



James Boyd Reay papers

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9.13.69



Saturday afternoon, Sept. 13

Dear family,

Here I am again at 25th med. My dear DR. Hicks has prescribed $\frac{1}{2}$ soak and another lancing job. My foot has started swelling again and is as painful as ever. No wonder - they had me tearing down a bunker yesterday and I was scheduled for KP tonite.

Seems that they want to bleed me ^{again} and I don't know, it just disgusts me, because I don't think this would all be continuing if DR. Riste (or any civilian DR.) was in charge.

All those penicillin shots, hot packs, and days of foot elevation seem worthless now, since I'm starting all over this afternoon. This has been plaguing me for 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ weeks now.

After they do their thing, I'll go back to the company area for strict ~~bed~~ (COT) rest, and will come back daily for bandage change.

Well, it could be more serious naturally, but I hope this will be the end. I haven't worn a left boot for weeks!

As I'm sitting here waiting my turn in the treatment room, a Vietnamese mother is nursing her baby beside me, and half a dozen people are up on stretchers with various wounds. I will keep you informed. Love always, James

Sunday night, September 14

9.14.69

Dear Mother,

Another birthday for you, and I hope it's an especially happy one. You deserve it !!

Was glad for 2 letters today from you and Kim. Also got a good one from Mollie.

There's no point in worrying about my foot. Although I'm sure it would have healed up long ago if I was at home, this climate has a good deal to do with the lingering infection. It's just discouraging to be sick in the army, because you can't do anything but pass the time reading & writing letters. You're really limited when you have to use crutches everywhere you go.

They lanced it, supposedly because it was starting to "come to a head." And again the second time for the same reason. (there was no scratch or cut to cause it)

What's the problem with Lynn & Lisa? Why does MaryLynn need a babysitter so urgently?

Don't overdo this weight-loss deal now, or we'll have to give you a new name; Mini-Marg? I think it's really great! ha!

Again, happy birthday - next year I'll say it in person!

Love, from one of the brood, James



9.15.69

Monday night, Sept. 15

Dear family,

Greetings again from the hallowed halls & walls of 25th MED. As I returned for my bandage change this afternoon, a 3rd DR. got into the act at the unveiling of my mysterious left foot.

In a brief conference, and after a few pinches & squeezes of the merchandise, the readmitted me to WARD 2 ... my 2nd home in Nam?

I suggested an X-ray (an idea from your letter, mom) so they did that, as well as took a culture sample ... AND ... changed my medication to 4 orange pills every six hours. Oh, I almost forgot; 'took a blood sample as well. (I never seem to get away without at least one needle in me. ha!)

There's no worry, no fear; just the slow process of healing in Vietnam. And they still call it - Simply - Cellulitis. So I'll read some more books, write some more letters, and look forward to the day when I once again am able to don both of my jungle boots!

Didn't get my mail today, but imagine they'll bring it into me tomorrow.

Last night, just as we were getting to sleep in the hooch, I learned that my platoon was hit out on an AP just about an hour earlier.

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The pointman, a soul-brother who I knew pretty well, was killed; literally blown apart from an RPG or Rocket. Another guy that joined our platoon just last month, went into shock when he saw Hal dead. I guess he's in pretty serious condition.

So again, I'm very lucky and thankful to be off the field.

PRAY FOR PEACE!

Wish there was something to write about other than my trite ailments and the troubles of the war, but when it's your life day and night, there's just not much else to think or write about.

That's what makes your letters so appreciated. To hear about the normal things - fun things - going on at home.

Remember when I left, I gave you my insurance policy, etc.? Did I also give you my bank book? If not, I'll look again. It seems like I brought it with me, but can't find it with my things.

Hope you've received Tim's address by now. It sure would be nice if I could see him over here sometime.

Well, good nite, and I'll continue filling you in on all the paraphernalia of my situation later this week.

Love, James

9.22.69

Monday, Sept. 22

Dear Marge,

♪ ♪ HAPPY BIRTHDAY To You! ♪ ♪

Congratulations! 15 down & 50 to go.... then you can start collecting social security. (sick, huh?)

Well, I got out of the hospital today and am walking around in green fatigues & jungle boots again. Feels almost strange - but good - to be walking again - without a limp EVEN. I hope you never have to go through using crutches. Of course it would be different in civilian life. Everything bad seems personified in the army.

Anyway, I'm glad my good ol' left foot is back to normal. All that's left are the 2 little slashes where they lanced it. I was just counting up the days and it took 25 days to heal!! That's Vietnam for ya.

I was glad to get 2 of mom's letters yesterday. Boy, she's really busy with work at Town 'n Country, company, etc. Tell her thanks for sending Tim's permanent address & that letter from his division commander. I'll give it to my company clerk.

Well Marge, I wish I could've sent you something, but being in the hospital, I couldn't get around.

Anyway, I hope your birthday's a real fun one. Can't wait 'til next year when I'll be ~~HOME~~ ~~to~~ help you celebrate! BLOW HARD! 😊  Luv, famer

Wednesday morning, Sept. 24

9.24.69

Dear family,

Muchō Gracias for buku mail recently!
Received your last letter (in the green envelope!)
yesterday along with another package. M'inn!
Those toastie rolls & everything else will be
delish! I havent had red licorice or "Chicken
Bones" for eons. Ya just can't get
those delicacies over here. 😊

'Was painting all day yesterday and then
had bunker guard here at Cuchi from 6-6.
Only got 4 hours sleep but have the
morning free ... and the rest of the day
if I'm lucky!

I just got back from bunker guard and
had a refreshing shower, so will try to get
some letters written.

Oh, I forgot - thanks for including the
Mpls. TRIBUNE magazines. Nothin' like reading the
hometown paper. ha. That was an

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interesting article on water pollution in Minnesota. I guess it was inevitable that they'd mention Minnetonka. But then the Leay's have clean/chlorine water to splash in! I haven't been swimming since June - I'll really have to make up for it next fall.

Karen + Bud wrote about what an excellent job you did serving, mom. Boy, you're sure flying around as a working gal & housewife! Glad you like it at Town 'n Country.

Some pretty nifty fringe benefits you've got with your job - bread crusts. I don't believe they know what to ^{ha!}ast or croutons are over here.

The food is pretty good here at Cuchi. My messhall feeds 150-200; all the ~~battalion~~ battalion "rears." Dig it?

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9.24.69 (just an hour after supper)

I had KP two days ago¹² and it's just as sickening as ever to see all the food thrown. We had corned beef and there was a chunk not even cut into that must have been 10 or 12 pounds - still warm from the oven - thrown in the garbage can.

The last couple days we've had some delicious fresh lemonade. They must've gone through cases of lemons. Well, after the meal, everything not used is THROWN. What a pain to dump out gallons of cold-good lemonade.

- Sigh: I guess I've picked up some of your "don't waste food phobia," mom. Enuf about food. ha.

2 days on my foot & it's still getting better. It's as good as new now - finally. You asked where it had

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been lanced: about an inch behind my 2nd toe, the first time, and about an inch behind my 4th toe - the day before my 2nd "hospital visit."

WELL, it's about time I'm on my feet & doing something to ~~earn~~^{earn} my PFC pay.
Wow!

Karen Boberg gave me the name of a Captain (female nurse) at 12th Evac. Hosp. here in Cuchi. She ~~was~~ camp nurse at Trout Lake ^{Camp} some years back when Karen was lifeguard! So I'll have to get down there and meet her. I assume she's from somewhere in Minnesota.

I had a nice card from Gina the other day, and one from Grandmother Ray not too long ago. They sure send nice cards.

I'm enclosing a few letters that may be of some interest to you.

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I'm glad the package arrived with Vietnam junk, and that your vase arrived in one piece, mother.

I'll be writing Tim again today. Wouldn't you know, my Lieutenant lost the letter I got from Tim last month. No big thing. But also, my Clerk hasn't received word from Tim's company commander yet. SLOW-SLOW! I could be here till Christmas. Really, it wouldn't surprise me in the least.

Seems that I spoke too soon about the jeep driving, too. Since I was in the hospital, another guy took the test and is doing most of the driving. Of course, things could still change at anytime. I'm happy!! There's always plenty of free time most days. If I don't have bunker guard, there's always something going on at the service club, or there are movies at various locations, there's the library, etc.

Quite the life of Riley, huh? Sure thing. Well, there's much more to do & enjoy than out at some sorry hard spot.

9.24.69

Every explosion & every passing helicopter reminds me of how nice it is to be off line! Last night on bunker guard was the first time I've carried a weapon since August 28~~th~~!! Unreal, huh?!

Yum - that English Butter-Scotch is great.
How is Mollie's typing job going in St. Louis Park?

I was surprised to see the "First Man On the Moon" ~~air~~ mail stamps on your letters. I didn't think they'd be out this soon. Neat, aren't they?

When I got out of the hospital last week, I found that my shaving kit was stolen. Maddening! All my shaving stuff; toothpaste & brush, mirror, powder, deodorant, etc. Guys take anything & everything over here. - And I'm constantly lending something. Maybe I've mentioned that before.

