalo (for which I'm happy) - when we got back, Jack and Lick were just arriving from the village and there were five large bonfires with a water buffalo deader than a mackerel with feet up in the air - in the middle of the fires. After ~~literally~~ literally burning for about an hour, they were pulled out, the hide was skinned off and they butchered them on the spot. Had to leave to work the dispensary but came back after work at about 5:30 pm, ate some water buffalo shish-ka-bob and saw some sick people - among which was my man with his lung gone. The people at Plei Brel had partied all night Tues- Wedk, all day Wednesday and all night Wed-Thurs and when I went back this afternoon were still "lapping on the hose" as Jack calls drinking rice wine. I can't take that stuff - vomit almost immediately - so beg off as much as I can. Will cool it for the next 3 days - am on call Friday, Sat, Sunday so won't go anywhere. Luckily have gotten people here interested in Plei Wau (we went there Sunday) so they will bring out the red paint, rice, etc this coming Saturday and I can relax - Saih wants it to paint the school house and set that up for teaching the people - no teacher yet but that can be arranged. Tom ~~Will~~ Wilson wants to teach English and French - will need an interpreter because he doesn't know much Bhanar as yet - with him luck.....

9 Mar '67 37 lb

... Let's see - think I talked to you already about the water Buffalo thing- I know I didn't describe it very well but will let that go until I see you in person. Actually a disappointment - a very brutal and coarse affair the next morning after the very mustelous and beautiful ceremony that went on all night long the previous 24 hours. They continued to drink, eat and sleep from Tuesday afternoon to Friday AM at sunrise. Got out of most of the drinking- have a great intolerance to their rice wine and even their food

d. ~~signature~~ A condi

doesn't sit well with me anymore. A conditioned reflex I'm sure but have vomited since I've been here more than I vomited in my whole life before.

Told you about the boy with the lung full of pneumonia? He damned near died on us the first couple of days but walked into the dispensary Tuesday and got a repeat X-ray. Very happy and grateful - in another week should be okay.

....(Marian Watkins) ..By now she's won everyone over - has Jack Rudy, myself and Greek pouring out all our stories and facts to her short hand ~~h~~ notes. Everyone here has been like idiots wining andx dining this gal for the last 4 days - first real female-type we've seen - nothing ~~h~~ / ~~h~~ phoney ~~h~~ and lots of fun. No question of her being in any danger from any of us - she gets a 4 or 5 man escort to everywhere but the latrine....

11 Mar '67 38 1a

...Am writing by candlelight now - no lights again tonite. Very romantic - boo bad onone to get romantin with like you.

Well, Bonnie is gone and I'm afraid the "good old days" are gone forever here with him. The new Colonel Huller is ~~a~~ of a different stripe andl his presence has already been felt. We are a very subdued group today. He's served notice in various ways that this command has to be shaped up, spruced up, no rioutousliving, etc. Don't know for sure whtat that means in terms of my trips to the villages - will play it cool for awhile to test the wind Haven't had my interview yet but expect it will come soon enough. Jack Rudy had a three hour session with him this morning in which my name came up as a discussion subject. Jack did me no harm at all. The Colonel apparently ;has a notebook on me from various sources, as he has on many of the men here. Also has one on Jack Rudy himself. By the way, Jack got the Bronze Star presented to him yesterday. Mentioned it incidentally to me while we were having a beer last nite. Something he did last fall - he was very vague about the whole thing.:.....

....5a.....Jack Rudy found a VISIBLE MAN (a piece-by-piece plastic model of a man) that he brought from Saigon. Will be able to use this over at Special Forces hospital to train the Montagnard medic - can always find a use for anything....

....One by one the gang that has spent a year here is leaving and with them, many memories of the old place. ~~h~~ John Value will be leaving shortly for the states but promises to return in a little while. Have gotten to like this guy very much in spite of his almost fransparent weaknesses...

....~~h~~ went to Plei Brel yesterday after a few other stops. The thing that was unique about this was that I went without Jack and without an interpreter (only an airman by the name of Benson McGowan, Eckjford and his dame) - brought some medicine for Ton's cows - yes, I take care of cows, too, also pulled 3 teeth the other day - am doing all kinks of things. Anyway - was very warmly received, drank rice wine at Hing's and Ton's house and was invited to stay all nite but am on my good behavior. Was able to converse fairly well in my halting Jarai and with GIR's help. Had a great time. Found out my pneumonia patient is back mome and healthy again (got invited to his house a week from today to drink rice wine.) Ton's hand is all healed up in spite of the fact it was a total mess 3 days ago - everything I've dpne out there so far has gone well - knock on wood. Feel like I'm ~~h~~ accepted but there for myself instead of just Jack's friend. Suspect when he leaves I may be filling his shoes - hope it goes okay - will have to bone up on my language course.

.... Jack didn't show up for our lecture at the dispensary this AM so we'll salve it for next week. Maybe we'll have it organized by then...

...Miss your presence, advice and comments day to day. Need a confidante but hesitant to don fide in anyone too much here - too many tongues wagging

Jack Rudy and Greek are about the only ones who can keep their mouths shut. Even John Value talks too much....

12 Mar '67 39 3b

....Jack Rudy hasn't slowed down noticeably though. Did the circuit today - Plei Breng, Plei Teng, Plei Brel and finally Plei Rho (I was in a different part - just missed him I guess) He was flying low when he showed up here. They've already started the going away rounds for him out in the villages. Plei Brel has a grave prepared for ~~him~~ him and they've given him a bird carved in wood as a symbol that when he dies his soul will come flying back to Plei Brel and stay there forever. If we had 50 or 100 of Jack ~~Rudy's~~ Rudy's here there'd be no problem and the V.C. wouldn't have a chance. He leaves in ~~about~~ about a month and they know it - are very concerned especially with the new commander here - afraid that maybe our attitude will change. They're in enough of a bind with the V.C. on one side, the ARVN on the other without the Air Force putting them in a greater squeeze.

They quizzed me today for a long time at Plei Rho about the new commander - I told them he No 1. man, but different and that we go very slow for awhile. They immediately sensed what I meant. They're old hands at this. It's a matter of survival for them, not just a game.....

15 Mar '67 41 1a

....Am full of about 10 cups of coffee so won't even attempt to go to bed - will probably roll around again scratching my mosquito bites all night. These mosquitoes are really something. No sound, you don't even see them but they're here and raise a large welt when they bite. A different bunch than the good old noisy ones back in Minnesota. They carry beaucoup disease also....

...Jack Rudy came in to my room when I'd just laid down for a nap about 8:30 just to talk a little. We started drinking coffee and ice tea, moved over to the officers club for more coffee and ice tea and just broke up our conversation now. Much politics, describing the various villages and the men involved. Who to trust (damn few it turns out) who's a P.R. man, etc, etc. Told him frankly that I'm picking his brains before he leaves. He said he was all for it - somebody has to before he goes and there are damn few around here he's willing to pass on information to. I'm going to be on my own in a month with only 3 or 4 I can depend on so must get the scoop about who, why, when, etc. now. There's a bundle of guys here who love to go out to the villages taking an arsenal, drink rice wine, gawk at the natives, find a piece of ass and come back with a bracelet and tell everyone what a damned hero they are. Also makes wonderful publicity back home if they can ring a reporter out with them. Maybe even a medal or two if they can convince the right people they're doing real good "~~the~~ Civic Action" work. Actually they don't really like the people, can't be depended on day after day and don't give a damn for these people's feelings. One thing these Montagnards are NOT - and that's dumb. They can tell almost immediately who's a real friend and who's using them. They're very kind and polite to everyone who comes but that doesn't necessarily mean they like all these people. This war is based on winning these people's hearts and loyalty and trust - and not on how many villages you visited, how much rice wine you drink and even how many sores you healed. Have to be very careful who I take with me or I'll start to be identified with some of these phonies and then I'm sunk. We reviewed about 50 of the people who go out in the villages and there are damn few Jack could honestly say he'd like to be associated with. Too bad, but the Ugly American really is everywhere here. We're so damn sure we have so much to o

so damn sure we have so much to offer and they have so little that almost every action we do tips our hand. As I learn to know these people, their beauty sticks out more and more although they're certainly got their phonies, etc. too of course. I';;; tell you this, I've learned to keep my damned mouth shut before I promise anything. You know how I usually promise the moon or make wild plans without thinking and then later on find out I can't possibly do it/ - well that stuff don't go here...

...Found a 5000 pound load of tin roofing today - that's really what it weighs - damned near broke the ton and 1/2 truck I carried it away in. ~~I~~ Finally had to get a fork lift to take it off the truck. Have located 2 more of these bundles but will go slowly before I liberated them - they've officially been condemned by the Air Force - too thin or some damned thing. /Can build a lot of roofs with this stuff- beaucoup trading material.

Talked wtih Judge Rudy tonite about the legal implications of trading rice for crossbows - black market type activity. Even though it's the right ~~thg~~ thing to do for their pride, etc - th rice I would liberated is officially gratis-type and must be given away - no trading or barter allowed. If we're going to set up any carossbow type industry in these villages will have to be on a cash basis. Y-O. We'll figure out something. Maybe CARE packages full of U.S. green or something. Very complicated as is everything else here. Once the good old U.S. government steps in and organizes things, everything gets fucked up (sorry, my English is really going to hell - find myself using Vietnamese, Bhanar, Jarai and good old G.I. slang more and more laltely.)

We had a round eye nurse in from Cam Rhan Bay along with some specialists today - as usual they wanted to go out and look at the natives (~~f~~really ~~rr~~ bristle at this - they think they're going to some zoo or something I guess) As a special favor to Dave Dulaney took them out with me to see this boy with a gash on his leg - he's all healed up now and looks good except he's lost half the muscle in his leg. Anyway they got to see a village but no bracelets or rice wing. Am glad noone I knew saw me. Am glad noone I knew saw me parading these characters around - don;t need the reputation as a P.R. jman this early in the game. Usually try to make it a policy to go by invitation with something specific to do there when I go. So far have managed to do this....

20 Mar '67 11a fll

.... talked again way into the nite with Jack fRudy. Have been picking his brains almost every day to try to learn as much about these people as I can before he leaves. He's got less than one month to go. As I get to know more and more about this place am becoming more and more confused. My initial impressions have so far all been correct in ~~ess~~ essence but the implications of these I'm only fully realizing now. I know the above statement is confusing.

The relationship of Yards to Americans, to Vietnamese, to V.C., to Army is substantially as I stated a month or so ago. One thing I didn't know before is that the Yards are a hell of a lot smarter than any one gives them credit for. A highly organized and determingd society w;ith tight discipline and absolute dedication to their leaders. By sheer dint of Jack Rudy's, Greeks, and Pappy Yoacum's personalities (and there aren't a hell of a lot of other Adir Force or Army men here they'll really be loyal to if the chips are down) fthey have remained layal and friendly to us. Greek and the Judge have been including me in their discussions more and more - they say I've made favorable impression on the Yards and they consider me a true friend. Trouble is that Jack is leaving in a month, Greek leaves in 2 days for a month's leave to Europe. (He extended another 6 mos. here so I'll have his help when he returns in April.) Pappy Yoacum left about one month ago and left a big hole south of here that I've been trying to fill. Out of 3,000

'Air Force personnel can't think of one other person who is interested - really - in working with these people except my corpsmen, and the para-rescue bunch that I can count on. We've got maybe 50 other men who constantly ask to go out - want to get a bracelet, drink rice wine, take pictures and grin at the natives in the zoo. Once they've been that route once or twice, lose interest and never ask again. Am a bit discouraged. Maybe as time goes on will find a good troupe or two who will really help.

Tom Wilson, my roommate, won't keep his G.D. mouth shut. Insists on talking Vietnamese and pig-French to these people - doesn't seem to realize it's like slapping them in the face. He honestly thinks he's God's gift to the Montagnards and Vietnamese. Greek can't stand the guy, and after last nite neither can I. He's promised to build 2 spillways for the assistant province chief and also a community house for them but doesn't have the materials cornered and really doesn't have the ~~guy~~/vaguest idea where he'll get them from. USAID is about washed up - lousy with corruption and under investigation right now. Billions of dollars have been wasted on corruption, graft, mismanagement, etc and McNamara and boys are getting a little nervous with the new Republican crowd that's just looking for an issue.....

