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

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1. Lick Rahlan a.k.a. Y- Djit 11 2b 31 Jan - 1 Feb '67

.....Went to 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 and maybe 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. A good man - he's teaching me also. A dirty little war....

.... Am learning a few words but language comes very hard for me...

8 Feb '67 16 2a

... Yesterday afternoon took the jeep down to Pleiku to see our interpreter Lick (Montagnard who knows Vietnamese, Jarai, English and is constantly harassed by the ARVN because he's too smart - think I mentioned him before.) He's been passing a whole assortment of worms lately so have started him on the regimen they have here. Makes a man sicker than hell. God involved in some Montagnard wine drinking but cut it off at 3 levels. Left there for Dr. Luce's hospital

12 Feb '67 3a

....Left 18th Surg to go to Plei Brel with Jack - had good time as we always do - talked Jarai all night haltingly - rice wine helps - learned many words - left there about 9 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 2 minutes under curfew whatever time that was. We'll get along fine. Next morning (Saturday) worked dispensary until noon - then went with Jack to pick up our interpreter Lick, 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 GIR (remember him, ten years old, smart, etc.) and his cousin PAN (also 10 years old, good boy) - to Plei Phong to get my leper - to Pleiku leper colony where talked to Olive Kingsbury and Charlie Long - she congratulated me on my diagnosis, a great satisfaction to me - to Montagnard Special Forces to see my boy with clubfoot (no phones here, must travel everywhere over these outrageously bumpy, dusty roads - can't believe the dust - 2 - 3 inches of it everywhere - later on during the rainy season all turns to mud I guess - 1 to 2 feet of it. As I write have many more things to say but the thoughts come too fast to write down - sorry I seem to skim along - don't know any other way....

....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/O, 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/O.

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, 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 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 were we really there to help them. We passed with flying colors. Sometimes morals are a good thing to have.

33 2a 2 Mar '67

...Right now everything is covered by $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 inch of soft powdered dust - including us by the way. I showered the other day. - finally got some hot water and after soaping down with lots of lather and standing under that wonderful water for 15 - 20 minutes - wiped myself and the towel came out brown. Y/O.

Got permission to go back to Plei Brel today to get my sick man from yesterday. Wanted to bring him to hospital last nite 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 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. Maybe TB but who knows out here what the hell it is...

....Think I told you about Tuesday nite. Well, got up about 5:30 AM Wednesday and made it back out to 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 burning for about an hour, they were pulled out, the hide was scraped 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-ko-bob and saw some sick people - among which was my man with his lung gone. The people at Plei Brel had partied all nite Tues - Wed, all day Wednesday and all nite Wed-Thurs and when I went back this afternoon were still "lapping on the hose" as Jack calls drinking ~~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.

4. Lick Rahlan (cont) 2 Mar '67 33 4a (cont)

Tom Wilson wants to teach English and French - will need an interpreter because he doesn't know much Bhanar as yet - wish him luck....

38 5b 11 Mar '67

...Back to my story - 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, Eckford 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 kinds 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 home 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 done out there so far has gone well - knock on wood. Feel like I'm accepted out 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...

51 2a 29 Mar '67

...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 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 - 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 (Lick?) 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

5. Lick Rahlan (cont) 51 3a 29 Mar '67 (cont)

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.....

57 2a 9 April '67

... 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. I'm 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 pbooze - 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 me 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 nearly 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~~ 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.C. at about 11:00PM last nite. Discussing all the Montagnards, Vietnamese, Americans that we deal with - who can be trusted, who are the phonies, ~~how to conduct myself, how to know when~~ LiC

6. Lick Rahlan (cont) 57 3a 9 April '67 (cont)

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 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 me luck and a few prayers whouldn't hurt either.....

.....4b It's hard to describe the waste, the phonies, the big tall well meaning rich smiling f---ing UGLY Aamericans 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 lproblem then will try to help it - no more hand outs - makes them the same as welfare patients back home. Very complicated. Did you know the average YEARLY income (con'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.....

58 2a 13 April '67

... Let me begin my story. Got to bed Monday Am at 5:45 AM - got up at 6:35 AM slightly tired but not hung over - had been drinking pop and cool aid and coffee and tea while I picked Jack Rudy's brains. Think I got all the information I could possibly get from him. We discussed each and every Montagnard by name, character description, whether he could be trusted, how much, how he reacts, etc, etc. Then we went through the men on the base - same treatment - turns out only 3 or 4 men that I can work with (Bob Shultz may be one of these - we'll see - has a good head, keeps his mouth shut, likes the Yards, is honest, says shit when he has a mouthful, etc.) Will have to stop treating the Vietnamese or having anything to do with

7. Lick Rahlan (cont) 58 2a 13 April '67 (cont)

them in Pleiku except the orphanage - casts doubt on my trustworthiness. ~~the~~ Yards have a fantastic intelligence system. Will have to stop associating with Saih - he works for USAID and too much with the Vietnamese - "is not known" by the Yards (same-same hated.) By associating with Saih I hurt my own work. May have to stop going to the villages south of here - there is a definite rivalry between these people and I may be putting my head in the fan by going to both people - will talk with Lick about this. Lick Rahlan was Jack's interpreter as you may remember - he's also FULRO in this area - I maybe mentioned that there is a tightly disciplined organization among the Montagnard and Lick is the head of this - comes on like Casper Milk-toast but actually is a brilliant man. Right now we're fair friends but we're still looking each other over. The fact that Jack liked and trusted me spoke volumes but these are a cautious and wary people and noone more so than Lick. His life depends on this. Eventually we may become good friends. Lick has accepted Colonel Hullar's offer to be his interpreter - am happy about this - will keep him close to home - maybe able to use him myself. This also gives Lick an advantage and more prestige than just working in the dispensary or the Judge Advocates office....

60 3a 16 April '67

...Spent the morning out at Plei Brel - they have an epidemic of measles - hits the Polynesians hard (the first exposure of measles in Hawaii Killed 1/3 of the natives) - another gift of the smiling, rich, God's-gift-to-the-native Ugly American. Six kids had pneumonia - a few very sick - and the thing just started. Went from Plei Brel to Plei Phung and treated about 20 more. Came back to Ton's and drank rice wine and "ate lunch" - cow I think and mangos - I liked it all - am developing a definite taste for rice wine and their food. Took Lick back to his house at Pleiku Rho and had a good talk with him. He's working now as Col Hullar's interpreter but I will be able to use him whenever I like. Was afraid that when Jack left, Lick would leave, too. He told me today he would be glad to go to any village I go to as my interpreter and friend. A real break for me because must stop seeing Saih. He's probably not long for this area - he'll either have to leave or be in bad trouble from Vietnamese and Montagnard and most probably V.C. Will also have to stop any dealings I've had with the Vietnamese such as Quy Them's family - the Montagnards know I've been seeing these people and also treating some Vietnamese and they don't like it. They'll still accept me in their villages and I'm in no

8. Lick Rahlan (cont) 60 3a 16 April '67 (cont)

danger but there will always be a reserve as long as I'm going "both ways." At least my quandry is temporarily settled and I can get back to work.

63 1a 21 April '67

....Have been spending most of my time with Lick Rahlan - feel I can trust him more than Saih. Think I mentioned his importance in this area in another letter.....

66 1b 25 April '67

....Received the 6 boxes of medicine - distributed it all over this area - some to Dr. Pat Smith in Kontum, some to Dak Pek (Special Forces Yard camp with 2 medics), some to our dispensary (stelazine especially and the Soma), some to the leprasarium. Feel the cost of sending the meds outweighs the good it can do - we can usually scrounge enough standard meds from the dispensary - what is short are odd items - soap, clothes, batteries (D size, etc.) that are scarce as hell and badly needed. There's a policy of moving the Yards out of the booneies near Cambodia into and around Pleiku, Kontum, Dak Pek, Plei Djering, Plei Me, Duc Co, etc - displacing them from their homes, cattle, clothes, etc and then destroying their villages so the V.C. can't use them. This works an enormous hardship on them in terms of health, cleanliness, clothes and food. Strangely enough our great wealthy U.S. government has been slow to provide this - (either that or the scoundrels in Saigon steal them before they can be distributed).

Consequently we scrounge this stuff from everywhere. All very legal - no money made, etc. Just got a load of 1½ tons of captured V.C. rice from 4th Division by way of FAC's that I'll have distributed by tomorrow afternoon, for instance. Have been elected (am out in the villages often as you know and can see where the need is) to distribute much of this stuff.

Our medical teams are doing good, I think. (Have constantly in my mind the image of the Ugly American and am never quite certain I'm not one of them.) Amazing how everything we do so far with few exceptions gets results. Pneumonia that would kill a boy or man clears up in 2 - 3 days with antibiotics here. Haven't attempted to clear up the worms yet. - don't think there's enough medicine in the world to do this. There are approximately 20,000 Montagnards here in the villages I go to - many more outside our artificial perimeter that would like to see but wouldn't dare at present. Plan on getting home in one piece, thank you.

The crossbow and pipe industry is in it's infancy but should prosper as time goes on. Have many good friends among the Yards whom I can trust now and one especially - Lick Rahlan - who acts as interpreter for me, Col. Hullar (our Commander) and the lawyer here....

70 2a 30 April '67

....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 of Plei Brel by invitation to two sacrifices at Hing'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 there - I slept from 8:00 PM to 11:30 - much needed....

78 1a 19 May '67

... - Just spent since 9:00 PM talking to Colonel Hullar about the Montagnards, Lick, Ton and all those people.....

....Very interesting and, in a way, unique problem that Col Hullar is stuck with me 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

10. Lick Rahlan (cont) 78 1b 19 May '67 (cont)
to become educated and beat the problem this way instead of by arms.
- how I was in a unique position to do this whereas Hullar was not, etc.

Think I can make a positive contribution to the problem here by working with Hullar and the 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.

30 1b 24 May '67

...Started reading the Ugly American again - should be required reading for anyone coming to Vietnam. Very interesting and very true. As I've mentioned - we are very stupid when it comes to understanding these people and their attitudes. About the time I think I understand them, I find I have missed the point by quite a bit - even the Montagnards. Have a date with Lick next Sunday to go down and talk with him - should be interesting - think we have many things to say - hope I can shut up for a change and listen to him instead of shooting off my mouth about my ideas.....

33 2b 5 June '67

...Got so mad reading that letter from that jerk that was in the paper that I didn't even finish it. What the hell does he think we're doing over here, playing monopoly? This is war, damn it, and war is - like they say - HELL. Those villages are told not to harbor V.C, or we will have to shoot the shit out of the villages. It's either pick our side or you get the same treatment the V.C. get. Also the V.C. has no compunction about doing the same thing - only they torture the people first. This is an ugly war but all war is ugly and no damn good. Also we won't win it by shooting people in the long run. We'll win it when we get enough people like the Special Forces who go out and live with the people, give them protection - it's got to be on a man-to-man basis and will take lots of time. Also we will then have to convince the Yards somehow that they can't go it alone - must join with the Vietnamese to make this one country. The alternative is get swallowed up by the Communists - a worse alternative. Neither one is very good, as a matter of fact.

Have been giving out plague vaccine shots to Plei Brel, Plei Sor, Plei Phung, Plei Dal (a new one for me). Talking way into the

11. Lick Rahlan (cont) 33 3a 5 June '67 (cont)

nite with Lick and Ton, selling many crossbows and having a hell of a good time but no sleep or time to myself.

37 2b 13 June '67

...Got back (from Dak Pek) to find out that many Montagnards were killed in the Pleiku mortar attack last Friday - much hard feeling between the Vietnamese (Plei Brel thinks it wasn't V.C. but ARVN that did the mortarring. Had to hustle over there to Plei Brel (by the way, none of my villages were hit, thank God - but the ARVN red hats (Rangers) were in there in my absence stealing pigs, chickens, rice, clothes, etc.). Talked late into the nite to try to patch things up a little - have investigated many of their rumors and most are false - have a date to go back at noon tomorrow to a sacrifice in my honor so can talk to them again then. Anyway, stayed at Ton's house Sunday nite so that's why no letter that nite.

Yesterday took John Watson and Bud Meehan (Captain with a masters in Sociology - will go for his PhD when gets out of service) - a good man - and some other medics and bought \$300.00 worth of crossbows, got some rice out to the men who had it stolen from them and some beds. Our primary mission was to set up a ~~se~~ school - English school - in one of the hooches - probably Ton's. Must keep it small or will attract too much attention from the V.C. and they may make trouble when we're not there.

You have by now heard the news that PLEIKU WAS BOMBED again last nite - no problem - the only problem was that we couldn't get back in to the base till this morning - again stayed at Ton's - Plo put up Meehan and Larry Dalton. Lick and Worthington stayed with Lair all nite. Arrived on the base at 7:30 AM through II Corps gate with Lick and fed him ham and eggs and then we both went to work like nothing happened. We were safer out there than they were on the base. Again the Air Base did not get hit or even aimed at. The only trouble is that damned rice wine - get one hell of a hangover the next day. Spent the whole day at the dispensary - asked Kent Combs (a new doctor here) if I could take his call. Needed to dry out - and here I am...

38 1b 15 June '67

Went out at noon as planned yesterday to the sacrifice in our honor. Had one hell of a party. Lt. Col Tarplay from Saigon - chief honcho of Civic Action - asked to go and he had one hell of a party for himself. Think we have an important ally for the Montagnards now. Up till now he was of the opinion that the Yards

12. Lick Rahlan (cont) 88 1b 15 June '67 (cont)
were just a few isolated, stupid, unimportant segment of Vietnam. Thoroughly indoctrinatedv him all day yesterday. Also got him very drunk on rice wine and beer laReaux. We talked much politics - ended up with three more bracelets from my bow makers. There are 8 of them (bowmakers, that is) in all = met some for the first time - had shish - ko - bob pig, peppers, rice, hot sauce, mangoes and beaucoup rice wine and beer. One hell of a party was had by all - much good times - a real roaring blast in North side Mpls style. Left there to take Lick home by 7:30 and got back to the base by 8:15 but was too tired to go see Jonathan Winters - went to bed instead. That Lt. Col. did so also and was still in bed at 8 this morning. Said he wouldn't have missed it for a million dollars but also would never do it again for a million dollars. Each one got a crossbow and some got friendship bracelets. They put three beautiful carved thick bracelets on me accompanied by much talk and rice wine - am very impressed and grateful for their friendship. It's taken quite a while but now feel solidly "in" in the village. John Watson and Bud Meehan have made great strides themselves - now feel that we have 4 or 5 good men working with us so can relax a little and don't need to do it all myself. For awhile there felt like the Lone Ranger.

