



James Boyd Reay papers

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Monday, June 23
2:45 a.m.

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6.23.69

Dear family,

..... Would you believe a purple heart?! And on my first ambush patrol, yet! I can laugh now, but just a few hours ago I was pretty scared and praying hard!

Our convoy reached Patent II fire support base about 2 p.m.

Sunday afternoon. I was briefed in along with another new guy in my platoon. After supper, we left at 7:00 p.m. to set up an ambush just a few hundred meters from the fire support base, along the road. See, the "gooks" plant land mines nearly everywhere to blow up passing trucks the

next day.

Well, we got out there at dark, and the guys in front spotted 4 or 5 "gooks" up on the road, evidently planting a mine. They opened up fire - machine guns and automatic rifles. But, right away we started receiving enemy fire from another direction. We opened up with everything: anti-tank weapons, grenade launchers, machine guns, and M-16's.

In the fire fight, one guy (who had briefed me in the afternoon) got a broken arm from an AK round. (Russian made weapon that the 'gooks' use.)

In just a few minutes

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the "dust off" arrived. That's the med./evac. helicopter.

Little did I know then that I was 'in' for my first helicopter ride very shortly.

As soon as the helicopter left, we had been obviously zeroed in on, because 10 or 12 mortars hit directly among us in the rice paddy.

One exploded I'd say about 15 feet away from me. My head was down, but I could sense the flash and concussion.

Praise the Lord! - I only picked up one piece of shrapnel in my back. It

didn't hurt that much, but a guy crawled over and put a sterile bandage on it - after ripping my jungle fatigue shirt away. (And I just put it on clean this morning!)

Well, I hate to realize it, but in that short, but pretty direct-hit mortar seige, 7 or 8 other guys picked up shrapnel. One guy in the temple area, and he was dead when we got in here to the hospital at Cu Chi. And he was married and expecting a baby!!

The other guys got hit in the arms, legs, seat, & back. Nothing real serious.

After the mortars hit they radioed for support. Within about 15 minutes there were two other patrols there to support us. One came by foot, and the other by tank.

The area was lit up like a football field from the constant flares sent up from the fire support base.

The area was circled by half a dozen helicopters gunships. They have miniguns that spray an area the size of a football field in something like 15 seconds, with rounds an inch apart! And they're equipped with powerful rockets. They saturated the ground with fire immediately

surrounding our position. Boy, they're powerful and accurate. A lot of the rockets and rounds were hitting within 30 yards of us.

Then the second dust off came in and we were here at the hospital in about 5 minutes.

I'm pretty fortunate. They just now dug the shrapnel out of me. A lot of times it is left in if it's not spotted while probing.

Noon - got a few hours of sleep in one of the wards and my Lieutenant picked me up in his new jeep about an hour ago. Had my bandage changed and am all set. They gave me a

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complete new set of clothes at the hospital. I don't know why, but that's the way they work it.

Well, for my first patrol I gained quite a bit of experience.

They say that was unusual - that my unit seldom gets fired on. The big problem is with booby traps.

— The food over here is the best I've had in the army. And there's always plenty. You should see all the quarts of milk used at each meal. There are cartons all over the place.

It's war alright, but the most comfortable war in history, for us. Plenty of food, medicine and

fire power. I just can't understand why we aren't winning faster.

I'll look forward to hearing from you and when Tim's leave is. I suppose he might be home right now.

'Til later -

Love, Jim

P.S. Please save my shrapnel souvenir. It was bloody and little pieces of flesh hanging from it when the Doc handed it to me. Ha!

6.11.69



Wednesday noon, June 11

UNITED STATES ARMY

Dear dad, mother, and family,

I made it to Vietnam lastnight, and as I remember Crosby writing when he came here, I too was sweating before I finished descending the ramp. The plane ride was long but comfortable. Now the idea is to keep cool, but there's little escape from the humidity.

This is not my assigned place. I will receive shipping orders sometime this week and then will send you my address. We flew into Bien Hoa ("Bin Ha") and are just 42 miles northwest of Saigon. The road outside the rows of barbed wire is well traveled - mostly with military vehicles.

As we were being oriented after "in-processing" last night, (3 A.M.) the sirens went on so we had to take cover for an hour. The air port was receiving some rounds. Pretty typical I guess.

It seems so unreal to finally be here. After hearing about Vietnam for years, reading about it and talking about it, now I'm a part of it.

However, unbelievable to me, I'm twice as happy as I've ever been in the Army! It helps to have so many people praying for me!!

This morning I was on a detail delivering truckloads of old clothing to a Vietnamese village near here. Seemed so strange to see all the orientals in Koolie hats and sandals - made me know that I'm in a foreign country.

It's sad to see all the sandbagged buildings, dead trees, and poorly clothed Vietnamese, but the moral seems high.

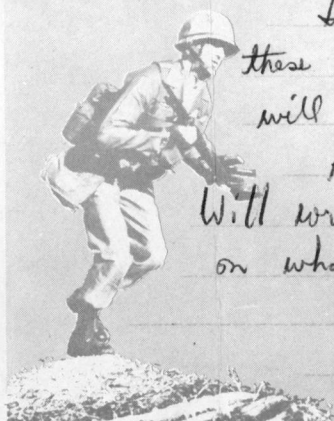
There are helicopters flying over constantly.

I could write a book on the experiences & sights of just these past hours, but have to go to another formation. Probably will be on details 'til I'm shipped to my unit.

Anyway, I wanted you to know I'm safe and happy. Will write again soon with my address & fill you in more on what I'm experiencing.

Please grant everyone.

Much love, James



6.16.69

Monday morning, June 16

Dear Dad, Mom, and family,

Finally got to my unit last night. You'll probably be getting a postcard with my permanent address on it. The "25th Inf. Div." isn't necessary though. The address on the envelope is correct and sufficient. Just don't make any small change or I'll probably never get it!

I'm just scribbling this note now - I have to go on detail at Headquarters for the day. My 5 days of 'on the job' training starts tomorrow.

Last night after getting here, a guy told us to leave the area or we'd get put on a sandbagging detail. I had been mixing cement on a detail all afternoon, so I left promptly. I got a steam bath, shower, & massage. Sure felt good. But as I was coming back to the company area, I saw streams of GI's running with their weapons & ammo to the perimeter or bunker line. There had been some incoming rockets or mortars, so the area was on 100% alert. I don't know how often that happens. Anyway, I found my way back to my "hooch" (screened barracks with cots) and went to bed. I couldn't do anything since I haven't been issued any weapons or equipment yet. I sure felt helpless.

I ordered a Kodak Carousel 850 slide projector from Ft. Worth Texas through the Army & Air Force Exchange Service. It should be arriving home through the mail within 30 days. Feel free to use it to see the slides I send home or for slides you may take.

Chuck Rye & I finally got separated. He's here at Cu Chi, but in a different Infantry unit.

Well, I'm "at home" now for about a year. When I'm settled I'll try to write a little plainer.

Love, James



P.S. Please give my address to Mrs. Brager - church secretary - so I'll get the bulletin. Thanks

AVDCAG-PA

3 October 1968

SUBJECT: Procedures for Emergency Leave to CONUS

d. Red Cross Actions: (1) The local Red Cross in your home will telephone the American Red Cross Communication Center (AMCROSS), Washington, D.C., and provide them with complete information to include the attending physician's recommendation, when applicable.

(2) AMCROSS, Washington, D.C., will immediately relay the message via overseas cable to the Red Cross Field Director serving your unit.

(3) The Field Director will contact you and advise you of the emergency. He will also contact your commander and the emergency leave approving authority who will approve/disapprove your leave as the situation warrants.

(4) The Field Director will then telegraph the local Red Cross in your area advising them to inform your family as to whether the emergency leave was approved or denied.

e. If your emergency leave is approved, you will be given priority for air movement to CONUS.

f. In order to preclude unnecessary delays in delivery of emergency messages to the Field Director, it is important that you keep your family advised of your complete current military address.

Dear family,
We got a few more minutes, so thought I'd stick these things in an envelope & send them even though I just wrote this morning. It's not like spending another dime on an airmail stamp, ha!
We heard of plugged nickels, but never before paper nickels & dimes, until I got to Vietnam. American 'greenbacks' are too valuable on the black market, so we had to exchange all our American currency for 'military money.' It comes in assorted sizes and colors. Wow! Seems silly pulling out 5¢ & 10¢ bills to pay for a coke.
Speaking of coke, we have been drinking the liquids. 5 or 6 cans of pop yesterday. The waiter OK, but pop & beer are the only cold beverages around. I think we're already getting acclimated. Not the 'gallons' of sweet like the first day. And we're taking my salt tablets & malaria pills daily. I start my 5 days of training tomorrow. And then... action? Love, James

W. F. FAUGHN
LTC, AGC
Adjutant General

Monday afternoon, June 16

6.16.69

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96225
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

AVDCAG-PA

3 October 1968

SUBJECT: Procedures for Emergency Leave to CONUS

TO: Each New Reinforcement, 25th Infantry Division

1. PURPOSE: To provide you and your family with the procedures to be followed in case of an emergency situation which requires your presence at home. It is suggested that you mail home this handout at the earliest opportunity.
2. DEFINITIONS: a. An "emergency" is a situation:
 - (1) When an immediate member of your family is seriously or critically ill and the attending physician recommends your presence.
 - (2) When an immediate member of your family dies.
 - (3) When your presence is required at home for morale or legal reasons (These are evaluated on an individual basis).
- b. An "immediate member" of your family is limited to your mother, father, wife, children, brother, sisters, or a person in "Loco parentis," i.e., one who has acted in the capacity of a parent during and extended period of your childhood due to the absence of your natural parent(s).
3. PROCEDURES: a. It is important that you advise your family to always go first to their local Red Cross Chapter in the event of a family emergency that requires your presence. Your family may write you if they wish, but after they have contacted the Red Cross.
- b. In case of serious or critical illness of an immediate member of your family, the local Red Cross must be advised of the name, address, and relationship of the person who is ill, the name of the attending physician, the hospital where the patient is confined, and your complete name, rank, service number, and military address. The Red Cross will contact the attending physician obtaining diagnosis, prognosis, and his recommendation regarding the necessity of your presence. If the doctor does not recommend your presence, you will not be granted emergency leave.
- c. In case of the death of an immediate member of your family, the local Red Cross must be advised of the name, address, and relationship of the person who has died, the doctor or undertaker to be contacted for verification of death, and your complete name, rank, service number, and military address. The Red Cross will verify the reported death.

6.21.69



UNITED STATES ARMY

Saturday mite, June 21

Dear family,

I'm done with my five days of training now, and am scheduled to go out in the field on the 23rd. It was mostly review, but interesting and important info.

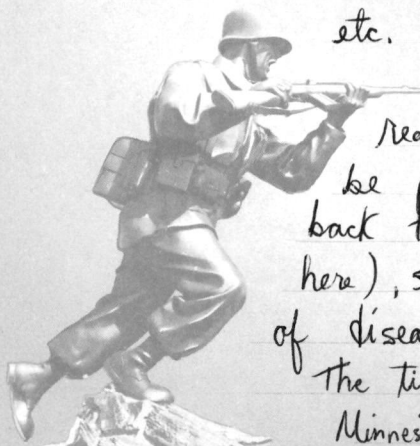
Received my M-16 this week. It has shrapnel holes in the stock from the last guy that used it. When we zeroed them in, we had to wait awhile, because the range is outside the perimeter and there were some Viet Cong in the area.

Saw a movie last night, drive-in style - outside in the bleachers. It was a western with Dean Martin and Robert Mitchum. Seemed wierd to be sitting there laughing, while air strikes and explosions were constantly going on.

The monsoon season has begun, so it rains at least once daily. Last night I put my swim suit on to go outside for my shower.

Had a class yesterday on how dogs are used in Nam for tracking, spotting booby-traps, etc. It costs more to train a dog than a soldier! Guess they're real useful though. But they have to be put to sleep instead of coming back to the U.S. (called "the world" over here), so there won't be any transfer of disease.

The time difference between here and Minnesota is 13 hours. You're 13 hours



6.21.69

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UNITED STATES ARMY

behind. So while I'm writing this on Saturday nite, you're just getting up on Saturday morning!

Seems early to be talking about extending here in Nam, but I found out that you can get an early out if you stay over here until you have only 150 days left of your 2 year hitch. That means I'd have to stay here 'til the middle of August instead of 'til June 9th.

Well, how's Al's stock car doing at the races? Has Ric gotten his built?

'Til I write from the field - bye for now
Love, James

P.S. I can't remember whether or not I told you about the slide projector I bought. It should come in the mail sometime next month. Try it out and let me know how it works, OK?



6.25.69

Wednesday 7:00 A.M., June 25

Dear mother, dad, and family,

I was glad to receive your letter yesterday. Just 4 days in the mail. Not bad.

I still haven't gone back to the field yet. They'll be sewing me up either today or tomorrow and then I'll be heading out. It's been nice to have lots of free time this week. Pretty different!

After I see the Doc this morning I'm going to try to get in at the Dentist. It's been a long time!

I went to see a movie last night (all the entertainment is free) and it was a pretty good western, but just as the plot was climaxing, the power went out. Not for the whole base camp, but that particular section. So we had to leave, guessing what would be the logical ending.

Last night I was on KP for a couple hours. Nothing tough. Anyway I feel kinda' guilty having it so easy here at Cu Chi.

The other guys in my hooch thought I should have refused KP - you know, play the helpless wounded GI bit. That seems to be the typical strategy of a lot of the guys here. They call it shām time. Anything they can do to get off the field for a day or two; appointments, petty illness, etc.

So Clod has been out at the house, huh? What's her friend's name? I'll be anxious to know

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what they find in Minneapolis. Wish I was there to show them around. I'm finally learning my way around downtown.

Well, I'm glad my basic training yearbook finally came. I'm sure it's just like Tim's, but I thought it would bring laughs to look back on.

Speaking of Tim, Welcome Home on your big 17 day leave!! Well, I didn't do much better with 21. You still like Ft. Bragg? I'm sure I'd take it any day over this place, except for  NO THANKS!

Wow, what a garage sale. Did you sell the GARAGE?! I can't figure out how you made so much. What were the biggest items?

Well mother, you're all scheduled for the summer. - Up tight! What will you be doing at Glen Lake? Was the assignment with Town 'n Country fun? I bet you'll really see some beautiful homes!

Don't forget to put the ducks & geese in, (or do they stay out all night now?) and take a good swim for me. Chuck teased me a few times about those "rich people with the pool."

All for now - greet everyone.
Love, James

P.S. Your letter was my first mail in Vietnam, along with a letter from Dianne Christopherson, and the one you forwarded.

6.27.69

Friday a.m., June 27

Dear Mollie, Rie, Charlie and Sean,

Glad for your letter on Wednesday. 4 days to reach me - not bad.

This morning I'm sitting at the dentist, hoping to get an examination on a stand-by basis. It's been over a year - nearly two years, since I last had an examination.

This has been an easy, restful week for me. Since getting my 'wound' on Sunday night, I've been pretty much free all the time. Seems unusubal - and is, for the Army. I guess they lay off you for awhile, in sympathy.