21 Mar '67 46 1a

.... Had a good day today. Worked the dispensary till 3:00 to 4:00 pm then went out to Plei Brel with Jack Rudy and drank beaucoup ~~du~~/ numpai (rice wine) and got lu mut (very drunk) - Sorry, revert to the vernacular qhwn I'cw had a few. Jack and I got back at MACV (sort of) after running 2 barackades and getting stopped by the M.P.'s for not putting our l8tes out when we approached the gate. Finally found an au ya drow (doctor) at Plei Brel and dumped all the medicine I had in his lap ot his amazement. Have been lookinga for him for a long time. His name's Bing - a young man - no mask, etc. like I imagined. He's going into Pleiku every day on his ~~own~~ time off to learn medicine from some Montagnard doctor. We hit it off very well and drank level after level of rice wine with him. Maybe now I can work like I want - teach him all I know and help him when he has someone really sick. Looks good - hope i'm not too optimistic. Maybe you can tell from my handwriting - have had b eaucoup numpai and am mut al - sorry about that - Y-O.

....dDon't enjoy being pessimistic about the same thing twice in a drow - if you say any prayers for us over here and - knowing you - I'm sure you do - please pray that someone will show up to replace Pappy Yoacum, Greek and Jack Rudy so I can work with him - need a good solid troupe very badly....

22 Mar '67 47 4a

.....The hours and days crowd in on each other - average 4-5 hours of sleep a nite lately, nap when I can but am over my head in activities - many of which Ik've instigated and must see through. Great entusiamsm jbuilding up around me here but somehow have gotten into the center of the storm and unless I move, nothing gets done. Jack Rudy sme-same. Get 5-10 requests from people a day to help me but they seem unable to move by themselves. Maybe as time goes on they'll be able to take their own head and go off by themselves. Miss Greek already....

.....9a..HDave been looking all over for that serious letter I wrote the other nite - don't think I can reproduce it - was just a mood that Jack Rudy and I got in that I recorded. Hope I can find it.....

23 Mar '67 48 1a

....had a long discussion with Jack Rudy and Col Doyal - again politics in this area - very complicated - may ;have to relate this to you some other

-have had about 7 beers and am again very tired. Don't know if I can adequately convey my thoughts bout this area and do it justice - very, very complicated and devious- no rules at home to follow - a life and death situation and the rules necessarily change when the stakes are that high.

Spent a quiet and frustration day at the dispensary - am anxious to get back to the villages again and pick up where we left off way back on Sunday-Monday. Saih hasn't been seen since I saw him last - have to look for him tomorrow and get him on our side again if that's his trouble. Has been exposed to too many phoney Americans - my roommate included...

..... The "Saigon Warriors" have been here all week - inspecting, criticizing and, in general, ruining the esprit de corps of the men really fighting this fucking war while they stand around and criticize and get their medals, etc. If they want to observe, they should spend a nite at the 18th Surg and see what the whole thing is all about.....

28 Mar 1b 50 1b

...Then went to Officers' Club where I blew my little supply of money on getting Jack Rudy smashed as a parting shot. He left for Hong Kong today Leaves for good on the 10th April. It paid off. Jack started telling a very interesting story about his adventures. Easter Sunday and all nite Sunday - Monday. Will give it in detail tonite. Then a group gathered around and both of us (with help of booze) talked till about 11:30 pm about the Montagnards, how to behave, etc. First time to my knowledge either of us has opened up in public about them. Jack plans to lecture when he gets back to States - he'll do a good job.....

....The pace here is really something - the initial quiet that was here when the new Commander arrived has begun to disappear and people are more open and relaxed than before. A happy group again. Hullar is no Bonneau but he's a leader none the less with an easy going sense of humor and a mind-like a steel trap.....

29 Mar k'67 51 1a

...Ate a large cricket or cockroach or some damn thing tonite - eyes, wings, feet, soft mushy body and all and washed it down with lots of rice wine - after turning down the second one, I then proceeded to eat pigs intestines stuffed with Lord-knows-what and again washed that down with rice wine. And I didn't barf for a change- wonder what my dreams will be like tonite. Wouldn't have eaten the damned things but they are obviously a delicacy here and were offered to me as a special favor. Think I may have lost a few of my helpers tonite though - they can't seem to stomach the food - actually I still don't like it but it would be a great insult not to eat it. My stomach is so screwed up now, a few crickets and pigs intestines aren't going to make that much difference. Smitty (pararescue man) was chomping on the intestines and asked me what they were - I told him to swallow it and then I'd tell him. After he did and found out - that was all he could take - looked a little puke-green for awhile - but give him credit - he kept it down too. That grilled cheeze sandwich and coke tonite when I got back tasted pretty damn good, though - greasy and stale as it was. My diarrhea has left me! Five days of bliss - a lousy subject to discuss but here it's headlines....

....Wrote you Tuesday AM I think, a short note about Monday nite - about how Jack and I held forth for hours in a sort of question and answer session for a lot of new pilots coming in. Actually it started out with me giving Jack a private little goodbye party - we both got pretty loose in the process and the questions from these guys were all we needed to prime the pump. Before that Jack told me how he was taken by the Montagnards out west of here about 10 miles Easter Sunday - 35 men - all chiefs of the various villages north and west of us. Sat ~~around~~ ^{around} telling stories from about 4 PM

till 3 am Monday morning - and the stories were a recitation of all the things Jack has done since he got here. They told the stories as if Jack wasn't even in the room - some by song, some spoken - ~~and~~ all in pantomime with the chief changing roles back and forth as he told the story. Jack had forgotten most of these things - stories about how he'd helped a man fix a fence, how he'd picked up a boy and taken him home in the driving rain, and on and on. Finally the chief of the whole area got up and walked over to Jack, took off his own special Montagnard jacket and pulled it down over Jack's head. So doing, he stated that wherever in Viet Nam Jack goes and there is a Montagnard present - he will know that this is Jack Rudy and a great friend and special chief of all the Jarai - as long as he wears this jacket. And all Montagnards will know that they must protect and love this man as a great friend and chief of the Jarai. Don't know what this story does to you, but if the same thing happened to me it would be worth any damn medal Uncle Sam could pass out - I got goose pimples hearing this story and I've got them again retelling it....

1 april '67 1b 53

....Jack Rudy is smashed tonite - first time I've seen him that way - drank rice wine again today and then everyone loaded him down with beer at their officer's club - I bought 4 for him myself. - he was in a rare mood - talking loud and having a ball. A good troop - going to miss him...

s 4 April '67 54 1a

....Am waiting for the truck to come back so I can go back to Plei Brel for yet another party for Jack Rudy. We're going to have to pour him on the plane next week. He leaves next Monday AM - we'll be sorry to see him go but, in a way, a relief - don't think my liver will hold out much longer. Stayed all night Plei Brel Sunday night - talked and drank rice wine till 2 AM - both Jack and I were stoned all day Monday so passed up another sacrifice yesterday. Was going to stay home like a good boy yesterday - and took call in the afternoon. AT 4:30 got a call to go to Pleiku to see a sick Vietnamese (one of the airman has gotten a Vietnamese girl pregnant and asked me to take care of her) - went to see this girl's sister - impetigo. While I was there decided to stop at Pleiku-Rho and see Saih. Intuition, apparently. He had been trying to get me all day - has been drafted again. (has already served 4 years in the "Mike" Special Forces.) He was smashed out of his head - was going down to Pleiku and shoot it out. Vietnamese giving him a hard time, calling him a thief (I gave him a bicycle but no certificate to say I had given it to him.) Anyway took old drunk Saih down, got him a certificate and straightened out the draft thing/ He's free again - doesn't have to serve. I can use him as my interpreter and he can work at USAID. Well, needless to say, we had to celebrate on that one. Took him down to our Chinese restaurant and had a feast. Roy Worthington (S/Sgt - number one troupe) myself, Saih and Tri (did I tell you about him? - have a funny feeling I keep repeating myself.) Half way through the feast, a fellow walks up and asks me if I'm a doctor - I say yes - she says come with me. - walked half way across town to the scene of an accident - a V.N. truck struck a V.N. boy about ten years old (How in hell they knew I was in town is beyond me.) We did mouth-to-mouth breathing, cardiac massage, the whole Ben Casey routine (about 200-300 people watching the show on the main street of Pleiku - should have taken a picture of that one) Anyway we put a board under him (broken hip, pelvis, spleen, both lungs collapsed but heart still beating) and stole the nearest bus and did it out to 18th Surg (10 miles away.) When we got there had canker sores all over my mouth (since cleared up) from French kissing this boy mouth-to-mouth breathing. We put a tube down into lungs and got bright red blood back. He eventually died but at least we gave it the

college try. The "White Mice" saw it all and were very pleased. (The "White Mice" is the name for the Vietnamese civilian police - a sharp bunch - not like the ARVN at all - very courteous, industrious and well respected by almost everyone.) They gave me a ride back to Pleiku and helped me look for my vehicle. Roy had taken Saih and Tri and some friends back to Pleiku Rho so I hopped a ride back to the base. Lost my belt (used as a splint) and my ophthalmoscope in the bargain. It's now 9:30 pm and hadn't even had supper yet except a taste of the chapsuey - caught a few bites of food at MACV and got into the middle of a party for Jack Rudy (again!)

At 1:30 I'm in bed and completely too tired to write - I'm sorry. Had a good talk with Roy Worthington when he finally got back. Also talked long time with a Negro nurse (yes - male type) about the Negro problem.

Today acquired 450 Englander inner spring mattresses (all very legal) and took them over to the new Special Forces hospital - well, you'd think I'd given them the 7th Air Force or something. They've been sleeping these wounded Yards (again that damned word "wounded" - "shattered" is the right word) on a board with bamboo rug for a "mattress".

This afternoon Jack and I hauled 100 plus pieces of steel sheet metal down to Lick's (Jack's interpreter) house. God my surgeon's hands all cut up - don't tell Ma - never did so much manual labor in my life! Don't need to play sports around here - get my exercise being a stevedore...

.... The truck just pulled up and I'm late. Will try to write to-nite. May repeat myself.. Can't believe half the stuff I see here myself - if what I write sounds a little unbelievable just remember I'm only hitting the high spots - will tell you more in person...

5-6 April '67 551a

....Yes, I'm sitting in the latrine with the cover down on one of the shit tanks - the only light there is in the place. When the action ever settles down here will write a decent letter about my adventures if I can remember them. Have been systematically getting Jack Rudy smashed every nite lately and then pumping him for information. It's costing me a fortune and am usually getting drunker than he gets. He passed out about 1/2 hour ago so read your letters today. Have Colleen's school letters on my lap but haven't gotten to them yet.

Will try to explain later. Will briefly outline the last few days. Took some beds over to Special Forces Camp (if you haven't read the Green Berets yet - read it right after you read this letter - it's all true - there is much-much more but everything in the book is true. You won't believe it - think it's sensationalism - but believe me - it's all true. Anyway, worked the dispensary today, then got a few volunteers (everyone wants to get in on the act lately) - went to Special Forces to see the 10 foot men - asked if they wanted some more beds - yes they did. By the way, I met a S/Sgt Phillips from Dak Pek who was scrounging supplies for 500 families (about 2,500 people - Montagnards - Jeb) who had been burned out of their villages - many died but those alive are homeless, clothesless and foodless. Well, we managed to find them a few things - 25 cases of C-rations (50 boxes to a case) - 100 100 pound bags of corn meal, 20 100 pound bags of flour, some blankets (30-40), beds (about 30) salad oil (one case) 4 100 pound bales of clothes and a few other odds and ends. He was amazed and pleased - think I can get a green beret for myself if this keeps up. Maybe can hang it with your various swimming medals. Loaded on 25 beds for the S.F. Montagnard hospital and some pillows, blankets and odds and ends, also. Am a fucking stevedore for sure. Sorry about that - Y.O.