Charlie Jenkins was in just now - will go over to Lick's with me this afternoon - he needs some rice and a few beds. Will have to start scrounging again and get off the rice wine kick. Am really exhausted the next day. Am now on call and volunteered for this afternoon so I can get some rice (oops, Freudian slip - meant rest) Call is a beautiful excuse NCT to go anywhere...

89 1a 17 June '67

...Col Hullar is giving a sacrifice of his own for Ton, Lick and myself today - should be a riot. Will be going out to pick him up shortly....

90 1a 18 June '67

... Had a good time, although a little stiff and formal, at Col Hullar's "sacrifice" yesterday. Ton, Lick, T.I. Harris (Jack Rudy's successor as Judge Advocate), myself and Col Hullar had a very good dinner put on by Joe Didasco - we ate on the Col's porch - some good talk, much beer. As I say, a little stiff and formal - much different than at Plei Brel where things are much more relaxed and informal. Some awkward moments watching Lick and Ton trying to cut their steaks - at Plei Brel every thing is pre-cut before cooking to bite

13. Lick Rahlan (cont) 90 1b 18 June '67 (cont)

bite - sized pieces - then you eat with your hands. We broke up about 7:30 - took them home and came back to a party at CBPO (my roommate Bob Schultz is the chief honcho there) -drank some more....

93 1a 21 June '67

...Went to Plei Brel again yesterday afternoon as I mentioned - bought about 20 bows - good ones - they've really got the message now and are making them hand over fist out there. Also talked politics, went to a funeral and got some good news. Ton's daughter (Bler) is engaged to a fellow by the name of Tick K'sor so I'm off the hook now. This is the girl that was "married" to Jack Rudy and was being lined up for me, I guess. They must have gotten the message that I have all I can handle in U.S.A. because I'm free as a bird now that the courtship is going on. Tick just got back from serving 3 years with the Mike force in Cheo Rheo. - knows English fairly well and seems to be a pretty good troupe - we'll see. Lick doesn't appear too excited about him but as I mentioned, he's slow to warm up to people.

Have a picture of Ton and Lick would like you to save for me. A good picture - this is taken in Ton's yard - the "kitchen" window is shown over Ton's right shoulder. This is my home most times out in the village. Someday will get lu bia mut pictures of my own but haven't had the nerve to ask lately. That's the next door neighbor's house to the left of Lick. Ton's motor cycle - makes him a millionaire by their standards. He (Ton) is number 4 or 5 in the province government (Montagnard) and works for the official Province (Vietnamese) government as an advisor. Is chief in his own right of 2,500 people and 7 villages and owns them lock stock and barrel, administers justice, marries people, gives out birth certificates, etc. A good man, a lot of responsibility and I think, my friend.

Lick you already know. Will get them to tape a letter to you people someday. As I mentioned Ton already has your pictures on the wall in his house. Lick stands about 5 feet 4 inches tall and Ton (a big man for a Montagnard) stands nearly 5 feet 8 inches tall....

94 1a 22 June '67

...Started setting up Lick's new house today - his brothers and friends are going to dig the footings today or tomorrow - we got them shovels and picks ("we" meaning Dick Miller who is chief honcho at the animal husbandry place). Should be able to pour the footings sometime next week, then the foundation and then up goes the house. Should be okay - don't know the first thing about it but Dick seems

14. Lick Rahlan (cont) 94 1b 22 June '67 (cont)

to - will help do what I can. Lick is very happy and excited about it.

95 1a 23 June '67

...Went to Plei Brel last nite with a large tent (meeting-hall type) and 3 150# bundles of clothes - had some more rice wine and a good time. Took Lick, John Watson, Roy Worthington, Larry Dalton and Charley Jenkins, all good men. Played "football" as they call it here - actually use a soccer ball - I assume they play soccer here and call it football - then had a jumping contest - it was a riot. It's been a long time but discovered I could still get off the ground okay. Was exhausted after about 30 of the high jumps - kept up with Lick okay; though. Worthington be^{ss}ed off but John, Larry and Charlie jumped right along with us. First time we've loosened up physically out there - we should do that more often. After that Ton served us chicken a la Montagnard. They chop the whole damn thing up, bones and all and then boil the piss out of it and serve it just that way. Ton and Lick ate bones and all but I couldn't hack that - daintily took the bones out - hope I didn't offend them.

Talked politics but mostly just sat around and talked about this and that. The time flies out there - before we knew it it was 9:30 - finally got back to the base about 10:30 after dropping Lick off at his house. Had less than my usual quota of rice wine this time....

98 1a 28 June '67

...Was exhausted yesterday, but instead of going to bed, like an idiot took some loads of lumber to Lick's place for his new house and then went to Blei Brel. That was my mistake. Was dead tired as I mentioned. Had to go out to arrange to get my medics (8 of them now - all Montagnards and raren' to go) to their classes at S.F. School. Will run for 3 months and will feature physiology, anatomy, wound treatments, care of common diseases e.g. malaria, plague, sores, boils, leprosy, etc. Also some preventive medicine, public health, etc. A good course.

-Anyway (have been interrupted by 6 different individuals since starting this) - met Ton on the road with a jug of rice wine on his shoulder and carrying a gourd filled with the same stuff. A man (Nhut's brother - one of the bowmakers) had committed suicide and they were having one of their famous Montagnard wakes. Of course we had to drink along with them - what a blast! Got home about midnite after vomiting 3-4 times and in general getting sick and smashed along with everyone else. Am a bit nervous and tired today but haven't had time to lay

15. Lick Rahlan (cont) 98 1b 28 June '67 (cont)

to lay down and rest. Mission accomplished though - will pick up the medics Saturday AM 7 o'clock and drive them over to S.F. Was worth it.

Will make a small trip over to Plei Jut this afternoon and arrange to get a medic from there also....

99 1a 29 June '67

...Went to a new village with Bud Mehan, John Watson and Lick yesterday - Plei Yut (pronounced Jut) - 1200 people, very prosperous and clean - out to the west of Pleiku - had a good time - no drinking. Talked to the school teacher and others. Want to get one of them as a medic to go to S.F. school. So far no luck. Lick and I will go down to Pleiku this afternoon to Province Chief and see if we can't arrange a salary for these medics when they graduate - will give them a n added incentive to learn. Right now the teachers are paid so maybe we can get the medics paid as well. Will take some talking b ut will try. Maybe can take out of Civic Action funds - we'll see.

Weir is the name of the school teacher - he was in prison with Lick - and for the same reason - too smart - no charge - was released 10 months later by ;the Vietnamese "suspected FULRO" - no proof, no trial, etc. Weir appears to be a good man - very sensitive, talks very softly, great soulful eyes. Apparently has suffered much and has much repressed anger. Looks you over very carefully - but when decides you're okay warms up more as time goes on. We'll be back to Plei Yut many times I suspect.

Went from there to S.F. where we drank bia bia beer and got home at 11:30 PM - went right to bed and got a fairly decent nite's sleep...

100 1a 1 July '67

...A quick not e while I'm waiting for the truck to come so we can go out to the village. We're going to Lick's house to try to get it started. Also have to take this salesman from Danang out ot collect his bows. He bout 26,000 piastres worth (roughly 200.00 dollars worth) yesterday but made many enemy's for himself doing it. Will intervene from now on and do business for him. Will not let him out in the village again...

101 1a 3 July '67

...Have been running my ass off for the last 3 days and right now am supposed to be rounding up plywood, tin, crossbows etc for Lick - also am supposed to go see the Province shief at 2:30 PM about salaries for my medics - must also drink rice wine with Ton tonite - the rat

race is here for sure....

...Will briefly recount my adventures to you since Friday for our "diary" and then try to answer your questions and comment on your comments....

Friday was interrogated by the Special Forces - No - Thursday - and was surprised to know that I am the only one that seems to know what the hell goes on north of us. Seems noone is as close to the people out there as I've managed to get. Was very surprised at this - puts me in a strange position - have never done that 007 bit before. Was complimented but confused by their questions. Made them promise none of my people would get hurt by any information I would give them then or in the future. This they promised. Furthermore made them promise that any information they acted on ;with soldiers would be with MONTagnard "Mike" force or Special Forces only - not Army or ARVN - th9is they agreed to as well. Have discussed this with Ton and L. Lick and others out in Plei Brel and they like the idea. Gives them a sense of security ;to know that we will protect them if they give us information that we can respond to - and with Montagnard troops. Unfortunately they neither trust nor like the Army or ARVN and I would not supply information if they knew that these people would be involved. Enough of that. S.F. in telligence quizzed me for 2-3 hours and I was like a dried up prune when I got out of there.

Friday a man from Danang - a business man who sells Montagnard artefacts - crossbows, loincloths, knives, spears, etc - came up by recommendation L. C. Olson (head of Civic Action) to contact me to buy crossbows. He has many good ideas but is a #10 man - I think a little queer, a little mouse of a man who comes on with too much too fast. Poses as a Montagnard expert but when I took him out otto Plei Brel he upset the Yards so much with his bargaining and impatience an down right selfishness, he as damned luck yto get out alive. Went back Saturday and apologized to Ton., Plo, etc and they were very understanding. Will never take another man out to Plei Brel until I study and know him very well. We don't need Ugly Americans out there - at least accompanying me. lHe did buy 26,000 piastres (about \$220.00) worth of bows though.

Went out myself Saturday afternoon and bought 30,000 piastres worth of very good bows. Got their pr\$ce down from 1200 piastres to 900 pi; from 1000pi to 700 pi and from 800 pi to 500 pi. Explained I could not sell them at this price they asked - you should have seen me explaining Hendry Ford vs. Buick - think I got the point across

17. Lick Rahlan (cont) 101 2b 3 July '67 --(cont)

though - these bows will go liker hot cakes at this price - should be able to tin all of Plei Brel, Plei Sor, Plei Pung, Plei Kep and then some.

We got a flat tire Saturday nite so John Watson and I stayed at Plei Brel in Ton's house. I am now Ton's "ama" - father - yes ME! - there will be a sacrifice shortly to commemorate the event. This make me Bler's g randfather wo am out of the woods for sure. Think John Watson will be getting married shortly to Bler, though. Lots of luck, John.

Went to bed at 9:30 PM on my favorite cot in Ton's house - slept like a log and woke up at 6:30 AM refreshed. Hitched a ride to the Air Base by lambretta and found a tire, crank, etc. - came b ack to breakfast of rice, an egg, onion, salt, and something else mix and water. Ton fixed the flat in the meantime for his "daddy." This is a riot but they are very serious about the whole thing.

Have just been interrupted by John Watson (a very very good man) - seems things are crowding in on me again. Sweetie, I'm sorry but must hurry this letter. Hope to be writing better letters soon.

Anyway - we went down to Lick's house yesterday to drink and talk at his house. Got into religion of all things. Lick does not believe in a god - believes in Montagnards, spirits, his family, his job, no lie, no steal, etc. John has a God who doesn't give a damn. Tried to describe my God to them - about being a God of love, understanding, a personal every minute God, etc - think some of my thinking got through - have given up trying to convince anyone of my beliefs - just explain what I think and let it go at that.

We got drunk last nite on some of the strongest rice wine I have every had - wow - like a liquor but gallons of the stuff. Barffed all over the place.

God home about 10:00 PM - very drunk - went to bed as soon as I could. This morning was up sharply at 6:30 AM if you can believe it- picked up my Yard medics - Binh from Plei Brel, Hinh from Plei Phung, Chal and Ju Rahlan (Lick's brothers) from Plei Betel. - carted them over to class at S. F. - a real triumph - 3 months of medical training and they're all gung ho to learn.

Had a hung over morning this mornign - am coming out of it now a little. That brings us up to date.

103 1b 5 July '67

...Picked him (John Watson) up at 7:10 yesterday morning (from Plei Brel) and we both went to work as if nothing happened. We have two

Montagnard lab techs that John is training. Watson is one of the most talented, positive and even minded people I have met - but not even tempered at all. Blows fuses right and left like Mike Conlon. But basically a very happy man - converses freely in Jarai and has passed me up a long time ago. Plans on medical school when he gets back to the states. Has a mind like a steel trap and a disciplined mind used to working as well. John, Lick and myself are damned near constant companions lately. If anything Lick and John are better friends than Lick and I - there is a certain reserve between Lick and I based on his immense respect for my title as docteur. Have been able to leave John by himself out in the village and not worry about him - something I can't do for most of the men I take out. There's a delicate sense you develop after awhile of what should be said, what should be dropped - how much you can push these people into doing - they resist change very much - must suggest something, then let it drop - talk about it later, drop it and finally they will take it on as their own idea - and now you have what you want. Like the medics - have been talking about that for the last 3 months - finally suggested it again and the response was overwhelming as I mentioned....

,,,Aha, they left (visitors - prospective buyers of crossbows) Quickly will tell you went to S.F. for a chat - the school for medics going well - my men need watches which will get from C.A. funds. S.F. wants to get in on the crossbow act - Col Hullar hesitant - wants the credit for the crossbows to go to the Air Force. Can't blame him. Will go slow.