Anyway, it's been fun. I went swimming yesterday afternoon, (yes, we have a pool here!) Read for a few hours in the library - air conditioned yet! - and shopped around at the PX. They have quite a few activities going on here at the base camp, but it's not the same as back in the world.

I was surprised to find that there's Television & Radio here. Of course we're only about 30 miles from Saigon, and when you watch the news, the commentator is wearing jungle fatigues the same as everyone else over here. (It's all military operated.)

I got my stitches in on Wednesday and the Doc says it will heal up fine. I was a little concerned at the time of the stitching though. The guy that did it was a Spec. 4 - one rank above me only. He was a medic in off the field & it was his first job! There was a captain standing by to observe and comment, like: "Use more gauze to sop up the blood" and "take the razor blade and cut away the old flesh, the depth of the hole", and then I felt the sensation of



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a chunk being pulled out of my back. Not painful because of the novacaine, but a weird feeling.

There are about 20 guys in my hutch here at the base camp. But it always changes, with guys in from the field with injuries, medical appointments, R & R, etc. And then there are the new replacements that continually come in. They usually get a little upset to see so many guys bandaged up & limping around. And then there's me - first day on the field, "Purple Heart veteran". (That's what they call me) The hutch is just a wooden floor, screened in porch. When I go back out to the fire support base tomorrow, I'll be sleeping in a bunker.

Yes, we're "on pills." Salt tablets are always available, and we have 2 kinds of malaria pills to take. A big orange one every Monday, and a small white one daily.

Boy, your trip to Montana sounds neat. Be sure to get some pictures.

I didn't know you were building a garage. One or two stalls? That'll be nice. Especially when the snow starts flying.

No, I haven't seen Numbo. For some reason I never got over to your house while I was home. Who chose the name? It's cute.

Ha! I didn't know it was a Studebaker like is racing. Is it one of those old ones with the hood that comes to a point? I laugh everytime I see one of these. How often do you take the boys to the races?

Ya, that's neat that mother's out of the house a little more. Her jobs sound interesting.

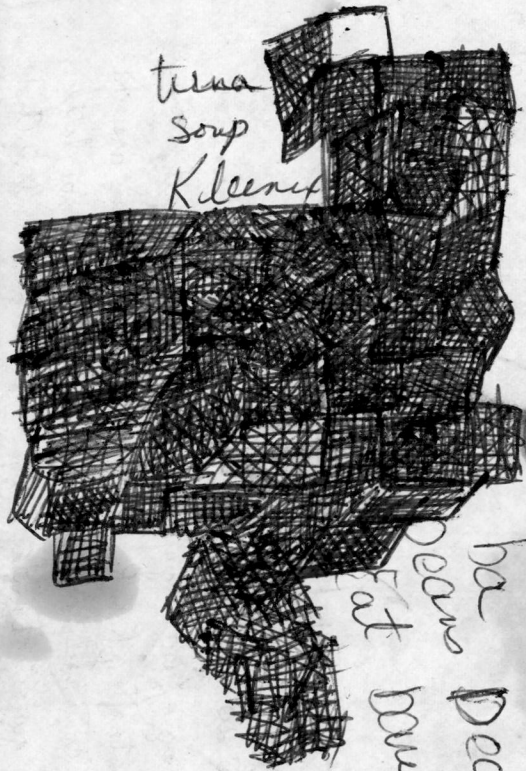
Yes, I'd really like to read "The Source" when you're done. Sounds interesting. There's time every day to read, but all they sell at the PX is smut.

Thanks for writing.

Love, James



terna
soup
Kleenex



be
Deans
Fat
Dw
Dean

Bordeaux
Arsenic & Lead

6.28.69

Saturday A.M., June 28

Dear family,

Just a note to let you know I was glad for your letter yesterday. The small envelope you enclosed was from Jeannie Johnson - now married - who worked at Bolin's and sang in "The Followers".

Mother, your job sounds real interesting. What a surprise to see neighbors and in-laws at White Bear Lake! Do you wear a white dress and shoes?

So Tim has a few days left at home. Take a swim for me! I bet it's been a long time since you had a tongue sandwich.

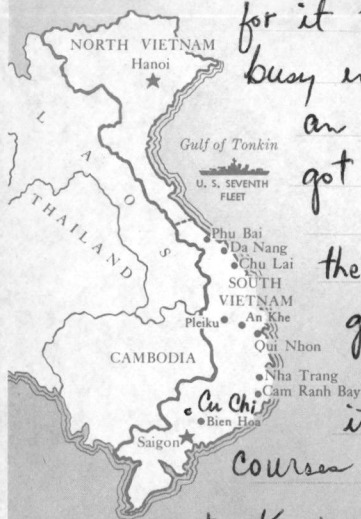
This afternoon I'll be heading back to Patent II fire support base. I haven't spent a night there yet. I suppose the medic out there will take my stitches out in a week or so. I have a profile for "light duty" for the next 7 days, so maybe I'll be watching the sandbags being filled. ha.

This army stand-by basis bugs me. I went to the dentist yesterday for the third time and they finally examined me. He only found one small cavity so I waited for it to be filled; from 7-12 noon! Still were busy with other patients, so I'm going to make an appointment for next month. At least I got some letters written during that time.

I signed up for a business course through the mail. I'm not sure that the credit will be good at the University, but it will be something to put my mind on over here, and it's of interest to me. Only \$5⁰⁰, and future courses will be free. Should start in about a month.

Thanks for the letter.

Love, James



7.1.69

Tuesday am., July 1st

Dear mom, dad, Tim, Margie, Beth, & Kim,

I was surprised to get another letter from you already yesterday. ☺

Just got back from an ambush patrol. All we do is go out, set up a perimeter and take turns keeping guard. Slept wet - but slept. The ground is like Uncle Mel's driveway after a heavy rain - but twice as deep.

It was good to read your letter after coming in from an afternoon sweep. We were really soaked, and believe it or not it gets cold when the wind blows with the rain.

We rode out to the area we were to sweep, on Army Personnel Carriers. (version of a TANK) It took 12 of them to transport our whole company - each one costs \$50,000. So on that one small sweep, over 3/4 million \$ was tied up in machines & equipment. The cost of this war is atrocious! (ya, I learned a new word. ha)

I've been keeping somewhat of a diary. Thought it might be interesting a few years from now. I'm going to send the pages home at the end of each month so there won't be such a chance for them to get wet. I doubt if it will be of much interest to you since I've written a lot of the stuff in letters.

This afternoon we'll be going on a "heliborn." The helicopters fly in into an area and then we make a couple hours sweep. I'm going to try to get a couple pictures if it doesn't rain. It will be my 11th flight; second one by helicopter.

I bet Grandmother, Aunt Esther, and Jackie have a lot to tell about England. At least they survived driving on the left side of the road.

Croz & Cheri's pick-up sounds neat. Did they buy it from Philips in Excelsior? Has Al gotten his



7.1.69

de luxe truck yet? I sure like the color of our new one, and the big "picture-window" back windshield.

Would you please send me Diane Fredrickson's address if you still have it? I tried to call her once while I was home, but there was no answer. Then things got so busy the last days I was home, I didn't get around to calling again.

Mother, what do you ride in for Town 'n Country - a panel truck? Sounds like an interesting, delicious job; but like you say, tiring too. I'll be interested to find out what you do during a "work session" at Glen Lake.

Glad to get the church bulletin yesterday along with your letter, and also a cute card & letter from Penny Wahlen. She writes in such a mature, grown-up way, I can't help but laugh.

Ah, it feels good sitting here in the sun outside my bunker. But in a couple hours it's sure to cloud over and start making things a little bit muddier.

Have a good end to your leave, Tim. And enjoy that flight with Stewardesses back east!

Love from Patent # fire support base,
James



7.1.69

Tuesday night, July 1st

Dear family,

Wow! Another letter from home today! I wrote earlier today but will let you know what I just found out that I'll be doing for the next week or so.

Since we've been here at Patent # Fire Support Base, we've gone out on an afternoon sweep, ~~and~~ each day, and an ambush patrol each night.

Tomorrow morning will be flying to the other side of Cu Chi - still only a few miles from Cu Chi Base Camp - to build another fire support base.

Up until now there's been lots of time to read & write letters in the mornings, but ^{now} I guess will be working most of the daylight hours on the new fire support base.

Thanks for writing again. Yours was the only letter today. ~~But~~ But most of the guys are giving me a hard time already because I'm getting more mail than they do.

The "heliborn" was real interesting this afternoon, even though we ~~got~~ got drenched again. There were 3 dog teams (3 German Shepherds - 3 handlers) that went with us. The door gunners ~~the~~ had their ammo belts hooked to the machine guns, but didn't need them on our mission.

We only flew for about 6 or 7 minutes. I got a few slides from the air. The pilots sure can manipulate their 'copters effectively & accurately.

Well, if you got a telegram on Thursday, I imagine you got my letter on Friday explaining my little combat experience. Yes, they said

I'll get a purple heart, but I don't know

when. The policy in my unit is that you are pulled out of combat after 3 purple hearts. Like

you said, I'd just as soon do without anymore! My



7.1.69

2

back hasn't given me any trouble, and very little pain. The medic just changes the bandage every day and will remove the 5 stitches later this week.

Tonite the chaplain has a protestant service. It will be the first one we've been able to attend since being home!

Seems hard to believe that Al is 28. I suppose it was a fun "party."

Even though the mail service is good, there seems to be such a lag between writing a letter and receiving one. Like, as I write this, I know dad's birthday isn't for 2 days, but by the time ~~you~~ get it, his birthday will be long gone.

No ambush patrol tonite, because of our new "venture" in the morning. ☺ It'll be my 12th flight. (not that I'm going to try to keep count, but it's still a thrill every time.)

All for now.

"Keep those cards and letters comin', folks!"

Love, James

P.S. Kim - thanks for the nice typed letter! I haven't typed for ages. I'll write you soon.



7.4.69

Friday morning, July 4th!

Dear Kim,

Good morning! I sure was glad to get your letter a few days ago. You're learning to type pretty well. Fun, isn't it?

Some 4th of July. Did you get any firecrackers & sparklers? Do they still sell cracker balls? I don't even care about fireworks anymore. I still jump everytime the artillery goes off. The explosions are so loud it hurts your ears. And we're always using star clusters and sky flares. Also different colors of smoke, so the helicopters know where to land.

Every night we have a test fire to shoot for a minute from our bunker and positions. You should hear the noise and see the flashes! When they finally call, "Cease Fire," there's a huge cloud of smoke covering the entire area.

Thanks for praying for me every night, Kim. I'm praying for you, too.

I just had my stitches taken out, and will have to get ready to go out on patrol in a few minutes.

I'm enclosing some "Chieu Hoi" flyers. The planes drop thousands of them all over, so the Vietnamese & Viet Cong will join our side.

A lot of them do it, because we have better food, supplies, etc. Then they become our "Kit Carson" scouts. They can find booby traps better than we can.

Thanks again for writing, Kim!

Bye for now.

Love,

James



7.6.69



Sunday, July 6

UNITED STATES ARMY

Dear Margie,

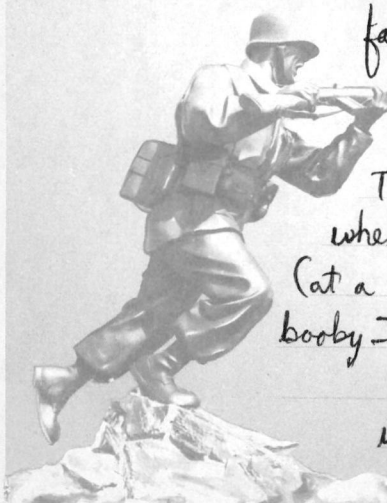
I was glad for your letter yesterday along with mother's long one.... and 8 others! I really struck it rich. I was "standing guard" at the top of our 40 ft. tower when my squad leader brought the "bundle" up the ladder to me. It was fun reading it all.

It's 2 p.m. now. Just got back from a 7 hour patrol. We found some Vietcong bunkers with ammo, supplies, and about 80 pounds of rice. We blew up the bunkers with grenades and C-4 explosive, and burned the rice and other stuff. There has been plenty of enemy activity in the area. Last night we didn't have an ambush patrol, but woke up at 1 a.m. when we were receiving incoming mortar rounds. We were relatively safe in the bunkers while the weapons platoon retaliated with our own mortars. It's hard to fire accurately at night though. The best bet is to cover the area with fire where the shots appeared to come from.

The first platoon from our company (I'm in the third) was on a sweep ~~today~~ yesterday not far from the tower when the point man hit a boobytrap and was killed.

Two others were injured from the blast. That's why we always stay spread out when on a patrol - so only one person (at a time) is susceptible to injury from a booby-trap or enemy grenade.

When, it feels good to be sitting here in the shade of the bunker. The other



7.6.69



UNITED STATES ARMY

guys are sleeping and I'm sitting in my army green undies, writing and listening to the Twins game. It must be recorded, 'cause it would be 1:00 a.m. at home now. In the 5th inning the Twins are leading Oakland by 10 to 1! Good ol' Minnesota. The only thing I miss about the game on the radio are the typical advertisements, like "Tucka Bucka Daye Way..." On this army station from Saigon there is no advertising. Nice, huh? Just music, news, etc.

The patrols aren't too far - maybe 5 miles at the most so far - but they're really tiring because of the terrain. There are a lot of paths, but we stay away from those, 'cause they are the most likely places to be booby trapped. So we cut our own trail through the thick underbrush. We aren't near any rice paddies here. The area is called "Hobo Woods." No tall trees but real thick vegetation. We went through some spongy-marshy parts today, too. Pew, it stunk like an overflowed sewer. But it was so hot, the water felt good. It was hard going, because the grass was thick and every step you'd sink up to your knees. If you stopped you'd sink even farther into muck. Once I got caught in the suction and fell on one side - keeping my M-16 above water like a good soldier. ha. The best thing about a patrol is getting back and taking your boots and wet clothes off! I carry 2 canteens and have to take 'sips' so it will last. I expect it to



7.6.69



UNITED STATES ARMY

be refreshing and satisfying all the time, but warm water never is. I can't help to think of "Mister Misty's," Kool-Aid stands, ice cold Pepsi, popsicles, etc. ha!

Hope I'm not exaggerating or making things sound worse than they are - just trying to "tell it like it is."

I suppose you're sleeping at Temperance River right now. Bet you'll have a good time there - if it's warm. How is the new camping area?

Who named the dark goose Ashes? It's a neat name. Glad that Cocker Spaniel didn't hurt it too bad.

I'm glad my slide projector arrived, that was pretty quick. Let me know how it works. And would you explain what the zoom LENS on the projector is?

Kinda dumb, but I ordered it extra without even knowing what it was. But it's the BEST projector that Kodak makes. I figured the zoom lens must be good, too.

Wow. Al's birthday present sounds neat. If it's made of concrete, what color is it? Sidewalk white? ha.