That black shaving kit was the one the girls gave me two Christmases ago. Well, they have cheap ones at the PX.

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Al's new garage sounds colossal - but then isn't every project of his so?

Won't be long 'til you're headed for Wyoming. Good luck! This will be the first big trip for the new truck, won't it? Besides to Iowa, anyway.

I guess I'll quit here and use some of my long wind-ed-ness on a few other letters.

'Using the fireplace alot I suppose. The new screen sure sharpened it up.

Bye for now.

Love from Nam,
James

9.24.69

Wed. afternoon.

Sept. 24

Hi Marge!

Sorry this will reach you a little late. As I've been saying, the pickins' are pretty slim in CuChi as far as gifts go. I thought about buying you some ivory earrings or a Chinese fan () but decided to just get this wall plaque.

At least it's something to remember your 3 brothers that served in Vietnam.

See the lady carrying the basket over her shoulder?

I tried it once, & they're
really heavy!!

Hope your Birthday
is extra fun.

Love, James.

9.24.69



Wednesday night, Sept. 24

Dear Kim,

I've owed you a letter for some time now, and I want to congratulate you on not having to run for the bus yet this year - or has your record been wrecked by now? ha.

I'm sitting in the shade of the service club patio, writing at an umbrella table. Later on there's going to be a floor show inside on the stage. Wish you were here. Of course it'll probably be just a bunch of sexy belly-dancers (You and Bridgette could do much better, I'm sure. HA!) 

How's school? I remember 5th grade was really fun. My teacher was kind of corny. Miss Herber had bad breath & ^{she} drove an old black Cadillac, AND she gave me my first "N", but we went on lots of field trips, & had lots of movies. Ah! the good ol' days at Hroveland. One day in 6th grade we were writing poetry (limericks), and I made one up about my reading Teacher (Miss Furber) and my 5th Grade teacher. (Miss Gerber) Ask Croz if he can remember it. He helped me make it up. It was pretty good - at least it rhymed OK, but it was embarrassing to have to get up in front of the class and say it. - It was the day that all the parents were visiting!!

Kinda' neat to have a man teacher, isn't it?

'Glad to get mom's birthday letter today. She's 50 now! I don't know what made me think she was 52. That must mean that dad is 51 then, right?

How do you like mom's "Phantom 309" album? Do you like Johnny Cash's hit, "A Boy Named Sue"? I think it's stupid. I got 5 letters today.  Bye 4 now. LUV U! - JAMES

Cu Chi, South Viet Nam
September 25, 1969

Round
Ex

Dear Civilian,

Many people have said that the Army is "an experience," but when that includes a year in a combat zone, then it REALLY becomes an experience!

At times I've felt like throwing in the rag, but Uncle Sam doesn't make much allowance for quitters. So, I'm going on four long months in Nam now, and naturally am already making plans for my future when I gain my freedom. As of now, I'm hoping to leave Vietnam and be done with the Army the middle of next August. Then I will start the fall semester at Bethel College in St. Paul.

In my relatively short time in Nam, I feel that I've had my share of events, good and bad. I guess I've spread the news about my Purple Heart received my first night on the field. My platoon has certainly had its share of contact with the enemy. There have been a number of casualties among the guys that I live and work with 24 hours a day. It's hard to see your own buddies wounded and killed.

Happily for me, those days of ambush patrols, heli-born missions, muddy bunkers, and wet rice paddies are over. I can still hardly believe that my "kid brother" (he's bigger than me, but two years younger, so I guess I can call him kid) has joined the ranks in Vietnam. As a result, I am no longer required to be in combat.

I'm "a Rear" now; (one of the fortunate GI's that carries out the work in base camps rather than in the boonies) despised by the grunts that have the unending daily task of humping, but also envied at the same time.

I'm still in Cu Chi awaiting my reassignment. Then I'll be transported to a "secure" area in Nam to serve out the rest of my time, probably as a Security Guard. As slow as Army processing goes, I won't be surprised if I spend another six or eight weeks here. In the meantime, I'm kind of a permanent detail man. I don't complain though. Everytime a chopper flies overhead, I'm thankful that I'm not outside the wire, in the thick of it.

The Vietnamese people are very friendly. I'm slowly picking up some phrases. A smile is international, and there are very few Vietnamese that don't give a passing GI a big grin. I'm looking forward to making some "gook" friends when I finally get settled in my new job, wherever that may be.

Without a phone booth at every corner, letters naturally become more appreciated than ever. I'm certainly thankful for the many people that have written me. I get some ribbing for writing 'buku' letters and for all the mail I get, but it doesn't bother me. There's nothing like whipping out the old pocketknife at the end of the day to slice into a bunch of letters from back in "the world."

It's impossible to plan even a day ahead over here, since things can change in a second; like as soon as an incoming round strikes! But, I'm looking forward to bigger and better things. In the meantime, the address below should be good for the next several weeks to fly a letter to me in four or five days from the states. Thanks for your concern, and don't forget to keep PRAYING FOR PEACE!!

PFC James B. Reay 469-54-6618
Co. A 2nd Bn. 14th Inf. 25th Div.
APO S.F. 96225

Your soldier in Nam,

Jim

e 3, Box 288
elsior, Minnesota 55331

EXCE OCT 8 1969 PM 1 33



EDGAR J REAY FAMILY
Rt 3, Box 65
WAYZATA 55391

Dear people have said that I am a "loner" but when that in-
crease in my life, I really become an experienced
man, but I don't know how to make
much money for my living on four long months in the new
and naturally as my father when I was my freedom
As of now, I am not doing with the army the night
of next year, I will be the fall semester at Federal College in
St. Louis.

is my relatively short time in the army, I feel that I've had a share of
good and bad. I guess I've spent the best about my family's money
my last night on the field. I guess I've certainly had its share of
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good and bad. I guess I've spent the best about my family's money
my last night on the field. I guess I've certainly had its share of

lately for me, there's a lot of things that I've learned, mostly
about the world and how it works. I can still hardly believe that my
"kid brother" (he's bigger than me, but two years younger, so I guess I can
call him kid) has joined the army in Vietnam. As a result, I am no longer
required to go to school.

I'm "Red" now, (one of the fortunate of the army) and the work is
some camp rather than in the field, but I'm still in the army that have the
unending daily task of training, but also having a little time.
I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.
I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.
I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.
I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.

It's a little bit of a change, but I'm slowly picking up some
things that I've learned, and I'm slowly picking up some things that I've learned.
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rienced than ever. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.
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It's impossible to know even what I'm doing, since things can change
in a second. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.
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I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field. I'm still in the army, but I'm not in the field.

Your soldier in Nam,

P.O. James R. Reay 469-54-0018
Co. 2nd Lt. 1st Inf. 25th Div.
APO SF 96225

Sat. a.m. 9/27,

9.27.69

Dear family,

Just got back from bunker guard.

There was some sniper fire during the nite, but not at our section of the perimeter. 😊

Glad 4 your letter yesterday. Also got one from Aunt Emelyn!

I'm enclosing a letter that I'd like you to save. I met an interpreter at Patton Fire Support Base last month. He speaks English pretty well & is really a nice guy. It's funny to read his "broken" English letter.

Boy; if or when you send another package, would you please include a 'church Key?' All I have is a c-ration can opener for opening sodas. (They don't call them cans of pop over here - but sodas!) It'd be nice to have one to carry with me. The PX just doesn't carry that stuff.

Mom, how'd ya like the TV dinners? ha.
I'd like to taste one of Aunt Bernie's sometime to
see the difference.

Well Kim, how are you gonna pay back
Jenny for bucking you off? Wow! A cast in
5th grade. You really live dangerously. Hope it
doesn't hurt anymore.

Bye for today.

Love, James

P.S. When is Mima's birthday?

10.3.69

Friday night, October 3

Dear family,

It seems like ages since I last wrote--I guess 'cause I've been so busy the last couple days. I went up to Battalion Headquarters two mornings ago for a detail, and ended up typing. They're pretty short on help, so I spent the whole day there, and again the entire day, today. It feels pretty good to be typing again. The Army is full of lengthy forms, so there's always something to work on. You wouldn't believe the detailed reports that have to be made up each day.

I will probably be working there for a good while now. Tonight the Staff Sergeant that 'hired me' told me that it might become a permanent job. I guess the Captain is talking to the Major about it.

Ordinarilly I'd be thrilled, but I've kinda had my eyes set on going to Cam Ranh Bay, or some other part of Vietnam.

Just yesterday I was offered either the job of Alfa Company mail clerk, or Administration clerk, but after doing alot of thinking about it, I turned it down.

I'd probably enjoy any of the jobs, but since I have the choice, I'd just like to leave Cu Chi and see another part of Nam.

Wow, each day I can't believe ~~how~~ different life is for me, just because I have a brother in country!! I haven't heard from Tim since that first letter. Maybe I'll be getting another letter from him soon.