Must get plywood today, (for Lick), also gravel, also rice and tin if I can. Will have to hustle - times wasting. Also have to see Nay Lo and Damju sometime this afternoon. Sorry to always be in such a rush....

104 1a 6 July '67

...Had a good srounge day yesterday - got 200# of nails, 2 loads of gravel, 1 load of sand, 36 pieces of plywood wall board, enough tin to tin Lick's house and 3 #100 bags of rice for Lick. Took a little hustling but looks like his house will go up after all.

We celebrated by drinking some more of Lick's deadly rice wine - got fairly well oiled but not stoned like the last time. Maybe I'm getting used to it.

Also bought 5 Timex watches for my medics - handed out 2 of them to Lick's brothers - this called for some more drinking - wow! Am fairly well hung over now. Saves on the liquor bill though. Can't remember when the last time was I bought a round of drinks at the officer's club. In fact only eat 1 or 2 meals of day at the club so this also helps on the

grocery money.

Am selling bows pretty well now - I think we're picking up momentum slowly. Can visualize a regular turnover of maybe 50 bows, a week, then 100, then more. Eventually hope to have them make many other things for sale but must go slowly. Someone who seemed to know said that the yards are at the "cottage industry" stage - same the middle ages when a man planted his field and in his spare time made things for sale. That would put these people back about the time of Charlemagne - 800 AD - a few years back economically. Roughly that means they have advanced from NO industry (about one year ago) - about 200 AD to 800 AD in a little over one year. Not bad! Eventually they will free up more and more men to specialize and let someone else plant their fields - when that day comes we'll be near the Renaissance at least as far as economics goes. (about 1200 AD). Enough of the economics talk....

107 3b 8 July '67

...Have had two days and nites of sobriety - same-same vacation. Spent last nite being quizzed by a full colonel from the 360th up from Saigon - seems he didn't know anything about the Montagnards and their problem. Of course yours truly was more than anxious to enlighten him. Am constantly amazed at the almost total ignorance of people not associated directly with the Yards and many that are directly dealing with them. And the Yards constitute 3,000,000/18,000,000 or 1/6 of the total population of Viet Nam and effectively control over 1/3 of the land area of this country. Until the Yard problem is solved, there will always be a fatal weakness in the strength of this country and a foothold for Communist subversion. Amazing to me that the brass in Saigon is totally unaware of this - it's crystal clear to anyone working with the Yards, such as the S.F., me, Jack Rudy, etc. Anyway, think this lowly captain gave this Colonel something to think about.

Fell asleep almost immediately after talking with this Colonel - played hooky as planned from the villages. Tonite I'm on call and can't go. The only trouble is that all I want to do is sleep. Will have to get off my butt tomorrow and get to work. Will dash off a note before going to Lick's house, Plei Brel to buy bows; Plei Sor, Plei Phung and Plei Kep to present the watches and finally end up drinking a large amount of rice wine somewhere.

Say Kay - will you do me a favor? please try to explain to people impatient for answers to their letters that almost every minute of my day is tied up doing something? I work dispensary, crossbow sales, scrounging and local neurotics, alcoholics and liason with the S.F. about training

20. Lick Rahlan (cont) 107 4a 8 July '67 (cont)

Yard medics, lab techs, etc. every morning until noon - if not on call, spend time scrounging a vehicle, collecting supplies and medicine and go out to the villages - usually eat supper out there, talk politics and drink a great quantity of rice wine - usually don't get back till 10:30 PM or 11:00 PM lately if at all - try to write you, get a bite to eat, settle down and it's usually 2-4 AM when I hit the sack. Have only slept in my bed 3 nites out of the last 7 - (2 nites in the village, 2 nite on my examining table at the dispensary - have to be up and at 'em at 7 AM every morning or I lose my right to roam on my free time. Have many obligations here as you know and must deliver most of the time. Consequently when I do take a "day off" like yesterday and today usually find a quiet spot and sack out as long as I can. My corpsmen are very careful to protect me - monitor telephone calls, see the sick they can and wake me only when absolutely necessary. Am watched after so well feel guilty at times - am humbled by their loyalty and concern for me - especially since I really haven't done a damn thing for them personally - just keep asking them to do favors for me and sharing a CARE package with them and beer now and then.

Must be very careful not to take myself too seriously. This is a small town essentially - find there are many people whom I've never met who know me by reputation. Am very flattered but deep down know I'm getting credit for what other people have done for me. Try to point this out but this just blows up my image more - makes me look generous to boot. Y/O - guess the main thing is that we've got momentum going now; and, I think, are getting something positive done....

108 1a 9 July '67

...Had a good day yesterday but again got shot down at Plei Brel after buying 40,000 pi worth of bows (roughly \$350.00 worth) - ended up at Ton's house in a pouring rain - stayed over till 4 AM with Lick, John Watson, and 2 new men (Tom Shaw and Larry Diamond - airmen, don't know their ranks, appear to be good men). We set out through the mud and just barely made it out of Plei Brel loaded down with 60 crossbows, medicine bags and five big (correction 3 big men, myself and Lick), in the cab of the pickup. Ol' Charlie Brown made it though. We got stuck going into Lick's road but got out of that, too. Got home in a pouring rain by 5:30 AM - slept till 9:00 AM and have been inventorying the bows with Bob Shultz all morning.

Was touchy and nervous as hell - same-same I am at home at times - remember? - was getting mad at everything and everyone - when got out to the village relaxed completely. My headache and aches and pains cleared up

21. Lick Rahlan (cont) 108 1b 9 July '67 (cont)

and had aa good time. The one thing that gets me is the volumn of rice wine I'm required to drink. Even with turning down half the rice wine offered me - must still take down 2 or 3 quarts in a nite - most of the time consume up to 4 or 5 quarts. Gives one hell of a hangover. The Yards have a custom (maybe same-same taboo) that serious discussion or even friendly conversation should never be conducted without drinking. Have tried to get an idea across out there without booze being passed back and forth and I was told very politely but firmly to save that for numpai (rice wine drinking). That ended my one-sided conversation abruptly.

Had a new dish - bamboo shoots. Very very good. Same-same sprinkled through Chinese chow mein but this was by the handfull. Tastes a cross between asparagus and mushrooms - crisp. Ate like a pig. Also inevetable rice (which I don't particularly care for) something else I couldn't identify and buckets of rice wine. Forced myself to vomit to make room - am getting in the habit of doing that now - otherwise the hangover next day leaves you stretched out on the bed all day.

Got involved with local politics. Nhuit wanted us to drink rice wine and started preparing it when Ton came storming in - chewed Nhuit out for keeping us at his house when Ton had invited us first. Also chewed Nhuit out for selling crossbows at his own house instead of Plo's. Nhuit took it humbly as coming from the chief but feel we put everyone in a spot because of my stupidity. Must apologize today if I get a chance. Still seem to be the ugly American even though my intentions are good. Must follow Lick more closely. Have been having too many independent ideas of my own lately may be good ideas but that doesn't mean they are good for this particular seto fof circumstances.

The group is forming up outside now to go to Lick's house and start building his house. We have an engineer, an carpenter and many willing workers. Hope we can get something done today...

109 all Mip Rahlan 10 July '67

Dear Sir Doctor Conlon.

I have wirte letter for you because I want to speak with you. Because you don't have time enough sometime I meet you, I know you are busy all the time. I am very glad to have you come in Viet-Nam to help my people and you take care all sickness from Montagnard every place you go, your are willing to help, that very fine. I am very glad to know you the first thing from Captain Rudy. introduction me, right now, I am very glad to know you and make friend with you, you are very very good my friend the best one all my life.

I know you help me to many thing during the day you stay in Viet-Nam all most you take care my family, you know my family very poor and very difficult to stay. I am not rich I want to tell something my life before, I am very difficult no body like me, my mother and father died during I was 3 months, my sister take care me, and nobody like my family before because why because very poor.

And then my sister was 16 year old but difficult to stay too. Lucky I have brother different mother to help make small cabin for me. Me and my sister very happy, very glad to have small cabin like that.

Until rihgt now something still very difficult to stay.

I am go to work and have job but my salary very little not enough to fit my family one mounth I get pay 7000 pi not enough to use money to buy meal in the town everything price go up you know.

I have house right now, I have my friend before from America USAF his very goood friend to me willing to help me, but right now I am not require from you, if you willing to help me, I will remember you all my life, I did not forgot your name when I still alive in the earth.

I have idea. Sir I need some rice if you know where is the place sell rice not too expensive that mean cheap, I will return you money, be sure have some rice in town but very expensive cost 1500pi one bag.

If you know somewheree I need 2 bag every mounth enough for my family.

And I just remember you promise me you said willing to help me 100 tins I would like very much sir if you can have by the way I am very glad for you said put soon you machine how to weave, that I told my wife to my wife said if we have *like that we must remember who is gave us repaire to weave shirt beddnt in your family and shirt for you children for you wife to when you finish in the Viet-Nam.

All the story I write letter for you. I am not require but if you willing to help me sir I am not same Viet-Nam(ese) -

Thank you very much

You very sincerely all the time

Thank you again, Sir

Mip RAHLAN -

111 2b 10-11 July '67

...Think I'm about ready for another R & R to Saigon. Maybe will try to get to Bam Me Thuot soon also - the home of the Rhade - want to see if there are any new ideas down there for me to dig up. The Rhade are closely related to the Jarai - same Polynesian background, same type

23. Lick Rahlan (cont) 111 3a 10-11 July '67 (cont)

language, etc. A little paler skinned and not quite so rugged looking features. They've had the advantage of 2 - 3 generations of intensive French teaching and military training. Most of the teachers in the villages, including Kat at Plei Brel, are Rhade. Want to see if I can borrow Lick to go down there and look around for awhile - he's got a fertile mind and picks up a lot of things I miss.

Just looked up Dengue fever in my Father's day presett - finally tumbled to what Lick's boy has. Have been treating him for malaria and he hasn't recovered - it it's dengue fever (also called break bone fever) then I'm golden. He's got a huge headache, bones ache, very sick, high fever - all the symptoms of dengue fever = also transmitted by our favorite mosquito (Aedes Aegypti) - same one that carries malaria here. Will check him tomorrow again - should be getting well by then if I'm right. Who would have thought I'd ever have to remember all these exotic diseases when I was learning them in bacti and preventive medicine? Knew them for the test but then promptly forgot them because I thought I'd never have to use the knowledge....

....Butch House (Dr., Special Forces) came over today - wants me to set up a daily medical patrol in September to the villages as a training exercise for the Montagnard medics he's training. Will discuss it with Ton soon - think it will work out. - must go slow but think 2 months will be enough time....

112 1b 13 July '67

...Got called out by Col Hullar at 1:00 AM - they had caught a Montagnard "VMC" wandering around the base - don't know how he got in. Hullar called me down to help interpret for him - we finally decided the Yard was either very stupid or scared or both. As close as we could gather he was from Bam Me Thuot or nearby and wither Rhade or a Southern Jarai. Anyway at Col Hullar's request, tooke the poor guy over to the dispensary, fed him supper, gave him a Librium and bedded him down on my examining table. Slept nearby fitfully all nite just to be sure. This morning at 5:30 Am we fed him breakfast and kept guard on him until Lick showed up about 8:00AM to identify him and talk to him. Turns out he's a crazy man who wanders all over this part of the country. Think I've seen him before myself in some of the villages. The OSI people came this morning - handcuffed him and blindfolded him and took him down for interrogation. Guess they're finding out he really is crazy and not just using this as a cover to do V.C. work....

....Anyway, here I am tired as hell and have to be out in the villages 20 minutes ago. Am going to Saigon tomorrow with Lick and Maj. Hevern. I need another R & R so will do it this way. We're officially going

24. Lick Rahlan (cont) 112 2b 13 July '67 (cont)

down to Saigon to sell crossbows and scrounge for Civic Action but we can usually do that in a day or two. Will stay until Monday next and be back refreshed I hope. Can't remember ever being this tired but sure I have been - especially in internship....

113 1a 14 July '67

....Got some sleep finally. Slept from 10:30 AM to 1:30 this afternoon on my examing table. Feel great. Had a wild discussion among 8 of us about the war, our policy here, Communism vs. Capitalism, sociology of customs, taboos, morals, etc. Went late into the nite with lots of beer....

114 1a 17 July '67

..Another quick note - came into Saigon with Lick, Major Howard Hevern, and Airman Comeau plus 68 crossbows yesterday Am. - sold the crossbows in about 4 hours - big demand here. Stayed with Lyn Bechlin and friends last nite. Took Lick down to "Cheap Charlies'" Restaurant - ate some more Chinese food - having another little R & R. Today we look for looms, anvils, color fast thread, et. Slept till 11:00 this AM after drinking 1 1/2 cases of beer with Lyn and some of the boys here. Got many of the worlds problems solved. Will try to write later. Am being pushed ;to go out now.....

.... Lick is seeing the sights, keeping his mouth shut - hasn't made many comments about anything. He got thoroughly tired out last nite and went to bed about 11:00 PM - woke at 6:00 AM this morning. Looks pretty good today. Yesterday was hung over all day from Saturday nite when 2 friends brought jugs of rice wine and got him smashed. Was pretty hung over when I picked him up at 6 AM Sunday morning.

Expected him to get sicker than hell on the plane down but he took that real well.

It's very hot here in Saigon and muggy. Will be glad to get back to Pleiku weather-wise. - it was about 60 degrees when we left Sunday morning in Pleiku. Lick is dying of the heat here. He's used to the cool mountain country and so am I by ;this time.

Will write more later- am having a chance to sit down and think a little - out of the rat race on the base. Thoroughly enjoyed my sleep this morning. ?First good one in over 2 weeks.....