Tack Boice is married now I think, at least

I know Gordy Stamp is. Ya, we used to do alot together in Jr. High. We had

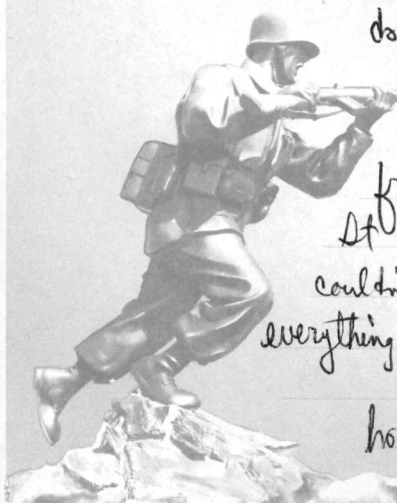
a sport house in his basement

once. Charged 2¢ I think and everyone

from the Assembly grounds was there.

It went OK, but one of the rooms we couldn't get very dark and you could see how everything was set up. ha.

Boy, mothers really putting in the house at Town'n Country. Hope she's



7.6.69

4



UNITED STATES ARMY

not losing too much sleep at those late parties. Is Uncle Dan is flying, huh? It was nice of Alla Mae to write and explain things.

I'm not sure if we ever sent "Chiêu Hoi" flyers home. I picked them up out on patrols. We drop tens of thousands of 'em, so the Viet Cong will read them and "Chiêu Hoi" (join our side) It may seem silly, but alot of them do because we have better supplies, food, etc. And we pay them for leading us to weapons, supplies, tunnels, etc.

I'm glad they had fun in England. I suppose you'll hear alot about it all summer. Just think - 8 years ago we were in Alaska now!

Cheryl Cook is married now. Boy, there's hardly anyone single left! I'd appreciate it if mother bought a gift for her from "us" as she suggested.

Well the Twins are ahead 13 to 1 now in the 8th inning. Pretty good game.

I have to stop now and help build a back blast wall in front of our bunker door. 36 more sandbags to fill!

Sorry this is sloppy, but I'm not used to writing on my lap & it's too hot to stretch out in the sun.

Thanks again for writing.

Love,
James

P.S. I suppose Tim's headed back to N. Carolina now. This stationery is what he left home at Christmas!



7.7.69

Monday a.m., July 7

Dear Mollie, Ric, & boys,

Glad for another letter from you. Your penmanship is easy to read, but I still like to read well typed letters. Fredrick Herfurth has pretty neat stationery.

It's just 7:30 Sunday night where you are. I suppose you had another exciting day at the races. That Studebaker must be in top shape. Are the prizes mostly trophies or cash?

We leave today at noon on patrol. Then tonight we have an ambush patrol. Our platoon has been having ambush patrol every third night since we set up this new base. The other two nights we stand guard at the bunkers.

Last night the guys out on ambush patrol had 2 gooks (North Vietnamese) walk into their "trap." They shot one and took the other as a prisoner of war. They just took him off to Cu Chi for interrogation - blindfolded and hands tied behind his back.

From what I've heard, we should only be here for another week and then be moved to another location.

I'll be glad to leave the Hobs Woods.

I see what you mean about needing to concentrate on The Source. But if you don't mind I'd still like to read it because I've heard so much about it and it's good to have something to read during "free time." Hope the boys rifles are returned.

Bye for now,

Love, James



7.8.69

Tuesday a.m. July 8

Hi Tim,

Welcome back to your job. ha. Bounded from mother's letters like you were pretty busy while on leave. Too bad it was cool part of the time, but I'm sure you still got in some swimming.

I suppose you'll get home next at Christmas, huh?

We have part of today free since we were on patrol all yesterday afternoon and then on ambush patrol all night.

We wear flak jackets every night here in the perimeter. They're lined with some kind of fiberglass. It's supposed to stop nearly all shrapnel. They'd be good to use out on patrols except they're too heavy and hot. It's bad enough with all the ammo & equipment we have to carry.

It probably won't take you long to get back in the saving of things. Do you like your position as a mechanic well enough to go into it after the service? - That is, if you're not a LIFER. ha!

That was nice of you to buy dad a 2nd truck battery for his birthday. That's some truck, isn't it?

I really like the big window between the cab and camper.

Well Tim, good^a summer at Ft. Bragg - if that's possible. Just think - a pay raise on this month's check. Not bad.

Bye for now - James

7-9.69

July
Wednesday, June 9
6 a.m.

Dear family,

My last note from this location. Happy day. We're leaving by Chinook (huge 2 prop helicopter) soon for Emery Fire Support Base. It's much better established, protected, and out of the Hobo Woods. I'm glad with everyone else in my platoon that we're movin' out.

Emery is also just a few miles from Cu Chi, all these bases are "offspring" of the mother base camp - Cu Chi.

I have no idea what's in store at Emery. Just found out at 10:30 last night that we were leaving. That's the army: "Be prepared."

Well Tim's back at Ft. Bragg now. I suppose he will make it home again at Christmas. Nice of him to buy a second battery for the truck. Must be neat with the cupboards in.

Received your 2 letters this week - of July 1 & 2. Also a nice letter from Grandmother Crosby, and Aunt Marybelle. It's hard to answer all my mail!

Aunt Marybelle is really thoughtf. She sent 2 color prints taken when we were down there. I'll probably send them home in the next letter so they'll not get ruined over here.

It rained long & steady yesterday. Dug some trenches to relieve the deepest puddles, but the mud gets thicker - or deeper, I should say. (It's soupy with suction)

7.9.69

2

With all the rain it brought the spiders above ground. Yuck! Willis Tapscott was going to bed & luckily carried a flashlight. There was a tarantula the size of your outstretched hand (NO EXAGGERATION!!) right where he was to sleep. I Reluctantly felt my way into the bunker - no flashlight. Well, I fared the night with mosquito bites only, so am glad - and relieved!

A new guy came in yesterday from Chula Vista, Calif. I was there with CIA at this time last year. He used to go to the church I was in there, so we know some of the same people!! Just finished breakfast and must wash & shave. Don't have much packing to do. I live out of my waterproof bag.

Well, the astronaut's head for the moon in a few days - the ~~man~~^{astro}-monkey is getting food pills out in space - and the first GI's returned home without being replaced. (I'm still hoping not to draw a full year's combat pay. Stateside would be fine!) See - I'm not missing all the news. ha.

Thought I'd let you know I'm making a location change, even though you don't know the diff. Emery should be considerably "safer".

Love from this side of earth,
James

7.10.69

Thursday a.m., July 10

Dear family,

Got a nice letter from Mollie yesterday with the cutest picture of Charlie & Sean. Better tell them though that those jungle hats are cheap. They're made by gooks (we're only issued one from U.S.) and fade into a dirty brown when they're wet. They also ~~lose~~ ^{lose} their shape, but a lot of the guys like 'em that way. Some also cut the straps off. Glad the boys liked them.

We usually have at least an hour a day to write letters, etc. I received my Personnel Management Course yesterday, so I'll have plenty to keep me busy.

I've been averaging 5 or 6 letters a day, ~~and~~ have been receiving that many or more! My squad leader is really disgusted. I don't think he's gotten a letter since I came. Every day they hand me my "bundle" with a sigh. I don't care; it's fun to get mail. I don't know if I'll be able to keep up though. Bud offered to do a newsletter for me! As funny as it may sound, I'm considering it. It's tiring to write many of the same things to so many different people.

That doesn't mean all you'll hear from me is mimeographed letters though. ha.

I haven't heard from Mike Smith. In the confusion I didn't get anymore info. than that he went to Pleiku. And I don't have his home address. All I know is that his family lives on a farm in Anoka. Of course "game"

7.10.69

2

I'd appreciate someone calling a few Smith's in Anoka to try and get his Vietnam address. It seems like a stab in the dark, but I can't think of any other alternative. I would like to keep in touch.

Emery is a pretty nice support base. Better than the last place anyway. I see they even have showers, so today I hope there'll be time to lather up.

Last night we went on an "Eagle Flight." Another company had made contact, so we took 9 helicopters & landed in a "Hot LZ" (Enemy infiltrated Landing Zone). We were there 'til dark. Didn't have to fire our weapons. The air support took care of it. We advanced, grenading 15-20 or more tunnels. Two gooks were killed. Guess they were really blown up. I didn't see. Calling them "gooks" may sound disrespectful, but it's easier, since they may be North Vietnamese or Viet Cong. We received some AK fire, but fortunately, no casualties.

Couldn't finish our afternoon patrol yesterday. The water and mud was getting waist deep!

Thanks for getting the wedding gift for Cheryl. Sounds like a real nice dish.

Margie - so you got your hair cut. Nice. Remember how I teased you with short hair, calling you "Rosie" - a girl on the peach crate?

I'm feeling fine. Every day is different and time seems to go fast.

Love from this end, James

7.10.69

Thursday, 7 p.m. July 10

hell-o again!

Before we went to build that new base they had us leave everything not necessary, behind. Got the stuff back tonite, here at Emery; My camera and a roll of film included. I bought a mailer and new roll, but either lost it or it was "taken".

Here's hoping it reaches you in this flimsy envelope. I have nothing else. Would you do me a heap of a favor & bring it to Brown's at Colonial Square? And perhaps they'd mail me a few mailer envelopes if you'd leave my service address. Brown's is still the most economical outfit I've found. Thanks.

Rode army personnel carriers (TANKS) out & back ~~from~~ our patrol area of the day. Gone for 7 hours.

Turning, but makes the bunker "a home" to get back to after the day.

Threw my first grenade in Vietnam. (Just in a tunnel) We found many fresh tunnels & more rice & supplies. Happily, no more contact. I don't sound like a soldier, do I? Well, most of the guys feel the same way, & will stay back if they can find a good enough excuse.

Oh boy, did that shower feel great this evening! Now I don't mind covering water - if I can get an occasional shower out of the deal.

from a happy GI, James

P.S. Film isn't supposed to go free, so I mark this day as using my 1st stamp in Vietnam - taken from the "stamp purse" "Dramma" gave me.

7.12.69

Saturday a.m., July 12

Dear Beth,

I just finished breakfast - powdered eggs. Yuck! The apple juice was good though.

How's Jennie? Have you been riding her much this summer. I bet there's plenty of grass for her to eat with all the rain you've had.

Yesterday we went on patrol with a mech. unit. (tanks) Those guys have it so easy! All you do is sit on Top and ride all day.

It's really kinda fun, as long as there are no "bad guys" around. Reminded me of our old Plymouth up in the woods. Of course these machines are much more powerful. They should be at \$50,000⁰⁰ a piece! They really cut through the brush and climb over fallen trees. I don't suppose they get very good mileage though.

There were 10 of them in a caravan. About 15 guys riding on top of each one. You don't ride inside, because if you hit a anti-tank mine, it would kill you from the blast & concussion. When you ride on top, it just "blows you off" the vehicle.

I saw a colored guy the other day with a MOHAWK.

Dude looked funny. Haven't seen one for years.

Vin including a magazine page that Mark Eaton sent me. (My life insurance agent) Pretty good salesman isn't he!?

Well "Ba", your summer is half over, Don't feel bad. I wish I was going to school in September! Love, James

7.14.69

Monday night, July 14

Dear mom, dad, & family,

Very glad for your carboned letter today. Do you realize what that means to me if Tim comes to Vietnam?! I will automatically (at my request) be taken out of combat - off the field!

I hope you don't think or feel that would be the "coward's way out of the war", but I'll tell you, I wouldn't pass up the chance.

I don't like to complain too much about my situation, but the GI's desire is No #1 - to get off the front line.

See, if 2 brothers are in Vietnam together, neither is required to leave a base camp. So if Tim was over here, I would immediately go into Cu Chi base camp & get a job there, or else be reassigned; perhaps Korea, perhaps stateside. There's also the possibility of being reassigned to the same unit Tim's in.

This all seems like a dream to me now - cause naturally I'd be elated to get another "job". But I'll be waiting anxiously to hear the whole final scoop. Maybe you've sent more news already.

If Tim declined Vietnam (which he had every right to, since I'm already over here) then you can just forget this [emotional] letter. (You may have an inkling of how I feel right now)

You said he was to report to Calif. on Aug. 15.

7.14.69

2

If he does, he should be over here within a week, & I'd be in Cu Chi base camp before September!!

I don't know if I'm making sense, but will be waiting to hear the scoop. I know my hopes might be shot down - cause right now, as I sit on my dusty bunker roof - Tim may have already gotten different orders. Oh well - I'm hoping anyway.

Again if Tim is Vietnam bound, I need these 3 things:

- ① A copy of his Vietnam orders.
- ② A letter from him saying he doesn't want to be reassigned (like to another country) in other words, that he's satisfied with his Vietnam orders.

- ③ Word from his unit - or a set of orders to his unit - when he ^{actually} arrives in Nam.

Well like I said, this may be all in vain, but I'm not going to be crying if I do leave the field. Guess that's enough of that for now.

Got your other letter & Margie's letter a couple days ago. Will answer those tomorrow or Wednesday (MOON DAY) 🌙 ✨ ✨ ✨

Thanks for writing - hope you can read this - hope to hear from you concerning the above - say hi to everyone - glad for another letter from Mollie today - at 7:00^{ish} off on an all night "watch" & search a village at daybreak -

LOVE, James

P.S. I wait proofread this - probably wouldn't make sense even to me!
P.S. I'm fine.

Tuesday, July 15

7.15.69

Dear Margie,

Here's another one of those
note pad letters. This time I'm
writing out in the field, right
outside a Vietnamese village. We
marched here last night in the
rain and surrounded the entire
village. Now the sun's just coming
up and some guys will go into
the village to search it and
look for Viet Cong. So far there's
been no shooting. There are
suspected Viet Cong in the village
so they should be found, unless
one of their tunnels leads them
to freedom. You wouldn't believe
all the tunnels over here. Seems

like everywhere we go, we find 'em
and blow 'em up.

What do you expect a village
to be like? It's just as
primitive as I imagined African
villages to be, deep in the jungle.

As we surrounded the village last
night, a few windows - (no glass
of course - but an opening in the
wall) were glowing from kerosene
or oil lamps. The hootches are
nothing but shacks, constructed out of
mud & scrap lumber with grass
roofs. The villages are really filthy.
They bring their water buffalo &
other animals right up to the
hootches. Sure stinks, the

legs tight.

There's a plane circling overhead right now "broadcasting" through loud speakers in Vietnamese.

I imagine they're asking the Vietcong to give themselves up: "Chieu Hoi."

It was nice to get another letter from you. I bet your short hair is cool & light.

I'd like to see it, but by next summer you could have it long again!

Only got a couple hours sleep last night so it may be hard to stay alert today.

I haven't heard from Tim.

7.15.69

people wear rags - some even have old army fatigues, & I think I've mentioned before that most of the young kids go naked.

Nobody has shoes. They wear those cheap Hong Kong things. There are palm trees & other jungle vegetation, but it's not as dense here as in other parts of the country.

Most of the land around here is rice paddies. They plow the land with their water buffalos and ancient wooden ploughs.

Since it's the rainy season now, the leeches are becoming prevalent, so we tie our pant

3

7.15.69

I'm wondering if he's back home or waiting for new orders, or what. I'll be anxious to find out his situation. It may be selfish, but I hope he's coming to Vietnam !!