Well, I'll be doing some quick, serious thinking about whether to accept this Battalion Clerk's job, or stick to my request to be transferred. What a change to be able to actually have some say about what happens to my military status!! Maybe I would be wise in accepting a position herein Cu Chi, since I've no idea or guarantee of what job I'd receive on a transfer.

I'll keep you informed!!

10.3.69

If you hold this stationery up to the light, you can see that I'm going military all the way, with 'Government Bond' paper--ha. I'm on CQ tonight, so grabbed a couple sheets from the desk here.

I opened a checking account here in Cu Chi last payday. It's an unbeatable deal! NO CHARGES whatsoever. And if a minimum balance is kept, your money draws 5% interest! It'll be nice to have, so I won't have to bother with money orders to send money to church, etc. Also, it's instantly available cash when I need it, but no danger of 'losing' it. It's with American Express, a pretty well established company--Same as American Express Travelers Checques. I don't know how they make a profit on the servicemen, but I'm sure getting a good deal.

I've really enjoyed and appreciated your steady flow of letters. They've been reaching me in just 4 days recently. You asked in your last letter about my weight. Don't worry, have I ever gotten skinny? Hardy-Harr! Don't I wish that were my problem. No, I would guess that I'm just about the same weight as when I left home. Really, I'd like to lose a few...

The mess hall food is filling and fattening, and I think with all the heat, a body tends to hold water. I've been drinking lots!! (Oh, but remember how thin Croz was when he got home? I guess my diagnosis doesn't prove too true.) I'm enclosing a few letters that you may find interesting. I've gotten a slug of mail the last few days. Hope I can keep up. It's nice to always have something to do--if there's no excitement or nothing going on, there's always a letter to write!!

Well, I could go on, but it's getting late. I've got lots to think about for the next few days. It's not a "critical" decision, but one that will determine how the remainder of my hitch in Vietnam will be spent. (Cu Chi or Cam Ranh?)

Thinking of you always--good luck hunting, working, studying, swimming, etc.

Love always, James

10.4.69



UNITED STATES ARMY

Saturday night, October 4

Dear Kim,

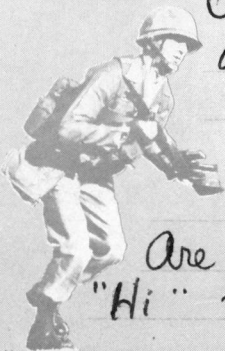
I got another of mom's letters today. Sorry your arm is still sore. I hope by the time you get this letter, the pain will be gone!

It must've really been scary and painful to get bucked off Henny!!



When I was about your age - or spanger, mom or dad was leading Smokey home to the barn from wear's pasture. (It was Zierold's then) Tim & I were riding Smokey as mom (or dad) was leading him. Then along the path just past the sand pit edge, Dutchess made Smokey buck us off. I sprained an arm & Tim got a pricker in his foot. HA!

I've been putting in alot of hours working at the Battalion Headquarters. I start at 7:15 a.m. and work til about 6:30 p.m. We get 1 1/2 hours for lunch though, and an hour for supper, so it's not bad. ... No week-ends though. Everyone in Nam works 7 days a week. At least I can take off for church on Sundays - like tomorrow morning. Our 2/4th Infantry Chapel is cute. It's like a club house - or huge bird house. (Know what I mean?)



Boy, I was sure sorry to hear about Sean. Are his eyes OK now? Poor guy. Say a special "Hi" to him and Charlie for me, OK?

Say, let me know about the deer hunt, OK? And please be sure to send me your school picture - Beth & Marge, too!
Love you - Games

10.5.69



Sunday night, Oct. 5

Dear Dad, Mom, & girls,

I was happily surprised to get a post card from Glendo, Wyoming today!! I hope you had a good hunt & return trip. I'll look forward to hearing about it all.

It was a beautiful postcard. I've only been in Wyoming once, ~~but~~^{and} saw very little of it. We passed through a corner of the state when I went to Hi-C Camp in Colorado, way back in '63!

I'll be waiting to hear about Jane Knowles — seems hard to believe that she may be married the 10th! That's ANOTHER wedding I have to miss.

Boy, I hope Sean's eyes are normal again. Poor guy. It must've really been a scare.

My typing job is going fine. Wow! Clean fatigue every other day, service club & library at night, and no other details (like bunker guard) since I put in a full day "at the office." Today I went swimming during my lunch break — it felt great. I'll stop for tonight — thinking of you, James

10.7.69

Tuesday afternoon, October 7

Dear family,

I'm sitting at my desk enjoying the fan on another hot Vietnam afternoon. I like Minnesota's Octobers better!

Everyone's kind of relaxing after the Annual IG Inspection this morning. Everything's been working up toward this day in the Battalion for over a month. Now the pressure is off, and things should be more casual.

We were here until 9 p.m. last night getting things in order, and came in at 6:30 this morning in our freshly-starched jungle fatigues, all ready to smile at "the Brass" who passed through all morning. I would never get used to 'Military Courtesy.' Seems stupid for someone to call "TEN-HUT" and everyone jump to his feet, just because a colonel or general enters. But just 10 months and my saluting days will be over. You know, that really seems like a short time to me.

Ever since getting off the field last month, my whole military status has changed; now I'm on top, with a choice in matters! Quite a change from the days as "trainee".

But RE-UP? NEVER!

If I'd have been in the field all this time, I would have made SP/4 this month. But no big deal - it'll still come. A SP/4's pay tops PFC salary by nearly \$50.!

Good news!! I heard from Tim yesterday. In his letter was a form filled out by his company clerk with pertinent info., so now things should really start rolling.

My clerk said that I may have new orders within two weeks!

Boy, to think that things would be totally different if Tim hadn't have come over - makes me hold my breath; and let out a thankful sigh. (I'm not trying to be dramatic, I think you know somewhat how I feel.)

Everyone that comes into Culchi for a medical appointment, etc., talks of how they're going to arrange getting a job in the rear. - seems to be everyone's hope, but not many are fortunate enough to have it materialize.

Tim just wrote a few lines, but didn't hesitate to say that he was happy in 173rd Abn. I'm still not sure what his specific duties are though, nor what his living conditions are like. Do you know?

I had a roll of prints developed; a number of them ^{are} shots of me, since some people have written and asked for a picture. Fuck! They turned out pretty scuzzy. And how ridiculous with my pockets bulging. I didn't realize they were that full. I had been carrying pills, medication, pens, glasses, handkerchief, dental floss, etc. But no more!

I'm also enclosing a picture with me & my crutches. I'm glad those days are over!

The pictures were taken right outside my hooch. See the sandbags everywhere? - And a 'neat' sidewalk, huh?

I had a good letter today (just now) from Melli, and a

10.7.69

Cute picture of Sean. I'm sure glad that his eyes are better.

I stopped by my hooch at dinner and there was a note on my bunk from Chuck Rye! He's on a stand-down, so I'll be able to see him tonight and while he's here for the next 2 days.

Guess I'll close now. Hope I get a letter tomorrow with the results of your deer hunt!

Say Hi to everyone for me.

As always -

Love, James

Monday nite, October 13

10.13.69

Hi Marge!

Thanks for your good letter last week! I got one from mom today. 'Been eatin' lots o' ducks n' deer?

My birthday's not for a week, but I already got a card & package today from Diane Christopherson. She wrapped the package, and inside were 8 or 10 individually wrapped packages; bubble gum, books, and candy. Sure was nice of her. She writes some real funny letters - like you do.

The days have been passing faster this month than any other time since I've been in the army. It's already the middle of the month!

I'm kept pretty busy typing for the captain. Today I typed 7 CONFIDENTIAL stencils of info., among other things. (Wanna know what it was all about? NO. My lips are sealed. HA!

I'm at the library tonite. Tomorrow nite I'm planning to see THE YELLOW SUBMARINE. Last night was DR. DOOLITTLE. It was more for kids, but funny anyway.

There's something going on everynite, but it's nothing like bombing around the Twin Cities!

Speaking of the Twin Cities; too bad the Twins didn't get the pennant. Of course the radio and/or TV will be going strong these days during the World Series.

10.13.69

I remember the World Series was one of the first things we watched on our Color TV - some years back. "(I THINK) Boy, could I go for watching some color television right now. Well, less than 10 months from now...

M'mm, thanks for the piece of doublemint you sent with the letter. I was out, so it tasted especially good one afternoon "at the office".

In the building where I work, I have my own desk, (just like a school teacher's) my own typewriter, and own phone. M'mmm, I can stash some of my 'goodies' in one of the drawers to munch on at appropriate times during the day.

The only bad thing about the job is that we get all the calls for dust-offs, and relay them to the various companies. There sure are alot of them - and too many are KIA's (Killed In Action)

Thanks for sending your picture. I have it in a little picture album that a gook girl gave me. She's a helper in the mess hall, and I give her gum quite a bit, so she wanted to "souviner me" with something. I hope Beth & Kim (and Charlie + Sean) will send their pictures, too.

Guess I better stop for now.