Came home beat after all the lifting and grunting but promised to go to Plei Brel after last nite (don't think I told you about last nite - will repeat in spite of the fact I bore you) - any way took these FNG (fucking new buys) out to see the montagnard villages - they've only been here a few

W... I bought 3 crew

weeks and worked very hard for me - bought 3 crossbows for 1500 piastries (about 15 dollars) and am now in the crossbow business. No rice wine or bracelets, etc. and they didn't seem to be disappointed. Came home to take a shower - no water - so faked it with Scotch for a face and hand job. - makes one amazingly clean - try it sometime.

Saw J. Rudy and proceeded to get him plastered again. He has been to hell and back all day making his goodbye calls here and there in the villages. Wants to get me to Plei Koteng before he goes - maybe we'll make it. Anyway talked some more till now - many things that are a great mystery to me - he promised to tell me on the way to Saigon.

Oh yeh, Jack and I are going to Saigon to visit a V.N. by the name of John - a V.N. Legionnaire who has been around the block many times - Jack saved his life one time and now John can't do enough for him. Jack wants me to meet him - it'll be champagne, beer and Scotch for two days - both of us will have to be poured on the plane - Jack to the states, me back to Pleiku - we go 10 April Monday AM, I'll get back 12 April Wednesday nite. Jack leaves for the states Wednesday afternoon. (this toilet seat even with the cover on is damned uncomfortable!) He's one of the finest troupes I've every met. Will have to have him to the house when I get back. Plans to marry a girl from Fairmont, Minnesota if she can stand his squatting in the middle of the living room sucking on the rice wine hose. He comes from a very old, established lawyer family in Washington D.C. - swam and dove for So. Carolina in the AAU meets 1960 - won 2nd prize. Plans to go in with Williams (ask Bill who he is) - the guy who defended Hoffa, Bobby Baker, etc.

Oh yeh, Tuesday afternoon went to Plei Brel for another party for Jack Rudy at Plo's house. Noone there - Jack went to the boon docks (Plei Koteng, Tien son, etc.) so found myself out by myself - had a great time - no one understood English so was forced to use only my Montagnard (Jarai.) Dispensed medicine like candy until my bags were empty and then started to leave (get the hell out of there is the expression.) Instead they insisted we go to Plei Phung to see some sick kids - okay, I had just enough medicine left - found malaria and a pneumonia in 2 kids. Said I had to leave - oh no - went back to Plei Brel and lapped on the hose awhile - finally figured out that they wanted me to take my truck out past artillery Hill to get a dead cow that the Vietnamese had killed for fun - belonged to Plei Brel - Y-O - we all piled in (you would have laughed yourself sick to see the pantomime involved to tell me this story) and went out to get the cow. We found the cow and took it back for a big sacrifice. - meanwhile more rice wine and raw food - including chunks of this cow that was killed - wish I could describe the scene - will try later when I get home. Any way, a great time was had by all - I stumbled back to the base late, talked to that louse Rudy till late into the nite and was too tired to write to you AGAIN. This is a long war - especially the nites. Did I mention I spent last Sunday nite at Plei Brel? Y-O - another adventure that I'll talk to you about sometime.

Jack and I have been many places together - great fun - believe we are really doing something - Hope so...

9 April '67 57 1a

....Will start by reciting all the things that have happened since I wrote Friday am. Went "slumming" Friday afternoon. Pleiku Rho to deliver 3 mattresses to Mip, orphanage to see the kids, leproasarium to see the lepers, dropped some medicine off at Quy Them's for her brother. Let me tell you about Quy Them - find out that she feels I'm her man! Don't know how this developed but apparently by going to her house that day became her boy friend. She dropped this bomb-shell Saturday. Carefully

explained I was already married, 5 children - showed the pictures I have of you people. Told her I was going to Saigon - she got all excited about this - said if I went to Saigon we were fini - more damn unspoken assumptions going around here. She insisted I meet her at the dispensary at 1:00 am Saturday and take her home at 4:30 pm Saturday - said I couldn't do this - had to go to Plei Brel for Jack Rudy's going away party (more about that later.) She's a bossy little girl - haven't seen any of this so-called wonderful Oriental submissiveness in the V.N. women or in the Montagnard wives either as far as that goes. Maybe with all the years of war and men constantly leaving home the women have had to become more independent and self reliant (same-same Kay Conlon?) Anyway carefully wasn't anywhere near the dispensary all day Saturday or today in case she gets any more ideas. How did a bald old man like me get to be such a Casanova, anyway? I'm going to be so proud of my prowess over women by the time I get back you won't be able to live with me - Lover boy Conlon, eh? 4 prostitutes in Sacramento, a couple of Montagnard girls and now a V.N. girl. What do you mean the definition of virtue is the lack of opportunity? Fortunately I have a very horny wife and some very good memories to keep me warm till my R & R. Find if I keep busier than hell don't miss it as much as I thought - it's the few slow nites and days around here that are the hardest - but manage to fill up the days and nites pretty well so far.

Went to Plei Brel yesterday afternoon - bought about \$75.00 worth of crossbows and got involved with a lot of rice wine with Jack Rudy - 2 sacrifices (shot one chicken with a crossbow - got him through the heart - first animal I can ever remember killing - it was for eating so didn't feel too bad but would rather leave that kind of thing to Mike and Ed - not my piece of cake.) Finally got a large bracelet from Ton - now am officially part of Plei Brel. Will be taking Jack's place in Plei Brel - don't know how tied up that will make me - want to keep fluid so I can feel free to come and go sort of on call to the other villages. Am having trouble being all the places I feel I should go. Went till 3 AM this morning with Jack and Lick - ended up singing a song I wrote for Jack Rudy - lost the words somewhere - he was sobbing like a little boy - wants to go back to the states but doesn't want to leave his friends in the villages. He's having a rough week - we ended up very smashed on rice wine and booze - I'm told we argued for about an hour in Montagnard - didn't know I knew that much of it. Don't know what the hell we were arguing about but apparently it had something to do with my telling him I'd try to pick up where he left off but would do it my way - couldn't be same-same Jack Rudy, etc.

Anyway went to bed at 3 AM here at MACV after pouring Jack and Lick into their bed. Slept till 9:30 this morning but really didn't come to till near-noon. Went out with Bob Shultz to Plei Brel to buy 3 more crossbows and got into the rice wine bit again at 2 more houses. Purposely did NOT go with Jack Rudy although he was there all day. Went to different places at different times. He was making the rounds saying his goodbyes and I didn't feel I should be with him. By coincidence went to Hing's to say hello right after Jack had left - a big scene I'll try to explain when I'm home - very complicated. It's now 4:20 AM believe it or not. Jack and I have been talking solid since I went for an R & R. at about 11 PM last nite. Discussing all the Montagnards, Vietnamese, Americans that we deal with - who can be trusted, who are the phonies, ways to conduct myself, how to know when lies are being told, subtle things that Jack knows from one year's experience and I don't want to have to learn the hard way.

We leave for Saigon at 6:45 - about 2 hours from now. Am hungry so have opened a can of C-rations and am making a pig out of myself. Have to shave and pack and try to get some sleep.

That damned clock has roller skates on the hands lately - never seem to have enough time for sleep, eating, etc. Maybe things will slow down a bit when Jack leaves. Am on my own now in Plei Brel and villages north of us - it's been a honeymoon until now, have ~~abasked~~ basked in Jack's light - now we see if I've made any points or if we maybe have to start all over again. ~~Wish~~ With me luck and a few prayers wouldn't ~~that~~ hurt either. ..

....About the orphanage. We're shooting a sparrow with a shot gun, or better yet - with a cannon. Let me explain. Everyone wants to contribute to the orphanage - it's a good old American tradition; we know the nuns will use what we give them and not sell it in Pleiku or give to the V.C.; these are nice children and every American wants to help children. Accordingly over 3,000 G.I.'s here are giving huge amounts of time and energy to 2 nuns and 70 children. At the same time there's a famine in the area here and no one seems to give a damn that 40,000 - 50,000 Montagnards are on the verge of starving and are going without medical care. Do not have soap, etc. 2,500 Montagnards were burned out of their village at Dak Pek - had to beg borrow and steal to get some things up there - was harder than hell to get anyone to help - finally got enough together to load up 3 planes last week so they'd be able to carry on temporarily. But just suggest the orphanage needs something and there's a veritable avalanche of help coming in. Please keep this to yourself - once you discourage a person who wants to give, it's harder than hell to get him in the mood again. There are now 4 cities that have adopted this one orphanage - 1. Syracuse, N.Y., 2. Kansas City, Mo., 3. Vista, Calif., 4 some town in Missouri. Would suggest adopting a Montagnard village like Dak Pek / 2,500 homeless souls with almost all it's young manhood either dead, V.C. captives or fighting like hell with the Green Beret. Or maybe the ~~ble~~prasarium although they aren't Catholics. Really must sound terrible to you but that's the way I feel. It's hard to describe the waste, the phonies, the big tall well-meaning rich, smiling f---ing UGLY Americans that are all over the place screwing things up and then patting themselves on the back because they DID something. I'm as bad as the rest.

Am making it a policy from now on in the Montagnard villages to come EMPTY handed - if there's a real problem then will try to help it - no more handouts - makes them the same as welfare patients back home. Very complicated. Did you know the average YEARLY income (can't count what they grow themselves and make for themselves) in dollars is \$36.00? And we come and pass out \$18.00 worth of grain as if it were nothing. Quite an impact on these people - can't blame them if soon they're standing there with their hands out waiting for the rich Americans to give them another hand-out. They don't like us for it either - they smile and thank us and they "like us in heads, but not in hearts" as Lick has said before.

Enough said. Sorry to give the sermon. Probably have really confused you now. Yes, I still want help and soap, etc. but please leave it up to me where it goes.....

13 April '67 58 entire(see copy made)

15 April '67 59

61

204

...Got a great letter from "Citizen" Jack Rudy - he's back in the social whirl of Washington D.C. - same-same R.F.K. and Jackie B. Kennedy, Williams, senators, etc., Says he finds it a little hard to believe he was ever over here - is very disturbed by all the Peace-niks, parades, etc. What the hell is going on in our nutty country? Don't they realize the whole world is looking at them, carefully weighing each word said? Makes it damn hard for us over here - we say something we feel is honest and straight forward about our intentions, good wishes, etc and then these idiots in the U.S. screw the whole thing up. Apparently they are well meaning like Fullbright, Bob Kennedy, etc., but boy! are they screwing us up bad! Like Jack Rudy used to say when he was here - "Keep your f---ing mouth shut!" And that Martin L. King - what's he got... - pardon - what's going on with him? - the best morale and the best soldiers here are the negroes - they have a tremendous record and will expect and get (or die fighting for it) full citizenship when they get back to U.S. on the basis of that record. - and here their leader is mouthing off about how we should stop the war. Stop it hell! We should open up both barrels not only on North Viet Nam but China too and get the whole damn thing over with. I know the issue isn't black or white but if we're going to tangle with China sooner or later, it might just as well be now while we're here, are armed and ready to fight and China has her troubles. Enough said. Personally I think Johnson is doing one helluva job and should have the full cooperation of all the people whatever their politics. He'll go down in history as a very wise, extremely patient man for the way he has conducted the war in spite of all the flack from all sides.....