I bet the pool feels good this month. I haven't swam for weeks. The closest thing to it is wading through creeks & swamps. (daily) The coolness & wetness of the water feels good, but so much of the water is polluted & stinks something fierce. It's just "Bad Noosh".

They brought breakfast out here for us. I just finished my

soggy toast and bitter coffee. Oh, it's not really that bad. We get plenty to eat, but it's not the same as popping a slice of bread in the toaster and pouring a cold glass of milk for myself.

We had to walk to the headquarter, get our breakfast and come back to where we're standing guard, to eat. I had to walk about from our house to Blesi's - both ways - carrying my paper plate & grab. Sure is different. (It's a long way around this village.)

Thanks for writing again!!

7.16.69

page 4

Wednesday afternoon, July 16

Hi again!

I didn't have a chance to mail this yesterday because we didn't get back 'til 6pm.

Today, the company flew out to tear down the base that we built just 10 or 12 days ago! I was lucky - it was my turn to stay back & guard the bunkers.

I don't care if you read my diary "installments" that I'll be sending home. It's not really personal stuff - just a record of what happens each day. Then next year I can sip lemonade by the pool & read how I was sweltering & miserable in Vietnam "a year ago today." ha.

I had to laugh when I read what mom wrote about her job at Glen Lake. It must be frustrating to try to help people that probably move slow. Must be hard not to grab it and do it for them.

Can you find Mike Smith's address or call his mom for it? I'd like to write him. Maybe they haven't heard from him if he's been transferred from Plicku. Never know.

Today our men head for the moon!

All for now.

Love, James

7.17.69

Thursday afternoon, July 17

Dear Tim,

Welcome home again! I just got mom's letter a few minutes ago written last Friday, saying you are coming to Vietnam. I'm so happy and mixed up inside I don't quite know what to say.

You know, I've never been the outdoors type - exactly. Oh, I like camping, but as far as really roughing it, that's not my bag.

Well, I've been through alot of wet nights and muddy days already over here, and it's just a relief to know that I'll be getting off the front line.

Two guys left my platoon just this afternoon. They were wounded along with me - only it was the second purple heart for both of them. So they're getting off the line and will be security guards for the remainder of their tours over here.

There is an advantage for you - that I'm over here too. You will be assigned to a base camp (more secure) and my Lieutenant says they can't make you "leave the wire" under any conditions - mechanical work or not. So you'll probably be in a motor pool somewhere over here.

Things won't be as nice as they were at Ft. Bragg by any means, but at least you'll have a light bulb where you sleep, and can wash every day!

That's what's so neat for me now: to look forward to a little better living conditions, & a different job. You know how the army is - I really have no idea what they'll do with me; but at least I'll be out of direct combat.

I'm sorry to say I don't have much - or enough faith in my company. Things seem just as



7.17.69

messed up and unorganized here as they often were in training. Like we go out on ambush patrols and sometimes spent 1/2 hour stumbling around trying to get positioned just right - wondering if we'll be "opened up on" at any minute.

There are rumors that our company will soon begin night operations. And that isn't just setting up ambushes - that's going on patrols in the dark! Seems dumb to me & the others. We'd be liable to blindly stumble into an enemy ambush. Well, this is just a sample of my reasons for being glad to get off line.

You'd be amazed at what guys will - or won't - do to get out of the action for a while. They'll go into Cu Chi for a dental appointment & end up staying 4 or 5 days!! They give the lieutenant some excuse like they "couldn't get in at the dentist's," etc. There are any number of excuses it seems, & many reasons why it's "imperative" to get into Cu Chi - (health, finances, etc.) We call it sham time: just wasting away the days - making your year shorter & having some time to goof off and to be much safer and at ease than out on the field.

It's hard to explain in words.

We've also been amazed at the number of guys re-upping for 3 years, just to get off the field. 4 or 5 guys from my company have done it just since I've been here, & more are considering it. 3 more years - but they figure it's worth it to be considerably safer in a different job.

Would you do me a favor and send me a copy of your Vietnam orders? And also a short letter to explain that you want to accept your orders as they stand. (I guess you could still have them changed since I'm already here)



7.17.69

If you could just write a couple sentences, probably to: "Dear Sirs:" maybe tell them you joined the army and are willing to accept your orders for Vietnam. Don't forget to date it.

I'm going to find out as soon as I can how you or your unit can contact me as soon as you arrive in country. Because as soon as you arrive - I go into Cu Chi!

Well, I'll write again in a couple days. Are you still planning to report in at Oakland on August 15?

I can tell you later, kind of what to expect.

Thanks! That's all I can say. What an answer to prayer! What a relief. I can bear this next month now. ha.

Your brother,
James

P.S. This letter won't go out until tomorrow afternoon, but thought I should write now. We're leaving on an AP in an hour & who knows when we'll get back.

If things go the way I expect, in a few weeks, ambush patrols will only be a memory. Whoopee! (Too good to believe!!!)



Saturday afternoon, July 19

7.19.69

Dear Civilians,

Got another nice letter from Mollie today & some cute drawings by the boys.

What do you think of this poem? A couple Red Cross workers were out one afternoon this week and we played a few games. They distributed this poem among others. I thought it was kinda funny - by more other than Beate John Lennon.

Wish I knew how to get comfortable. We've been on night operations for a few days now, so have the day pretty much to sleep & rest up. Kinda hard in the heat of the day though. It's too dark to write inside the bunker so I'm under a crude poncho-tent - set-up. Wouldn't you know they're burning the days "outhouse accumulations" (I don't know how to put it more politely or plainly - ha!) and the wind is blowing directly this way. Think I'm losing my appetite.

We've had good food, but still far from up to par of insurpassable home cooking. I was wide-eyed the other night to see wedges of watermelon for desert. But it was tasteless & not sweet. No matter how good watermelon looks, if it doesn't taste - it ~~doesn't~~ "get it".

Once in awhile we get bananas. I think they're Vietnamese, because they're small & green when ripe. I don't know why - they don't get yellow. Sure could go for some red raspberries on ice cream! Oh, we even get ice cream once in a while, but it's like at Uncle Mel's = half melted before it's out of the carton. Mollie said she's had beans already. Yumm!

I had to laugh when I pictured you driving Glen Lake ladies through the parking lot ... jerk ... jerk. They'd think it was an amusement park, thrill ride. ha - just kidding.

Don't get sick on fresh fruit & vegetables! (Wish I had the chance.) Love, James

The Fat Budgie

I have a little budgie
He is my very pal
I take him walks in Britain
I hope I always shall.

I call my budgie Jeffrey
My grandad's name's the same
I call him after grandad
Who had a feathered brain.

Some people don't like budgies
The yellow little brats
They eat them up for breakfast
or give them to their cats.

My uncle ate a budgie
It was so fat and fair.
I cried and called him Ronnie
He didn't seem to care.

Although his name was Arthur
It didn't mean a thing.
He went into a petshop
And ate up everything.

The doctors looked inside him
To see what they could do,
But he had been too greedy
He died just like a zoo.

My Jeffrey chirps and twitters
When I walk into the room,
I make him scrambled eggs on toast
And feed him with a spoon.

He sings like other budgies
But only when in trim
But most of all on Sunday
That's when I plug him in.

He flies about the room sometimes
And sits upon my bed
And if he's really happy
He does it on my head.

He's on a diet now you know
From eating far too much
They say if he gets fatter
He'll have to wear a crutch.

It would be funny wouldn't it
A budgie on a stick
Imagine all the people
Laughing till they're sick.

So that's my budgie Jeffrey
Fat and yellow too
I love him more than daddie
And I'm only thirty two.

John Lennon

7.21.69

Monday, July 21

Dear Charlie,

Hi! Are you having fun today? I've been writing some letters on top of my bunker and listening to the radio - the astronauts are on the MOON! Pretty exciting isn't it!? I wish I could watch it on color TV like you're probably doing.

We're going into Cuchi this week for a one day "stand down." (rest) I'm going to try to find something to mail you at the gook gift shop.

Just think - you'll be in 1st grade this fall. Do you think you'll get a pretty teacher? ha.

I'll be anxious to see your racing dive. You must be getting to be a real good swimmer.

Pet mumbo for me.

Love, James

P.S. Your drawing of the Apollo 11 rocket was good!

1911

Dear Mother

My dear Mother

I am so glad to hear from you

and hope you are well

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

I am so glad to hear from you

Dear Mother

Yours affectionately

CHARLIE

Monday, July 21

7.21.69

Dear Sean,

Boy, you sure are getting good at drawing ski-doo's! Thanks for your art work. Would you like to race when you're older? Do you still think ski-doo's are better than Polaris's? ha.

I want to get a little surprise for you and Charlie ... something from Vietnam. So you might expect something in the mail in a couple weeks.

I'm enclosing a piece of a plant in the envelope. Guess what it is? A peanut plant! They grow lots of peanuts here besides all their rice.

I bet you've been swimming alot. Must be fun on air mattresses in the pool.

Won't be long until you're going to school on the bus! I bet you are getting excited.

Bye for now.

Love, James

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SEAN

7.26.69

Saturday morning, July 26

Dear fellow earthlings,

Another move this afternoon. We're going back to Patent fire support base - the place I started out at that "historic" day in June. It's much like Emery, but the bunkers are better and the burn surrounding the base is higher.

Well, our moon men are back safely. Sure would have been nice to follow the flight a little closer (like color TV!) but was able to pick up bits from time to time on the radio and in the military newspaper.

Had KP for the first time ~~in~~ the field ~~this~~ yesterday, so I didn't have to go on AP. Had the best sleep I've had in a long time. And it rained And I stayed dry!

Nice of Aunt Marybelle to write again & send more prints! They're of "you all" when you in Iowa in May.

Nice of Aunt Nettie to write, too.

Will let you know what things are like at Patent. Wonder if we'll still be on night operations. We don't know anything until it happens, as plans often change even at the last minute.

All for now. feeling good like about 3 weeks left out here in the boonie.!

Love, James

7.28.69

Monday, July 28

Dear family,

Glad for your letter yesterday & for the Brown Photo mailer envelopes. I bought film last time I was in Cu Chi with the prepaid mailer, but will use the Brown Photo mailers later. Thanks!

"Just like old times" to be back at Patent II. They've made some improvements since we left a couple weeks ago: there's showers now! However, shower time is strictly between 5 & 6 p.m. daily. They run a pump from a nearby well, so there's hot water for a change. (Ya- learned a new word! - Vietnamese, yet?)

Am enclosing a letter from Grace Larson earlier this month. Quite a neat job. for typing with her teeth! She always sounds so happy. Makes you wonder how we have a right to have bad days. At least we can walk and feed ourselves!

Also an article that you may find interesting to read - between berry picking, weeding, swimming, etc! Remember how I said how much fire power we have? It's unbelievable how much ammo those helicopters put out - and I'm sure much of the time they don't have a definite target at all. I agree, it's better to shoot more than absolutely necessary, but I think it's just another area of army waste. Naturally, it would be a thrill for a lot of guys to be flying high & watch the tracers and explosions "do their work." So I imagine lots of times they fire when unnecessary or over do it.

In our C rations lately we've had these Stim-u-Dent sticks. Different - and better than an ordinary tooth pick. Flavored, too!

But the goose tasted good. But what's this about the ducks going on Ye's pond? ha. Took us long enough to stop calling it Swenson's Swamp!



7.28.69

Nice to know Croz + Cheri actually did move in Roman's house. What a privilege to sleep in Bella's bedroom. ha!

Will anticipate package (or packages?!) from home.

I'll be going on trash guard for 3 hours later this afternoon. All our garbage is dumped right outside the perimeter in a big pit. You should see the mob of Kids around all day to search through each load that's dumped. They find lots of C ration cans unopened + other ^{usable} garbage. Well, at least someone eats it. There must be cases of food thrown out daily.

My job is to keep the Kids out. Only some older ones with "passes" are allowed to "get the goods". By the end of the day I imagine they have quite a haul to take back to their village.

You might imagine how impossible it will be for one GI to keep all those Kids out. Guess it's not that important really.

What a way for kids to grow up though. I guess they try to sell you all kinds of stuff: gook sodas, beer, smut pictures, mirrors, trinkets, ^{merchandise} etc. We're not supposed to buy anything from them, but some guys do.

Will close and eat my C's. Yumm! ^{ha!} (the crackers + peanut butter are ok.)

Bye for now.

Love from this side of the world,
James



7.29.69

Tuesday mite, July 29 (HAPPY BIRF-DEE Kim!)

Dear Beth,

Hi! I just ate supper and took an invigorating shower after being out humping all day. We took helicopters out to the area we were to sweep, & then walked all the way back. Wouldn't be so bad if it was the dry season, but it sure is easy to get bogged down in the soupy rice paddies.

I just have time to write you tonight before it gets dark and bunker guard starts.

Boy do I feel good. ☺ Thanks for your long letter yesterday. And for Margie's & Tim's note... and Tim's beautiful Vietnam orders. I gave them to my lieutenant already. The letter he wrote was perfect. But I found out one more thing... would you let him know? = When he arrives at his unit (a few days after arriving in Vietnam) he must give my address to his company commander & have him write my company commander a letter, clarifying that he (Tim) is in country. It's only then that I'll be taken off the field. Oh well, just a few extra days for that letter to arrive. I'd still like Tim to write me a note the day he arrives, so I know things will start rolling. He can ask someone or check the mailbox at the Nam reception or replacement center for his return address and in the upper right hand corner (where the stamp goes) write: **FREE**

Be sure to get the "in country" written, too. **(IN COUNTRY)**

Hope this isn't too confusing. Make sure he writes down my Co's name: **Captain Connolly**

C.O. A 2nd Bn. 14th Inf.

APD S.F. 96225

That's who his C.O. will write to.

Well, enough of that. Hope it's understandable.



7.29.69

I got the goodie package from home today. Yumm! And the Vietnamese kids (some!) will love the Dubble Bubble. Boy, dad sure does a good job of packing those tight!

Thursday morning, July 31

Hi again. Didn't finish this the other night because the Chaplain was here for a service and then it was dark. Yesterday we were gone from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., so didn't have time (or energy!) to write.

But I was surprised & elated to receive the 2nd package from home yesterday. Nice! The flashlight & camp knife will be perfect. I notice dad even sharpened & oiled the blade. You'd think they'd sell stuff like that in the PX, but they hardly have anything useful.

"Mrs. Reay's black raspberry jam" will taste good on crackers for lunch today - in place of C rations for a change. And those kipper snacks even sound good!

I had the bag of root beer barrels with me yesterday, but we went through so much water they started dissolving & leaking out. I gave the remainder of the bag to a couple little kids when we passed by their hootch. They were so far out in the boonies, they probably very seldom get candy. (they call food "Chop-Chop")

The Readers Digest will be good reading as well as all the other newspapers.

It's just like Christmas to get all that stuff!! thanks!!

How was the Rodeo in Buffalo? Fun, I bet.



7.29.69

Wasn't it about this time last year that you were out west? I remember you writing about a rodeo out there.

Has Tim gotten his high powered telescope yet? Boy, that will be neat. I hope Sears delivers it faster than the best mother ordered a couple years ago!

Thanks for sending along the postcards from Sandi. Bet she had fun at Disneyland. You know, Mr. & Mrs. Russell live real close to Disneyland now.