115 1a 18 July '67

...Have had a good day. A wild day but a good day. Had a fight with a couple of Vietna,mese at USAID - probably an international incident butv Y/O. Those damned Vietnamese have a warehouse on the docks of Saigon that is unbelievable. They have about 10,000 carpenter kits, 300 \$5,000 looms, literally ;thousands of rice gardenning tool kits, huge

crates of blacksmith tools, anything and everything that we can use including lots of jeeps and trucks. Yet they're so busy making lists and filling out forms of that stuff that none of it ever gets out of the warehouse. Instead they just build more warehouses - they now have about 15 of the damned things and yet we never see any of the stuff up in Pleiku. Well, I raised hell - tried to cut through the red tape - took us all morning long - finally started loading the stuff on myself (and Lick and Andy Comeau and Maj. Hevern) - as fast as we loaded, they unloaded the stuff. Finally I got mad a la Mike Conlon and pushed them all away ;and finished loading. Didn't know I could get that mad - but we got the job done. Got 10 sewing machines, 25 carpenter kits, 5 blacksmiths complete outfits - a promise (we'll see) of 1,000 kilos of thread, and a firm promise (I hope) of 5 looms. Also got a chance to inspect their damn warehouse for the first time - now know what to ask for. Next time won't piddle around asking for 5 or 10 of each item - will ask for 50 or 100 instead

You should have seen the comedy on the way down to the dock. I'm directing a Vietnamese driver who has lived all his life in Saigon how to get to the warehouse and next to me is a Montagnard (Lick) who is translating for me. Talk about the blind leading the blind.

We did the town for Lick again last nite - took him to a sin spot - live entertainment, dancing girls, prostitutes, the whole bit. He just sat there with his mouth open. Didn't even make a pass. The big city really has him buffaloed. Am sure he'll think it all over when we get back to Pleiku - next time he'll be an old pro. Already knows the city pretty well.

I wish you could be here and share my impressions. The Vietnamese ;women are truly beautiful - slim, small boned, delicate. When dressed up in their "ao dai's", black gloves, sunglassed and riding their motor scooters are a beautiful sight. I'm sure if the G.I.'s were ever allowed to know the decent Vietnamese they would respect and admire them as I do John. By the way, haven't had time to see John this time. - too much running around down here. Have to be back in Pleiku tomorrow AM - hope we get a plane out in the morning - we have lots of junk to bring back. It's been a good trip - haven't seen Lynn very much - have been put up royally by these people - very hospitable - but I'm usually too tired at the end of the day to drink much past 2-3 AM.

Lick and I have had some good talks - are comfortable being together - we talk when we have something to say - otherwise we just keep silent. Think he's having one hell of a time just watching what's going on -

26. Lick Rahlan (cont) 115 2a 18 July '67 (cont)

right now he's watching t elevisiion. Last nite we ate a cheezeburger and a malt up in the Rex hotel downtown while watching "Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolff" of all things. The elevator up to the 5th floor was what really got him - couldn't figure out how we could press a button, the door close and when it opened - out we stepped 5 floors up. When explained to him, of course, he understood but he still thinks that's pretty swift.

He's meeting prejudice here of course, but is smart enough to take it in stride. Tells me to calm down and not to get my water hot. Have developed quite a temper lately - must watch that - don't make any friends that way.

We're sitting in Lynn Bechlin's villa waiting for the down pour to slow up if it's going to - has been pouring buckets for the last $\frac{1}{2}$ hour - hope it slows down long enough to make it to the USO club.

Am anxious to get your letters when I get back tomorrow. Expect there should be a few. Will get a good nite's sleep tonite I hope and be fresh for the rat race in Pleiku.

Wish you were here, sweetie. Find myself talking to you and pointing things out to you when I see them. Really like this city - so many beautiful things - a capital city of the world - once called the Pearl of the Orient, the Paris of the Orient - now overcrowded and very dirty in parts but you can see the original beauty still. Palaces, beautiful statues, Hindu temples, Buddhist temples, many oriental beautiful Catholic Churches, the buddhist monks in their saffron robes, the very feminine beautiful Vietnamese women, the strong legged pedicab drivers, the children scrounging in the garbage, the violent traffic with no traffic lights or signals but no accidents or very few, the Ugly Americans standing $\frac{1}{2}$ foot above the people, the nightclubs and Saigon tea at \$2.00 a clip for the prostitutes who sit down (have learned not to catch their eye and you can sit all nite and enjoy the sights and smellls without buying a single drink). It's an exciting city - full of activity and strange sights for this midwesterner (and for Lick I might add) - wish you could see it....

117 1a 21 July '67

...Just finished reading all about Viet-Nam in the Newsweek edition you mentioned. Very interesting. Think I'm one of Johnson's boys but would like to see more emphasis on civic action than killing. Don't see how we can kell all 3,000,000 Montagnards any time soon no matter how much bombing we do. Will have to go out in the villages and win them one by one like the V.c. so, provide them protection, help educate them, teach them induc

27. Lick Rahlan (cont) 117 1a 21 July '67 (cont)

teach them industries, train medics, improve their health, win them as friends first of the U.S. and eventually of the South Vietnamese. A long hard road I'm not sure the Americans have enough guts for but see no alternative from my bird's eye view. Either that or hand over the Montagnard country and ---

----and (to continue my lecture) in the process Laos, Cambodia and So Viet-Nam to Ho Chi Minh and Giap. Eventually Thailand will go after Burma caves in to the Chinese and then our next defensive position will be the Phillipines, India or Australia. It's crystal clear to me from where I sit but reading Newsweek didn't enlighten me a damned bit. Maybe the U.S. thinks we're playing with boys over here - they're wrong. Giap and his men are tough as nails - possibly as good as our best in open combat and certainly better than us at their brand of warfare. And they have dedication that would startle a Westerner - can you imagine a guy from Hanoi setting out with two artillery shells on his back walking to Pleiku over muddy roads. bombed, napalmed, strafed, no food, rained on, dirty, few if any places to sleep, hiding in the day time, walking at nite - maybe 3 months of this - arriving -- giving his 2 or 3 shells to someone and turning around over the same lousy roads, etc to go back and do it all over again? Hell, even in a battle zone we insist on riding as many places as we can....

....finally arrived in my room at 11:30 PM last nite and didn't get unpacked till this morning. Didn't shave till noon - no breakfast, no lunch and 10 minutes for supper tonite - got interrupted by Col Hullar wanting me

...The opium or "pot" smoker was a shocker to me - haven't had one of those yet.....

However, he will be inverstigated and the dope ring possibly rounded up. At least 30 other airmen on the stuff. Probably a V.C. trick - they make great defectors or informers because can be balckmailed very easily - and it's a known fact that most of the prostitutes up here are V.C. or V.C. sympathizers.... d

....Yesterday when I got back - went to Ton's house - gave him a set of knives picked up in Saigon and had aa good chat with him, Lick and John Watson. Think we're rolling now - we'll see. As soon as we get the looms up here and the balcksmith tools should be able to start quite a factory in Plei Brel and other villages. Hope I'm not aiming too high - we'll see.....

121 all Lick Rahlan

Interpreter/ Translator
633rd Combat Support Group
APO San Francisco 96295
24 July 1967

Dear Mrs Dan Conlon,

Today I am very happy in my heart and I could write my letter say hello for you and also your family over there. I love your husband Doctor Conlon. He is good Doctor help our Montagnard every days.

16 July 1967 Major Hevern, Doctor Conlon were went at Saigon, were went anyplace too much drink. Too much drunk, and when were left Saigon we are going to Plei Brel Montagnard villages. Sit down talking drinking every days we have good times, good trips too.

When you have recieve (sic) any letter please write and send to me your letter, if you can. I wish to hear information from your United States of America.

Sincerely yours, Lick Rahlan

123 1a 24 July '67

...Watched myself last nite and didn't get very drunk at Plo's and Nhuit's houses - John Watson got himself smashed and Lou Bracey did likewise. Felt pretty good this morning - had an inspection by outgoing Col Brannon and incoming Col Baer - new chief surgeon of Vietnam area. The new Col is as good as the old one - both number one men. CoL. Brannon is going to be the commander of Travis Hospital - asked him to stop and say hello to Bill Lawson and Terry when he gets there.

We talked and talked last nite till I was wxhausted, believe it or not.- They are loosening up - especially Lick. Talked about the eventual solution for the Montagnards - most are convinced their only salvation is to go with the Communists after the U.S. leaves the area. Pointed out to them that we are not likely to leave, anymore than we have left Korea. A truce might very well be signed but we would stay on as an occupying force. Pointed out that we have a 99 year lease on Cam Rhan Bay and have spent billions of U. S. dollars on Pleiku we are not likely to relinquish. The Yards feel as do the No Vietnamese that the vast majority of the U.S. is against the war, that we do not have the moral strength to continue to fight and that Pres. Johnson will have to end the war and pull out by 1968 or lose the next election. You see what all these nuts in America are doing to our war effort? They're just giving the enemy hope to pers;ervere. Actually if they would just shut up and let us go about our business we could probably ;finish this thing shortly. The only thing keeping the NVN going is the hope that we don't have the guts to keep fighting the war. Once convinced that we will see it through, most of them would lose heart and give up - because they're desperate and losing all the time now. Am convinced in my own mind that all these demonstrations are communist inspired, including R.F.K., Fullbright,

Luther King, etc. Am not saying these people are communist - am only saying that they are listening to and being influenced by a group that at least have backing from the Communists. Very disheartening for us here to know that the enemy at home is fighting a much more effective war against us than the so-called enemy in front and all around us. I say "so-called" enemy because the V.C. here are actually Montagnards (VMC) who are being misled into believing they will have an independent country ;if they join hands with the Communists. Actually ;they will be victimized worse by these people than they ever were by ;the Vietnamese. It's very hard to get this point across to them however. Must read more about the Communist tricks, etc to know how to contradict them.

You must be wondering how safe I am talking like this to these people. Again want to point out a few things: as long as we are here in strength- most Montagnards will not come out openly in revolt. The people I talk with are MY friends, have a religious obligation to protect me based on these bracelets I wear and their solemn word to that affect. They must warn me when the time comes that they can no longer talk to me or protect me. This they will do and have done before (e.g. Plei Bong Bao). As I mentioned, Ton feels more obligated about my safety than does anyone on 1 this base - I check with him before I go anywhere. Usually Ton goes with me when I go anywhere he feels is not perfectly safe - sort of a safe conduct pass, you might say. In other words, relax. As Leo Toninato pointed out many times - the most protected man in any service or war area is the medic or doctor.

Have read over this letter so far and find out it is very solemn. Pop mon yi - we had many laughs last nite and much good times. John Watson is a riot when he gets drunk - he's a happy drunk. We sang songs, call each other names, chug-a-lugged Vietnamese rice wine (like regular booze) beer, and rice wine. Told stories about Jack Rudy, talked about how the crossbow 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 the bible) -...

125- 1a 28 July '67

...Just came back from digging John Watson out of a ditch out on the perimeter. Am on call so hadn't intended to go out but John would still be out there if someone hadn't gone to get him. Lick and all the Montagnards were out there huffing and puffing but couldn't budge the truck. The Vietnamese - maybe 50 of them - were standing around....

- okay, another \$35.00 to add to our collection - now where was I...

Oh yeah - these Vietnamese were standing around throwing insults and rocks and spitting on John - some actually came up and started pushing him until the Montagnards showed up - then they withdrew a little and just threw verbal insults instead. John has a temper - nearly hit a few of them but controlled himself. Got a taste of our "allies" for sure. Can't say I'm in love with the little bastards myself - have only found a few Vietnamese that I could like - make a friend of one of them and before you know it - becomes clear why they've chosen you for a friend" - they want something. Makes you feel cheap and like a sucker - have nothing but contempt for the vast majority of them. The Montagnards by contrast don't actg this way. for the most part - they are open, loyal and honestly friendly to us in general. Overwhelm me with their affection. Did I tell you about the other nite - cried real tears like a sap - they started telling stories about me as if I wasn't even there - gave me a sword (which I'll send as soon as possible) - wouldn't let me pay for it. They can express affection and say embazrrrassing things like cao cap Conlon lu bia mut - geang ma al - "I love Conlon with all my heart - my good friend" - that I have trouble saying - same - szme Jim Herd.

Sunday is going to be a very interesting day for me - this is the day they've chosen to make me Ton's father - a very serious occassion from what I can ga ther. Will be a Montagnard sacrifice of a pig and all the trimmings - I am to be out there at 12 o'clock noon. John Watson, T.I. Harris, Lick and myself are the only ones invited. The whole village is aware of it and men from Plei Sor and Plei Phung are also invited - am a little apprehensive about what goes on but am game for anything.

Had a serious talk with Ton, Lick and Hlin (a very intelligentj 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 American leave. They said they would take their land back. I asked if they would go with the No. Vietnamese, do they consider the No Vietnamese their friends - they said no, No vietnamese same-same Vietnamese. (they call the No vietnamese "Viet Minh" - the name the French gave them). Lick explained that the No Viet Nameese steal and lie same as the So VietNameese, that the Montagnard hates them both - that the only foreigners they can trust are the Americans ann the French before us. They feel had and are confused because the Americans insist on bringing in their ancient enemy the Vietnamese, buta at

the

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 sympathize with - find it very hard to try to talk them into becoming friends with the So Vietnamese 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 any thing but screw these people.

Get very involved in this as you know but; it's hard not to once you've sampled the goodness of these people....

v 126 1 Aug '67 1a

....Have been sicker than a dog all day - full of gas, nauseated, etc etc from my experience Sunday at Pei Brel. Not hat I'm sorry for my experience - just that I'm just exhausted and hung over. - Slept from 5 PM till 9 PM - ate a few bites for supper and have been making trips to the latrine ever since - just got back. Have read an entire pocket-book on baseball in the process. Let me tell you about my day yesterday - hope I ;don't bore you. Went out to get Lick at about 11:30 Am v. with 2 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 LeRieu, food, etc. Ate a chicken head, much pork, bamboo greens, all kinds of stuff. When I got to the last jug had only vomitted 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

32 Lick Rahlan (cont) 126 2a 1 Aug '67 (;cont)

on to the next hooch (Gnau's) where we started all over again - 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 Erins party;....