30 April 70 1a

....Have been on a steady rice wine drunk since last Tuesday almost without stop. Am afraid to sober up for fear I'll get D.T.'s - seriously Have been doing my best to plug the hole that Jack Rudy left in Plei Brel, Plei Sor, Plei Phung. Yesterday went to Plei Brel to see Hluce and get the 3 beautiful black crossbows he had promised me - he wouldn't sell them - a gift - gorgeous things. Gave two to Dick Miller but kept one for myself - may send home. A very beautiful weapon - capable of killing tigers and elephants let alone men. Had some more rice wine (numpai) at Hluce's house. Then went to Plo's house - bought 19 more crossbows (16000 piasras - my money - will get it back when we sell them - in the meantime I go on short rations here - Y-C.) Talked to him about his wife - tried to explain that she would be in hospital maybe two more weeks (dua roi ju) - very difficult for me without an interpreter - am learning lu al Montagnard (Avery much) the hard way - they won't or can't learn English so must learn Jarai or not communicate at all. Went from Plo's house to Hing's (Jack's family - this is Jack's and my home here in Vietnam - maybe have told you about these people - if not will a little later - a beautiful marriage, two wonderful children, very happy and content) - where drank beaucoup rice wine - got very drunk (mut al) and then came back to MACV and slept. On the way to Plei Brel went to Animal Husbandry village (Montagnard) where treated 5 or 6 sick people - only medicine I practiced all day.

Last nite we had a party at the officers Club - got up about 9:30 pm for it and went till 1:30 am singing songs and in general dissipating. Slept till 9:30 am this morning. Sold some crossbows and relaxed. Should have written you this morning but just sat here enjoying having nothing to do. This afternoon at 2 pm Lick, myself and Col Hullar (the commander, no less) went out to Plei Brel by invitation to two sacrifices at Higg's. He killed a young goat (Bie) for us - very delicious meat - a good party - much rice wine again - good company - Col Hullar joined in like a good troupe - then we went to Ton's for MORE rice wine - finally went home at 7 PM to Pleiku Rho to Lick's home and then back here - I slept from 8PM to 11:30 - much needed....

....S

..... I need you more here than I every thought I did in the U.S.A. (wherever that is.) Am sure, like Jack, this will all seem like a big dream when I get back to Minnesota. Until then need your words and encouragement to continue my hectic and very strange schedule here in Pleiku.

15 May '67 76 2b

...Got a disturbing letter from Jack Rudy - most of which I don't really understand - have read it twice now and don't know anymore than I did before. He wants to write a book - has a publisher all lined up - but I think it will necessarily get a lot of Montagnards in deep shit. Jack's really involved in politics already - is being subpoenaed to a senate investigation of USAID - has offers to come back to Vietnam as a civilian worker here in Pleiku, is being sworn in as assistant D.A. for Washington D.C. (at the White House, yet) ; is running in the society of senators, lobbyists, representatives, etc. Thinks it's phony but part of his career. Says he's still wearing Hinh's bracelet in spite of the stares he gets - has put the other 27 in a glass case for posterity.

Don't think I'll get as involved in these people as he did - mainly because I'm not single and have something concrete to come home to. Jack feels very lonesome for his friends among the Yards - quite possibly because this was his first exposure to an uncomplicated people. Yet he likes the intrigue, etc. of high society in Washington in spite of himself because this is all he's known until Vietnam and Pleiku. How's that for psychoanalysis? - probably wrong, I don't know. Could use your eyes and judgement here, Sweetie. Want to come over for a while and clue me in on some of these people? Still give too many people the benefit of the doubt - we balance each other pretty well = you're too critical and I'm too naive - am attempting to use your judgement but usually end up learning the hard way a guy is a phony, etc.....

19 May '67 78 1a

.... Just spent since 9pm talking to Colonel Hullar about the Montagnards, Lick, Ton and all those people. This is the nite they give attacks away - Ho Chi Minh's birthday today - 19 May. This is the day we've been promised a full scale attack. 3 barrages have gone off already - 4 now - no sweat - no alarm as yet. MACV will be the last place hit and that's where I am.

Very interesting and, in a way, unique problem that Col Hullar is stuck with me a sink or swim because I am the only one on this base as of this moment who has the confidence and the friendship of the Montagnards. Have assumed this position by default - no one else will go out independently - except Dick Miller to the Animal Husbandry school - and attempt to establish a personal friendship with these people. We discussed where to go from here - how involved should I get, etc. Decided to play it by ear and carefully avoid being identified solely with the Montagnards. That move I mentioned where I held sick call with the Vietnamese was a smart one. Yesterday we went back and gave a bunch of clothes away - Lick and I ended up on the roof of a house in self defense - damn near got crushed by the Vietnamese as they grabbed at the stuff. Later on we went to Plei Brel and gave some more clothes to the Montagnards. Dramatic the difference - asked Plo to pick out some clothes - he refused - said he was ashamed (same-same embarrassed) - insisted Ton hand out to him the clothes Ton wanted him to have. Same the rest of the village. Amazing - can you see why my sympathies lie toward the Montagnard?

.... Was very honored by Col Hullar's invitation to see him privately at his quarters tonite. We sat and discussed the war, our situation here, what our policy toward the Montagnard vs. the Vietnamese should be. How hopeless an uprising by the Yards would be now against the Vietnamese, how I should try to influence them subtly to become educated and beat the problem this way instead of by arms - how I was in a unique position

~~position~~ to do this whereas Hullar as yet was not, etc.

....Think I can make a positive contribution to the problem here by working with Hullar and Montagnards. Hullar is in a very lonely position - very few people so far he can count on - he has managed to find one or two he can trust and confide in - not the extrovert Bonneaux was - and also not the showman - the Yards trusted him immediately whereas they never showed this trust of Bonneaux in my presence. Am very impressed with this man as you can probably guess - am also a little embarrassed by his show of trust in me - am getting involved again, sweetie - don't worry - no problem-Y-O..

21 June '67 93 1a

....Got a letter from Jack Rudy yesterday chewing me out for not writing also - wrote him from Dak Pek along with yours - will probably have to wait another week before that one arrives as well....

24 July '67 123 3a

...John Watson is a riot when he gets drunk - he's a happy drunk. we sang songs, called each other names, chug-a-lugged Vietnamese rice wine (like regular booze) beer, and rice wine. Told stories about Jack , talked about how the cross bow prices were getting too high and would have to cut them down. Discussed building a forge and getting scrap metal from the base to make hoes, shovels, picks, plows, knives, etc ("beat your swords into plowshares.." - somewhere in bible) -

28 July '67 125 2a fl1

....Had a serious talk with Ton, Lick and Hlin (a very intelligent man from Plei Sor I suspect is an important man in FULRO) yesterday - asked them point blank which way the Montagnards would go, what would happen to the Montagnard when the Americans leave. They said they would take their land back. I asked if they would go with the NoVietnamese, do they consider the No Vietnamese their friends - they said NO, No Vietnamese same-same Vietnamese. (they call the NoVietnamese "Viet Minh" - the name the French knew them by.) Lick explained that the Novietnamese steal and lie same as the /So Vietnamese, that the Montagnard hates them both - that the only foreigners they can trust are the Americans and the French before us. They feel bad and are confused because the Americans insist on bringing in their ancient enemy the Vietnamese, but at least they feel they can trust certain Americans to help them become strong e.g. myself, John Watson, Col Hullar, Jack Rudy, Special Forces, etc. They are determined to have their own country which I certainly sympathise with - find it very hard to try to talk them into becoming friends with the SoVietnamese but see no other way out for them under the present conditions. A huge frustrating problem that makes me very sad "in my heart" (as they say here) - the only thing I can do is try to make them strong, train them to be as self sufficient as they can be so when the time comes for a solution (whatever it may be) this generous, courageous and honest people won't be exterminated either by pressure politically or a suicidal war. Right now don't really see a solution that will do anything but screw these people....

...Let me tell you about my day yesterday - hope I don't bore you. Went out to get Lick at about 11:30 am with John Watson - took out the remaining 5 sewing machines to Ton's - arrived to see many of the village assembled and six rice wine jugs in a row in Ton's house. Bought a few crossbows and then the ceremony began. They had me take off my right boot and then place it on a piece of metal with cotton on it - on top of my foot they put some wet red stuff I still don't know what it was - then the priest (not Ton) started saying some words very fast and poured rice wine all over my foot while saying the words - Ton kept talking in a low tone and the priest sounded to me like he was repeating what Ton said. Finally the ceremony was over and then I was asked to drink two levels of the ceremonial rice wine (Ton's) jug - that started it - after I finished, then Ton drank, then John Watson, then Lick, then the priest, then each man according to his rank. Each group had a representative in each of the six jugs - my medics were there with their jugs - those that didn't have a jug had beer Le Rieu, food, etc. Ate a chicken head, much pork, bamboo greens, all kinds of stuff. When I got to the last jug only vomited once and had held down most of the ten levels (about a fifth a level) - then drank 3 levels out of the last jug - then we went to beer Le Rieu and then moved on to the next hooch (Gnau's) where we started all over again - Finally made it back to Ton's where we drank some more rice wine - have no idea how much - finally found my bed and passed out for about 2 hours. Made it back here to the base somehow and lo and behold - had 4 letters from you and a tape from Mike and the people at Erin's party....

...Am sorry sweetie - but it's called fighting the war here - Have been sicker than a pup all day today as I mentioned but am recovering slowly now. The shake is over and the head feels fine - only the stomach cramps and gas are still with me. Look like the wrath of God but will get over that by tomorrow....

...Think Jonhn got initiated also into the village yesterday - he's very quiet about his experience - possibly hooked up with Bler in some way - don't know. She starts working in the Officer's Club tomorrow morning which ought to be something else again. The first jerk that makes a pass at her is likely to be picking himself off the floor. She has a motor like Megan - doesn't stand for any nonsense. My comments about Bler must be very mystifying to you. Forget for a moment your strick upbringing along your rigid lines on what is and what is not permissible with regards sex. Accept for a moment that other cultures have

just as rigid rules about sex

just as rigid rules about sex - but they are different rules. If you can - then maybe you can understand all this junk about Bler. Can talk with detachment about my "granddaughter" (By the way you now have 6 children - the new arrival is a 45 year old MONTagnard chief of 3,500 people by the name of K'sor Ton - and believe me it ~~was~~ a rough labor and choildbirth on my part) - about Bler - she's very modest, hands-off type with great pride as befits a chief's daughter. Laughs with her eyes but always with great dignity. Her walk is like a movie stars - or an Indians - back straight, head held high, etc. Her picture is in the same frame with you and the kids, Colleen's school picture and Jack Rudy's picture. She is no prostitute or loose lover same-same Vietnamese. These many comments I've made in the past about her and the Yards' offers made to me, Jack Rudy and John Watson are made as a token of deep friendship. Hope I'm making myself clear. Hurt their feelings very much when I ~~refused~~ Ton's offer - ~~as~~ but we've both adjusted very well now with this arrangement of "ama" (which makes Bler my granddaughter and taboo) confusing? Join the club. Virtue is, I find, not necessarily the lack of opportunity, I'm happy to report.

Have just been interrupted for the last 1/2 hour by Charlie Brown (the ~~new~~ information officer and Frank Doyal who is very drunk. He's waiting to go home - Charlie is his replacement and rarin' to go and Frank is all burned out and ready to go home. The two of them have been roaming the Officers' quarters looking for company - they usually end up here. Had a drink with them and now they're gone to bed. It's 3 AM now and I'm going to turn in also. Sorry my letters have been so few and so lousy lately. Will improve I hope. There's a constant demand implied here to ~~at~~ talk and be social by the mere fact that a person cannot ever be alone (even at 3 AM in his own room.) Enjoy these people - especially guys like Frank Doyal but it does get wearing as you know.

Frank (Lt. Colonel) Doyal will be calling you when he gets back to the states - hope he has a few good words to say - I've been giving him hell ever since I arrived. Don't want or need his publicity and am constantly refusing to take his reporters and photographers out to the villages with me. He has a tough job (or had) - now Charlie Brown has it - must constantly court the Saigon warriors and newsmen who come up for a day, look around, talk to the newest P.R. man they see and then go back to Saigon and write their "authoritative accounts" that they learned all about in 2-3 hours. Guys like Jack Rudy, myself and others don't want anything to do with them - and after they've interviewed us they don't want anything to do with us, either. The story we have to tell is con-

refusing, no broad lines of heroes and villains, no easy answers, and no photographs or posed pictures. They usually give up in disgust and take the easy way out - take the canned pictures and publicity and use that for their story. There's two gals right now up here wanting to go out with me to Plei Brel tomorrow - hope to quietly avoid them without putting Charlie Brown in a bind. If not will get them in a out of Plei Brel as fast and as unobtrusively as I can - without pictures. Would like just once to see the Montagnard story told as it really is according to what Jack Rudy, myself and the rest have learned it from the montagnards and other sources. But that's too tough to get down on paper - John Value found that out - lived up here 6 mos and found out for himself - hasn't written a word since he got back to the U.S.A. - is writing children's books instead. - like he said he wanted to do in the first place....