So you're really getting rich this summer, huh? Your savings account will probably get bigger than mine at Wayzata. I'm saving \$100.00 per month with "Uncle Sam" at 10% interest. Pretty good deal. What kind of skis do you think you'd like to get?

Congratulations on water skiing! Must've been fun on the river. I'd give anything right now to do a few laps on Lake Minnetonka! (or an air mattress on our pool!)

Have you gotten rabbits yet? I think they're one of the neatest pets to have.

Well, I guess I'll close & dig into some of that good American food. Thanks loads for the 2 packages. Really neat stuff.

'Til later -

Love, Jamer



8.1.69
... When I got close he was
pretty mean. I guess he's
bit quite a few GI's, so he
has to have a muzzle on
most of the time. (Not when
we're out on patrol, of course)



Speaking of animals,

have you seen any raccoons
in your woods this year?

One of Tim's friends, Billy
Nash, used to have a pet one!



Tim doesn't have much time left at home.
Just think - after he leaves, I may see him
before you do again. Wouldn't that be something
if we saw each other in Vietnam?!

Well, I better be flying.
I have some other letters to answer.



Love you! JAMES

P.S. These decals are from JIFFY POP, that a guy got from home in a package.

Friday afternoon, August 1st (14 days Tim!) 8.1.69

Dear Northerners,

Glad for your letter yesterday - as usual!

I'm sending a stub from a prepaid Kodak mailer. Mailing the film today, so you should get the slides in a couple weeks or so.

I got a letter from Mike Smith near Plicker yesterday, so have his address.

Boy, that picture of Cheryl is good. She must've had fun in the parade - probably the only married one, huh?

It's really neat reading from the local newspapers. I knew Carla Engler. She used to come to some of our Hi-C stuff - I don't really think she's pretty though, do you?

The jelly is delicious! It smells just like summer at home.

Will write you Tim, in a few days & give you a few pointers on what to expect in Nam.

'Till then -

Love, James

8.6.69

Wednesday, August 6

Dear family,

Decided to write today after being pretty depressed since Saturday the 2nd. It was the worst day I've seen in the army - maybe the worst in my life - and haven't done much of anything since then except my mechanical duties. In the meantime I haven't written a letter & now have a stackpile of over 25 to answer!

Well, we went out on a typical heliborn mission Saturday morning in the Hobo woods. Our company: our 3rd platoon (that's mine) and the 2nd. We found numerous booby traps & dud grenades & rounds as well as a cache of rice. Because of the extremely dangerous area, the Captain said to move straight ahead and out of the area. Then it happened. Just ahead of me about 75 yards, the point flank man tripped a 40 lb. anti-tank mine. The explosion went straight up and Dewey Conrad was killed instantly.

I had really gotten to know him well, since he came out to the field just 2 weeks after me. We had talked alot & felt the same about the army & the war. The pathetic thing is that he was going to re-up in 2 weeks to get off the line. It was all so

sudden - so final. Just doesn't seem fair. He had just graduated from college & was planning to marry a girl from his home town = Ft.

Lauderdale. I won't go into anymore explanation of that, but it did have as big effect on me - and the platoon.

I had talked to him just the night before on bunker guard. He said he

didn't like to talk about religion - he hoped there



8.6.69

was a God. ... He was Catholic.

That wasn't the end. After his body was dusted off, we continued on. Around mid-afternoon it really poured hard. We stopped til it let up, & then started out again. The area was real dense vegetation. The point man & our Chieu Hoi scout spotted smoke just ahead & smelled food cooking. One of the files hastily pulled back a short distance & opened fire. The NVA were definitely caught off guard. Then we started moving into the area, but this time they were ready for us!

Our file was well spread out, but we walked right into their trap. The enemy was dug in & well concealed. They started throwing grenades & sniper fire was picking off some of our men. We were definitely penned down & had little cover. I was assistant machine gunner for the day. (400 or 500 linked rounds around my waist & shoulders: Poncho Gonzales style)

The machine gunner was just a few yards to my left and he was hit. All of a sudden he was yelling HELP! HELP! I'm Hit in the Head!! You can

imagine how I felt. The medic was crawling from place to place, treating wounded guys.

We slowly pulled back, but not before

a number of guys were wounded from bullets & shrapnel. What a helpless

feeling. We were obviously clear

targets, but couldn't tell where the enemy positions were! We fired back, but blindly.

After the dust-off we regrouped while



8.6.69

artillery and air strikes penetrated the area. Then we - unknowingly - re-entered the area. They were waiting for us again & we walked right into what we later found out was a base camp - with concrete bunkers!

The enemy is like that - well concealed way out in the boonies - while we GI's go out to find them.

The air strikes had failed to penetrate their concrete, underground bunkers, so again they opened fire on us with machine gun, grenades, etc. This time a guy was killed from the 2nd platoon & many others from both platoons, wounded.

Out of my platoon of 26 - 11 were not dusted off. The ~~rest~~ were injured - fortunately many of them only with minor wounds.

Somehow I wasn't even scratched - just shaken up - and feeling awfully helpless. There was fire coming from all directions - so it seemed anyway - and we didn't know which way to go.

For someone to view it, I'm sure it would have appeared to be a typical war scene. Here we were dodging bullets, getting up, running a few yards to better cover, and even leaping into fresh bomb craters our own planes had made only minutes earlier.

We got back to Patent just before dark. The bunkers seemed mighty roomy with 15 less than the night before.

Well, I'm glad it's only a memory now, but I'm sure I'll never forget it. I can't really adequately describe how it was, but I knew once again how close



8.6.69

death can be. . . . Not even a scratch - just muddy, tired and alot to be thankful for.

I answered Mike Smith's letter last week & then received one from Chuck Lye. He gave me a detailed account of his one & only time in contact. Of course sometimes once is all a guy sees.

I'm sure I'm receiving all your mail - it's been coming nice & regularly! Heard from Mollie yesterday, and received your letter of August 1st today. Also Margie's & Kim's letters.

I bought a few more Vietnam souvenirs & will mail them to you next time I get into Culhi. It's all "cheapie" stuff, but kinda characteristic of the country, anyway.

By the way, since we're "understaffed" in our platoon, we've been /and will indefinitely be manning a guard post along the road about 1/2 mile from Patent. We're right on the edge of the road & because of the water filled paddies, our 4 bunkers & tower are built above ground on barrels. We man the tower and check ID's of passer-bysers during the day, & rotate guard from the tower at night. We go down to Patent for breakfast & supper. One other daily detail is going each morning down the dirt road to the next village with a couple engineers carrying mine sweepers, to check the road for any freshly planted mines.

Being here at the "hard spot" is sure better than going out humping. But then we're at the beckon of "the brass", so things could be totally different tomorrow. Anyway as things stand now, we have a good



8.6.69

Chance of being here for at least a few more days.
 Maybe til Tim arrives? It would be fine with me!

Not a day passes without 3 or 4 of the guys bringing up the subject of my brother coming over here. I guess it's natural, since every GI's dream would be to get off line. And I'm one of those lucky one-in-a-million's.

I'm enclosing a rough little sketch of the set-up here at Cu Chi so you might have a little fuller conception of the situation here.

Good to hear about all the action, excitement, & company you've been having.

My biggest thrill to report this week is that I got clean clothes yesterday! Well, I could shake dust from them & they're not washed too clean, but at least they're dry & cleaner than the set I had been wearing.

Guess I better close before they make me put a stamp on this "bundle"!

I'm feeling pretty good now. Waiting for my new assignment more than ever.

Love from this end,
 James



8.6.69

Wednesday, August 6

Dear Tim,

I hope you've had a good month at home. I'm sure the time has gone too fast, but we've been counting the days for you! Will anxiously await your arrival here in Vietnam. I couldn't get off line any too soon.

I'll tell you a little about what happened to me as I processed through, & you might expect something similar. When I reported to Oakland, had to fill out forms, (watch!) have medical records (shot record) checked, partial pay if needed, & jungle fatigues issued. Moves faster than issue in basic - not quite so many guys going through at the same time. We were told to box up & mail home (free) all unnecessary stuff. The only things needed to bring are: jungle fatigues issued (also green towels - washcloth undies, etc. - new issue -), shaving gear, 1 pair khakis, dress shoes (for R & R) that's about it, except personal things, stationary, etc. Most of the guys had dress greens, field jackets, regular fatigues, etc. etc. They either put them in bins there or boxed them up & sent them home. So travel light.

then we just waited for shipment from Oakland. I think it's all commercial airlines, which is nice. I stopped in Honolulu & Guam, but some flights go through Anchorage, Tokyo, Okinawa, etc. The stops are short, but long enough to get off & look around the airport gift shops, etc.

I flew into Bien Hoa (on map at left) but some flights also come into Tan Son Nhut just outside of Saigon. Others to Cam Ranh Bay, etc. I've been told that



8.6.69

82nd Abn. is stationed somewhere in the Saigon area.

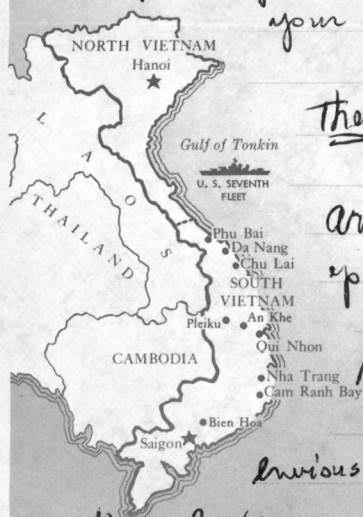
So perhaps that's where you'll be. But over here they even put regular infantry guys in Airborne units, etc. Seems dumb. You can't predict in the army!

You'll spend a day; maybe 2 or 3 at a replacement station. Then after being assigned they'll fly you to your unit. A couple days orientation there & then to your job.

As soon as you set foot on this soil ... be thinking of me ... ha. and jot me a note to inform me that you're here. Although I'll have to wait to get off line til my CO hears from your CO, at least they will keep me at the fire support base instead of going out humping. (details & K.P. I'd rather do than dodge the bullets & booby traps!)

Don't forget, any letter you mail in VN must have your return address, so ask around for your temporary return address at the replacement station.

And then ... I repeat ... ask your CO (after finally being assigned to your unit) to write my CO to verify your presence in country.



Capt. Connolly
Co. A 3rd Bn. 14th Inf.
APO S.F. 96225

Then ... I go into Cuchi!

This may all seem a mess (typical Army operations!) but take from it what you can.

I still have no idea what my reassignment will be, but I won't complain!

The guys in my platoon are very envious. I don't blame them. But how nice to be the lucky one myself! - Till we meet over here ... James

EXAMPLE:

SP/4 Tim Reay

free
(IN COUNTRY)

PFC James. B. Reay 469-54-6618
Co. A 2nd Bn. 14th Inf.

AP0 S.F. 96225

Friday a.m., August 8

8.8.69

August! the happy month of freedom from the field.

Dear family,

Found out last night that we should be here at the hard spot til about the 12th. By that time we'll have some new replacements and be up to strength for going out humping again.

Went on Road sweep this morning. Filled my pockets with candy, & apples from breakfast. Am getting to recognize some familiar faces now. They definitely recognize me! In their limited, Vietnamese accented English, they nearly all say thank you. Too bad many of the kids as young as 6 or 7, also beg for cigarettes. I just turn up my nose and say, "Yeecch, No!" "No Bic", means I don't understand, but I'm sure they "bic" that.

Kim, you wrote about how you loved the Brama Bulls at the Buffalo Rodeo. Well, if they're anything like these waterbuffalo, I would always want to have a fence between me & them!

For some reason, they just don't like GI's. Just this morning one started charging one of the guys as we passed it on the road.

The Vietnamese tie a rope through their tender nostrils, so a jerk on the rope usually gets them

8.8.69

back in line. Two of them ~~hatched~~ ^{fetched} to a cart went wild this morning & jumped off the road, "moving out" across the rice paddies. Everytime the cart crossed a dike with a thwart, I thought for sure it would splinter, the poor guy trying to control them was only about 100 pounds & all he had was a little bamboo switch.

GI's have occasionally had to shoot charging water buffalo. I believe the U.S. pays them for a new one, because they are such prized possessions of the people here.

I finished off another roll of film today, but am afraid some of em' will turn out kinda dark. Well, c'est la vie!

Heard on the news yesterday about the devastating tornadoes in Minnesota. Well, I'm glad they were north of Mpls.!

Speaking of Minn., the Twins are doing pretty fine, huh? We get their games on the radio once in a while.

Oh, the bubble gum sure was great. I'm sure the kids would love it, but I'm afraid it didn't get past the bunker!

My ^{new} flashlight & pocketknife are proving very

8.8.69

useful. They've already received hours of use by me & the borrowers. . . which brings me to the subject of borrowing & lending; I'm glad to help out when I can, but most of the guys here don't plan ahead for anything. Every morning its, "can I borrow your soap & razor? . . . do you have an ~~x~~tra blade? . . . do you have your mirror handy? . . . etc. Guess I should just consider myself lucky to have the things when I need them.

By the next time you hear from me, Tim should be on his way! what-a-dream!

Love you-all,

James

8.9.69

Saturday, August 9

Dear Kim,

Howdy! Thanks for your nice letter. I'm glad the P.J.'s fit. As soon as I can get back to Cu Chi (when Tim arrives! ☺) I have a few "souvenirs" to mail home. Too bad we can't send packages free, like letters!

I'm writing this from 20 ft. up. Sure seems higher than that, though. Yesterday afternoon 4 of us came down the road a ways & were "guarding" from an ARVN ("are-vin") compound tower. We eat, sleep, & live up here, but have it alot better than the ARVN families below. ARVN stands for Army-Republic of Vietnam. The ARVN soldiers live in grubby bunkers below with their wives & children.

Kim, You can't imagine how poorly these people live. We're in luxury up here on the tower... the grubbiest conditions I've ever experienced!

They pick through the garbage that we throw away, beg for chop-chop, etc. I guess they have rats & bugs in their bunkers. Will be here about 3 days. The re-supply truck brings our C-rations, mail, & supplies each afternoon.

You good at puzzles? I'm not. Try the one enclosed that someone sent me... but don't cheat by looking at the "Key".

Thought you might get a laugh out of Mrs. Zierold's letter.

2 WEEKS more of THIS!

Luv, JAMIE



(BACK)



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AND PERSONALIZED WITH
THE DATE OF COMBAT
SERVICE IN VIETNAM.**

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- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
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| ☐ | ☐ | 101st Airborne Division |
| ☐ | ☐ | 25th Infantry Division |
| ☐ | ☐ | 1st Cavalry Division |
| ☐ | ☐ | 1st Infantry Division |
| ☐ | ☐ | 4th Infantry Division |
| ☐ | ☐ | 173rd Airborne Brigade |
| ☐ | ☐ | 9th Infantry Division |
| ☒ | ☐ | 199th Infantry Brigade |

NAME _____

ADDRESS

Year of Combat Service in Vietnam

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Enclose \$2.50 Additional.