Say hi to everyone - especially GRAMA GRAUPEE!

Love From Nam,
James

10.16.69

Thursday night, October 16.

Dear family,

Wow, this month is passing even faster than last month! It seems like alot has been happening recently, but then over here, any little change from the day by day routine, seems worthy of mentioning.

Today was a 'first' in my life; Vietnam or elsewhere. I got a letter from Al!! It was good to hear from him, naturally. ~~but~~ He writes just like he talks - funny! (comical, that is.)

Yesterday I received a package from Aunt Emelyn - homemade cookies. Yum! She did a fabulous job of packing them - (a 3lb. coffee can inside a box) You must have told her about my "raison crave" (!?) They're real good ones - kind of sugar cookies with nuts & raisins - fresh & tasty.

I'm on CQ tonite at S-1. CQ means Charge of Quarters, and S-1 stands for Battalion Supply, for you ignorant civilians. HA!

I'm really enjoying my job, even though the hours are long. We have a new Major, and he's cut our lunch and supper breaks from 1½ hrs. to a measley hour.  Guess I can't complain though. The Captain who's essentially in charge here at S-1 is good to work for. He's more commonly known around the 2/14th Inf. as "PINEAPPLE", but ~Cpt. Baron (Baa ROWN') is a nice guy. He's Hawaiian I believe. Dark skin and indented eyes; eyelashless, but not a foreign trace in his speech.

10.16.69

I think I wrote to Margie (Hi Marge!) that I had heard from Tim last week. I still have to answer him. I'm really behind in correspondence. Oh well, I could have much more serious problems.

I imagine it's been a full week for you with "Granny" visiting. Did she join you in the Moratorium March-War Protest on the 15th? (HA!) I suppose she helped make the new camper cushion covers as planned. I'll be anxious to see that wildlife-print. Neat!

I'm all worked up these days about my new "home!" Yesterday I moved into the S-1 hooch. All this time, since coming in from the field on Sept. 1st, I've been in the company hooch, with different guys coming & going each day. All I had was a cot, and had to live out of my water-proof bag.

Now I've stepped up in the world to my own private room! Well, at least it's partitioned off about to waist height. I have my bag screen set up on my cot now, and there's even a shelf and chair!

There's a new shower built outside nearby - with electricity - so I pulled out my good ol' Norelco that you gave me 4 years ago, and it's working good as ever.

The summer I spent in Tim's shack was considerably more elaborate, (after all, it had wall to wall carpeting!!) but this little room is comfortable. It's nice just to have a place to call my own.

10.16.69

They're still trying to talk me into staying here, but as tempting as it is, Cam Rahn Bay still holds my mind. I'll most likely be here through the first part of November anyway.

Since I have CQ all night, I'll get the afternoon off tomorrow. Think I'll go to the pool and service club!

CQ's not bad. It's just a matter of being here to take any emergency calls, etc. Dustoffs happen at all hours you know! Here at 5-1 we often find out about casualties in the Battalion even before the Dust-off reaches the casualties. Then we relay the info. to the appropriate company, so the clerk and officer can get down to the Evacuation Hospital. It's quite a system, all composed of an intricate communications system of radios and telephones. We have 3 types of phones at 5-1. ① A land line - to call Patton Fire Support Base or any building in the Battalion area. It's controlled by a switchboard. ② A dial phone to call anywhere in Cu Chi. And ③, a dial phone to call anywhere in the world. (That's my kind of phone!!)

I've been using my flashlight lots. It really comes in handy at night. But could you please send more batteries. The PX doesn't have the right size. It takes 2 SIZE AA Batteries.



I'm waiting to hear whether or Not Jane got married on the 10th. If so, I'll look for something to send them.

10.16.69

Well, I could go on endlessly it seems, but guess I'll call it quits for tonight, and set up my cot. I'm getting sleepy.



Sure is nice to sleep dry and relatively comfortably each night!

I wonder what Can Rahk Bay will bring next month?

Oh, I found out that my supervisor at the desk across from mess, will be celebrating his 24th birthday - also on the 20th! He's a Sgt. that's been in for 5 or 6 years. Comes from a list of foster homes, etc. Pretty sad. The army seems to provide some sort of stability for guys without families. He's 1/2 done with his Vietnam tour - and wants to return to KOREA! Wow, from HBT to COCD.

You should see his hooch! He's got stereo-tape recorder, refrig., fan, TV, bed, cabinets, etc! The ~~new~~ NEO's and officers live nearly as good as in the states.

Guess I'll have another buttery cookie from the dear Reeve family in Des Moines. (HA)



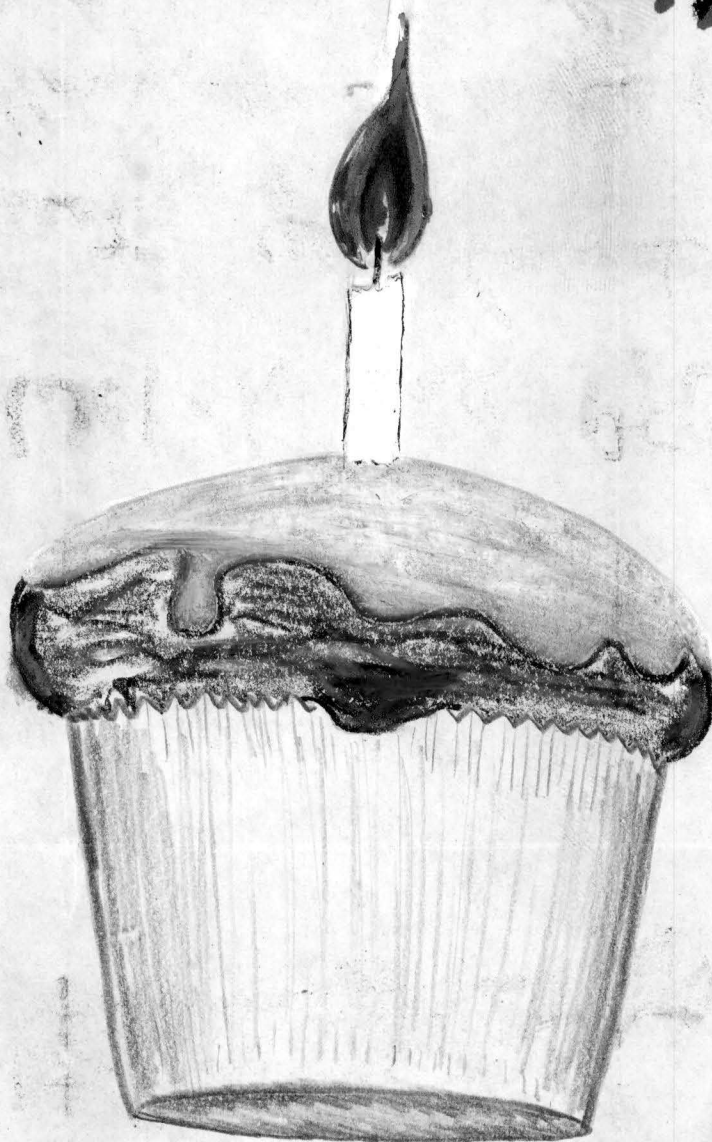
and hit the sack

Love, James

HAPPY

BIRTHDAY

10.20.69



to Sgt Welch and PFC Reay
your first year (in Vietnam)!

Many, many more (birthdays,
not Vietnams), may they be happy.

1904 H 1910

1914/15



10.23.69



Thursday, October 23

Dear family,

Thanks gobs for the continuing flow of letters, and for the most recent package. It arrived in perfect shape as usual, and is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ devoured already.

Thanks for your letter yesterday, Beth!!

Wow, we've been swamped with mail this month. - Got 4 or 5 birthday packages and lots of other cards. And they're still coming!



Not a day goes by without 3 or 4 letters. But, I must confess, I'm falling behind somewhat in answering them. I counted 63 tonight, so decided to sit down and start writing! Wow, I'm sure glad postage is free. HA!

We've enclosed 2 of my cards - one from the Red Cross Girls, & one from "the guys at the office." Thanks for the real nice one that you sent.

Ah, 21! (Any word about renewing my ^{driver's} license?)

Sorry we missed ANOTHER wedding. So 'Becki Sue' is a wife now, too. Brother, things are changing these days in our circle of relatives. It seems unreal when I hear it all kinda second hand - being way over here. But that's better than not hearing at all. I'm still very impressed with the prompt and efficient mail service in Nam. Better than the states, I'm sure. Of course there are better helicopters to do the job.

Would you please send me my bank book? I already have a savings envelope. Yes, I get 10% savings over here,

but that's on a specified allotment taken from my check automatically each month (\$100.00 for me) But the rest I want to keep in my checking account over here, and savings at Wayzata. It's not safe to keep large sums of money over here, but I'll need a considerable amount when R & K comes up, (I want to go to Australia!!) So I want it to be accessible.