134 around 18 Aug '67

Come Frank

We go now

Fly to Bangkok

and swim at midnight

We walk in wards

and see the dying

comfort

Come, Frank

we go now

drink all night

and go now

Wander through misery

but go now

We understand

Come, Frank

we go now

No need to sleep, eat

all same-same

Think

we go now

Come, Frank

we go now

And do -

oh, things

Because we only

enjoy life when

we are

doing something about it

we go now

Come, Frank.

(My Montagnards friend, Dr. Conlon, is flattering and kind. signed John B. Value)

(The following was found on a pad of paper on a vacated desk of Lt. Col Frank Doyal, my predecessor as Information Officer at Pleiku Air Base Republic of Vietnam. I suspect, from internal evidence, that it was written by John Value, a correspondent for a group of New England newspapers, who came here for three days and stayed for three months.) Charley Brown, Capt USAF

...And thus we become a victim of over - empathy, of outraged morals, who trembles at a sudden noise, not from any specific fear but from the awful strain that results from being men, from not cauterizing one's nerve ends, from not hiding. So I have come to learn terror, and horror and love and it is more important than the trembling and anguish that accompany such learning. The latter will heal. The former results in a much more moral being, my hardest lesson ever, and most worthwhile.

"Part of it is learning to be honest. I came here to run away, to be killed, and I lost my nerve, with the result that the intolerable I left has become tolerable; that I no longer hate God, nor life, nor anything, including myself.

"The anticipation of coming home fills me with joy. When I left, I took my loneliness with me and my lack of confidence.

"I have dropped them along the way. In the handclasp of a child. In a smile from a Montagnard striker who had lost all his limbs. In kind conversations with some French nuns who run an orphanage and a missionary lady who treats lepers. In the death of friends. In the sure knowledge that most people like me and that I like all people.

"I have become full of love, I truly a happy man. I know nothing of bitterness.

"I have found out what I have always suspected; that I am a happy man/

"So the only things to overcome are shyness and laziness and physical carelessness and that job is begun.

"It is not so much a matter of growing up. It's just that I think that I have to grow up faster than other people, if not as perfectly.

"War seems to be a natural condition of man. I don't think we can call it good or bad. Unhappily, people are most imperfect and war seems to be one of the ways we demonstrate our imperfections.

"But, some of the finest men I know are warriors. It is puzzling.

"But, that's the way we seem to be. So, let's not call war good or bad - or worse than that : just or unjust. War just seems to describe itself, and in this description, good and bad don't seem to make much

sense." on or about Feb March 1967
John Burnside Value.

13 Aug '67

..I've just had a wonderful conversation with a good man - Lt Col. Frank Doyal - he goes home tomorrow after a long tour. He's worn out, has been drinking much too much, his resistance is gone - he's tired - lonesome for his wife - his year is through. Gave me the supreme compliment tonite - inaugurated me into the Pleiku Irregulars - an uncommon award give to only a few here. - Col Wm Bonneaux, Jack Rudy, Frank Doyal, John Value, Rick Smith (Lt. Col.) and a few others (not more than 5 or 6) Had to walk the bar - same-same pay for a round of drinks for everyone. Did it with determination and qualified as the best bar walker in many a month.

Have talked philosophy for the last three hours with Frank. All centered around Psalm 91, John Value's essay which I include and a general description of what happens to a man after a year of this wonderful - ugly - lonely - inspirational place. After the initial wonderment passes in the first 2 - 3 weeks, you become an expert about everything here - this lasts for 2 - 3 months at which time you begin to doubt your judgement, lose your black and white ideas about all Vietnamese being bad guys and all Montagnards being good guys. See good V.N. and bad Yards. After more time your depression leaves you and a lethargy sets in where you want to sleep, hate rice wine, the dirty Yards, the ugly confusing war, the lousy V.N. and everyone and everything connected with the assignment (about the time I blasted away at you, sweetie.) You either get hold of yourself and force yourself to work at this point or you just continue with your bitterness and day-counting routine. If you're fortunated enough to get hold of yourself and work, you drive yourself even harder - a day by day work schedule that, in retrospect, is quite unbelievable (same-same what you just went through and ended up with pneumonia) - finally you get to my stage now where I'm short with people - impatient with them that they can't kick themselves in the ass and get with it, quick to get to the point, short with patients, unwilling to painstakingly go through the long-winded explanation of the Montagnard vs. V.N. (also because it can't be explained in black and white as it once could be so eloquently by me.) Have found a strength quite unknown to me before (I think because of you, Weez and Ed and others) and have become intolerant of people who cannot find this strength. We discussed Jack Rudy - how he went from a timid young man to a virtual lion by the time he

left here. How Fr. Ray Sullivan started falling apart ^{the} ~~at~~ last month he was here. How Frank himself is coming ~~apart~~ apart at the seams now that he has only a few days left. He will be calling you when gets to the states - a very good friend to me - can honestly say I love the man - same-same Jack Rudy.

3 Sept '67 144 2a

...Have been thinking about you off and on most of the day - want to give you a few of my thoughts about religion, etc. Plan to make a nit e of it, ~~so~~ relax and read on. My thoughts are by no means clearly worked out - most of my bitterness toward our Church has been dulled by not thinking about our problems. Have become somewhat of a ~~pragmatist~~ pragmatist about religion and life, a cynic about people - here a man's worth is determined not by his good will or his smile or his good looks but by what he can produce - not just one time but consistently and under pressure. Also we are concerned about Why a man does what he does - greed, pride, urge to make a name, publicity, medals, looking for a piece of ass, etc. - any of these motives can screw up an operation so it'll take 2 -3 weeks to bring it back where it was when this guy started to work with us. Was looking around the little theatre we have here at the men I've grown to know and - yes - love and respect. Come from all over hell to ~~this~~ spot called Pleiku. Many motives driving each man, some good, some not so good, some lousy. Previous to this have been able to ignore someone I didn't particularly like and shut him out of my life simply because I didn't really need him. Now the ~~rules~~ ^{changed} are ~~changed~~. I'm forced to work with these men, read each one like a psychiatrist, examen his motives, read his weaknesses, use his strengths if I can. Can't ignore them anymore. Must work with them, eat, sleep, the whole bit. Part of the strain here. - why I like Saigon where I have no obligations. I need each man's skills here in some way to help our little war out in the villages. Some men are so weak, stupid or selfish I can't begin to use them but most are willing to help if humored along. We also have some powerful enemies who control supplies, vehicles, etc. and who have been slighted in some way or feel that our so-called Civil Actions is for the birds. Many of them feel ^{our} helping the Montagnard is a waste of time and energy; misinterpret what we're doing; think we're out for medals, etc - wouldn't help if their lives depended on it and obstruct in every way they can. A strange war. Fortunately there is usually a way around these men and we have powerful friends of our own.

But this constant playing one man against another, humoring this one, praising this one, more or less bribing a third, etc., to get our aims is very disagreeable to me - but very necessary. Will sit down and explain the reason why it becomes necessary over the kitchen table some day.

When we find a really strong man who needs no support for his faltering ego, who is a good man, as we say - then we find a real prize. Such a man is John Watson, Bob Schultz, Jack Rudy, Lick Rahlan and a few others we're looking over now. I couldn't care less what their religions are, what the secret to their strength is - all I'm looking for are strong men who are capable of performing without some hang up that will destroy their effectiveness. A very hard commodity to come by. Ask Ed what I'm talking about - he's one of these people. I'm not looking for a superman exactly - just a good man. Hope I haven't confused this by my verbiage. Know what I want to say but somehow can't say it....

145 4 Sept 5a

..... Hope I haven't changed as much as I think I have - you may find you don't like the "new" Dan without his "niceness" as much as the old one. We'll see. In many ways am proud of myself for what I've managed to accomplish so far but in other ways see an ugly, proud streak in myself I don't particularly like. Am caught up in a struggle quite foreign to anything in the states - have been in Viet Nam without a break since January and can remember very little except in a dream about how I behaved before this. Become angry and impatient almost everyday now and have to control this. Do not remember being this way before. Much of the empathy and sympathy and gentleness I once remember having is not apparent any more. My true personality, maybe, is showing. Much of the ugliness that only you saw in me in our house, the angry outbursts, the frustrated angry fits I used to control everywhere except at home are coming more and more to the surface in the form of shortness, frank statements, insults sometimes, etc. Maybe I'm more honest with people now, I don't know. Certainly I'm more critical and less tolerant. A good man, a sincere man, even a weak man who I can help still gets my attention and help; but the phoney or "leader" who can't cut the mustard gets my contempt and I'm afraid I show it. Have discussed this already so will shut up....

....I'll tell you this" : a strong good man like Ed Ronin or a woman the calibre of Weezer or yourself is a damned hard thing to come

by - treasure all of you more than you will ever know...

...Today was election day all over Vietnam - looks like a shoo in for Thieu and Ky. Probably for the best. We had to stay out of the village today so the V.C. couldn't say we rigged the election. Good thing, too, since a bunch of us got stoned last night at Hinh's house. Had a headache that kept me up most of the night. Also had a drunken wrestling match with Gnau. - turns out he wanted me to come to his house to drink some rice wine, give me three bows he's made and share his food with me. I was so drunk thought he was Keck - thank goodness Watson was able to break us up and get us out of there by curfew time. A wild session for sure. Moral of the story - never drink beer before, during or after rice wine - you'll get clobbered every time. Will go back Tuesday when we start the medical visits and repair the harm I've done and have a good ol' hugging session, rice wine, etc. Gnau and I were covered with mud from head to toe and drunk as skunks - Y/O - he's a good man and makes a good bow. Ton and John between them got us all sorted out and cooled down - in short, your sweet empathetic, sympathetic husband made a royal ass out of himself. Where's that leader you were talking about?

...Today suffered through a horrible hangover - catalogued the bows I bought, ate sparingly and by 2-3 PM this afternoon decided I'd live after all. Feel pretty good now, my shake is gone, got the fluids back into me and should be raring to go by tomorrow. Tomorrow is organization day at Special Forces - we organize the medics, the medicine, the Americans, the vehicles and like that. Hope to have a fruitful month of trips to the various villages to train the Yards and also to improve the health of these people. Have a few volunteers and think as time goes on I should have a pretty good team alternating everyday. The Special Forces, 71st Evac people and my people are all joining in. Hope it doesn't turn out to be a circus - don't just need warm bodies - need good men - same-same problem I mentioned earlier....

10 Sept '67 148 1a

.... Have had the worst emotional upset of my young life in the last few days. Am determined to shake this thing and get back to work but am having one hell of a time. Maybe the shock of what happened to John is just an incidental thing - but it has made me sit down and re-evaluate my life and activity here, the reasons for doing what we've set out to do in the villages - even to re-evaluating my entire philosophy of life. Find it very difficult somehow to communicate

with anyone on the subject - part of the reason why you haven't received any letters for the past few days. Want to be by myself, ignore the world, cry real tears, go hide somewhere. You must find these words very strange coming from me. I'm sorry. Wish I could convey to you somehow just how close John Watson and I and Lick Rahlan and a few other (including Jack Rudy) have become over here.

Find myself jumping at any sudden noise, can't bring myself to drive, have lost a great deal of that know-it-all self confidence I had. All these things are new to me - am hoping I'll soon be over them - Am not sure, but think once I force myself to get back to work that I'll forget and be myself. Am living the last few days in a very strange way. Am ashamed of myself but haven't been able to shake it as yet.

Will be leaving for Clark AB in the Phillipines tomorrow ~~with~~ John. Plan to get him settled and aimed for the States, take a few days off away from Viet Nam, look around the place a little - and then come back and get to work.