....Sorry Sweetie - but it's called fighting the war here - have been sicker than a pup all day today as I mentioned a 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.....

127 1a 5 Aug '67

....Am still in the clothes I put on Friday morning - slept at Hinh's house last nite - wil tell you about that later. Should have rushed off a note to you yesterday I know but got fouled up all day - this mornign was impossible as I wiill relate. Am very sorry.

First a large thank you for your letters - they are wimply beautiful- each one has been a song - you sound beat but content. ...

...Now for the diary". Thursday got your 7 tapes off to you, pouring rain and mud as usual. Left dispensary promptly at 4:30 for Plei Brel to buy bows as promised - boutght 20,000 pieastre worth (about 190.00 \$) but not before getting stuck in the mud out there and in Pleiku Rho 8 times - much huffing and puffing. Also got 10 rabbits from Special Forces, some grain and some clothes and took them down to Lick's - the rabbits for him and the clothes for some poor Vietnamese carpenters who have been helping Lick buildl his house - it's done, by ;the way - his house - looks great - will call for another party I'm sure.

After buying the bows - cornered Bing (my medic at Plei Brel) and Lick forced him to give the names of the 2 Vietnamese who told my medics they would be shot if they went to school at S.F. Returned the names to Spe;cial Forces - they will deal with the Vietnamese in their usual abrupt fashion - quite possibly will kill them - am sorry, sweetie - but this is a war and a violetn people. The Vietnamese have my people thoroughly intimidated as I've mentioned - it's about time they got some of their own medicine. Had a few drinks at S.F., came home to write you a letter but had to say goodbye to Bob Boyer - a good man, combat engineer - stayed in his hooch with a party philosophizing till 3 AM - (this is with only 3 hours of sleep from the nite before.) Hit the sack hard and was out immediately. Overslept for sick call next morning - worked till after 3:30 PM straight through - didn't even have a chance to check the mail - tore out to Plei Brel to buy ;bows and keep my date with Hinh (have been premising to drink at his house for 2 months "and you no

33. Lick Rahlan (cont) 127 2a 5 Aug '67 (cont)

go my house" - bought 23,000 piastres worth of bows - and sat down to drink with Ton, Hinh, Lick, Watson and Katt (school teacher). This wine had been brewing for me for 2 months! Drank 2½ levels and collapsed - no sleep, very little to eat and powerful rice wine are a lousy mix - Woke up at 2 AM on Hinh's bed - he was still drinking - had another level and hit the sack again - woke up at 6:30 AM and drove back here with Lick, Watson and Bler. Took Bler and Lick to Pleiku and then made it in for breakfast and the dispensary. Ate the first meal I've eaten in Vietnam with a real appetite - great! Don't even know what I ate - oh yeah french toast - not very good either. Have been on call all day and am still on call now - had time to write 2 times in all this time - both of them today.....

129 1b 7 Aug '67

...You can write Lick's letter in care of me and I'll deliver it...

...You mentioned the fighting around us in Pleiku. What do you hear about it in the states? There's not a word about it in our papers. It's the biggest battle so far in the Vietnam war bar none. We have the 173rd, 101st, 1st Cav, 4th Division and Special Forces Mike Forces, plus 2 regiments of ARVN paratroopers just flown in from Saigon just north of us. This is the big one we've been expecting for so long. We're taking a beating but are decimating probably the last intact regiments (estimating to be 5 -6 full strength NVN regiments) that are here in So Vietnam. After this the feeling is that the "war" - that is, the regiment to regiment fighting - will be essentially over. That doesn't mean the other wars will be over for a long time. We still have the V.C., the VMC., the FulRO, the almost 30% corrupt Saigon government, the 70% insecure villages, the lethargy and the almost total lack of central government influence to contend with. Besides, it's becoming more and more obvious that it'll take at least 10-15 years to build anything remotely resembling a stable, efficient government if we let the Vietnamese proceed at the pace they're going - if they ever make it at all. The alternative is to make a real colony out of this like the Communists have been saying we wanted to do from the beginning. From my point of view, I hope we take our time - maybe 10 - 15 years - in the meantime the Special Forces and people like myself can train the Montagnards, develop an intelligencia, cottage industry, cattle ranches, soldiers and statesmen and eventually a civilization actually surpassing what the Vietnamese can attain. The Montagnards have something going for them that the VN do not - mutual trust, a genuine desire to take advantage

34. Lick Ra hlan (cont) 129 3b 7 Aug '67 (cont)

of what we have to offer, eagerness to learn and a genuine unity and trust in their leadership. Sounds like a pipe-dream? - the S.F. don't think so. They preach to the Yards and FULRO that they can never win a total war with the NVN or the SVN governments - but that, once they've developed their resources - material and human - they can become a force that noone can ignore and must be dealt with on equal terms. Will take approximately one generation of very hard work - but the Yards are eager to learn and not a damn bit afraid of work. And they can see some hope with this arrangement - can pour all of their frustration into working hard for this goal. Wouldn't want to tangle with them in 10-15 years, if I were a Vietnamese.

Just read over that last bit - sorry to get so carried away - but believe what I said. (Can hear the almost constant sound of mortars, cannons, big stuff and the constant drone of airplanes and helicopters off to the north - it's like living by the railroad tracks - have to concentrate to hear it but it's there almost continually - will have to tape record it for you some nite.)....

131 1a 10 Aug '67

...Went out to Plei Brel yesterday after writing you that short note and relaxed for the first time in 3 -v4 days. Gnau (one of my good bow makers) invited Lick, John and I to supper and some rice wine. Had sweet corn on the cob (what a treat!) bamboo shoots (almost like asparagus shoots but more crisp - very good) and a chicken which he shot with a crossbow. He presented me with the crossbow and arrow which I'll be sending home. Drank a great quantity of weak rice wine and some beer (from Lille who invited me to his house next week - the social whirl goes on and on. Am enclosing Lick's invitation to come to his house next - sort of a house warming. Do not destroy - will be part of my memories someday. Also must go to Ton's house for rice wine Sunday. Have a meeting with Special Forces on strategy and policy in villages - Friday nite - and so the days go by same-same Kay Conlon. Worry about you, sweetie - will be happy to hear from you or Bonin's to know how that chest pain and fever turned out. Not knowing is worse than anything you can tell me.

Slept soundly for about 2 hours before eating at Gnau's. The adrenalin drained out and excused myself and sacked out on the family bed. Gnau ;woke me up for supper - very solicitous for me - am very touched. They say I must take good care of myself because I am giang ma lu (very good friend). I find I am a soft touch for signs of friendship like this. This monkish existence most of us live (there are many of us here,

35. Lick Rahlan (cont) 131 1b 10 Aug '67 (cont)

believe it or not - that have managed a virginal or monkish course here.) here leaves you wide open to blubbering and tears when true friendship and concern is shown by these people and by friends here...

136 1a 19 Aug '67

....Have been out to Plei Brel with Lick, John Watson - bought 30,000 piastre worth of bows - got drunk at Hinh's and Lille's while Lick got drunk elsewhere and John Watson roved the village with the young men and learned very much. He is thoroughly loved out in the village - can't be jealous of him because I unabashedly love him myself. A powerful, dynamic, joyful person - we work well in tandem - he learns from the young people and I hold my own with the "older" set. Between the two of us we cover the 3 villages and add people to our side that come in from outlying villages. John got an invitation to go to Plei Koteng tonite. Add this to my invitation and we're set to go in October. Bought some bows from Plei Breng also tonite myself. Haven't been there since MDarch - will get on the stick when the monsoon quits in September - October.///

....Plan to take another "R & R" to Saigon with Lick next Friday - may take a whole week at that time. - plan to sleep and relax as much as possible....

137 1a 21 Aug '67

...Got through my 4 parties okay and am relatively sober. Drank some powerful rice wine at Plo's house - fell asleep on the whole show at about 1:30 PM - woke up at 3:00PM in time to go to Lill's house where they had a pig and goat sacrificed - drank there and then left for Ton's house - fell asleep again there and Bler put me to bed, took off my boots and jacket and put a blanket on me. Woke up fully rested - first time in a long time - at 8:00 PM and came back to a party at 4th ACS. This is all full of "I's". Went out with John Watson, Lick, Lee Ignatowicz and another Montagnard from the MACV village. They went their separate ways ;and eventually ended up at Ton's to wake me up and get me on my way. Was particularly touched by Bler's attentions to me. She is much like Megan - saucy, full of the devil, never shows any emotions at all like softness or womanliness, et. - goes to great lengths to be as strong and outspoken as possible. But when I was obviously beat tired today, couldn't do enough for me to make me comfortable. - like a good grandchild should. Too bad you'll never meet her. - think you would enjoy her, too.....

138 1b 23 Aug '67

...- and have been on the go ever since. Laid out our plans for Sep

September when we travel the villages with our medics - both Montagnard and American - inoculating training, etc. with Special Forces and a man in the 71st Evac Hospital - looks like a good plan - went from there to pick up Bob Shultz for a conference with Col Hullar about a visiting gen's Nicholas who's coming through - to Pleiku with Bob Shultz and Lick to pick up a plaque for the gen'l and 3 rice wine jugs for Hinh - to the dispensary ;to pick up John Watson, Dr. Charles (his first try at going out to the villages), Lou Bracey and Ron Smith - to Plei Brel to get some big bows, triggers and quivers, chat with Ton about the upcoming medical visits - ate supper there at Ton's - got back here at 10PM - have been talking to Ken Roberts, Hevern and Hawkins same-same Civic Action till now. How's that for a birthday? Must apologize for your 1 - 2- 3 days without letters - have done it again....

140 1a 26 Aug '67

...As you can see, am in Saigon again at the villa. Drank beer and had a crossbow contest with Art Arthier and Lynn Becklin and Hack Luce till 6:30 AM - helped the sun come up. Our aim got worse and worse as the nite and morning wore on - but our spirits improved. There's a Play Boy fold out that's full of holes now. Also all the beer is gone. Went to bed at 7:30 AM and finally got up at 1:00 PM this afternoon. Am relaxing for sure - can feel the adrenalin draining out. Plan to do nothing at all I don't want to do - Lick is no problem at all - watches TV, disappears for long stretches of time, chats with the Vietnamese, etc. - same-same Tonto and Lone Ranger. Have missed the first part of the Civic Action meeting - same Liars Club - everybody gets together and brags about what a hell of a job he's doing in Civic Action. The one that lies the best gets the Civic Action award

We're all sitting here trying to decide whether to go ahead and die or wait it out and see if living can be worth while. Lynn and I have had a good time - am getting to know him better each time and have to agree with Mike that he's quite a guy. Very quiet spoken but with good ideas, enjoys a party and has a very good strong philosophy of life. Loves his wife and kids - probably the source of his strength.....

141 1a 28 Aug '67

...have had a very relaxing R & R and am ready to go back to work again. Lick and I plan to nail down the looms today if we have to put them together ourselves. Have talked to Lynn 2 nites in a row till 6:30 AM - 7:30 AM - very interesting and personable guy with a very good mind. A very fine judge of people also a very good friend of Mike's. Have eaten 5-6 times a day, slept 8 - 10 hours a day, drunk 2-3 cases

37. Lick Rahlan (cont) 141 1a 28 Aug '67 (cont)

of beer, seen Saigon fairly well. Although this is election time and we don't want to spend too much time in Saigon proper after nite - terrorism is the name of the game here as everywhere in Vietnam. We are in a real bastion here in the villa with guards everywhere - and the places downtown we go to are also well guarded - but no use looking for trouble.

Lick is a little of sitting around doing nothing so will go to work now if for no other reason than to keep him busy. Montagnards do a lot of partying but the day time is for working - especially for a guy like Lick - he's got too good a motor to just sit around and look out the window. I think he's relaxed a bit himself tho - he has a lot of people bugging him back in Pleiku - same-same "Doc" Conlon...

...Will probably leave here Wednesday if we get all our business taken care of...

The SAC boys have sold 18 bows and I have a market for another 10 of them at the OSI place. Civic Action here has done no crossbow selling for me - will pick up those bows when I go out to the base. today or tomorrow and either sell them myself or dispose of them in some way. Am beginning to think these people talk a good game but can't deliver when the chips are down.

My anger titter is way down now that I'm relaxed again but am getting a bit of my adrenalin up again and should be in full swing again tonite...

142 1a 28 Aug '67 "F Troupe" Saigon

Everyone is getting ready for bed and I'm tired after a wonderful roast beef dinner cooked by Lynn. Have continued to eat like it's going out of style. Only three meals today instead of the usual 5 or 6 since I've been here.

The V.C., I'm just told, are swarming all over the warf where the USAID warehouse is - control large parts of Saigon now during the elections - the white mice, army MP's and Air Force AP's are out in full force everywhere with flack vests, automatic weapons, etc. Think we'll wait to put those looms together some other time. Maybe we'll come down in a few weeks after the elections. Lick will be dissappointed as am I - also the Yards will be sad - but hell it isn't worth sticking our necks out for. Wish to hell there was someone down there who would put those things together for us and get them up to us without our kicking them in the ass all the time....

29 Aug

...got involved in another bull session last nite lasting till 4:AM - have had quite a nite life in the villa. Was startled awake by Jim Morris (Capt, Spec. Forces) who had some things to discuss - but at 8:00 Am it was a rude experience. Out base gonnies has h

8:00 AM it was a rude experience. Our base goonie has been canceled so we'll have to scrounge a way back to Pleiku - probably tomorrow. Have definitely decided to not work on the looms till after the elections because of the terrorism around here.

Have just finished 4 poached eggs on toast plus 2 other pieces of toast, butter and jam. Had a roll of Gouda cheese and a bottle of sweet pickles at 3 AM, about 10 beers and 4 bananas all during our bull session, after that big dinner of Lynn's last nite. Have been eating, resting, sleeping and in general having one hell of a restful vacation. The company is stimulating, the people are very hospitable, and the pressure is zilch. Am about to take a leisurely walk out to the base to conduct business...