Well, if Beth and Kim slept out on the lounge, it must not be too cold in Minnesota - after spur premature snow. Boy, I could go for a nice snowfall right now. I manage to get to the pool every day or two, but never at the hottest part of the day. (My problems could be greater, huh?!) The monsoons are all but over now, and the days are definitely hotter than ever. Wish they sold fans in the PX. All appliances are bought up the day they get on the PX shelves!

It's nice to be able to change clothes every other day, since they get soaked every day.

My request for transfer to Cam Ranh Bay finally went through my company 2 days ago, (APPROVED!) so now it's at Division HQ's. where the final decision is made. I'll find out within 2 weeks, how I am to spend my next 9 months in Vietnam. (my last 9 months in the army!)

Either way, I'll be happy with no AP, etc. etc.!!!
Love, James

10.25.69

Saturday, October 25

Dear Beth,

I have a few minutes before lunch, and no typing to do, so thought I'd answer your letter. Thanks again for writing!!

I traced this sketch from a booklet onto a stencil for use here at Battalion Headquarters. The dragon doesn't look too ferocious, though, does it?

So you've already had some snow, huh? Must be nice. Of course you might have to wear leggins' and boots when you go Trick or Treating next week.

Speaking of Halloween, have you gotten a pumpkin yet? I don't think the Vietnamese know what a pumpkin is!

M'mm, I got ANOTHER package from home yesterday. Those were the first Krispy Treats I've had for months! Everything else is good, too. THANKS!!

I saw Chuck Rye again last night. He's in Cu Chi for 10 days for some leadership training. Guess I'll be seeing alot of him the next few nights.

I turned down another job today. I had an offer to go to Long Binh as a security guard. It wouldn't have been bad, but when I came through there in June, it seemed like a pretty run down place. So I'll still take my chances on getting to Cam Ranh Bay.

Have you gotten your school pictures yet? I'd sure like one of yours and Kims.

Well, 'Becky Sue' is married now... Another wedding I've missed since coming into the Army. I wonder how many more I'll miss before next summer.

You'd think I'd have fewer mistakes, since I've been typing everyday, but I'm doing a rush job on this. The Major might not like me typing personal letters if he happened to walk in. "But while the cat's away..."

Good luck in school--and have a good November eating your



(200 ARE VICTOR)

JANER
Love,
dum-dums!

10.25.69

2D BATTALION 14TH INFANTRY



(GOLDEN DRAGONS)

10.28.69

Tuesday, October 28

Dear family,

I just found out this morning that I've been 'put in' for a bronze star — no, don't get excited; it's no big thing. They hand out medals 'like candy' over here. So it seems, anyway. It's supposedly for meritorious achievement...

You know before coming into the service I thought receiving a medal was really an honor. But working at Hqtrs. I've seen how freely they hand them out. It's really sad, because it ruins the meaning that should go with them. And it's unfair to the guys that really deserve them.

Last week a 'confidential' report came to our awards clerk concerning awards for snipers. They have an actual scale for awards, related to the number of gooks a sniper picks off. 1-5 Killed; bronze star. 6-10 Killed; bronze star with oak leaf cluster over 16 .. SILVER STAR, etc. That doesn't make sense to me.

Enuf about that.

I'll also be receiving my CIB (Combat Infantry Badge.) You're supposed to get it after your first fire-fight or after 30 days of humping, but they're "a little" slow.

I've also heard that I'm up for promotion to SP4. I didn't think they'd bother since I'm leaving, but it would be nice. \$60.00 /mo. more!

Chuck came by yesterday and we threw some horse shoes.
'Got a letter from Grandmother C.

Adieu pour maintenant,
Luv,
James

Saturday night, Nov. 1st! 1969

11.1.69

Dear Mom, Dad, and family,

Glad for your letter today. Boy, when you talked about raking leaves it sure seemed distant. I think it's been two years since I ~~last~~^{last} held a rake!

Yesterday was payday!  It was convenient to make a deposit in my checking account at the air-conditioned bank, rather than wait in the long lines at the post office for money orders.

It's taking me a long time to write this. I'm on CQ tonight, but have been reminiscing my stories from the field with another guy here at S-1. (Morbid?)

Also, something in your letter spurred a long geographical discussion - what was Tim asking about State Capitals and rivers for? We were trying to list the states & capitals by memory. It's harder than you think!

Nixon's speech on Vietnam policy should be interesting on the 3rd. There's still a lot of action around Cu Chi.

All for now.

Love, James

November 4

11.4.69

Dear family,

Thanks for your letter today and for sending my bankbook ... Airmail, no less !!

It was good to hear from Mollie again, too. That sketch of Wayata State Bank on my savings deposit slips, sure looks familiar, and good!

'Heard Nixon's speech today. It helped me accept the situation a little more, but then I'm not out there fighting every day! Just last week, Chuck Pye's unit (2/12 Inf.) walked into a series of Viet Cong bunkers & spider holes. 10 guys were killed, and as the bodies were being moved out by an APC (tank) the goats hit it with an RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade) and the drivers legs were blown off.

The war may be in a 'lull', but there's still fighting & dying.

Called Hqtrs. (DIVISION) today to see what's holding up my Reassignment. They'll 'look into it' and report in 'a couple days'.

And they want me to re-up in this organization!?!?

This month is supposed to be the worst for new malaria cases. (The change from rainy to dry season.) We no longer take the daily white pills - just a big orange one every monday. - Hope it does the job for the next 9 months!!

M'mm, I missed your popcorn balls on Halloween. I remember how good they tasted last Dec. 9th, after a year's abstinence. Come next August, I'll have lots of things to devour after missing them for over a year.

Speaking of food, we had cherry pie tonite; so they called it anyway. There desserts just aren't very appetizing. The crust is thick and pasty, and the filling is so thickened, it has no cherry flavor! I just picked out the cherries - like nearly everyone else.

The cake and occasional rolls often have lumps in them: ingredients that didn't get blended. Oh well, it's still better than C-rations. I have to laugh when I think how good those first "C's"

tasted back in Boot Camp. But there was snow on the ground, we were on Bivouac, and STARVED! Most of the guys pick through a new case of "C's" and $1/3^d$ or $1/2^d$ is left to be thrown. That's where the Vietnamese come in - Scavenging the dumps by the dozens.

So Beth had Debbie & Sandi overnight in the Camper. Remember when I had Gordy Stamp & Jack Boice over and we slept in it? We were so glad to eat a pancake breakfast inside the camper the next morning.

I'm really getting excited about getting a new car when I leave here. I'll have a little figuring to do in the meantime, to work out car payments, school expenses, insurance, etc. (HA)

Gues I'll close and write a few others. It's nice to sit in the air-conditioned

library! It's open til 9 p.m. every nite. Everything else closes at 10. excuse me, 2200 hours.

Love, James

Mother wrote in her last letter that she read about the 8 guys killed near here recently. That was Chuck

11.10.69

2

Rye's unit. But my old platoon had to go out and load the dead guys onto an Army Tank. It was really bad news. There's stuff happening in our unit every week, and they call here at headquarters as soon as it happens.

Well, it's going on the middle of November already. Are you learning anything new about Thanksgiving at school this year? ('Luv that Turkey!')

Say hell-o to everyone, and type me again sometime!

One of your brothers in Nam,

James

Jamer

Hi

December 7, 1968

Hi!

December 7, 1968

Dec. 7 1968

Hi

Thursday, Nov. 13

11.13.69

Hi 'Marge'!

Wow, thanks for that deee-licious
(50¢!) "WORLD'S FINEST" candy bar. Sure brought
back memories. I sold cases of 'em to
go to Chicago in 10th grade. And Mollie used
to sell the same things, too. I wonder
if they were BIGGER back in those days?!
Anyway, it was ~~good~~ good. Thanks!!

I volunteered to go out to Patton
Fire Support Base last night for bunker
guard, and wouldn't you know that it
happened to be the night that it got
mortared! Well, just 2 rounds, but that's
enough! I was just dozing off a little
before midnight (my guard was from 12-3 a.m.)
when we heard the low whistle and close
explosions! One hit just on the other side
of the bunker ~~sit~~ next to ours; Miraculously
NO injuries. Sure brought back memories though.

11.13.69

I Tell ya, when you're all scrambling in the dark to get inside the bunker, there's sure a hollow feeling in your stomach!

Well, being out there for the night (first one since the end of August!) makes me appreciate all the more, my "comfortable" life in Cachi.

Did I ^{ever} tell you about a guy here in 2^d/14th Inf. that everyone claims looks just like me? Well, he's a medic, and some strangers have started talking to me in the mess hall, etc., thinking I was 'HIM'. (Kinda embarrassing - but more embarrassing for them!)

Just tonight I walked in the latrine & a guy said, "Hi, Doc!" [I'll have to get a picture of "we Bobby-Twins." ha.] Maybe we can do a Doublemint commercial or something!

Speaking of pictures, I finished off

11.13.69

another roll of slides today. Most of 'em were taken at Patton ... and on the road between CuChi & there. There are so many kids that line the road with their hands outstretched for candy, etc. I ~~threw~~ threw them the last of my butterscotch, but that didn't last long. It's really ~~for~~ pathetic the way they live.