In many ways I think you will find me a changed man when I get back - as we discussed before. I hope not but am afraid this is so. We will sit down, Seweetie, and talk way into the nite many times and maybe somehow I can tell you some of my experiences - good and bad - here. When I write them down they don't seem like much - but they have meant a great deal to me and have changed my perspective on life a great deal.

My love for you and the kids and Ed and Weez and others is just as strong - I think stronger - than before - but somehow it's a different man who does the loving. Am afraid I'm just making a mess of this topic and not really saying what I want to say.

Thursday nite - the nite John Watson was run over by the tank - was amazed how many people became involved in us. Had 5 or 6 trucks come out to make sure I was all right - a helicopter came and got John. Many of the people who have been critical of what we are doing - suddenly demonstrated great concern. After I scrubbed in an out 4 or 5 times while they worked on John at the 18th Surg - they took me to the Officer's Club very kindly - ~~like I was a s,a,,eje,d~~ - like I was a small child - made sure I ate something - Col Hullar took me by the hand to the front of the room where he sits - sat me down and demanded I watch the entertainment - it was very good Koreans I think - he kept feeding me full of gin tonics - people all over the room kept sending me drinks. John Hodgson ³¹ wanted to give me

- Seua

a seda ative abut told him I was just fine. T.I.Harris took me down to see John after the show, brought me back and took me to a good-bye party for Bud Mehan - drank Scotch until 2-3 AM, said my good byes and then was carefulljy led home to bed. The next morning noone would let me see patients - took me (Col Hullar that is) to see John Watson again. Wandered around the place most of the day - everyone else did the physicals except for one that I stumbled through. Then Bob Miller, Lick and I went out to the village - Hlin's house - for a sacrifice to make me his father. Bought crossbows - beautiful ones, received a Montagnard robe from him and a bracelet - everyone was again solicitous for ME - even though I was okay - JOHN was the one who got hurt. Feel like a fool even writing this down. Came back to see John - gave him the crowbow and bracelet and rice wine and fruit that Hlin had given me. Broke up a little when I saw John in such pain - made an ass of myself again.

John Hodgson got me TDY orders to go with John Yesterday - think everyone is glad to get rid of me. Can see how an alcoholic will turn to drink to forget - will have to watch myself the next few months. All I can think of right now are guys like John Value, Frank Doyal and some of the other good men who started to drink heavy towards the end of their tours here. Can see all the symptoms in myself. When I get back from the Phillipines will just put my head down and plow ahead with the work...

.....am very sorry have made this letter full of so many "I's" - Needed to talk to someone and this has helped. Am slowly getting my thoughts squared away - have many guilt feelings I'm sure about John's accident that I must come to terms with yet but will in time...

19 Sept 1a 149 '67

...Am very sorry for all the lousy letters I've been sending. Would like to review my activities since John's accident if I may. That was Thursday 7 Sept about 6:00 Pm on the way back from Plei Brel in the muddy, bumpy roads. He was run over by a tank as you know. That sounds like a simple statement but cannot remember every falling apart like I did that time. Put a new premium on what we are trying to do. Have had to sit down and re-evalutate the whole thing. If I can bore you a little would like to expand on that...

...The Montagnards are incredibly dirty, worm ridden, unhealthy people who's life expectancy is 35 years. They live in mud, have no latrines, drink rice wine that by any standards is pretty horrible -

their food is good but ^{their} ~~they're~~ taste buds are quite different. They take filth, mud and ~~bugs~~ bugs for granted and, consequently, they're in all the food, beds, etc. Those that survive this atmosphere are tougher than hell but small and really quite weak over the long haul in spite of their beautiful torsos, heavy muscular shoulder, legs and back. They have great pride, honesty and integrity and love with an intensity that over powers me. In spite of this they have ~~remained~~ remained back somewhere in the late Stone Age for reasons still obscure ~~to~~ to me. That they can and want to learn new things has been demonstrated many times to me. Witness Lick Rahlan who has advanced centuries and literally ages in his short 33 years. And there are many more. Once committed to a course they attack it with enthusiasm. It's getting them to want ~~to~~ change that's the difficult thing to do.

So why ~~do~~ I feel I want to work with these people at all? Why not just sit here on the base and wait for my DEROS like most of the men here do? There's plenty of things to do here. Haven't read more than one book since I've been here. Time and Life are work to me. My medical reflexes are dulled now because they are not constantly honed by difficult medical problems.

I'd like to write out some of my ~~thoughts~~ thoughts for ^{you} ~~you~~ but mostly for me. The Montagnards are caught in a historical struggle not of their making, one which they don't understand or even care about. One system of thought - not entirely evil - called Communism - more specifically Chinese or Asiatic Communism is seeking to take over South-east Asia simply because by doing so it can survive, get the riches that are here - heal its wounds, feed it's belly, and amass ~~wealth~~ wealth and resources to continue its planned expansion beyond the limits of Asia - first to India, Australia, Phillipines and the islands - and eventually ^{South} ~~South~~ AMERICA AND Central America. The softening up process is going on in these places right now. Africa is also somewhere on this time table. Eventually the U.S. will be isolated enough and China and friends strong enough for an even confrontation - the oriental is not concerned that this will take a long time. - he thinks in terms of centuries, generations - ~~this~~ this concern is instinctively this way. We think in terms of ourselves, our parents and children - 10 years, 20 years, etc. He ~~thinks~~ thinks in terms of centuries, movements of nations, there is a flow of peoples, not of families, etc. in his ~~thinking~~ thinking. (This will be disjointed - am getting interrupted frequently again. Hope you don't mind this lengthy discussion but would like to review my thought on paper. You, as usual, get the brunt of it. -

THANKS)

Okay, the Montagnards are merely a pawn in this struggle. And they are ~~totally~~ unequipped to contend with it. They deal on the one hand with a very well thought out philosophy of guerrilla warfare, terrorism, dishonesty, etc., from the "Viet Minh" as they call them. The struggle is unequal since the Viet Minh have a world-wide philosophy, a very well thought out method, a vastly superior intellectual foundation from which to work. The Montagnard sees his village or groups of villages - and, at best, the Montagnard nation or FULRO.. He is intensely loyal to these things but can see very little else. The flow of world forces, Communism, Democracy, Capitalism, etc. mean almost nothing to him. Men like Lick Rahlan with my and others constant coaching are seeing the light a little but the going is rough. There is no historical background such as we have had - he is still not sure where Europe and America even are much less anything ^{of} our culture, history, etc., except what I've been able to give him. And he's just one very intelligent Montagnard who would be a fantastic genius if he had all my advantages. Even now he knows 6 different languages quite fluently and soaks up knowledge like a sponge. His sharp eyes don't miss a thing. Gave him a large map of Southeast Asia and he's devoured it like a dog with a steak.

Aside from the fact that I would probably have become involved with these people anyway, always must be kept in mind that we have been sent ~~to~~ Viet Nam to fight a war. A lousy dirty war. One that we are not allowed to win outright for whatever reason. Mostly we are trying to stop the ~~advance~~ advance of Communism, a containment war. We are trying to give the South Vietnamese time and strength and just enough security to build a nation - a nation founded on an oriental version of democracy. Whether or not it will work I cannot say - nor is it my job really to decide whether or not we are doing it right. My opinion is that we are doing the best we can in this lousy situation we blundered into.

This struggle we've gotten into is a great nuisance to us, we lose a lot of money and good men like Lee Hitchcock and others. It's grim for us and our loved ones back in the states. For the Montagnards., it threatens them with ~~extinction~~ same-same American Indians. So - good riddance! possibly that's the facts of the matter. And maybe it would be best to just say that and let them all go to hell. If we could, that is.

The problem is that, even if I felt this way, to leave them as they are is to invite the Viet Minh to step into the vacuum - as they have

done in Plei Wau, Plei Bong Bao, Plei Monu and elsewhere where we used to go. (Greek's and Pappy Yoacum's villages across from Camp Halloway) And then we have another Dien Bien Phu here at Pleiku and and the Viet Minh win another round. So, you say, so what? This is what - we'll just have to draw the line somewhere else - Thailand, Burma, India, Australia perhaps - Phillipines, etc. and start all over in another unconventional war not of our choosing. We're set up here - have poured billions a day into Viet Nam to get set up so why not fight it here?

I said unconventional war. That's the name of the game. We call it Civic Action for want of a better name - actually no one has the rule book on it - maybe we should use Mao as our model - his methods seem to work the best. Unfortunately we are a nation with a public conscience and must do everything morally including killing Montagnards, etc. The Mao followers have no such limitation. But we can use his other methods and I think we're doing that little by little as we gain experience.

So we're stuck with a primitive, dirty, disease infested, ignorant but honest and genuinely loyal people who are under terrible life and death pressures from both sides. I have chosen for one reason or other - as I'm sure you or Ed or Weez would have, to work with these people. Have quit the give-away program, the one-stop "Medcap" program. Have chosen instead to essentially live with these people - to widen our perimeter with friendship, if you will, instead of the phony give-away. The crossbows, the looms, the informal English-Jarai (11:45 Pm now) lessons, the medics we are training and have trained, the trips to Saigon with Lick, the many discussions I have had with Ton, Lick and others - all these are an attempt to bring these people up to date, to help them compete in the world of today. Why the effort? - To seal off locally at least the Ho Chi Minh Trail, if you will.

Is risking my life even a little bit on a voluntary basis worth it? I think it is. I know that sounds like a very poor decision to you and maybe it is. But, damn it, sweetie - life has to be lived - not foolhardily like a race driver or a circus daredevil - but with all the proper precautions. But I feel very strongly that what I have started must be continued - and by me as long as I am here.

Have thought long and hard about this - for a long time as you can maybe guess. Someday I'll tell you about the agony - yes, that's the word - of indecision and questioning I've been through since John's

accident. Suffice it to say it's been a long 10 -12 days - maybe I've grown up a bit in these few days. Can tell you this is the first time I've been able to talk to you or anyone about what I've been thinking. Do not feel personally that strongly against Communism or for Capitalism. Do feel very strongly against totalitarianism. - or slavery and very strongly for freedom. Revere my right to speak my mind and live my life as I see fit as I have never done before. Never again will my Church or anyone or any influence deny me the right to do or say what I feel is right.

In the same way that I hold very sacred my freedom as a person, a thinking, independently acting person - in that same way I have espoused the problem of the Montagnard, the Negro, or anyone else who is denied this right for whatever reason. For this same reason I hate Communism with a passion and love democracy with the same passion. For the first time I realized the importance of a vote when the Montagnards - to a man - voted in the last election for the candidate of their choice. Watching Lick Rahlan champion his people has made me realize how important one man can be if he takes the trouble and has the courage to take the trouble - in helping his people. And Lick Rahlan has six children - and lives under the daily threat of violent death from many sources. Yet he has the guts to carry on. Asked what his religion is by John and myself - he stated very succinctly: - "The Montagnards, my family, my work, to help the Montagnards." I'll buy that for a more impressive religion than half the Christians I know.

Have gotten very carried away in this letter. Will get my R & R orders off to you tomorrow morning so you can use them in buying your ticket. I hope you don't judge too harshly what I have said. Am still very confused about myself. - and not a little chicken about the whole thing. Hope you understand what I'm going through. If you don't will be very sad and disappointed....

24 Sept '67 150 1a

....Catch myself thinking more and more of home and less and less of the job here lately. My main problem is finding someone acceptable to the Montagnards, to replace myself and the others working with me. Do not want to suggest that I am irreplaceable in any sense, as Jack Rudy was not irreplaceable. The problem is finding someone or some people who are willing to become totally involved in the problems, out there, live with the people, etc. - even when it gets to be work and the novelty wears off. Simply stated - must find some people who get

the message that friendship with these people secures the perimeter from attack. "Lacking this, we get mortareed instead of Halloway or Pleiku or the like. Enough of this...