...walked back - still haven't found my crossbows that are out here on the base somewhere - will have to check through Hevern in Pleiku. Plan to get out tonite if I can - otherwise will leave in AM.

Bought some teachirts, size 38-40 shorts (only ones available, and 12 handkerchiefs - ought to last till Hawaii. Lick and I are headed for town to do a few things and then we should be through...

143 1a 31 Aug '67

...Am back in Pleiku as you see. Had a fabulous day yesterday on the wharfs of Saigon. Spent the day with Lick and myself puzzling over the looms - how to put them together, etc. Don't know how they work but have figured out how to put them together at least. There are parts for 300 of them - and they are all ours - noone else seems to give a damn about them - all we have to do is assemble them and get them up here. One trouble- we're working in an unlit warehouse with huge boxes of junk we walk around in - nuts, bolts, parts, boards, etc. - no rhyme or reason to them - have to light a match to find anything. Each loom is worth close to \$1,000.00 put together so it's a little like sorting out gems found in the bottom of the sea. Lick and I figured out about 2/3 of one of them and will go back in 2-3 weeks to work on it. Once we get one together, it should be a breeze.

We had an adventure in the middle of this. Took a break to look at the ships on the Saigon river off loading. They are really huge. Stopped at one huge cargo-transport ship called the Seatrain - New York Savannah Ltd. - Lick had never seen a ship before and neither had I close up. Took a chance and ran up the gangplank and asked if we could look around awhile. The 3rd mate (Bob Linklater) said sure - so Lick and I had a conducted tour by Captain White and 3rd mate - pilot house, boiler room, captain's quarters (served Norwegian beer), hold, served wonderful beef

for lu

for lunch - you know - prime ribs - your favorite dish when we go out - got the royal tour for 2 - 3 hours at lunch time. Left there with our heads full of new impressions and full stomachs and hustled back to F'r troupe - got 3 bows - took them back as a present for their hospitality. This ship is nothing short of fantastic - the length of 3 football fields - 5 decks as tall as Williams arena - 8,700 horsepower steam engine, radar scopes, all these huge, new ideas I've never considered before.

We also took a long tour the day before of the Vietnamese shopping area in Saigon - Everyone thought Lick was a Phillipino - I was the only Caucasian I saw there - interesting places - much silk and odd things - but the best shops had American clothes for sale - didn't pick up a thing for you because didn't see anything of any quality. Bought Ton a gift - a pair of scissors - he's easy to shop for. Lick bought himself a bracelet - name bracelet - thought it was neat.

We decided to come back last nite - hit it lucky - caught a C130 out- road in the cockpit with the crew members - Lick had a ball looking at all the dials and switches, the takeoff and the landing, etc. - Got in here at 8:30 PM - talked a bit and collapsed promptly in my bed - back to the old rat race again but much refreshed.

Bler woke me up this morning at 7:45 AM - embarrassed the hell out of me - apparently she's been checking every morning to see when I got back. The Vietnamese had stolen her new umbrella - found it for her and read out our mammasan but good for stealing. Told them - with Bler interpreting for me - that they could steal all they wanted in Pleiku but in my house I would crocodile them if they tried that sort of thing. Explained that Bler was part of my family - same-same pictures of my children - that she had a right to leave her things in my room and they had better lay off. Think I scared them enough so they won't try it again/ I'll throw them out on their asses if they do...

144 2b 3 Sept '67

...Plan to make a nite of it, so relax and read on. My thoughts are by no means clearly worked out - much of my bitterness toward our church has been dulled by not thinking about our problems - Have become somewhat of a 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 are changed. I'm forced to work with these men, read each one like a psychiatrist, examine 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 Civic 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 Shultz, 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...

146 1a 6 Sept '67

...The next nite (Monday) got my truck stuck out in Plei Brel with a load of about 150 crossbows. Stayed the nite at Ton's house. The mud and rain have really made the roads impossible - one false move with the steering wheel and you're up to the axle and running board in mud and deep gu

deep gullies. Had a very enjoyable nite out there- slept in my "bed" with a warm Montagnard blanket, mosquitoes, the sounds of the village and the Montagnard smokey smells all around with the rain pounding down. Will remember the nites I've spent out in the villages the rest of my life, I'm sure. There is nothing like it. It's nites like these that have brought me very close to these people.

Hitchhiked back to the MACV compound at 6:AM and got the 4-wheel drive vehicle of the dispensary and pushed "Charley Brown" (my pickup has my usual name - has been through a lot of rough miles with me) out of the hole - there was enough traaction by then on the roads to get it out under it's own steam. John Watson stayed with men and also a new man by the name of Ken Roberts (who looks like a good man).

After getting some fo the mud off of us, John and I wnet to work at the dispensary with the pickup loaded down with mud and crossbows, banbanas, guavoas (sp?) and assorted other commodities. Had a little explaining to do but no sweat - told Col Hulkar who took it well. Tuesday went out to Plei Brel again to start the j"internship" of the medics. By the time I got out there everyone had left - settled for buying some more bows - ended up talking about America, Cõmmunism, "Viet Minh", Vietnamese, etc to all the young men at Hnuch's house. No interpreter - Lick is still down in Plei Kly - have found I can speak very well in my halting Jarai, broken French bia bia Englise and a great amount of pantomime and pictures - didn't even need Lick or John Watson. Was very pleased and surprised. Have been ivited to the following sacri-fices and numpai gatherings : Friday at Hlin's for a sacrifice in my honor at Plei Sor - apparently a Montagnard robe and bracelet bit. Sunday at Nui's house - one of my best crossbow makers - the man who "died" last Februarry - maybe told you that story - took him to Special Forces with hours to spare and one week later he walked into the village thin but well and alive - will save that for one of my war stories when I get back. Anyway we'll have another sacrifice at Nui's Saturday. Sunday have two sacrifices to go to. Gnau's and Hnuck's house. Gnau is the guy I fought with in the mud last Saturday nite - both of us drunk out of our heads, A riot - had abig emotiojnal make-up time - big hugs etc. etc. last Monday. He'll have another sacrifice for me Sunday. I should be hung over for a week from all these affairs.

We have over 200 crossbows in our room now - stacked up with care by Bob Shultz and myself - almost touch the ceiling in one pile - every corner and crack has a pile of bows in it - would make a very good picture.

42. Lick Rahlan (cont) 147 9 Sept 2b

...Am very sorry for the lack of communication, Sweetie. Col Hullar and the other men around me have sort of taken me in tow the last few days. Col Hullar personally saw to it I got smashed Thursday nite. Yesterday went back to the village to Plei Sor for Hlin's sacrifice for me and John Watson. You now have another son - 41 year old K'sor Hlin - now. It was a very toughing ceremony but sad because John could not be with us. Lick gave him a Montagnard coat this morning before we left, a crossbow from Hlin, a knife from Ton and Sao and also some rice wine..

Have recovered my composure now pretty well - feel like a tit on a boar right now but should be able to avoid boredom - we're on the sea here - will take a look at that pretty soon.

Talk to you later - John's waking up - jis sweating like a trooper...

148 1a 10 Sept '67

..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 from 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 others (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 go 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, Sweetie, 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 li

43. Lick Rahlan (cont) 148 2b 10 Sept '67 (cont)

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 Jed and Whee 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 and out 4 or 5 times - while they worked on John at the 13th Surg - they took me to the Officer's Club very kindly - 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 wanted to give me a sedative but 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 goodbies and then was carefully 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 the 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 crossbow 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..

149 1a 19 Sept '67

...Would like to review my activities since John's accident if I may. That was Thursday 7 Sept about 6:00PM 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 ever 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-evaluate 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 taste buds are quite different. They take filth, mud and 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 shoulders, legs and back. They have great pride, honesty and integrity and love with an intensity that overpowers me. In spite of this they have remained back somewhere in the late Stone Age for reasons still obscure 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 constantly honed by difficult medical problems.

I'd like to write out some of my thoughts for 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 Southeast Asia simply because by doing so it can survive, get the riches that are here - heal its wounds, feed its belly, and amass wealth and resources to continue its planned expansion beyond the limits of Asia - first to India, Australia, Philippines and the islands - and eventually 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 US 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 - his concern is instinctively this way. We think in terms of ourselves, our parents and children - 10 years, 20 years, etc. He thinks in terms of centuries, movements of nations, there is a flow of people, not of families, etc. in his thinking. (This will be disjointed - am getting interrupted frequently again. Hope you don't mind this lengthy discussion but would like to review my thoughts 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 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 Indian. 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

46. Lick Rahlan (cont) 149 4a19 Sept '67 (cont)

to go. And then we have another Dien Bien Phu here at Pleiku 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 noone has the rules 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, et. The Mao followers have no such limitations. 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 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

speaking my mind and live my life as I see fit as I have never done before. Never again will by Church or anyone or any influence deny me the right to do or say what I feel is a 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....

150 4b 24 Sept '67

....Got your not so cheerful letter on the 16th Sept worrying about me - hope by now some of the others have arrived.

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 son Ton or 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 a t

Lick than with anyone else.

My first reaction at John's accident was bewilderment and profound grief - 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 kink - 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 shaky 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 had had little or no success elsewhere and the so-called Medcap missions all over Viet Nam have done nothing but get a lot of publicity for the doctors and a lot of medicine for the CV.C. who come in right after the Medcap teams leave.

Sweetie, it's 3 AM or later - I'm beat. 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?.....

151 2b 16 Oct '67

...I came back , have been strangely sad and depressed since. 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 appear) - much conversation blowing me up to be quite a hero. I would be a fool not to be pleased - but besides that am confused by it all. Somehow am losing control of the situation - am being caught up in a big Civic Action thing - my "baby" is growing up. We have good men who have taken the ball and run with;(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.

Somehow I've been struck in the role of a seer full of knowledge about these people - what I say is weighed carefully and the same brain picking process I used on Jack Rudy goes on in reverse now. That's okay. But somehow I feel like the horse that is put out to stud...

...Maybe all the above is just some sort of mood I'm going through/ Noted something like this with Jack Rudy just before he left. A certain melancholy about leaving the work here and his friends - and yet anxious to leave at the same time. A strange thing the emotions. Will shake it, I'm sure and get back to work. There is still much to do:

Want to get those looms from Saigon before I leave.

Want to set up a store in the villages before too much more time goes by.

Want to help them harvest their rice in November.

Want to get back to the Phillipines if possible.

Want to open up Plei Koteng for the new Army doctor.

155 1a 25 Oct '67

...Didn't write last nite (Monday nite) because was sleeping out at Ton's house. Couldn't get the truck out of the village because of the muc. Had about 15 Montaganards and 5 G.I.'s trying to push me out and

50. Lick Rahlan (cOnt) 155 1a 25 Oct '67 (cont)

still we couldn't make it. Woke up at 4:AM to a strange pounding going on in front of Ton's house - crept out to take a look and here are Bler and Blio (Ton's wife) pounding out the days supply of rice. They routinely get up that early apparently to start the day's work. By the time Bler comes to work at the officer's club at 7:30-8AM whe's already been working for 4 hours! Had a good if cold nite's sleep. Have been on call all day Tuesday and am still on call. Will be off

156 1b 27 Oct '67

To review briefly the week for our "diar" - Sat and Sunday was on call at the Dispensary - according to our nice bosses in stateside arm-chairs - that means I stay in the dispensary - all the time. And our new boss _ Major John Hodgson goes by the book because he is career type. Consequently Sat and Sunday I slept on my examining table. Monday was on call till 4:30 PM with about 8 hours total sleep for 60 hours. Instead of going to bed like I should have - went to lPlei Brel to Ton's - had a good time with Lick, Bill Fulton, Lee Ignatowitz and Roy Worthington - unfortunately our truck "Charley Brown" couldn't make it out so Lee and I stayed at Ton's that nite. Maybe I told you already - Bler and Blio were up at 4AM preparing rice! - yeh, I wrote that already - so I'm not so far behind on letters after all....

161 1b 6Nov '67

Jack Rudy is coming back at some undetermined 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 Montagnards 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! Thik I'll live on soft foods for awhile when I get back. My stomach is either too small or too raw from rice wine - but can't take anything greasy or heavy without getting nauseated. Also am smoking too much. I'll be a mess by the time I get back - you'll have the job of pampering me back to health - okay?...

164 1b 7 Nov '67

..Have decided this cough of mine is purely a nervous cough and will work on it like that from now on.

My one great sorrow here is that most of the things I wanted to

54. Lick Rahlan (cont) 164 1b 7 Nov '67 (cont)

accomplish did not get done. No looms as yet, nor does it look like they'll be here by the end of my tour. The villages are still being taxed by the V.C. 10% of their rice crops - and right under our noses. They still don't know how to read or write except a select 2 or 3. The medics are very slow to respond to the sick in the villages - haven't injected a sense of dedication into them like I hoped I would.

They still are not willing to stand up and fight for themselves but look to me and others to right their wrongs for them. In many ways they are like children. Even Lick calls me his father and he has more native intelligence than I will ever have.

Tried to get them to make chairs and tables for the new Montagnard store Jim Morris and I have almost got built at the Mike force camp. All I got was a negative response. So I, of all people, have to show them how to make a chair and a table! Talk about the blind leading the blind!

Am ready to go home, sweetie. Or at least get out of this frustrating atmosphere for a few days. Need a wife to come home to and bitch at once in a while...

165 1b (to the clinic) 8 Nov '67

... Have had a very different year than I thought I would have. Will not have any slides to show and I'm afraid my talking will sound very pessimistic and boring to you. Have written great volumes to Kay almost every day, but found out in Hawaii that my experiences will remain pretty much my own no matter what I say.

We now have 6 Montagnard medics practicing fair medicine, even if a little too energetic with the penicillin, vitamins, etc.