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ADDRESS

**SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
OR YOUR MONEY BACK**

[illegible]

CUT OUT. WRAP AROUND FINGER & DRAW LINE AT ARROW POINT

8.10.69



UNITED STATES ARMY

Sunday, August 10

Dear family,

Glad for your letter yesterday. Mmmm... fresh peach crisp. Musta' been good. I've got to be satisfied with canned peaches...and it's a treat to get them!

I never know where I'll be sleeping 'til bedtime comes. Last night just before dark someone came to relieve me at the ARVN Compound, so I slept back here at the hard spot again. Fine with me. Seems a little more stable here..and I don't spend the entire night in the tower.

Found out that on the 15th we're going to another hard spot, and will be resuming our nightly Ambush Patrols. Supposed to be there for 2 weeks... the 2nd week consisting of daily sweeps. Oh well, I'm sure to hear from Tim sometime during those 2 weeks.

Some guys have suggested that I 'demand' an appointment in Cu Chi this week; eg. dentist, doctor, so I can sham in Cu Chi 'til I hear from Tim. I can hold out for that long!

Bosbergs were in N.Y. recently & then Bud had business in Connecticut. I want to travel east next. I have ~~seen~~ all the states west of Indiana except Washington, Oregon, Idaho, & Montana.

Poor Mike & Chuck will be humping probably 'til next June. Unless there are 100,000 more troops withdrawn... I HOPE!!

Thinking of you.
Love, James

Wish that's all we had to worry about!



Monday, August 11

8.11.69

Hi Beth!

I'm kinda' in a dumb mood today ... ow 'bout u?
Dianne Christopherson has been sending lots of
crazy cards + letters on wild stationery. Guess she
likes making money this summer. Wow, U R
making lots of dough (\$) too! Must be
nice to be able to go to stores to spend some
of it.

Diāne told me the joke you told her
'bout Sen. Kennedy. 😊

3 more days here at the hardspot and
then we're back on night AP's. We'll be
moving to another fire support base.

I'm sending a fairly recent copy of our
25th Division newspaper. See the monkey?
That's the one I wrote home about a while
back.

Take a swim for me aaahhh!
And ... eat your popsicles the RIGHT WAY!!
(THE Best way!)

'Til later, JIM

DEAR CHARLIE AND SEAN,

August 1st! 8.1.69

How've you been enjoying the summer?

Not too many weeks and you'll be in school!

I've been pretty busy lately. The other day we had a plane ride (helicopter) way out in the boonies, but



had to walk all the way back! ugh.



How's mumbo? Bet he's getting big.



Beth wrote me that the ducks are getting kinda wild, & can fly pretty good now.



Just hope they make it through the rest of the summer without getting killed by some bigger animal.



Grandpa sent me two neat packages with bubblegum, fiddle faddle, nuts, Candy, flashlight, pocket knife, etc. Sure is fun to get mail from home!

8.1.69

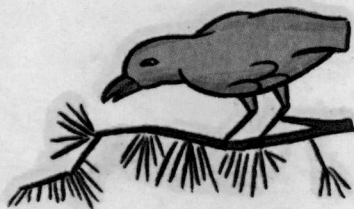


Grandma has been working
hard this summer.

She sent along a jar of
her homemade black raspberry
jelly. Yumm!

Sure tastes good.

I'm glad she was able to
pick alot before the
birds got them all.



Those birds sure can
eat alot!



We have a "dog team" with us.
That's a german shepherd
trained to smell the enemy ~~and~~
spot booby traps ... and his trainer.
His name is Lobo. He seemed
real friendly when I first saw him
a few nights ago, BUT.....

8.13.69

Wednesday afternoon, August 13

Dear Kim,

It's been good to get "buku" mail from home. I'm glad for the Radio Bible Class literature, etc.

The jokes you've sent twice are funny! I've showed them to a bunch of other guys, too.

Also I showed them to some Vietnamese kids this morning but I don't think they could understand them. It's kinda funny to talk to them since they understand little English, & I understand little Vietnamese.

Next time why don't you try to make up some of your own cartoons? ha.

I received a good letter from Mollie yesterday. They sure keep busy. Won't be long until the boys are in school... and your girls!

I'm sitting out by the road right now waiting for the resupply convoy. I'm going into Cu Chi this afternoon! I got permission from

8.13.69

my Lieutenant to go in to talk to a legal advisor. I want to find out if I have any choice in my reassignment. (Tim leaves for Ft. Lewis Tomorrow! ... by the time you get this he may even be over here!)

Has mom finished redecorating the camper? What's it like?

I'll write from Cuchi after I speak to the legal advisor (probably a drafted lawyer) tomorrow.

I suppose I'll be sent back out to the field 'til there's confirmation of Tim's arrival.

Wonder where I'll be a week from now?

Make use of these last free weeks. Pretty soon it'll be up at 7 a.m. & into your scratchy new clothes!

Love you - James

Thursday a.m., August 14

8.14.69

Dear Mom, dad, & everyone,

Just got back from talking to some soldiers with rank about my reassignment. I kinda' got the runaround, (which is typical Army procedures) but after speaking to 4 or 5 officers in that many buildings, here's what I learned: just because my brother is Vietnam bound gives me no choice in my reassignment. If I were to stay in Vietnam, I would be right out in the field for 10 more months. However, I have the choice of leaving country, since Tim accepted his orders to come here.

When I hear from Tim, I'll be pulled back into Culchi & processing will begin for my reassignment outside RVN. I will be reassigned to a country in the Pacific Command - like Thailand, Japan, Philippines, etc. (Guess Korea's not included 😊)

I don't know what my job will be there, but I'm hoping for the best... like something

8.14.69

interesting & somewhat challenging... time will tell.

This afternoon I go back to Patton with the resupply convoy & we go to that new hardspot. Tomorrow night starts a week of AP's.

So ... I hope to hear from Tim within 10 days & that priceless letter shall mark the end of my M-16 toting days in Nam.

I wrote Tim earlier about the Necessity of a letter from his captain to mine. That's still a needed formality I guess, but his letter to me "in country" will be sufficient evidence for my release from AP's, road sweeps, bunker guard, tower guard, etc. 😊

I still wish Tim wasn't coming over, because no job is safe here. But it would be senseless for me to stay, since my hopes of reassignment in country are shot.

Oh, there are lots of things I'll be for feiting: free postage, hostile fire pay (an extra \$65 per month), a minimum of military inspections, etc., R&R... etc.

But when guys in my platoon are being wounded

8.14.69

and killed, it just seems like common sense to leave the whole situation now that I have the opportunity.

So I'll be seeing another part of the world before Christmas ... depending on how ~~long~~^{long} my processing takes, the sooner the better, I feel. The 82nd Abn. Division is located near Saigon, so there is a slim chance that I'll see Tim before leaving country. I certainly will, if at all possible.

As far as my return to the states, I hope it will be June of '70. But I believe ordinary service overseas is 13 months, other than combat zones. Time will tell, I guess.

As I've said before, whatever my reassignment turns out to be, I can't complain, since most guys would give their right arm to get off the field. (Oona... that's a bad pun!!)

Anyway, it's exciting to look forward to seeing & living in another country.

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Just as I threw my stuff on the truck yesterday,
 (as I was coming to Culhi) I was handed my mail -
 your 3rd package + Standards + Decisions included.
 Thanks!! Boy, those mandarin oranges Tasted
 superb a few minutes ago. And I'm wild over those
 sunflower seeds... all shelled! Yum. I'm going to
 try to save some of the bubble gum for the
 kids this time. It's sure to go fast.

Wish the PX sold balloons or something
 that would last a few minutes... but then something
 to eat or chew seems very sensible for people used to
 eating rice, fishheads, etc.

Also received a letter from granny Crosby,
 with newspaper articles on the Minn. tornadoes.
 The coverage was big news over here, too.

Well, I'll close now + keep you informed.
 Huh - Tim heading for Washington today - Donna's
 birthday - for a year! Hope it goes fast for
 him. - Hope this war will certainly end
 before the end of his year.

Thanks again for food + good supply of reading
 matter. Love, James

Thursday night, August 14

8.14.69

Dear family,

Back at the hard spot near Patton tonight.

I returned on the convoy this afternoon, only to find the Lt. Rigsby wants me to stay with the company as a jeep driver in CuChi. Typical Army Bureaucracy. I went to CuChi expressly to find out if I had such a choice. After being referred to 4 different buildings I only learned what I wrote you this morning.

So I'll just wait for word from Tim; enjoy the ride to CuChi, & decide there what to do.

Got a letter from Chuck Scott today. His typing is atrocious, (I learned a new word. :)) but nice to hear from him. He seems to really be a studious thinker. He's counting the days left in Germany - I've never considered it... yet.

Some guys come over here for the year with a deck of cards & send home a card each week.

Off to the new site in the morning. That I'll drop a line tonight. May not have a chance for a while. (BACK)
As always - Love, James

P.S. I went to CuChi a day too early. Miss America is there for a USO show tonight, along with Charlotte Simms, Miss Minn. '68, and 5 other past State queens. Oh well, the service club will probably be too packed to get in, anyway.
(Sour grapes! Ha.)

Saturday afternoon, August 16

8.16.69

Dear All,

Would you believe?... another new experience to remember Vietnam by. We flew from Patton by Chinooks yesterday to our new hardspot; Huntsley Patrol Base. It's much like the one I was at the first part of July - (the one we built.)

Anyway, I went to the medic last night with what I thought to be spreading mosquito bites.... His diagnosis; RINGWORM! Yuck - that name has got to be worse than the disease itself! It's very common here so he immediately put me on pills and ointment to stop it from spreading. And, I trust, to eradicate it.

↖ (if you know what I mean ☺)

It looks just like sores on my ankles; big red blotches. Well, I came to the conclusion that if it was on my ankles, I'd better

Check out the rest of my bod thoroughly!
And wouldn't you know - the stuff is all
over my seat, too! ... and a few starting
signs on my thighs, & one on my cheek no
less.

So I rewashed my clothes this morning
with my small ^{plastic} dish & a bar of Lux.

Also got a shower - it was a crude
set-up, but I guess a shower is what
you'd call it.

The platoon was called on an unexpected
heli-borne mission around noon, & I was
the lucky one from my squad to stay
back and keep an eye on things. (guess
there is quite a bit of theft in Nam as anywhere
else)

Am enclosing a new dime. They pulled in
all old currency & made the switch to trap the
gooks that aren't supposed to have military money.
Last time they did it was October '68,

2

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and there was millions unaccounted for! Guess Uncle Sam picks up a little profit for a change. By the way, notice the moon ^{emphasis in the picture} ~~on~~ ^{back?}

We're to start our AP's tonite. The days should be relatively free, outside of details now & then. Put up a "Circus tent" yesterday: Our new mess hall facilities! I don't know how the cooks can stand to stay inside that canvas. Especially these past few days that have been hotter than usual.

Guess I'll stop my scribblings for now - time for another ringworm treatment. HA!

Love from Nam,
James

TIM'S ON HIS WAY!!! ☺

Monday, August 18

8.18.69

Dear Margie and Beth,

I got mother's letter yesterday explaining your traumatic experience last week: dog fight, dog bite, stitches, dizzy spell, cracked head on the cement, etc. I'm just glad it wasn't more serious. But it was a scary time though ... or don't you remember it yet Marge? ☺

I'm having my little health problems; too. Happily, my ringworm   is healing up well, thanks to 2 pills in the morning & 2 at night, and some greasy ointment applied at opportune intervals throughout the day.

Now the pussy blister on the back of my head is finally healing, (about a month old) but another infection has sprung up just below my right knee

Ouch! it hurts when I crawl into the bunker & put pressure on it by accident.

8.18.69

I have my own little medical bag (plastic) with ointment, tape, salve, etc. A lot of the guys are coming to me for treatment or supplies instead of the medic!

Tim should be in country now. I'm just waiting for that letter now. The enemy is really getting aggressive as of last week. Last night we were out on AP and just before dark they radioed us to get back to the hard spot perimeter - "urgent". They had received intelligence that Huntsley Patrol Base ("Home Sweet Home" since the 15th) was to be attacked.

We started back immediately at a fast pace, & as we neared the wire just after dusk, Huntsley started getting incoming mortar!

We just laid low for awhile & then "beat it" into the perimeter after it stopped.

8.18.69

Happily, nothing else happened last nite.
We won't go out Tonite, as they expect
action still I guess.

Today I stayed back (arent they good to
me? 😊) while they went on a rif; bobby traps
galore. I was in charge of "latrine detail"
and cleaning up the bunkers. Big deal. "It's
MINOR" (that's a common expression over here)

I don't like to exaggerate or try to make
you feel sorry for me - just "telling it like it
is."

A lot of the guys never write home about
the bad things or what's happening, but I
guess I just want to share it with someone.

after all the years this war's been going
on, I never began to realize what was
really happening until coming over here myself.

Keep looking up ... it kinda tickles when the stitches
come out, Both
did you transplant the flippers you
laid in, Marge? HA. LOVE, JAMER

Tuesday, August 19

8.19.69

Dear Mother, Dad, and family,

So glad for your letter yesterday along with Margie's & Kim's.... AND my first aid package. Thanks for sending the zinc oxide. Perfect! Many of the other guys have been getting burned, too. The last week or so seems to have gotten brighter and hotter than ever. They'll appreciate it, too. ☺

Well, the war goes on. If I wasn't in Good Hands (& I don't mean Allstate-ha!) I'd really have something to worry about.

Last night we received another mortar attack. It was just about dusk & we were outside the bunkers, talking before we split up for various bunker guards.

I saw one flash & explode directly out

from our bunker, but fortunately outside the second wire. Didn't take us long to scramble inside the bunker!

Sorry to say, some landed inside on the other side of the perimeter. Within 10 minutes 17 guys were dusted off & I don't know how serious their shrapnel wounds were.

This morning there's a sniper team sighting in up on the Tower. Guess they expect more trouble. I thought we were supposed to be the aggressive ones!

All this, & the ^{new} papers aren't expecting big additional pullouts as was earlier hoped.

You know, I don't know if things are getting worse in the world, or if newspapers are just building up the crime stories, but it's disappointing to be fighting these wars and then to read of the rising crime back home:

8.19.69

Mass murders in California & Tennessee, still more investigation on the Kennedy/Kopeckne incident, etc.

Just makes me thankful that I haven't become bogged down in this materialistic rush-rush world. ... Well, enough philosophizing for today. ☺

Other mail I got yesterday was a nice letter from Dianne Stillman of Encinitas, Calif. Remember, she wrote you last summer after I had stayed with them right near the beach for 2 weeks.

Her Sunday School class wrote too - asking my favorite foods & assuring me of their prayers. Nice, huh?

And can I believe that another package is in the mail from Rt. 3, Box 65?! M'mmmm, cookies. I'll be waiting!

Another \$1.00 card from Dianne Christopherson! Honestly, that girl writes nearly every day! I've surely received at least 15 cards from her, not

To mention the letters ... and a package with cookies & candy. She recently wrote that she'd spent another \$7.00 on cards to send me.

... I mean I like the mail, & they're funny cards, but I wish she wouldn't spend all that \$! What does a GI do??

So Tim got the 1st tomato this year. Boy, wouldn't a B/T/L sandwich taste good right now! They've had tomatoes 3 or 4 times here - quartered - but tasteless or overripe. ^{??} I think I need an art course.