Well, another $\frac{1}{2}$ month is gone, and I'm another $\frac{1}{2}$ month closer to freedom.

Thanks again for the 'bar'. Mr. Minkler's a good cook. (sick!)

As always,
Jamer

Saturday, November 15

11.15.69

Dear family,

I had CQ last night, so have this afternoon off. I just had a swim and am soaking up some rays at an umbrella table before I go to the PX for some things that I need.

Just as I was going to sleep last night (shortly after midnight), I heard the Apollo 12 blast-off. Sure wish we could get the stuff live and in color like you do back home.

Our battalion had 4 casualties last night. Seems that all the patrol bases & fire support bases were mortared in the area. Patton got it again, but no injuries there. One guy from Delta Company was killed by friendly forces. Somehow, for some reason, he wandered out beyond where his ambush patrol was set-up. One of the other GI's on the AP figured he was a gook, so opened up on him. He took just one round

in the back, but the M-16 round is designed to tumble on impact, so it really makes a mess. When he was medevaced he was talking some & guess, and no one suspected it would be fatal, but he died at 2 this morning — another sympathy letter for Nixon to sign. They're conducting a formal investigation of the incident, but everyone feels it was a legitimate accident.

I sure feel sorry for the guy responsible. In the field I was always hesitant about firing just in a general direction where an enemy was suspected. Too often, we had other friendly forces nearby, & could never be certain of their exact location.

There are alot of GI's and innocent Vietnamese civilians killed from free-firing, gung ho, soldiers.

Concern is already turning to the new Tet Offensive, expected to start in January, &

11.15.69

believe.

Well, I'm sending some more goat junk sawinners. A girl that works in the mess hall has always been real friendly and I've given her little things from time to time (gum, soap, etc.) So she's returned some gifts from the goat markets just outside of Cu Chi. I complimented her one day on the colorful scarf that she was wearing, and she insisted on me sending it home to "my sister." ha. When she gave it to me, it was damp, and I could smell that she had just washed it out with lux bar soap. Don't bother to save it.

I'm also sending my ARCOM (Army Commendation Medal) for the weeks I worked "long & hard" at S-1 (Battalion Hqtrs.) before the annual IG Inspection.

Mom, I'm sending a few carbon 'sets'. Try 'em out for your carbon letters. (P.S. put your paper ~~directly~~ ^{over} the carbon, NOT ~~over~~ the yellow sheet. - ha!) Hope this reaches you soon. Love, James

P.S. I took another trip to the aid station yesterday (first time in weeks - wow!) to have my left ear ~~washed~~ - out. It was plugged up with infection again. No big thing. The medic cleaned out the mold (or whatever) and I left with another bottle of eardrops for my personal medicine stockpile.

PFC James B. Reay 469-54-6618
Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
25th Infantry Division
APO San Francisco 96225

Cu Chi, South Vietnam
November 15, 1969

Dear 'Silent Majority,'

With all the recent news about ending the war, the fighting continues, but with some new hope for a rapid, honorable peace. To the average GI in Nam, President Nixon's recent speech doesn't promise to have any immediate effect on the situation here, but at least we are reminded that the United States is still trying!

I've been "in the rear" for more than two months now, and am still grateful each day not to be out humping. At the same time, I'm determined not to become fat sitting behind my desk at Battalion Headquarters. It's nice to have three swimming pools in Cu Chi. One of them is close enough for me to have a quick swim during lunch. (Don't you wish YOU could sun-bathe in November?)

I'm happy with my temporary job here, but am still waiting for a transfer to Cam Ranh Bay. I learned just today (after calling Division Headquarters AGAIN) that it will most likely be another month before my orders come through. So it looks like I may be seeing the Bob Hope Christmas Show in Cu Chi.

Some people think I'm dumb to request a transfer since I have a good set-up here, but since I have the chance to see another part of Nam, (an opportunity that very few GI's have) I want to make use of it. Plus, a change of scenery might help the time to pass more quickly.

Since working at 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry Headquarters, I've been exposed to an entirely different view of the Army. It's much nicer to be "on the inside" to see how the administration of the Army works, rather than the typical draftee who is not to worry about understanding Uncle Sam's logic--just to obey orders like a robot.

I'm in charge of the daily status reports; an accurate account of where each soldier in the battalion is. It's quite a task, as there's a constant shuffling of guys to and from the field, hospitals, R&R, etc.

Speaking of R&R's, I've just acquired that job also. I'm responsible for each month's distribution of R&R allotments to the companies, and for doing the processing of each GI. Every process in the Army involves at least one form to be filled out, and always a number of carbon copies. I must go through pounds of the stuff every week.

Although I'm happier than ever (as content as one can expect in Uncle Sam's clutches), I'm certainly glad that this is only a temporary job. I can't help but smile when I think that next year at this time I'll once again have my freedom, and never again have to don a green fatigue uniform.

I haven't started counting the days yet, but I AM getting SHORT!! (Would you believe 9 months)

Keep those letters comin'!
As always, "GI JIM"

11.17.69

Monday afternoon, November 17

Dear Mom, Dad, girls, and everyone,

I got your last letter yesterday, and also the big envelope with the magazines, etc. Sure is nice to get that stuff to read! (Military publications get a little dry and repititious) Wow, that Minnesota Motorist had some good articles. Those snow scenes sure make me homesick. So many of the guys over here are from the south, and don't even know what fun winter can be! Ha, it's a joke to even THINK about snow this time of year over here. Sure gets humid in the afternoon. We have some fans, but they just don't do the job. Even sitting still, my shirt and pants get soaked. At least the nights usually cool off, and there's no problem in getting to sleep. I'm real comfortable in my private little room. 'Think I told you about the soft throw rug that I bought at the PX. Boy, to stand on that barefooted makes it hard to believe that I'm in Nam!

Well, I'm no longer a measley little PFC.....Just found out yesterday that I'm SP4 ---just like 'little brother'-----as of November 7th of this month. I was really glad about it, since they could have easily passed me by, as I won't be here much longer. Now my base pay is \$214.20 instead of \$155.10 Nice little increase, Huh?! (+\$9.00 Foreign Duty Pay, +\$65.00 Hostile Fire Pay)

I was surprised to get another package from Aunt Emelyn. It came just a few days ago. Sure is good. Two kinds of cookies and 30+ packs of gum. And I got another package, today. It's from Carolyn Opie in Duluth. She was in GIA last year.

I did something alittle different thisafternoon. I volunteered for a detail and we drove 1/2 way to Saigon to pick up some sewer culverts (?) --you know the concrete things. Any way, then we brought them to a small village. I think they're going to put in a well or something. ~~Any way,~~ **I** It was nice to get out and ride for a change. Almost makes me feel human! (It's not really that bad.)

11.17.69

2

Oh, I had a letter from Tim yesterday. I'm glad he likes it in the motor pool. I'm going to see if I can get an 'IN-COUNTRY' pass to go see him in a month or two. I don't think it should be too difficult.

Well, I got back my savings deposit slip from the bank today. I'm not so sure that I like it without an up to date record, but if you'll forward my monthly statement, I'd appreciate it.

The Captain here at Headquarters is DEROSing (finishing his year over here) so we had a party for him the other night. He was real easy to work for. He's definitely Hawaiian, and most of the guys call him 'Pineapple'. There are a lot of other LIFERS that have nicknames, too.

I took some more slides today, and will probably finish off the roll in a day or two. It sure is nice to get film at such a low price in the PX. But my trusty little Instamatic 100 that Al gave me for Christmas about 5 or 6 years ago, is getting pretty worn out. I'd like to get a nice 35MM Japanese camera-- like a Yashika, Minolta, etc. On all that kind of stuff (cameras, tape recorders, etc.) we save 30% - 50% over here.

Well, I guess I'll close here for today. Thanks for the ~~easy~~ ^{steady} flow of letters!

Miss you all.

Love,

James

Friday, November 21

11.21.69

Howdy!

Glad for your 2 letters this week. Things are busy as usual in Woodland.

I haven't been much in the letter writing mood lately, but just scratched one off to Tim to inform him of his brother's 'Rivalry of Rank.' HA! (SP4)

I tried to CALL him a few nights ago when I was on CQ. We have a directory for all of Vietnam, & you can even dial direct. But the connections were bad. I got to Bong Son, but then was cut off. I'll try again sometime.

Well - another guy from my platoon was killed today. He was hit in the neck and chest from a booby-trap, tripped by the guy in front of him. I had just had a good time talking with him one night last week when he was in Cu Chi for a 3 day stand-down. It happened on a rif near Patton II FSB. Things sure happen fast. The medic gave him mouth to mouth

resuscitation, but he was dead when the dust-off reached the hospital with him.

I have to call in all the details of Casualties in our Battalion, to Brigade & Division Casualty offices.

On the lighter side, I was able to see the New Christy Minstrels in person last night they put on a show for us.