Have gone from hating the Vietnamese and loving the Montagnard, to knowing individuals of both kinds and preferring the Montagnards to becoming disenchanted of both and treating them like children. Have, in spite of myself, reached quite a stature among my villages by being there constantly, speaking their language, constantly advising and pushing them, etc. Have a total of 10 sons and innumerable brothers by "blood brother" sacrifices of water buffaloes, pigs, chickens, dogs and horses. Have learned to speak a broken Jazai-Rhade-French-English-Vietnamese language of my own making so can get along quite well without an interpreter most times. Have 4-5 very good friends who have put their lives on the line at least once each and, in Rahlan Lick's case, many times for me. Have many adventures that I will cherish but that don't make very good print. Have seen one very good friend murdered by the V.C. sixteen days before he was due to return

52. Lick Rahlan (cont) 165 2a 8 Nov '67 (cont)

to the states. Another brilliant man, John Watson, run over by a tank who lived and will probably go to medical school some day.

Have grown up a little but I'm not real sure I like the new "me." My wife assures me I haven't changed that much and I'm glad of it....

...This would be a beautiful, beautiful country and the work very rewarding for a missionary like Chapman or Stolle or the Swansons if there were no war here. Unfortunately my job is to wage war here - that's what the U.S. government is paying me for. Medicine is just an excuse to go into the villages. Find myself spending more and more time with the Special Forces. We are setting up an intelligence network in my villages. In the words of my good friend Mao Tsetung - we are making the water inhospitable for the V.C. fish and hospitable for the American fish. Thus the crossbow industry, the loom industry, the medics, and all the rest. Eventually we will use these villages to set up ambushes for the "Viet-minh" (as the Montagnards call them). If the North Vietnamese (there are no "V.C." in the highlands here) cannot procure supplies or get rest or sanctuary from the Montagnard villages, then they will be exposed and eventually will die. Our job is to win the villages over to our side by one means or the other. We chose to do this by living with them - out guerrillaing the North Vietnamese if you will - beat them at their own game. So far we can claim about 10,000 of the Montagnards around here. And, before I leave, there will be more villages that will succumb. The crossbow industry is one incentive. The fact that we have taken the trouble to learn their language and eat and drink their native foods is another. I do everything (and there are about 15-20 others who do likewise) but marry their women to convince them that we are for them. The "V.C." are not willing to do this and because of this are losing out here. Am convinced this is how our particular part of the war in the highlands will be won...

...Thank you again very much. If I can clean up my language, stop smoking 2-3 packs of cigarettes a day, cut down on the rice wine and booze, and quit squatting and sit in a chair naturally - should be ready for work come Feb '68....

166 2a 10 Nov '67

... Think GIR will be going to work and to learn from Jim Morris next week - he's that 13-14 year old boy who's smarter than hell I've been mentioning off and on. Told Jim about him and he's interested. GIR is anxious to go also. Have set up a meeting with Jim and GIR and a few others at Plei Brel Sunday. We'lll also talk about making tables, chairs and baskets at the same time. Jim has a "store" built - looks like a Montagnard hooch built on stilts, etc. - will have Montagnard ex-GI's running it - should be a real good thing f

ex-GI's running it - should be a real good thing if we can get it off the ground.

Sent two of my medics - Chell and Ju - to Plei Betel by lambretta with "orders" cut official - like - to head off the plague epidemic going on there. They have enough vaccine for 500-600 Montagnards. If the Vietnamese and/or V.C. will let them through, it should be something worthwhile. Think they can handle it okay. They're Lick's blood brothers and by "borthers" as well...

...The expected attack on the base on 5 Nov '67 never materialized probably because of the constant pounding our artillery and airplanes have been giving them. There is one hell of a battle going on at Dak To however. 3-4 plane loads of KIA and wounded coming out every nite. Our statistics lie but so do the V.C.'s (Charles" as Jim Morris calls him) so who cares.

The Newsweeks and Times we've been getting sound universally pessimistic - wish all the loudmouths would put their mind in gear before they talk instead of staying in neutral all the time. We need this war and we need it for a long time to come - whether we like it or not. There is no easy solution and we might just as well forget about an easy solution. We are attending the birth and development of a very difficult baby - possibly a retarded baby - but it's ours and we're stuck with it. Either that or we'll have to face giving them Laos, Cambodia and Burma and Thailand. That's the choice. A truce would be a farce at this point. I'll mouth off when I get back - sorry...

167 1a 14 Nov '67

...Chel and Ju (Lick's brothers) returned from Plei Betel along with Mlem. They gave out 345 plague shots. Are they ever proud - and so am I. The 38th Air Rescue took them down by helicopter and they worked very hard for 2 days. Imagine: Mlem was a medicine man complete with incantations, etc 10 months ago - now he arrives with stethoscope, plague vaccine, etc and by helicopter yet! as a modern doctor. Chel and Ju left Plei Betel 6 months ago as green kids and came back as conquering heroes to vaccinate their uncles, aunts, etc. Makes a very good story and it's also true. Think we can all be proud. Haven't had time to look in my mail box since Sunday - have been on the go and hung over. Need another little R&R soon. Think Lick and I will slip out in a few days and go to Saigon for some rest, good food.

A man fitting Jack Rudy's description but without glasses (contacts?) and a different name arrived in Kontum about a week ago. If he's back in country, expect either Lick or I will be seeing him soon.

....Am happy to hear Ronald Reagan speak out. Also am delighted to see LBJ finally getting tough and showing everybody he's not the sweet old farmer from Texas but the son of a bitch we all know he was all along. Think maybe if he keeps that up - may vote for him myself next year....

...Went to Pleiku Rho (the Montagnard village - not the refugee village where Lick lives which we call Pleiku Rho also). Met some very good men. Talked crossbows, swords, etc. Think we can make a go of it. There are about 400-500 people there. Two school teachers. A good strong chief by the name of Kel. Bob Miller and Kick Carle are working there in tandem. Looks promising. Lick came on this new motor scooter complete with helmet. I call him a Saigon cowboy. (an "in" joke I'll explain sometime later). Think Lick and I are finally, really friends. My admiration, respect and love for that guy know few limits at this point. He is a real patriot and can be trusted as few can in this very mixed up country...

168 15 Nov '67 1a

...Spent a lazy day at the dispensary this morning and then took off for the villages with Lick. Collected a bunch of mattresses for the Special Forces hospital new wing, talked politics with the S-5 over there, went to Lick's for a coke and then came home. Very quiet day and a good break...

169 1a 16 Nov '67

...Plan to leave for Saigon 25 November with Lick and whoever else ever else wants to go for a few days. Lick suggested it and I agree. It'll do us good to get out of here and will take the attention off our activity as far as "Charles" is concerned.

You mentioned about the rice harvest - we were asked by Tun, Lick and others to not help. They felt that it would publicize the thing too much and be an invitation for trouble. They've been harvesting for 2,000 years up here and know how to do it okay. That's okay by me.

Went out to Tun's house yesterday with a case of beer, some cigars and tobacco. and Bill Julton brought out a motor cycle helmet for Tun. We had a good old social visit for a change. Tun's neighbor came over with a chicken which was pretty good, we cracked a jug of rice wine which wasn't bad. Mostly we talked politics - Plei Kep has been shooting tracers at the dust off helicopters for the last 4 nites. The gunships almost leveled the village 2 days ago but was called off by someone who knew they are friends of ours. Some V.C. got in there and used Plei Kep as cover to shoot down the dustoff coming from Dak To. We let Tun know that something has to be done about that kind of goings on.

55. Lick Rahlan (cont) 169 2a 16 Nov '67 (cont)

He went over there today to try to iron out the problem. I think the answer is to get rid of Muir somehow - he's the alcoholic chief they have over there. Tun is chief over that village, too and he's upset about what he heard. Think we'll get some results.

I wasn't all politics, though. We had lots of laughs. I got drunk and hammy and started telling jokes in Jarai and we all had belly laughs all around. Think I do better talking without Lick to lean on. It takes lots of pantomime and gestures but everyone has a good time trying to find the word I'm trying to say - and the joke is great by the end of the sentence. Translated back into English today it doesn't sound very funny - was telling them how hung over I was from Plei Koteng and had ruwa lung (stomachache), ruwa co (headache), potuck (cough) and the shakes and Bler comes in to wake me up with "Hello Dr. Conlon, good morning, time to get up" with a cheery voice. Hands me a flower and is all smiles. And I'm dying. From there I go to sick call where everyone comes in with the cough, upset stomach, headache and nerves and wants me to feel sorry for them. Like I say - it doesn't sound very funny now but when it takes about an hour of pigeon Jarai, kpanomine and facial gestures - we were all belly laughing and coughing, etc. It was fun and good to see them laugh so hard. No longer doubt their friendship...

Maybe the newspapers are talking about the huge battle going on at Dak To by now. It's the largest battle since we got involved here in Vietnam. At least one division (3 regiments of North Vietnamese) against the 4th Division, 173 Airborne, the Korean ROKS, 1st Cav and 101 Airborne - at least 5-7 full airplanes of wounded going out of here a day. Load 60-80 wounded on an airplane. The battle has been going on for the last 8 days. Dak To is about 40 miles from here. to the Northwest. Can see the B52 strikes, goony birds and A1E's all night long from the porch at MACV - no actual planes but the flashes of light. Looks like the 4th of July or Northern Lights. Also many smaller battles south of there all the way down to about 10 miles from here. Don't know why there's no publicity. Every major newspaper and magazine has a representative or 5 up there.

After leaving Tun's house last night spent the night until 12:30-1:AM helping load patients on C-130's. Loaded 81 patients on one plane. No complaints from any of the wounded. They were all just glad to be alive and out of Dak To alive. Don't know who is winning. Know that we're lying like hell about the casualties but suspect the V.C. are too. The wounded said that little kids - North Vietnamese - were charging

in waves, all hopped up on dope and booze and fighting like tigers - hand to hand. Hard to get air strikes in because it's so close quarters - afraid to hit our own men at the same time. Many stories floating around, but the latest says we have them trapped from the North, West and South and are trying to push them into the mountains to the East and finish them off. Would be nice if true. Have become very cynical of late....

170 1a 17 Nov '67 (my folks)

...Received your very thoughtful and much appreciated sausages, sunflower seeds and candy. Hope you don't mind but have shared this stuff with my corpsmen, the Air Evac people, my friend Lick Rahlan and the bunch of people I live with. Could run for mayor of Pleiku and win with that for bribe material.

Will sit down with you when I get back and try to explain what we have been doing here in detail. Am beginning to get philosophical and nostalgic already about this place. It has been a very good year for me in many ways. Feel I have contributed my share to what we're trying to do here. Have found many friends - more than my share - among the Air Force men, the Special Forces and the Montagnards. The Yards have already started their series of "sacrifices" that will go on now until I leave. These are remarkable ceremonies that I'll describe in detail later. They resemble the blood brother rituals of the American Indians - all the gods of the earth, sky, wind, water, house, fire, etc are called upon to bless, protect and make strong the one prayed for. Very impressive, solemn occasions - capped off by presentation of a bracelet and gallons of very strong rice wine....

171 18-19 Nov '67 1a

...Lick, myself, Dave Berrio and probably Roy Worthington are planning to go to Saigon 25 Nov - 1 Dec for a little cheap R&R. Will be good for all of us. Roy's good friend on army dustoff got shot up near Dak To and will be air evacuated tomorrow - Roy's pretty shook as I was with John Watson. Sgt Martinez - a good friend from Special Forces - was killed yesterday at Dak To - the war is getting very personal for all of us here. Sort of grim around this dispensary lately....

...Went out to Lick's house yesterday. Took Jim Morris (Capt, S-5 - Special Forces) with me. Much politics. Lick is gathering 100 men for Duc Co to fight with. Another 13 for Jim's "reactionary" (ambush) force. Jim's out at Plei Kep waiting in ambush for the V.C. fax collectors right now. That's not my business - he's the soldier - but we work together. I'll get him the intelligence - he acts on it. And noone is

57. Lick Rahlan (cont) 171 18-19 Nov '67 (Cont)

and noone is the wiser. Finally all our work out in the villages is paying off. The Montagnards are a little hesitant now but when the pressure comes off them and they can be in peace for a change - their enthusiasm will follow. The 10-15 men I can trust out there with my life are all for it. Things are definitely looking up around here....

172 1b 20 Nov '67

....Love you, sweetie - but am beat tired. Have been on call 44 hours now. Only about 8 more and can get some sleep, then go see Lick and dump off the acetate, plywood and mattresses and soap I've collected...

173 1a 22 Nov '67

...Hope to go to Saigon Friday and really relax. Dr. Charles and Lee Ignatowicz are in Dak Pek, so will have to wait for them to get back first. Roy Worthington got passed over for Teck Sergeant - he's so mad is ready to get out of the service. Also turned his ankle pulling wounded into dust-off helicopter so has to cool it now. Will take him down with me. Also Lick will go again. Will take some cross-bows with me also.

Went out to Plei Sor - Hlin's house with Lick, John A. Smith and Major Dick Miller. Dick is leaving in 20 days. That was his last trip. Had a good time. Hlin made 3 beautiful book ends - paper weights for me. Carved DAN CONLON MONTAGNARD PLEI*KU on them. Heavy as hell and beautiful I think.

174 1b 22 Nov '67

Was going to leave for Saigon today with Lick but Dr. Charles and Lee Ignatowicz haven't come back yet. Will probably have to wait till Sunday now. Am anxious to relax, drink some beer, have bull sessions till the wee hours and sleep till noon or 1:PM. Am....

....My Thanksgiving meal consisted of 4 hard boiled eggs, one small crustacean (crab?), one small shrimp and about 10 minnows from the rice fields not counting 6 levels of rice wine. My appetite is back so it tasted very good. Also the company was excellent - Hlin, Hmyar, Huir, T.I. Harris and Al Zaharian (a lawyer friend of mine from Saigon). Many laughs - am getting to be quite a pantomime artist speaking with out my interpreter Lick. I went to his house before the "dinner" to deliver some mattresses but missed him. Lick was out in the villages looking for me. A sort of Keystone Cops type thing. When I finally made it out to the villages, he had given up and gone home. No sweat....