Another new guy in our platoon, from Marshalltown, Iowa. His parents have a cottage on Lake Bemidji. He said he thought he'd seen me before; then decided it was just that I look like someone he knows. That happens more times to me!

Will stop for now. Thinking of you, & wondering where Tim is right now. (greedy little anxious me!)

P.S. Love from here, James

ThankX for writing, Marge & Kim! Did Croz buy a new mailbox? I'm glad the 2 [dog/sidekick] casualties are OK!!! By the way, how does dad fit Mergies bed? ^{??}

8.20.69

Wednesday a.m., August 20

Dear family,

No mortar attack last night! ☹️ So tonight I believe we'll be heading out on an A.P.

Don't like to complain or harp on my ailments, but this boil is bad news. I've never had one before, ya know. It's been oozing light green pus, & appears to be leaving a big raw whole. I keep it covered with gauze and ointment most of the time.

Guess I'm lucky that it's not real sore - or in a more uncomfortable place if you know what I mean.

They may send me into the aid station to have it lanced. The medics do have the tools to do it out here, but don't like to in the dirty situation. Guess their 'tools' are far from sterile.

When the Chinook brings the mail in, its extra special these days. I figure I could be getting in country news from Tim anyday now.

Did you ever get my letter with my July "diary installment" enclosed? - just wondering.

Mother - tho't you'd get some laughs (& compliments!) out of Mrs. Harrison's letter. I answered her questions in a letter yesterday.

I still laugh to read some of her comments and questions. Of course I didn't know anything about the situation before getting over here, either.

Well, enuf about Vietnam in today's epistle.

Love from Nam,
James

Wednesday nite, August 20 [just one month 'til 8.20.69
monies th
--
birthday!

Dear Awl,

How u bean?

My platoon just left on a AP. I'll have
2-3 hours bunker guard with another company
in the perimeter instead. The doc (medic) is
sending me into CuChi in the morning on the
early Chinook. (7a.m.) The doctor at the
aid station will lance & care for my boil.
... ♪ As those pus-drops, go rolling along. ♪ (sick)

Ordinarily, I doubt that they'd send me in.
They'd do the best they could out here. But
they're being extra nice to me since I'll
be going in soon anyway. (I didn't argue! 😊)

Oh - yum-yum-yum. The dee-lickous
cookies arrived today - it made getting soaked
in the rain, running out for re-supply, un-
important! You'd better believe that they lasted
no longer than 7.34 minutes (or something
around there)

Now I've tasted many-a-cookie here in Vietnam, but never have they drawn the comments of that batch of old fashioned oatmeal **HOMEMADE** cookies, just bursting with plums, California sun ripened raisins. (Sound like I'm working up to something? ☺)

Nice surprises all the way to the bottom, - what with Dubble Bubble & Double Mint appropriately distributed throughout.

"Granny's" were still fresh in good, too. Just like reaching over from the ^{white} rocking chair & jangling the flowered glass lid on her Kitchen cookie jar. (well, almost the same)

I nearly missed Margie's masterpiece on the wrapper - rather, inside the wrapper. I laughed ..., more than once. Clever! Nice that "double tragedy" can be laughed at now.

- Yes, I believe the \$1.05 postage was well worth it - even if I do speak from a non-paying standpoint!

Well, I don't know how she gotten carried away for so much exposition on a can of cookies, but maybe it's just unusual to be alone at the bunker for a few minutes - & be able to concentrate on one thing for awhile!

Anyway, THANKS for sending my favorite variety and the best BRAND.

I'll stop now, as the sun is below the horizon, and another uncertain Vietnam night sets in. I'll finish this tomorrow in Cu Chi.
- ga' nite!

Thursday afternoon, 8/21

hi again - had a thrill riding into Cu Chi on the Chinook this a.m. I love it in the air.

My bail will be OK. will stop at the aid station again tomorrow before heading back out to Huntsley.

'Plan to pick up a few things at the PX today, get a haircut, & do some studying on my USAFI business course.

Enjoyed eating lunch with silverware! The Kraut & wienies weren't bad.

All 4 now. Love, James

Friday, August 22

8.22.69

Howdy,

I had hoped to send home the gook "souvenirs" that I bought earlier this month, but left them at Patton before we flew out to the hard spot ... maybe the next time I'm in Cuchi.

Saw my first USO show last night; the New Folk singers. Real good. Too bad though that the guys in the field seldom get in on the entertainment.

Got my haircut yesterday, and couldn't help but laugh to myself, at how the gooks attempt to be professional barbers.

The barber shop is fairly nice, since it's a military concession. A girl continually goes around the chairs, sweeping up cut hair ... then picks it up on an old rusty sheet of metal.

The barber really works you over, running from side to side. But the razor

cut is not done with lather - they have big bottles of water with a fine mist spray. He doused me with it til water ran down my face + neck.

No worry though - at the finish, he grabbed a tissue (scratchy paper towel) and dabbed it in a couple spots.

So I left the place with hairs all over my neck, but who can complain for 40¢?! ha.

Not much of August left. Paydays aren't so urgent since we have little opportunity to spend in the field, but at least it marks another $\frac{1}{12}$ of my tour.

All for today.

I look forward to seeing my mail when I get back to Hantsley.

Love from Nam,
James

8.26.69

Tuesday morning, August 26



Dear family,

Received your last letter dated the 20th yesterday.

Still no word from Tim. Guess I shouldn't be so anxious, but every day counts! We've been on day operations since I came back from Cu Chi on the 23rd. It's really been hot, since the rain has been coming during the nites - but my zinc oxide is a big help!

We were out two days ago for 12 hours. Sure was

hot and tiring. Found gork supplies & bunkers in a hedgerow, then a bunch clustered around to see, & someone tripped a boobytrap. I was dusted off, including the captain. Most were ^{relatively} minor shrapnel wounds, but unnecessary, since we're always to stay spaced, to avoid just such "mass injuries."

Then we were heliborned into an area where Delta Company had had contact - 2 of their men killed. After air strikes & artillery, we swept through the area. I had my camera along and got a picture of a NVA that Chien Hoied as we were reconning by fire & sweeping through. Another roll of film is on the way - via Chicago. The conditions weren't too swift for picture taking, but I took a bunch since I don't have many more missions in the boozies.

Another aers-gramme from Aunt Lettie this week! I'll send it on later. Boy, the news of Camille is sure steady. Quite a catastrophe. Must've been a Terrible experience for the thousands involved.

Mother, now don't go overboard on your diet, or you're bound to just... FADE AWAY! ☺

Thanks for sending the 'bulletin' from Joyce's wedding - another one I had to miss. Guess Keith didn't go. You know he always liked Joyce, but the feelings just weren't mutual.

We have just today left at the hard spot; Huntsley. Tomorrow we go in for a one-day stand down & from there back to Patton Fire Support Base. We'll be going on just a short rif near the perimeter here this afternoon, so hope it's my last one!

Have you finished redecorating the camper? Boy, I bet it will be nice. It sure is nice with the bigger window between the cab & camper, isn't it? A neat color for the truck, too.

You know, GI's can buy new cars about \$600.00 cheaper by ordering them over here before they go home. It's a tempting thought!

Well, that's all the news for now. We're hoping that the next letter comes direct from Achi. ☺

Love, James

Saturday, August 30

11:30 a.m.

8.30.69



Dear dad, mom, & girls,

Howdy from Patton fire support base! Well, Tim is 19 now, & I'm wondering if he's in Vietnam. Still no word. I really had expected to hear a week ago, but then I probably shouldn't be so excited. If or when you hear from him, please send me his address right away. (that is, if he's at his unit of assignment.) It's possible he's written but the letter was misplaced or delayed, although I still expect to hear anyway.

Well, guess what the latest is on me?! When we were in on stand-down & wasn't feeling too good, so slept alot. When we got out to Patton the next day I saw the doc with my sore ears. ... Yup, fungus in the ears.... must be from those muddy rivers here. So I've been administering 4 ear drops in each, 3 or 4 times a day. Boy the past 2 nites have really been painful. Couldn't sleep much with the throbbing pain. And then getting up for 3-4 hours & bunker guard didn't help - not the mortars & artillery going out all nite.

We went out on a rif the afternoon we got back from stand-down. (2 days ago now) after getting back, drenched from the rain, I changed clothes & took off my boots, & immediately my left foot started swelling up & sore. To make the story short, the doc thinks it's some kind of infection. Boy the first night it felt like it was broken. But it's just puffed up & slightly red. You know - just looks like a fat foot. Kinda dwarfs my toes.

So that gave me 2 days sham time - yesterday & today. I don't go out with the platoon on heliborne 'cause I can't even get my boot on.

I'll go back this afternoon, because it doesn't seem to be

8.30.69



improving. I'm taking bun penicillin pills & keep a hot pad on it all night (chemically heated by adding water - even seen em? They're pretty nifty.)

The reason it's not improving I think is because I'm on it all the time! I thought the natural thing to do with a sore foot is to stay off it for a while. Well, today I'm on KP, and had some details yesterday, too, besides bunker guard, resupply, etc.

Reminds me of my experience at Minnetonka when I had appendicitis. The nurse told me to get out and "make room for a new batch." It's the same story in the army. There's so many fakers, the sick ones suffer. Well, I'm mighty fortunate that "foot 'n fungus" aren't serious. Just makes me mad that I seem to have been hit with a deluge of ailments this month. Oh well... at least no wounds! ☹

When we were on standdown I was elated to get the package. Boy, that cloth/tape sure is great. All the packages have arrived in "poi-fect" condition! Thanks for all the bubblegum, rootbeer barrels, wiglay's, dry roasted peanuts & Mpls. Tribune. And please thank "Grams" again for financing the care package. Everything was yummy. I don't believe ~~everything~~ how delicious bubble gum tastes over here! All the guys get big eyes when they see it.

Also glad for the Brown Photo mailer, & news clippings.

Have to get back on KP at noon, so better close & hobble over there. Heris hoping ^{that} the next letter won't have any new illnesses to report!

Have a great labor day. Have a juicy tomato for me!

'Will write as soon as I get word from "Toots." ha.

Love, James

P.S.

1:00 p.m.

The nice thing about these self-seal envelopes is that you can open them to add something to a letter!

I'm back "safe" in my little bunker now. When I went back on KP my foot started swelling & hurting more, so I went back to the aid station & got a new "profile". They changed me from Penicillin to some other ^(sp) psychidellie-pink pills, & I'm to keep my foot elevated ... no walking! - Some poor soul had to replace me on KP this afternoon. ☹

Hope I'll get a letter from you today!

Greet Aunt Laura & Uncle Mel for me!
Some car they've got, huh?!

Love - again,
Jim

Sunday, August 31 1:00 p.m.

8.31.69

Dear family,

Re-supply just came in but I'll try to jot off a few things on my mind before the mail bag is loaded for "shipment" to Culchi.

Glad for your 2 letters yesterday, of Aug. 25+26. Not bad... 4+5 days delivery time. But I wonder why they so often "build up?" Lots of times I've received more than one letter from the same person, with postmarks up to 3 days apart! Oh well, better late than never.

My ringworms' healed, my ears are fine, etc., etc. Now just for my foot. It's still swollen & red, but the heating pad relieves the pain. But standing on it during bunker guard doesn't feel too swell! Things could be much worse though!

I'm glad you heard from Tim. As soon as you receive his permanent address please send it - although I certainly ~~hope~~ to hear from him before then! I'm wondering if ~~his~~ ^{his} letter to me may have been lost in the mail.

Today's payday, so will speak to the

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lieutenant about my [predicament.]?

Maybe they'd call Cam Ranh Bay replacement station for verification of Tim's arrival.?

Anyway, will keep you posted.

For the present, this "elephantitis foot" (perish the thought!) is giving me some Sham time - but what a way to sham!

Pam. witcher's picture in the local paper was cute. Assistant manager, eh? And Carrie Adams as a part timer. Is that in downtown Wayzata?

Glad to get the news in the 2 letters yesterday -- happy and sad.

'Till tomorrow -

Love, Jim

Monday, ^{oops!} ~~August~~ September 1st

9.1.69

Dear Dad, Mom, and everyone,

I remember in one of your letters early last month you wrote that you hoped I'd be off line by September. Well, that hope becomes fact today! Your letter that stated Tim's arrival in Cam Ranh Bay was sufficient confirmation of Tim's "in country" status.

So I feel like singing! The rest of the company just left on tanks to another fire support base, a couple miles from here, still in connection with Cu Chi.

So I'm sitting in the middle of a dusty, but empty bunker, writing a few letters while I wait for re-supply... And then my "historic" ride into Cu Chi.

You know, after all the letters, thoughts,

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and conversations about getting off line, this is the day I was looking forward to, & now it doesn't quite seem real. But it's true!! No more AP's, no more 'rice paddy swims', etc. of course now that I'm through humping, I can say that I'm thankful for the experiences gained - I hope it all adds to a good - positive effect on my life.

But if you'd have asked me if it was worthwhile during a firefight, wet AP, etc., I would have commented far differently.

~~But~~ I trust you don't misunderstand me... The war is sickening, & I often wonder how much "good" we're doing over here, but I guess a guy can learn something worthwhile in most any situation.

I still look for a letter from Tim any day. Will anticipate his permanent address from

9.1.69

you though, as soon as you receive it - just in case I don't hear ^{from him} I still have a feeling that he's written, but the letter was lost or held up somewhere along the line.

I usually don't remember my dreams, but last night I really had a way-out doozy. I dreamt that I was home and Aunt Laura & Uncle Jack came out to give me a new M-16 for my birthday. I really liked it - it seemed better than the ones Uncle Sam issues. But then we started getting mortared right outside the house! - and a string of other events - all war stories. Aren't dreams wierd? ha. I'll never forget the one Dad told about being chased up a tree by a moose. And dangling from a limb, or something like that.

Oh, back to ^{the discussion of} my 'rear job'; Lt. Riggsby

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asked me this morning to go to the motor pool this evening and get my military driver's license to drive a 3/4 ton jeep for the company! That's all he said.

I don't know if it's an offer for a permanent job, or just while I'm being reprocessed. But it sounds fine with me.

I don't even know what or whom I'll be driving. (is that correct, Ma? ha!)

Naturally I've been thinking a lot about what my new job might be, & I can request to leave country. I believe I wrote earlier that the legal advisor informed me that I could be reassigned to another country in the Pacific.

But if I have a relatively safe, decent job in Nam, the benefits are much better for me. Like I'd still get an R & R ^{and my}

9.1.69

monthly salary is \$65.00 more. I know these things are relatively minor, but the big thrill to me is that I can extend over here until August, (rather than go home at the end of my year, which would be June 8) and then go home - done with my military 'career'.

How long did Croz have to extend?

You need only extend the number of days it takes, so that when you leave Nam, you have 150 days (5 months!) left till your normal termination of service.

That means I'd be home in time for Fall Quarter '70, drawing \$ from the GI bill (like about \$150.00 per/month!), and done with the Army.... instead of getting home in June for thirty days leave, & then being shipped to some base, probably just to help harrass the Trainees until Jan. 12, '71.