28 April 1984

I must take some time out to reflect on what I wrote so many years ago. No doubt I had come face to face with a new reality. Death. Death by violence. I was not really prepared for it. Up till now life had been one challenge after another. Sort of God's Providence working its wonders with me. Now I had John Watson's "death" to deal with, even though he was not dead, ~~lonely~~ maimed for life. I had led him into the situation where he could die, as Jack Rudy had also led me. But I was a mature man - albeit a dreamer wanting to fulfill myself with a cause ~~that~~ ^{who} had succumbed to his charisma. That was my individual problem that Jack and I would come to terms with some day. John Watson was a young man whom I ~~had~~ lured into the Montagnard villages when I was absolutely alone and in need of a companion. That he fell in love with the Montagnards and the "cause" was an accident. ~~That~~ I was the reason for his involvement in the first place, I felt acutely that I should be guilty. Thank God he does not feel that way today, or so he says. I also feel that I let him down in not reading the "signs" in the front gate by the school yard and lost control of the vehicle (Charlie Brown lost the tie rod somehow as we went through the entrance/exit in spite of the fact we were warned against going that way by the bamboo signs on the road).

After John's accident, I came unglued. As I have alluded to in my letters, "Who the hell gives a shit about the Montagnards?" It's one thing to go out there myself for my personal reasons - putting at risk my family without a father on some hair-brained adventure as described - securing the Montagnard villages from the Viet-Minh by the force of one man's personality. It's another to involve men who are assigned a job in the dispensary as corpsmen or P.J.'s as rescuing downed flyers or even Air Evac personnel or even supply men or Air police in a clandestine mission (totally distinct from their stated reason to be in Pleiku). I felt responsible for talking them or even inspiring them ^{IN} to go ^{IN} out to the villages. I needed to find a philosophy of why they should go out with me. The narrative above is an attempt to do this so I would not be guilty of a crime that I could not live with. By the same token, if I could not find a

valid reason for "my men" to go out to the villages, why did I feel I should go out and run the risk of not coming back to my wife and family? Thus the discussion and reasoning above. In retrospect, the reasoning is not bad. Remember, always, I had promised Jack Rudy that I would be faithful to my promise to do what I could for the Montagnards. I do not like to go back on my word, once given. I was learning new depths of my own fear and what courage was.)

24 Sept '67 (cont) 150 5a (cont)

. Want very badly to ~~talk~~ to you about my problems in depth but have, frankly, been afraid to alarm you. We all weigh our words home very carefully here so the thought of imminent danger isn't always in your minds. I think this is as it should be. We ourselves are not constantly, at least consciously (perhaps subconsciously) aware of the danger here. To deny there is an ugly war going on would be ridiculous. To deny we are slam bang in the middle of it would also be ridiculous. It is our constant companion here - like booze to an alcoholic, or the color of his skin to a Negro. The contrast between Clark AB and Pleiku AB is simply astounding. No words I can use would describe it. At Pleiku we live with death, wounded, danger and this lousy war. Every Vietnamese or Montagnard could be the enemy - even my sons Ton and Hlin could be pressured enough to become the enemy - although I feel more safe with them and Lick than with anyone else.

My first reaction at John's accident was bewilderment and profound relief - the worst I have ever experienced - the next reaction was disgust with this war that has brought us here and can cause a thing like this to such a good man - wanted to drop the whole thing and hide somewhere - suffered guilt, pain and deep empathy all in one. After seeing John safely on his way to the States a new emotion came over me which I'm not at all proud of - FEAR. I got cold feet, quite simply. Especially when I arrived and found out Lee Hitchcock had been gunned down in a planned terrorist action down in Pleiku. I've known fear before many times here as I'll discuss when I see you - but this was a new kind - sort of a superstitious fear like the Negroes have when people close to them die or get hurt.

This is why I didn't write for so long - didn't know how to tell you this and yet wanted to very badly. Have now sufficiently recovered to go back to work again - must do the job in front of me - more cautiously perhaps - but still it must be done. Have had to dig deep to find faith in God's Divine Providence and am still a little shakey in that department. Your letter of the 15th helped more than

You will

ever appreciate. Will not be foolhardy, sweetie - plan to get back to you people - but feel I have a definite job to do that needs doing very badly - and we're damned short of people willing to do it. In fact, a few of us sat down and counted up the men we can rely on and it comes to 10 men - out of 2,700 men on this base! Col Hullar feels very strongly that we are the reason the airbase has not been hit - because we are contributing in many ways to the good of the Montagnards and consequently they return the favor by keeping the "Viet Minh" away from us. I feel that this is true also. There ain't no medals here, however,. Most of the things we do are illegal or not mentionable. We have attracted a lot of notice regarding our "civic action methods" from 7th Air Force - it looks like I'm going to be asked to write an article about what we do - the "give-away" civic action has had little or no success elsewhere and the so called "Med-cap" missions all over Viet Nam have done nothing but get a lot of publicity for the doctors and a lot of medicine for the V.C. who come in right after the Medcap teams leave.

.....Hope what I have said hasn't alarmed you. Think you have guessed this much already anyway. Have always wondered how I would respond to fear - am not proud of my first reaction but think I've learned something about myself. Please pray for my faith in God. Courage is something very different than I thought it was. It's no fun at all. Quite simply it's the ability to handle fear. And the amount of courage is in direct proportion to the amount of fear you have. Do I make any sense?

16 Oct '67n 151 a

... Yesterday (Sunday) was a two bracelet day. Two sacrifices complete with rice wine and on my bare feet, incantations, etc. Bill Fulton, Steve Charles and John Hodgson also got themselves initiated. One was at Lil's house - turns out he was the old chief before Ton - and apparently will be the chief again someday - they have elections periodically in the villages - something I was unaware of. From just myself and John Watson we have grown to 5 - 6 men who are willing able to go out and do good work in the villages. Was worried for awhile about having a replacement - can relax now. The crossbow industry is also out of my hands now - and this is a good thing. Have a few pang of possessiveness about the projects that I've worked on going out of my hands - much like a parent hates to see a child grow up and leave the home, I suppose.

For the record, had the following people out at Plei Brel yesterday-

~y

day: Bill Fulton, Steve Charles, John Hodgson (doctor), Lou Bracey (medic), Lee Ignatowitz (medic), Browman (medic-flight), Chunn (air-evac medic), Dave Berrio (P.J. medic), Rusty Shields (Maj.-munitions expert), Ken Roberts (Lt-munitions), Sue JFinche (friend of Bliers - Red Cross), Marsha Ness (Red Cross - not related to Mary Ness Becchetti), and 2 others I don't even know who came along for the ride. We spread all over the villages. - Plei Brel, Plei Sork, Plei Phung, Plei Kep.

Tomorrow is the big day (today actually - Monday) - all the people of Plei Brel got together and bought a large water buffalo from the Vietnamese - will have a sacrifice today, for the upcoming harvest of rice. It started yesterday with all kinds of gong playing, ritual dancing and fighting. (Hing ended up with a wicked cut under his left eye from his ritual fight with another man.) Luckily I'm working the dispensary so don't have to get smashed today - will go out Roi Dua (Tuesday) and join in the festivities (rice wine drinking) Looks like a blast is in the making....

20 Oct '67

....Am glad you had a good time in Hawaii - I did too as you know. But have been strangely sad and depressed since I came back. It's not the villages exactly - have gotten into the swing of things again. It's not the fact that much of the work has been taken out of my hands. Got almost a royal reception in the villages when I got back - very embarrassing....

...If you don't mind, would like to philosophise for a moment. Have received a large amount of notoriety lately - articles written about me (Lord knows where they will appear - or even if they will, I appear) - a much conversation blowing me up to be quite a hero. I would be a fool not to be pleased - but be sides that am confused by it all. Somehow am losing control of the situation - am being caught up in a big Civic Action thing - by "fbaby" is growing up. We have good men who have taken the ball and run with it (today Steve Charles, Lick and Bob Miller took off for Plei Brel and Plei Sor and I don't even have a vehicle to go out with). We've had a wild week of it as you can gather from the lack of letters. Have spent every waking moment either out in the villages or talking about them. The enthusiasm is tremendous and very gratifying but the "good ol' days" are gone forever.

Somelhow I've been truck in the role of a seer full of knowledge about these people - what I say is weighed carefully and the same

on in

brain picking process I used on Jack Rudy goes on in reverse now. That's okay. But somehow I feel ilike the horse that is put out to stud....

6 Nov '67 161 1a

...The only way I can get some solitude was take a walk with my hand radio around the base. As it was ran into a group of guys at bailetting who wanted to talk Civic Action. Andy Comeau just extended for 6 months - makes his DEROS a year from now. Wouldn't do that on a bet! Most of these kids extending are experiencing a challenge for the first time and have nothing to go back to the states for. They are not married generally and have more time in the service to spend anyway. They don't want to get stuck on some base like Sheppard AB pulling details and wasting their time so they're extending.

Jack Rudy is coming back at some undertermined time - he wrote Lick Rahlan that. Will probably go to Kontum as his base. Would guess he'll be working for the CIA in some capacity. This should help the Montagnard a lot. If I can get him hooked up with Jim Morris, they would make a good team....

....Had a suckling pig sacrificed for us at Lick's house yesterday. Still have my cough (same-same Sophomore year Med school - remember?) - coughed so much Lick ordered me to bed. Am beginning to really dislike the taste and smell of rice wine. Can't seem to find my appetite. Bill Fulton ordered 2 poached eggs on toast for me at MaCV - tasted just great! Think I'll live on soft foods for awhile when I get back.

170 3a 17 Nov '67

...Kay says people are amazed at how primitive the Yards look in these pictures I've sent home. Am beginning to realize how different things are here from stateside. Hard to describe. Guess I'll have to take some pictures so my word pictures will make sense. Don't think I will ever forget what it's like here - but have resigned myself to never being able to convey my memories to other people.

My good friend Jack Rudy has gotten bored with life as Assistant District Attorney in Wash. D.C. and is coming back to Pleiku-Kontum in some CIA role. Another good friend - John Watson +- is starting to walk again after 2 months since his tank accident - He also wants to come back. A retired Special Forces man has just come back as a USAID man. Don't think this will happen to me - but have to admit there's a challenge here like few other places...

174 1a 22 Nov '67

.....Don't like this going alone bit at all. Sympathize with

what you are going through. This is some of what I went through when John Watson was run over and then Lee Hitchcock murdered. Learned for the first time what cowardice- fear- courage is. That was the time I wandered all over Qhùì Nhon like a lost soul, Clark AB and back here. Damned near fell apart at that time. Have had a much more sober second half of my tour than the first half. And believe it or not, have been much more careful also. Have no intention of winning this war - in fact, to win this war militarily at this time would be a great tragedy for these people. Our pulling out would just leave the Montagnards to the mercy of the Vietnamese again before they are ready to cope with the new struggle. Give them 5 - 10 more years and we'll have some educated Montagnards who can read and write; have a broader knowledge of world affairs; have medics, lawyers and teacher; a cottage industry, etc. The reason I am so involved here, Sweetie, is that there are damned few people who want or can get involved. We've hit on a Civic Action formula that works but it's damned hard to sell to an IBM machine or to a career diplomat who likes numbers, quantities, etc to use in Washington DC. I had to list the good men working with me yesterday for Col Hullar and my opening statement was, "Sir, we have a lot of them now." I then found myself hard pressed to squeeze 10 names out of my memory! And that's out of nearly 3,000 men. Granted it's better than when Jack Rudy was here and he was quite literally the Lone Ranger. But we have Gen'l Mommyer's official blessing complete with letters of commendation mentioning the crossbow industry, etc., specifically. We've got publicity coming out our ears now. Am told I got another spread in the Stars and Stripes the other day (haven't seen it yet.),,.,.,.

181 1b 4 Dec '67

...Apparently I will be an authority on Vietnam because I'm here. The only trouble is that there is no authority on Vietnam. I have my opinions and have certainly talked the subject to death here with everyone. One thing I am an authority on - and that's the Montagnard problem. I take my hat off to very few people on that subject. You will hear me mouth off many times until you're sick of it - plan to tell a few war stories in the bargain.