...Have been down here since Sunday noon. Came down on the base goony with Lick. Have eaten and drunk beer almost continually since arriving. Was up till 4:30 Saturday nite, got up at 6:30 Sunday morning to catch my plane. Stayed up all day Sunday drinking beer, relaxing, haveing a continuous bull session. Got a short nap Sunday nite, then got up for the next crew and stayed up till 4"00 AM Monday morning. Have eaten almost continually. Lynn cooked a pork roast that was out of this world. I think I'm in love with him- asked him if he could do washing also but he said we could always hire a maid.

Yesterday Lick and I went to the Saigon Zoo. All kinds of exotic animals including kangaroo, tigers, lions, macktow (sp?) birds, elephants... - much better than the Como Park Zoo. Had a Vietnamese lunch at the zoo - omelet, cream puffs, nuoc mam (fish sauce from rotten fish - very tasty) french bread and a coke - didn't get sick yet. For supper last nite went to the International House in downtown Saigon with Lick, Lynn and myself - same-same Charley's in Mpls. We had a band, filet mignon, wine, the works. Lick's forst time I think. Very good food. Came home and watched TV until the 11 o'clock shift came home. Stayed up till 3:30 AM this morning talking philosophy with Puff (Lt Col Flloyd Pugh) and Art Arthurier and Roy Worthington. Roy came down yesterday and will have a few days on "R&R" himself before we have to go back. We'll be going back Saturday or Friday. Apparently Kontum got hit last nite or Sunday. We whipped them badly at Dak To - now they'll try some pot shots to save face, then retreat to Cambodia or Laos and regroup. It was and is the largest battle of the war to date. Estimates run between 1,000-3,000 NVN killed and 5-7,000 wounded. Our figures for U.S. dead and wounded are conservative by the Air Evac estimation.

... have had my nap now, feel good and ready to go. Can't seem to get enough to eat. Went to the Cholon BX today and loaded down with groceries and beer. This is called a "picnic" here. Art Arthurier, Lynn Becklin, "Puff" Pugh, Don Goodman, Roy W., Lick and myself went on this picnic. The food consists of beer and we try our best to drink as much as we can between here and Cholon and back. Find we don't mind the trip at all. The two guys riding up in the cab can't drink so that leaves more for us.

Tonite will go down to the Rex and see if I can pick up some good ivory or wood pieces. Will try out a Chinese restaurant again also - porbably the My Canh floating restaurant....

59. Lick Rahlan (cont) 180 1a 30 Nov '67

...Did a lot of politics yesterday. All the way up to Col Underwood - 2nd in command to Ambassador Komer - Civic Action. Looks like we'll get our looms after all. Maybe won't see them during my tour - but Ambassador Komer is interested and that's a real good start. Also got my foot in the door to the USAID - Cords - Rev. Dev. - OCO - warehouse and think may get away with 30 sewing machines and anything else I and Lick and Roy W. can get our hands on. All perfectly legal, too - for a change. Will do this tomorrow.

Today is goof-off day. Distribute crossbows, drink some beer, get a haircut, etc. Am having a relaxing time of it. A good R&R. Picked up some bracelets and some dolls. No wood carvings to be had. May have to settle for what we've got already. Everything down here is priced out of this world and am broke now. Will have to borrow through the month of December as I did through the month of November. ,,

...Will take some crossbows to the base and distribute them this afternoon. The adrenalin is starting to come back again but am going at a leisurely pace anyway. No rush. Will try to hook a goony Saturday morning and deliver all this junk I'm accumulating...

181 1b 2 Dec '67

...Got 30 sewing machines and real promise of those looms for our efforts yesterday. Made a new record. Went through all the Mickey Mouse at the USAID warehouse, loaded on the machines on a 1½ ton truck, got them out to the airstrip and found a Pleiku airplane that agreed to take them back - all in one day! - that's usually a one week project...

...My adrenalin is coming back again - am ready to come back to Pleiku and get busy again....

182 1b 4 Dec '67

..Was interested to hear the candid conversation at Ivory's on Thanksgiving day. 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 of 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 m

Lick is the most careful, knowledgeable 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'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 - no one questions it - even Tun who is a chief in his own right. I have not seen anyone speak roughly or argue with 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 villange 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 strick Montagnard Jesus. Our roles are reversed. I don't make a move with out 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 panto-mine 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 ww 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 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 - theyve 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 .

him and ask his advice. That was a good R&R for Lick also in Saigon.

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 everyman 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 news men are so fond of calling them) but Montagnards with 5 fully equipped, well trained divisions, excellent leadership, great love for their highlands and great suspiciaon towards the "Viet Minh" (North-Vietnamese), the V.C. and the South Viet-nameese. They don't particularly like t e 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 maybe 2,000 men who can read or 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 anyone or all of their enemies. Soon our war with the North 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 and 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. Theyve 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...

....I hope I don't disappoint you, sweetie, when I get home. Have a case of the nerves and fatigue - there is such a thing as battle fati

fatigue, you know. When I got to Saigon could feel the adrenalin pour out of me and I felt like a Raggedy-Ann doll. But Saturday morning it rushed back in and the familiar tremor of anticipation was back. Put on my fatigues again and Lick grinned at me - said "We go now - Pleiku?" and I didn't even have to answer. It's an experience I'll have trouble verbalizing but everyone involved up here know what I'm talking about. You don't know how much you're living on nerves and adrenalin until you get an R&R like I just had. Must seem odd to you for me to take an R&R to Saigon but the difference is amazing. Like "round-eyed" women, civilian clothes, USO clubs, TV that works, movies and entertainment everywhere. And a choice of places to eat - and not C-rations camouflaged as a varied menu. It's wonderful! Anyway, what I started to say was - the only loud noises we hear here are either tanks or heavy truck, artillery or airplanes taking off. Any other noise we hear, we look for cover. The first time one of the kids yells in my ear unexpectedly I may do some strange things. You'll have to be patient with me as I unravel. Also will probably bore you to tears with my "war stories" - all part of unravelling, I'm told....

....Received the package from Lindeberg TO me but not For me. Thank them very much. Lick is a Christian this month for Christmas (will be a Buddhist for Tet, I'm sure - also has a sacrifice to his gods everynow 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.

That bug was placed in the rose lazy susan with care by my (your) granddaughter Bler. It scared the hell out of me, too. Was it still alive when it got to you? Alive, if you squeeze it, it makes one helluva loud noise. Glad you liked the stuff. Am accumulating all kinds of Montagnard junk lately - my room here is getting smaller and smaller. So Jimmy wants a purse!

184 1b 6 Dec '67

....Am slowly but surely running out of gas. Am less and less interested in the Montagnards, the dispensary, even meeting the new fliers and other men coming on base. All the men I've known very well here are leaving one by one. Dick Miller left today. Lee Johnson left 2 days ago. Bob Shultz is packing his hold baggage and I'm thinking about doing the same. The old fire is gone now. Have good men to replace me. Was invited to a sacrifice today and didn't even show up. Started loading on sewing machines into my truck this afternoon to take them down to Lick's house and let that go. Got some of them loaded, then quit

then quit and went in and started reading a book CARPETBAGGERS instead. Had a steak dinner tonite and really splurged. My friends in the kitchen here fixed me up a porter house steak - same-same Doc Conlon's(senior) - with all the trimmings. Tasted great. Also had a salad with Italian dressing, some cake and a stinger for an after dinner drink. Hope I didn't let down the Montagnards too much. Guess they had quite a party planned for me. Am just tired I guess. Also could use a letter from you....

187 1b 12-13 Dec '67

...Nothing much going on here. A potential build up of NVA was foiled today thanks to the B52's. May have had something to do with that. Don't want to know for sure. Let the OSI and Jim Morris (S.F.) know what the Montagnards had told me about a build up of "Viet Minh" in Plei Op and Plei Dang Roia north of here. Told them that Sunday. Damned if the B52's and artillery hill weren't blasting away early this morning and today at that exact spot. Maybe I'm the 007 type after all... More like GET SMART sype, I think.

Don't think I'll be going to Japan after all. Will take my R&R to Saigon instead. Think Bill Fulton, myself, Lick, Tun, Hlin and Hmyar will see if we can't do a tour of Saigon instead. We'll see. Maybe it would be a good idea to leave country and see Japan. Am undecided. Understand it takes about \$200.00 to see anything and live for 5-6 days. Expensive, but may be a chance in a lifetime. I'll wait awhile and see..

189 2a 17 Dec '67 (to the clinic)

...My private little war goes very well. Plan to take chief Tun, Hlin, Hmyar and my friend Lick to Saigon with me end of this month and live it up on an R&R. This to pay them back for all the sacrifices of friendship, brotherhood and thanks they are having and will have for me before I leave. Very embarrassing but heart warming. These are very noble, strong, hard working and generous people in spite of all the hardship they contend with daily. It has been a real experience dealing with them and being incorporated into their way of life. A little embarrassing when they pour the rice wine on my lily white feet during a sacrifice and all around me are dark brown skins. Feel a little bit like apologizing as they stare at the obvious whiteness, but they don't seem to resent it like we do the Negroes' skin in America....

190 1a 19 Dec '67

...Spent last nite in Plei Brel so didn't write. Was safe, drunk and happy, thanks. Yehh, Hluce and Hnuch took very good care of me.

64. Lick Rahlan (cont) 190 1a 19 Dec '67 (cont)

Sent me on my way at 7 o'clock this morning. Lick and I had a private little party at his house - his rice wine gets to me every time.

Will be leaving for Plei Sor in a few minutes for a sacrifice that I've been avoiding up till now. It's going to be a wild one am afraid...

191 1a 20 Dec ;67

...Had a goodd time at Hlin's house yesterday. All the people involved 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 Rahlan, Hlin, Hmyar, Hiur, Tun, Ih, Kyl, Hjun, Lee Ignatowicz, Hohn Batey, and 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...

...Habe 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....

200 1a 8 Jan '68

Went out to the villagbes shortly thereafter (after reading your wonderful letters) - to take some pictures of the people there. Got invited to 2 sacrifices for my efforts - finally passed out and they put me to bed. Did my usual ritual vomiting but no blood this time. Dave Berrio drove me home and put me on my bed. Woke up 6:30 AM this morning fully clothed hugging my camera. Paul Hawkins has taken away my watch until I leave. Says if I wear it will give it away out in the villages like the other ones.

They take very good care of me around here. Have 3 large sacrifices planned already for next week. Am glad I'm getting out of here tomorrow so I can sober up. Lick, Dave Berrio, Sid Ellis and myself are leaving in AM for Saigon with crossbows and propaganda. Have a reason to go also. Col Hullar asked me to brief Gen'l Sythe (?spelling) the new general in charge of Civic Action - about what we do here - same-same bullshit. Guess he picked me because I'm full of same so should be easy...

...Got in Friday nite about 9 PM. After taking Lick home went to bed. Saturday I think I wrote you a short note - at least intended to. Went out with Berrio and Brian Riel (a dentist from Qhui 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 loved 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's forgotten all about it. Ended up instead at Hiur'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 - want to have a sacrifice for me but told him I won't have time. Also took in a sacrifice at Hluce's house and then came home by 5 PM - went right to bed - was awakened by music at 9 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, Hiur, Kil, Ton, Hinh(g), 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. I need you sweetie. Nurse me back to civilization slowly, be kind to me when I say stupid, strange things.

List

66. Lick Rahlan (cont) 201 2b 15 Jan '68 (cont)

Listen to my stories as patiently as you can and I'll listen to yours. And then we'll both forget this wild, strange, wonderful, sad and ugly year - and start to live our lives all over again. Sounds good, doesn't it? We'll be oday once we both settle down and have each other again.....

202 1a 17 Jan '68

...Well, its 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, Majaor Paul Hawkins, Berrio, Roy Worthington, Lee Ignatowiesz, Hlin, Hmyar, Hinh(g), Hiur, Kil, Karr, Jun, even Agleo from Plei Koteng, Bill Fulton, T.I. Harris, Ralph Nagle (new man Ill 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, colonels, 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." Let's make love, sweetie, not war, okay? Maybe when I get away from here, I'll miss it but think it'll take a long time.

...Will get paid tomorrow and mail my final box to you. 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 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.....

26 Oct 1977

...Quite frankly, in Minneapolis and your letter, I was a little surprised at your "shock" regarding Lick, a.k.a. Y-Djit or, more correctly, vice versa. I'm speaking of knowledge here, but reaction. First, Lick left too many obvious "trails" to ignore the obvious - at least from my standpoint. Secondly, I seem to recall - with somewhat unusual clarity - you, Lick and I discussing his political philosophy over rice wine at Hinh's hut in Plei Brel. Third, Lick knew too much, and was far and above more intelligent than any other Montagnard I knew - and attempted to conceal that too often, not to have had skeletons in his closet.

As you have noted in your letters to Kay, Lick took command when in the villages - as if he, and not the village chiefs, ran the villages. And, you will recall, we operated with impunity or immunity from the V.C. when on our sojourns - because the village chiefs "guaranteed" our bodies from harm. Thinking back, how many chiefs said that to you directly? On the other hand, how many said it through Lick's translation or, after Lick had talked with the chief? I would venture to say that Lick was the moving force - the guarantor of our safety from V.C. harm and either directed or enlisted the support of the village chiefs. Enough!

In reviewing your letters, I have to agree you were a set up for our adventures in the Montagnard villages. You didn't let anyone down - certainly not me, especially not the people. To paraphrase your remarks, those who became involved, learned a great deal about themselves, gave a lot, received a lot, and left an indelible part of themselves, at least, in the memory of those we touched - affected...