Well, I can see I've rambled on enough

9.1.69

to make your eyes sore, the summer squash to scorch on the stove, and who knows what else!?

Guess I'm just elated over this day, and my big - fortunate - break... all thanks to a (gung ho)?] Kid brother. ha!

- Got a nice letter from Grandmother Crosby yesterday.

- Am enclosing my diary from August. (sounds childish, but I guess that's what it is!)

- And I'll close for now, looking forward to reading your next letter as I sit on the coil spring jeep seat under a shade tree in Cuchi!

♪ ○ Happy Day! ♪

Much love from Nam,

Jamie
↗↘

Tuesday, Sept. 2 9:00 a.m.

9.2.69

Dear family,

Cu Chi is beautiful! I enjoyed reading in the air-conditioned library last night.

This morning I went down to the motor pool to make an appointment for my military driver's test.

- Speaking of licences, mine expires on my 21st birthday next month. Will the state automatically send me the form to renew it? - If not, I'd appreciate it if you'd get me one.

I filled out a form at the motor pool, & then had to trot down to the aid station to have an eye & ear check..., sure thing. They asked me if I could see & hear, & gave me 20/20 vision & 20/20 hearing! That's how the army operates; formalities that are meaningless.

I'll probably be taking my test sometime tomorrow. I'm going to hop down to the library today & bone up on auto-mechanics! Good idea, huh? (FOR ME!)

I guess this jeep-driving job will be for 2-4 weeks; the time it will take for my reprocessing.

No word from Tim yesterday - but received 6 other letters. I'll await his permanent address as soon as you receive it. I sure hope I'll be able to see him sometime over here. Of course it's not the same as back in the world - ya can't just hop a bus to the next town on a week-end pass!

Guess I'll answer a few letters while I have some free time.

Oh, I'm going to mail those Vietnam "souvenirs" today. The bunch of blue & brown clothes are what we found in a cache in the Hobo Woods. They're NVA clothes, I don't even know if you can use them - but they'll make rags if nothing else. I probably shouldn't send so many, but some guys took them, then

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dropped them in the bunters & left them.
 I just stuffed them all in. I don't have the
 time or facilities to pack things well.

Just do what you want with all the
 "junk."

Am out of film, so will have to get some
 at the PX soon.

I'm looking forward to those cookies!

All for today - hope I
 pass that test tomorrow!

Love from this side of
 the world,
 James

P.S. I'm enclosing my "profiles".

- The pass for a soldier to
 get out of humping! 😊

I'm wearing my boots now - limping a little,
 but the swelling has gone down
 considerably.

9.4.69

Thursday afternoon, Sept. 4

Dear Mom, Dad, and girls,

I'm sitting at the aid station, waiting for a jeep to take me down to the 25th Med. Hosp. It's nothing serious - but my foot has been swollen & sore for 8 days now. The pills they've given me don't seem to have had any effect.

The doctor isn't around - he's out at Patton for a couple days, so that's why I'm going to 25th Med. Maybe the Dr. will prescribe some different pills, huh?

Well, they've said it's inflammation or infection - I can't remember ever having anything

like it. It's not that painful except when I stand on it or walk on it. Glad I don't have to do much walking these days, but "laws", I'm not going to pass up walking to the mess hall twice a day!

There's always the good news to offset the bad! ... My in country letter from Tim arrived yesterday! Dated August 22, it took 12 days to get here! They say in country mail is slow, but that's ridiculous! It would have been faster for him to mail it home & ^{then} ~~then~~ have you mail it to me! Oh well, it's

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done now. You've probably heard by now that he's with 173rd Light Brigade unit, at Phu Cat. I'll be waiting to hear from him again to get his permanent address. I'm supposed to get another copy of orders - the ones that assigned him to his present unit. He probably received them at Cam Ranh Bay.

Received your letter yesterday. Thanks for the funny cartoons you cut out, Kim! That must've been some patio party Al & Donna had. I'm anxious to see what their patio looks like.

Well girls, your 3rd day of

school today. Be good to your teachers. ha!

I was all excited at lunch today because they had orange jell-o with fruit cocktail. But upon eating it, I changed my mind. They put "titi" water in it so it wouldn't melt. As a result, it was rubbery & too sweet! - Can't win 'em all.

My driver's test kinda fell through yesterday. We got their too late, cause the jeep were being used somewhere else, so tomorrow I'm to take it. This fat foot of mine better not interfere!

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I'm at 25th med. now. The Doc called it Cellulitis or somethin' like that. You know how hard it is to decipher DRS. handwriting! well it could be worse - it could be Elephantitis. ha!

I'm back in the same "treatment room" where I had my shrapnel removed 2 1/2 months ago! I'm soaking it in hot water for 1/2 hr. & then I think they're going to cut it open. (Yeeecchhk!)

3:30 p.m. Well, it's over & I'm waiting outside now for my ride back to the company.

I think this was worse than

my shrapnel "operation"... I could see everything he was doing! He lanced it, (after novacaine) probed, squeezed, etc. I have to come back in the morning to have it checked & the dressing changed. - Well, I guess that's the end of my exciting news for today - tune in tomorrow... sure thing.

Guess I won't be playing soccer for a couple days!

Sure am glad I got that letter from Tim! ☺☺

Bye for now.

Love, James

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9.4.69

Friday a.m., Sept: 5

Hell-o again!

Didn't get this in the mail last night. I had to wait 'till 5 p.m. (an hour) to get my ride back from the hospital. And my foot was so sore, I had to get crutches back at my aid station! It's OK when I'm lying ^(laying?) down & keep it elevated, but as soon as I stand up it starts throbbing. My ankle is really puffed now.

I guess I'll be "blowing this" day" like yesterday. It's wait - wait - wait. What would be a simple visit to the DR. at home, becomes a complicated

system in the army: sign out at my orderly room with a sick slip, come to the aid station & wait for my records to be drawn & then for a ride to the Hosp., sign in and wait there... etc.... and on it goes. A bunch of grief for the few minutes that I actually receive treatment, but then as a measley PFC there's not much I can do to change it.

-Still better than being shot at!
"But what a time to get laid up. The Lt. was a mite surprised to see me hobble back into the company area on crutches. All he said was, "My jeep driver!"

9.4.69

So I missed the drivers test.
Guess I can take it next week.

How nice that there's always the
good with the bad; I got the
cookies when I got back to my
hooch last night. Thanks for
sending them! ... Delish. as
usual. And mmmm, those raisins -
yum! You're really proficient
packers - very few crumbs and very
few broken! And the Dubble Bubble
& Wrigley's is much appreciated, too.

I was surprised to find the
pinched cookies in the bottom.

They taste great, too! Aunt
Emelyn bakes quite abit,

Doesn't she.

I'm discovering more & more things benefits to being in the rear. Like free laundry, & unlike the hodge-podge system in the field, we get back our own clean clothes, and even folded!

Well, I'll try to get this in the mail today, & hope to hear from you (with Tim's permanent address?) soon again.

Love from Nam,
James

9.7.69

Sunday afternoon, Sept. 7

Dear Mom, Dad, and girls,

... Would you believe... I'm writing from Ward 2 in Culchi's 25th Med. Hosp.?! -No score; it's no big thing, but here's the scoop:

When I came back to have my foot bandage changed & checked on Friday, the DR. was surprised to see that the swelling had increased and spread, making my left foot REALLY a fat one!

This was a different DR. and he said to the medic who had lanced & probed my foot on Thursday, that it shouldn't have been. Guess that Other Doctor was a little hasty in his 15 second diagnosis. Well, I'm sure it's not the first time someone's been unnecessarily "butchered." ha.

Anyway, DR. No. 2 had me immediately admitted with orders for pills & hot packs. I'm just 2 beds down from where I spent the night after my shrapnel encounter in June.

The swelling seems to have gone down some, but my foot is hot and red on top. Very little pain until I stand up and "take a trip" with my crutches. The pressure really makes the foot throb & starts a little trickle of blood.

My bed is elevated at one end so I don't have to sacrifice my down-filled pillow - nice!

It's hard getting around, so I've had all my

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meals in bed, and have been doing lots of reading. But I pushed myself to get out and have a shower this morning. It was worth the effort. I'm just glad I was alone. I must have looked awfully silly balancing on one foot.

I don't know how much longer I'll be here. It's maddening that there's no personal contact with the Dr. Like he hasn't even been in to see me since I was admitted 2 days ago! I don't know if he'll be in later today or not. But you can be sure there will be pages of reports & records from this minor occurrence.

Naturally I came here on Friday with no idea of staying at the hospital, so I didn't bring anything with me. But 'the Red Cross supplies a box full of all the necessary toilet articles: razor, blades, comb, soap, deodorant, etc. Really nice.

And I was glad that they brought my mail from the company area yesterday. Hope they'll bring it again today. Was glad for your letter with the news of Al's patio party, the first day of school, etc. Glad you heard from Tim again. I'll be waiting for that permanent address. (Although he's not nearly so "desperate" as I was waiting for his in-country letter. ha!)

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This hospital ward is a small version of the Cleveland School Quanset. Rather small, & old, but sure comfortable to sleep on a thick mattress and blue sheets. Really has been relaxing to sleep alot - of course it also gets boring, in time. There are no windows, so we're really in a different world, but the books, magazines, & Radio, are great life savers. Right now the Twins game vs. Kansas City is on. A touch of home!

Most of the guys in this ward have battle ~~wounds~~ wounds - there's a big turnover in patients.

I'm looking forward to driving that jeep, but it's hard telling how much longer they'll keep me here, since I can't put any pressure on my foot yet.

Well, that's the medical bulletin for today. I wish I had some cheery, exciting news to relate, but when you're in bed all day - with no windows to look out - that's kinda wishful thinking.

Oh, I finished HOTEL by Arthur Bailey last night. I started it the night before. Really an interesting novel about a hotel in New Orleans - it's people & problems. Same author as for "Airport."

Thanks for the letter yesterday. - "The next best thing to being there!"

Love, James

9.9.69

Tuesday, Sept. 9

Dear family,

~~Wish~~ to get another letter yesterday with cartoons enclosed! Being in CuChi, I receive my mail a day earlier than in the field, so your last letters have reached me in 4 days! I'm sure the airmail stamp helps. Most letters I get with a 6¢ stamp take an extra day from the Midwest.

Heard on the news that Miss Minnesota was in the final 10 in the Miss America Pageant. And then wasn't she finally a runner-up?

I wonder if this 3 day Truce "in honor" of Ho Chi Minh will amount to anything.

I was surprised that Everett Dörtsen died in the hospital. He was certainly in the news alot recently.

I'm in a different world here at the hospital - and enjoying it! I'm sure after a while it would get boring and depressing, but knowing I'm in just for a matter of days, I'm making the most of it.

Being continuously waited on reminds me of my appendectomy days at Abbott. Except I could go for some visitors... and nurses. ha.

The DR. put me on penicillin shots night before last, so it's getting a little tender rolling around in bed. They seem to be doing the trick though. My foot is easier to move and the swelling is mostly gone. Now it just looks like a truck ran over it. I'm glad it doesn't

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feel as bad as it looks!

I don't know why I spend so much time explaining it. It's not that big a thing. There's just not much other news I guess.

I'm glad Tim did get in maintenance. Over here you can't be sure where they'll stick ya.

So you turned down crab apples this year, huh? Boy I wish I had some to munch on. ☺

Sorry to hear about Dave Swan, but like he said, at least he's out of Vietnam.

The DR. will probably be "pushing me out" in a day or two, so I'll write a few letters and read some more books!

Love, James

9.11.69

Thursday, September 11

Dear family,

Well, I left the hospital today, and am on 60 tonight at the company orderly room, so thought I'd make use of the typewriter--one of the rare opportunities here in Nam.

As you may have noticed already, this is a typical piece of Army machinerythus, something's wrong--in this case, no "X." Rather than take the time to sketch in the letter each time I come to it, I'll just leave it blank--ok? OK!

When the Doc came to check me this am, he gave me a profile for a week, and sent me on m wa . (I have a feeling that this omission might not work out too swell--oh well)

I was glad to be leaving the confines of the hospital, so I laced up m right boot after lunch, and was off!....After stopping in at the treatment room for a bottle of penicillin pills and an earwash. (Some combo. huh?)

Happ to report that m ears are clear again. The pain was gone, but the were clogged..rather IT was clogged...the right one. Would ou believe m ward had no Q-tips.... and ou know me, I can't live long without them. Hs.

An wa , the earwash was great, and I'm now back in the compan area....dreading the sleep on m cot tonite. But then things could be worse, couldn't the ?

I'm to go back in two da s to 25th Med. for a final check on m foot. It's much better now-- I've turned the crutches back in, and hope to have m left boot back on in a few da s. I sure feel conspicuous walking into the mess hall and ohter places with one boot and one thong, but then again.. things could be a lot worse!!

I was glad to get our most recent letter this afternoon on arriving back to the compan area. M first "carbon letter" in Nam. (even though I got the first sheet)

9.11.69

I hadn't gotten Tim's temporary address from you until today, so I'll write him tomorrow--and hope it reaches him in less than 12 days!!

When I got back this afternoon, I was glad to be able to finish off the last of the cookies you sent--with raisins still succulent, protected in the airtight coffee can. Mmmmmmm!!

I'm not sure what's in store for me for the next few days, but maybe I'll get that test taken before too long. (Driver's test, that is)

I got back my first corrected USAFI Business lesson, and was kind of happy with the score of 93%.

In talking to the company clerk today it ~~seems~~ seems that I'll most likely be able to be ⁱⁿ reassigned here in Vietnam at a reasonable "safe" location. I'm kinda anxious to know where it might be, but I'm full contented here in Cu Chi for the time being, and in the meantime, the days are ticking by!! Almost the middle of Sept. already. Not bad.

Well, I have a batch of letters to answer, so I guess that's it for now. I don't know if I'll put up with this typewriter any longer or not. Hope you've been able to read and understand this.

Thanks for the continued letters....the best of morale booster!!

As always -
Love, James

9.12.69

Friday, Sept. 12

Dear All,

Surprised to get another letter from you already today! wow, David's wedding was quite an affair, huh - the dance + all. In yesterday's letter you said it would be your first Polack wedding, but at the time I thought you were kidding ... far from it!! Did you take any pictures at the reception? Mom, you should've donned your white uni. and charged catering fees for doling out the cake! ha.

I walked down to the PX today - one boot, one thong - and by the time I got back it felt good to get it elevated - Big strain, huh?

This afternoon for 3 hours I headed a team of 7 or 8 Vietnamese girls + "mama sons". Our job? Tearing down a bunker. They earn \$1.10 a day! They filled the wheelbarrows + I wheeled 'em away - kinda' fun working with them - but sad, too. They haven't much future. Kinda' funny too, how conscious of time they are. They kept asking to see my watch, since they got off work at 4:00. (or should I say 1600?)

M'mmm, I could go for some of that jelly + tomato juice in a big way RIGHT NOW! They have Koolaid for lunch + supper, but rarely get fruit juices - even at breakfast.

How long will Beeki be at Mary Lynn's? Is she still taking the Corvette DR.? Bye for now Love, Jim