Pretty good, but nothing like the Supremes. ha!
(I can't wait to hear "Reflections" with the earphones!)

In case Tim hasn't explained to you what a leg unit is, it's just another name for the common Infantry soldier, also known as the 'grunt.' ... so leg unit = walking. Get it?

It's been interesting to follow Apollo 12, but we still miss out on total coverage, since newspapers are at least a day late with news. But parts of it have been carried live on the radio. They'll be landing back on earth tomorrow.

I'd say the average temperature here is about 85°, but it gets above 90° - and the

11.21.69

hottest part of the year is still to come.

I had to laugh at Beth's dream - that she was dying of thirst on the desert & woke up thirsty. That's about as good as the person who dreamed they were eating a giant marshmallow & woke up swallowing their pillow! Ha.

But if she was sick all day, it wasn't too funny after all. Did she make it to the Bathroom at school? I remember when I threw up in my MATH class in 7th grade. Yuck.

Will close for tonight. ~~Less~~ Less than a week until Thanksgiving! Oh, they have a decorated and lighted artificial (naturally) Christmas tree in the PX. I bought a few Xmas decorations for my room.

Bye for now.

Love, James

11.30.69



Sunday night, November 30

Dear Family,

Seems like a long time since I wrote, but the time has seemed to really pass 'faster than ever' lately. Got paid today, and tomorrow is another month already! This month will be the worst away from home, I guess--In all my 21 years, I've never strayed from Woodland at Christmas. Ha/Ha.

We're planning to construct a tree in our hootch (of some sort) so that should be some fun. But without even a snowball to throw, Christmas trees look somehow out of place. Oh well, NIXT YEAR!!

Thanksgiving was just like any other day, but the meal was something special. The shrimp cocktails brought me a little closer to appreciating sea-food, and the turkey was surprisingly good. But I'd rather have sage dressing ANYDAY instead of Cornbread dressing. I'm enclosing the MENU.. Ya, a printed menu, yet! We even sat down to a tablecloth (sheet) and the Vietnamese K.P.'s served us. That was different.

The weather has been surprisingly cool the last few days. Haven't even needed fans. Reminded me of those dark, windy September days, when the sky is full of clouds, but you know it won't rain. Now the temperature is picking up again, and a T-shirt is just extra bulk. It was kind of funny to see

11.30.69



2

how the change in weather effected the gooks. It couldn't have been less than 65-70° but they wore extra clothes, and most of them had sniffles. It was just a nice relief to us!

A guy here in the rear has a Colorpak II Kodak Polaroid, and he snapped a few. They're pretty clear pictures for a ~~\$10~~ \$30.00 camera. The one close-up-that lit up my face a little too much- I took of myself!

Good to get your letter today, and catch up on the news. The mail is starting to slow up now, since the X-tra Christmas load is picking up. I'll be looking forward to that package.

Yes, I got those small flashlight batteries that you sent in the last package. They're perfect, and should last for a long time.

Met a guy from St. Paul today. And found out that he entered the army the same day as me, and was in my Basic Training Co. Wierd huh, we never even met in Basic.!!

Well I guess I'll say good night. Have to get my rest, so I can function at 100% in the office tomorrow. (Hardy-har)

Love from Nam, *James*

P.S. It was nice to get another letter from you, Margie!!

Dec. 2nd, '69

12.2.69

Dear family,

Met a Minnesotan today from Hibbing. I have "MINN." sewn on the rim of my hat and have been stopped numerous times by guys from Minnesota. The guy was new in country and it ^{sure} felt good to tell him that I've been here for 6 months!

Rosemary Grimes, the dark haired girl from GIA & Bethel College that I had for dinner during my leave in May, is going to be married Dec. 20th. (Remember, she & Luther (the blonde that left her shoes in the car) came for chicken on the grill, etc., and then we went out in Bobberg's boat.) I'm enclosing a \$10.00 check. Would you please send one of my favorite Pink Pony gifts? I'd appreciate it if you'd try to get it in the mail soon, as the Christmas mail rush will probably slow it down. It's OK if it doesn't get there by the 20th but the sooner the better.

"Ah 'preesheateit an qued nite!" Love, James

12.6.69

Saturday night, December 6

Dear Mom, Dad, and everyone,

Well, It's finally happened! My transfer actually came through and I should be on a plane for CamRanh Bay within a week!!

All I know so far is that I'll be with the 97th MP (Military Police) battalion. So don't write anymore until I send you my new address. Boy, I'm really excited to 'move on.'

And then just 8 months to go--and I still have my R&R and leave coming, too! Things are definitely looking up for me.

Oh, I was glad to get your package today. It arrived in perfect condition as usual. And all the goodies will be appreciatively devoured. Yup!

I got another package today, too. Bobergs sent me a Christmas Tree!!!! It's about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet tall and has decorations, too.

It really looks sharp in my room. Believe it or not, I'm beginning to get that Christmas spirit. I wish they had some decent things to send as gifts from over here, but the shopping possibilities are all but nil. Just wait until my R&R and the packages will come rolling in. Ha.

By the way, your mail has started slowing down some, with the extra Christmas load, I guess. But you know, you could just as well stop using Air Mail stamps and save a few cents each time. The 6¢ letters get here just as fast.

Will write again before I leave here. Love, James

December 8

12.8.69

Dear family,

A year ago tonight I was in Concord, California at our closing GIA service. Little did I think then, that a year from then I'd be writing from Vietnam! I've learned alot in the past year - but look forward very much to next year's December 8th!

Last night I was working late on my Christmas cards. The PX Really had a wide variety, but I bought the 25th Div. cards.

Anyway, I decided to take a shower before going to sleep, so walked out in my thongs and a towel wrapped around me. Half way to the shower, a big, leathery, cold creature rolled over my foot. I shined my trusty little flashlight down in front of me and saw the hugest toad I've ever seen! It was the size of a chipmunk (Almost) and it just stared up at me with its beady eyes.

I was relieved to see that it was only

12.8.69

a toad, but I sure was looking hard on my way back from the shower!

Today at work I was listening to the Vikings/Rams game. Pretty good showing for Minnesota! The announcer mentioned that Minneapolis is experiencing a 7" snow. Wow! Sounds great.

Oh, thanks for ANOTHER package, already! I'd never heard of Space Food Sticks - not bad. And those apricots are my favorite dried fruit. THANKS AGAIN!

I got a second Xmas tree yesterday - this ^{one} from Pikers in Calif. I'm going to box it back up and mail it on to Tim. It should reach him in plenty of time for Christmas. Hope he doesn't already have one.

I should be getting my orders for Cam Ranch tomorrow and then start 2-3 days of clearing. Won't be long now!

12.8.69

Our unit photographer gave each of us a print of this picture from the AWARDS ceremony that I was in. Looks like I'm pigeon-toed, doesn't it? We were making a left turn and I had to "step-out" more than the others. It was kinda' fun.

Congrats on your raise, mom! Now don't get any silly ideas like saving for your own SKi-doo. HA!

The ad on the back cover of the Alaskan was a real slam to SKi-doo. Evinrude said, "CANADA introduced the sho-mobile, we civilized it."

Wow, your new coldspot sounds sharp. Now dad can't yell, "Who left the refrig. door open?" HA!

Will close for tonight and try to finish my Xmas cards. (100+)

Love always,
James

12.12.69



Sunday morning, 12/12/69

UNITED STATES ARMY

Dear family,

I'm almost on my way! Got packed last night and came to the airport at 7 this morning - only to find that I can't catch a flight until 3:30 this afternoon. That will be to Saigon, & then I'll catch another plane to Cam Ranh from there. I suppose there's a chance that I'll spend the night in Saigon if I can't get a flight from there this afternoon. No big thing - I expected it to take a long time. I brought along stationery and a book, so I have plenty to do until my flight leaves.

Sunday morning - it sure doesn't seem like it. Every day is just an ordinary work day over here. In a way it helps the time go faster, but it sure will be nice to have week-ends and holidays again - come next August.

It's really close to Christmas now. Hope I haven't missed the Bob Hope Show in Cam Ranh!

Wish I could have contacted Tim by phone from Cu Chi while I've been here. They make a big thing about dialing direct and all that, but the connections are poor. Even calling just outside of Cu Chi, you sometimes have to literally yell to be heard. Maybe I'll have better luck from Cam Ranh, although I don't think it's much closer to Long Son.

Well, I'll write from Cam Ranh either tonite or tomorrow. Sure is going to be great to get up in the air again!

Love,
James



12.12.69



Cu Chi, South Vietnam
December 12, 1969

Dear Dad and Mother,

The Holiday Season is here, and the Christmas Spirit is growing in enthusiasm even here in Vietnam. The mail clerks are already swamped with cards and packages, yet each days mail call seems to be bigger than the day before. I'm surprised at the number of decorated Christmas Trees that have appeared in guys hooches, and even some with lights.

It's my first Christmas in 21 that I'll not be at home. Today as my jungle fatigues became soaked from the humid heat, I could hardly picture the nice big fresh, fluffy snowfall that Minnesota recently had. What a relief to know that I have a white Christmas to look forward to next year!