Went to 2 new villages with Lick yesterday. Got a wonderful reception (mostly because I was with Lick and the school teacher from Plei Blang 2.) Also got very drunk as usual. Was tempted to write another drunken letter to you last nite but have learned from experience that's not the most wonderful thing I can do. Danger? - no sweat.

Lick is the most careful, knowledgible man in the world up here in his country. Let me tell you a little about Lick Rahlan.

He's 31, has 2 wives and 6 children. I've mentioned before all the languages he speaks. He ^{was} and still is chief of 32 Montagnard villages near Plei Kly - Plei Me. He ~~can~~ can't live there because the Vietnamese fear his influence and forbid him to live in a Montagnard village ever. I have witnessed very often his power among his people. Just a gesture or a short 3 syllable quiet command sends Montagnards scurrying in all directions. His word is absolute - noone questions it - even Ton who is a chief in his own right. I have not seen anyone speak roughly or argue with ~~the~~ him. - even the Vietnamese around Pleiku treat him with respect although we both know they would stab him in the back given a chance. Any Vietnamese who hurt Lick around here and was identified would have to contend with a number of black-pajamaed Montagnards or leave the area.

And yet this man is an infant in Saigon. Looks around like Alice in Wonderland. Hangs on to me like Kaela - never takes the initiative. In fact he won't even walk by my side but walks behind me! wherever we go. After one week of this I was beginning to wonder if I wasn't overestimating him - until yesterday. Somewhere between the Air Base and a Montagnard village our roles reverse. From an obedient, ignorant native who speaks poor English and says "yes, sir" and speaks when spoken to on the base - he grows 5 feet and takes on all the airs of an all-wise, decisive, kindly but strict Montagnard Jesus. Our roles are reversed. I don't make a move without checking Lick's eyes. These roles are well understood by both of us but we've never discussed this openly. He knows and understands me - laughs at my stupidity and my attempts to speak, think, act and eat like a Montagnard. He's given up on me ever learning to speak Jarai very well - laughs at my pantomime language and says, "You want to vomit now?" after 3 or 4 levels of rice wine. We are good friends. After I get home will explain fully what that means here in this ugly little war we have. Reminds me of the Last of the Mohicans story I read a long time ago. The chewing out you gave me after the Plei Koteng episode was mild in comparison to the criticism ~~the~~ he deferentially gave me when he found out I went without him. He was very upset to say the least.

Picked up 7 more bracelets yesterday from Lick's house. He has about 100 people living on his property - they've pitched a big tent in his back yard. Maybe I'll write Hilton and see if we can get him a hotel. Seems the bigger we build his house, the more people come to see him and ask his advice. That was a good R & R for Lick also in

Tomorrow I pick up 3 more Montagnards from our villages and take them to Special Forces to begin their training as medics. At least we'll leave that as something permanent. While in Saigon, Lick and I discussed in detail the Montagnard dilemma - a shadow government called the FULRO with every man in it an outlaw in his own country - hiding out in Cambodia. And no peace in the highlands (roughly 1/3 - 1/2 of the area of this little country) until and unless Thieu and Ky come to terms with Y-Bham (President of FULRO - a Rhade). and his men. Until Thieu and Ky can demonstrate some honesty and strength, the Montagnards will not come into active cooperation with them. They are not V.C. or "indigenous Vietnamese" (as the newsment are so fond of calling them) but Montagnards with 5 fully equipped, well trained divisions, excellent leadership, great suspicion towards the "Viet Minh" (No Vietnamese), the V.C. and the So. Vietnamese. They don't particularly like the U.S. either or the French. Except always the Special Forces and some mavericks like myself, Jack Rudy and others.

The trouble is that these 200 odd people and men like Lick (totals may be 2,000 men who can read and write) have many problems. They must bring the Montagnard people from the 2nd or 3rd century to the 20th century, fight a war coming at them from all sides and play their cards with supernatural wisdom not to get victimized and crushed by any one or all of their enemies. Soon our war with the No Vietnamese will be over - at most 1-2 years - probably sooner from the looks of things here. At that time the Montagnards will have had to make their deal already or Thieu or Ky will simply turn their war machine on the Montagnards and overpower them (probably one of the bloodiest wars in history - my bet.)

The V.C. problem apparently is taking care of itself in the delta. Their organization is crumbling, the Chieu Hoi program is working, the North Vietnamese have had to step in openly to man their dwindling ranks and staff their headquarters, etc. We're winning slowly but surely that war and everyone here is beginning to see an end in sight. Not tomorrow, mind you. But given 3 or 4 more goes like Dak To and the punch will be out of the Viet Minh. They've reached over 2,000 body count now for the No Vietnamese and they haven't finished yet. And that's the pride of their Army - led by Giap himself....

.....6a ...Lick is a Christian this month for Christmas (will be a Buddhist for Tet, I'm sure - also has a sacrifice to his gods every now and then just to keep everyone happy - can't take any chances, you know.) Anyway - gave him the box for his kids - there is a very

happy family today because of it.....

191 1a 20 Dec '67

....Had a good time at Hlin's house yesterday. All the people involve were out there - Bill Fulton, Bob Miller (who leaves in about 8 days), T.I. Harris, Paul Hawkins, Dave Berrio (who's over his bout of malaria now), Lick Rahlank, Hlin, Hmyar, Hiur, Tun(Ton) Ih, Kyl, Hjun, Lee Ignatowicz, John Batey, and ~~as~~ 3 or 4 more that came to look on. Also Hlar - Plei Sor's chief. We had a drunken good time - a going-away party for Bob Miller.

Have decided to go to Tokyo after all - when I come back will go down to Saigon with Hlin, Tun, Hmyar and Lick along with Bill Fulton and Paul Hawkins. Have been invited by Col Hullar to explain Civic Action to the new general coming in. That ought to be something. Have never talked to a general before.

Went to bed at 8:00 Pm and slept ~~at~~ still 7:00Am this morning to give this rack of skin and bones of mine a chance to catch up. Feel good today. Am on call until tomorrow at noon. Will make this

.....Have a sacrifice to go to tomorrow afternoon. at Anao's house. He's the original little ol' bow maker that Jack Rudy started with. He and Hluce, Hnuch and Plo have a pig and rice wine sacrifice scheduled for me and Lee Ignatowicz. Suspect a few others will be present as well. Can see it now. Will be one party after another till I leave.

....Ended up seeing about 10 patients - thriving practice I have. Last one was a very special private patient of mine - Col Hullar. ~~My~~ my father figure over here. Can add another name to those I admire very much along with.....Honored me with an invitation to have a beer with him in his quarters tonite. Another all nite bull session, no doubt. Will try to keep my opinions on a conversational level - but will probably end up mouthing off again - he usually eggs me on with his eternal questions.

Still having a great deal of trouble liking the Vietnamese in spite of the fact things are improving between them and the Montagnards. Their evident dislike for us, their basic philosophy of stealing and lying as long as they steal and lie outside of their family, their cruelty toward each other - directly contrary to the Montagnard people - all these make me furious. They are also next to impossible to examine or treat. The Vietnamese mommasans come in with their stomach aches, etc., and want treatment yet won't even let you see their bellies without a huge amount of struggling, grabbing at my hands, pulling up

up their clothing, etc., And yet they'll turn right around and sell their bottoms at the drop of a piastre. As far as I'm concerned wouldn't miss never laying eyes again on one of these conniving, stealing, lying hypocritical people for all of their sad stories. Sorry to blast off but haven't changed my mind about these people one bit since I got here. And, by the way, am still as much in favor of the Montagnards as I every was. We got 44 Yards on the base now and they work circles around the Vietnamese - who are eternally picking their nose or their ass, standing around, sleeping or doing anything but work. The Yards won't even take their allotted one hour for lunch - just eat their sandwich or rice and head right back to work. All I get are rave reviews from the men (G.I's) working with them - eventually should get rid of all the Vietnamese and replace them with half the number of Montagnards and we'll get twice or 3 times the work done/.

15 Jan '68 201 - 1a

...Got in Friday nite about 9:00 Pm. After taking Lick home went to bed. Saturday - went out with Berrio and Brian Riel (a dentist from Qui Nhon who has done wonderful things with the Vietnamese up and down the coast - came up here to see if he can pick up some tips on working with these people. A good man to have along. The Yards love him. Another Jack Rudy. Went to Hnuch's house for the sacrifice he kept insisting he was going to have for me. As usual, he'd forgotten all about it. Ended up instead at Huir's house in Plei Sor - could only take about 8 levels of rice wine before I quietly fell asleep. By the time they took me home about 8 - 9 o'clock was fairly sober. Stuck to coffee and water once I got back and felt pretty good this morning. Went out to Hing's house today for a sacrifice - not for me but for GIR who's been gone for about 2 weeks working for the Special Forces. When Hing discovered that I'm leaving in 4 days, he was really upset - wants to have a sacrifice for me but told him I won't have time. Also took in a sacrifice at Hluc's house and then came home by 5:00 Pm - went right to bed - was awakened by music at 9:00 Pm from the Officer's Club. Have been drinking coffee and Pepsi ever since. Got a hot shower and a new set of clothes and feel pretty good right now except I'm hungry.

You can't believe how nice people have been to me here. Everyone takes very good care of me and someone is always with me to make sure I get back okay, get my sleep, remember my camera, etc. It's tough to say goodbye to the Montagnards and tougher yet to say goodbye to the people I've come to know here on the base. Charley Brown left on R&R

Yesterday so said goodbye to him. Bob Shultz is gone. Jim Hawkins has left. And, Sweetie, would you believe I have only 4 more days in Pleiku? Probably this letter and one or two more and then there won't be any reason to write because I'll beat them home!

Have a sacrifice to go to at Anaow's house tomorrow - if he remembers. These people are celebrating their New Year's now and have been on a steady drunk for the last 2 weeks. My going away is just another excuse to have some more rice wine. Tuesday is the big sacrifice at Hlin's house - Col Hullar, myself, Bill Fulton, Lick, Hlin, Hmyar, Huir, Kil, Ton, Hinh, Jun, - everyone is apparently going to be there. It's a good idea - that way I can have my blast and pass out and call it a tour. Wednesday I have to go to Lick's house for a final sacrifice and then it's home, sweetie. Ache all over and am shaking as I write in anticipation.

202 17 Jan '68 1a

Well, it's coming to an end. Had my big sacrifice at Hlin's house today - 14 jugs of rice wine - one from each of the men there. Col Hullar, Lick, Ton, Major Paul Hawkins, Berrio, Roy Worthington, Lee Ignatowicz, Hlin, Hmyar, Hinh, Huir, Kil, Karr, Jun, even Agleo from Plei Koteng, Bill Fulton, T.I. Harris, Ralph Nagle (new man I'll tell you about sometime) - all kinds of strangers - also Brian Riel, Frank Barnett (he'll put me up in Cam Rhan from Friday till Sunday when I leave here.) Got drunk and was taken home by John Hodgson and Steven Charles. Slept from 5 PM till 11 PM and have been drinking coffee ever since. Have been asked my opinions about Viet Nam, the Montagnards, etc by generals, colonel, L.C.'s, Majors, Captains, EM's, ad nauseam. They appear to think I know something about this thing. I know only one thing for sure - I'm sick and tired of the whole thing. Want to go home very badly and be with you and the kids. Maybe I'm just tired period. But can generate very little enthusiasm for anything remotely related to this lousy war. I'm all for "flower power." Maybe when I get away from here, I'll miss it but think it'll take a long time.

....Am wearing this jacket I received from Hlin today. It's beautiful. They say that if I sleep with this jacket on, then I can talk to them and they will hear me. Also Hlin gave me the family gaung - level - that you measure the rice wine you drink with. A very special gift - like giving the family silver away.

....Tomorrow is Lick's sacrifice for me and Thursday is Ton's blast and then I'm through! Hurray! Was going to leave Thursday but

Ton wa

49. Jack Rudy(cont) 202 2a 17 Jan (cont) '68

Ton was broken hearted when he learned I was going to leave without giving him a chance for a sacrifice. Oh well. That'll be the end, though. No more. May be a teetotaler when I get back home.....