My transfer to Cam Ranh Bay has actually---finally been approved and now I'm just waiting on orders for shipment. The anticipation grows!

I hope that your Christmas this year will truly have significant meaning and that the start of the '70's will mean much happiness and satisfaction to you and yours.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH
PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.

Luke 2:14

May peace come to Vietnam and to you.

from a thankful GI ---

James



~~Monday~~ Sunday night, MIDNIGHT

12/14/69

12.14.69

Dear family,

Didn't get this mailed from Cu Chi, so will add something tonight and stick it in the side of the envelope.

I'M HERE! Flew from Cu Chi to Tan Son Nhut on the outskirts of Saigon at 4:30 - after a 9 1/2 hr. wait. Left Tan Son Nhut at 6:30 for my non-stop flight to Cam Ranh. It only took about an hour. It was dark when we flew in so I couldn't see much, but what a mass of lights!

I'm at the MP station now, waiting to be taken to my company. Seems kinda weird sitting here on the bench with the phones ringing and lots of MP's dashing in and out. There's a guy yelling from the next room (LOCKED UP!) wanting out, and a guy down the bench from me has a hunk of gauze taped over his bloody ear. (He resisted an MP and got clobbered by his Billy club.)

Don't know what I'll be doing yet, but there's going to be lots to see here. The place is huge! I was surprised to see as many AIR Force personnel as ARMY, at the terminal. It's pretty

cool here this time of year - Not cold, but a steady breeze. I saw plenty of barbed wire and bunkers on the way from the terminal, but the war seems distant in many respects. Most of the streets are well lighted and black-topped. The airport runways looked as good as those at Twin Cities' International. The 4prop "caribou's" that I rode in are camouflaged green and brown. Reminds me of a duck-hunter's coat.

Already I can see the difference in the way guys live here. Guess I'll start wearing undies & T-shirts. - But don't think I'll ever get used to these GI boxer shorts! But I can take Anything (almost) with "just" 8 months left.

These late night in-processing procedures bring back the nightmares of Basic & AIT. It wouldn't surprise me if I sit here another couple hours before someone decides to show me to my hutch. That's the Army! But at least with each passing minute, I'm getting shorter!!

Still have no further address. I'll send it tomorrow. Otherwise, the one on the envelope should be sufficient to reach me.

Will say good night, Love, James

12.16.69



Tuesday, Dec. 16 3pm.

Dear family,

What luxury! I took a hot shower last night (first hot one in 6 months!) and then crawled into my bunk - with a mattress + 2 fresh sheets. I went to sleep and woke up at 8:30 this morning! (No revelry!)

The address on the envelope is current, but it may change slightly. Mail will reach me, regardless.

I'm waiting on orders which may take a few days to come down. In the meantime, I'm on my own - haven't even had a detail - and there are no formations! One guy has been waiting here for 2 weeks - just reading, writing letters + sleeping. It's like an in-country R & R.

I feel like I've come into a different army. Things are different in Cam Ranh Bay. Haven't even seen a helicopter in the air or heard an explosion since arriving!

Cam Ranh is the main supply point in Nam. All food, ammo, etc. goes out on convoy and plane from here to all points of the country.

I was a little surprised at my address: 51st Infantry. It's a far cry from the infantry I once knew! Anyway, I'll be a security guard either here in Cam Ranh, or I may be moved to the location of

12.16.69

another platoon - at another coastal army post near here. Any of the places sound ~~like~~ great.

I haven't seen the beach yet - but that will come in time. The weather is fairly cool - very comfortable. Cloudy with a light rain, The sun hasn't been out much. But I guess when it clears, it really gets hot. The topography is much different than Cuchi. Where Cuchi was flat, this area is hilly with cliffs. The ground is sandy everywhere. Even right outside my hootch, a 2 story stateside-like barracks, the wind blows ripples in the sand to give that desert appearance. The hills would be perfect for Al's dune buggy. Not many trees, but a few palms and some bushes. Even the parking lots are like a beach.

I can't believe how casual things are for me. There's lots of space in the barracks. I have a good wall locker and a big double one with shelves from top to bottom. Plenty of room for all my stuff. This is definitely the best set-up I've had yet in the army. And even if I move from here, things should still be comfortable.

Boy, it's like a dream, really. Just weeks ago, I was living like a lbangi, and now I can keep clean and dry again. Nice, huh?!

12.16.69

When guys complain about the food, conditions, etc., I feel like piping up and telling them what it's like to Hump. But they're still in the army, and any army situation can get to be a strain. My first sergeant is really nice & down to earth. Sure makes it easy to fit in. I just can't believe that I'm not stuck on details galore. I'm on my own! The PX is definitely better here. Appliances, like fans, are stacked up, where in Cu Chi they were bought up as soon as they touched the shelves.

The 51st Infantry is a segment of the 97th MP Battalion and all of the army in Lam Rank is included in the 1st logistical command. So I'll wear that patch now, & put my 25th Div. Patch on my right shoulder. Makes me feel like a lifer with different patches and a repertoire of places I've served. ha!

There's a good day room here with magazines, pool table, ping pong table, TV, soft chairs, etc. And the EM club is 3 times nicer than the one in Cu Chi. The line troops just have the raw end of the deal in all aspects!

The free quarter-master laundry isn't in effect here. There are geok women everywhere and you just have them do your laundry for a moderate fee. Reminds me of a slum area to walk between barracks with clotheslines full of string in all directions.

12.16.69

It sure is a different life alright. And I'm really going to make the most of it. Naturally I'm anxious to get my final assignment and settle down for the next seven or eight months, but in the meantime it's beautiful to be on my own to read, write, etc.

I usually catch bits of the news in Minnesota (Vikings, weather, etc.) and sure wish I could be there. ESPECIALLY this time of year. Just 9 days til Christmas. Will be thinking of and missing you all.

Much love,
James

P.S. I'll be looking forward to your letter. This address is a little shorter than in Cuchi. So Tim & I are both in "D" Company. Hope he's got it somewhere near as good as me. Love him BUKU THANKS!!

12.20.69

Saturday, December 20

Dear Dad, Mom, & family,

♫ On the 7th day - BEFORE - Christmas, my ... ♫

What a happy surprise to get your package today with all the goodies. It was forwarded from Cu Chi, so made better time than I'd expect.

Mmmm those Russian tea-cakes are perfect - and you made 'em with Black Walnuts, right? Thanks for ANOTHER package!!

I just got back from evening show. (how do ya like my military jargon? ha!) Time to get ready for my 3rd straight night of guard. We go out at 6 and get back in at 8 a.m. Then the day is free, so it's not a bad set-up. Last night I was in a water tower about 60 feet up: Two of us, so it was two hours on, two hours sleep.

The tower is right at the checkpoint where all the Vietnamese workers come through each morning and night. There are literally thousands of 'em.

At 4:00 a.m. we go down and help check them through. They start coming that early!

The set-up reminds me of the Canadian border - a whole line of fenced walkways, when they come through we change their numbered ID's for their working tags. (just like Honeywell, or any business like that - they wear them on their shoulder.)

Then the trucks pick them up and they're off to work. While they wait for their rides, they squat down in



12.20.69

little groups and sell stuff to each other—just like a portable little market. As you look over the huge parking lot, all you see is knees and Koolie-hats.

The wind is really steady & strong here—especially up in the Tower. But there's some protection, & I wrap up in my Poncho liner so it's not bad. They even bring us out sandwiches & milk & fruit at midnight!

~~This~~ letter & card are from people I wrote thank-you cards to who sent stuff to Vietnam, and I got some of it in the Cu Chi Service Club. Thought they might be interesting to you.

well, better give my boots another buffing and strap on my 45. (Doesn't seem real to me! 😊)

Love,
Jim

P.S. I really got a laugh from this letter to Abby !!



Tuesday P.M. 12/23/69

12.23.69

Dear family,

Our company got some cards from Red Cross today so I decided to send out a few.

Back to the tower tonight after supper. I'm not used to night hours yet, but at least I'm not bothered during the day. By sleeping in the day though, you seem to miss out on everything. By the time I'm up and read the paper, shower, etc., it's time to get ready for work again. At least the days whiz by.

Tomorrow is Christmas Eve! As far as I know, I'll be working again. Supposed to get off once every 9 days or something like that.

It would be fun to call home, but the waiting lists are long, and the conversation cannot contain anything military; where I am, what I'm doing, etc., so I'll forego the "over & outs," this year.

Thinking of you = the snow - the ski-boos - the food - And everything! Luv, Jim

To my favorite dog:

Merry Christmas

Happy New Year ARF! ARF!



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January 28th

199

1.28.70

Dear family,

Another working day. Here at "Mica" Checkpoint we never go hungry. There's always plenty of confiscated fruit and even warm chicken from the snack bars. It's great to get all the oranges I can eat! And they're the big, thick-peeled Munkists!

That sickly looking piece of transparent material is Vietnamese food! It's made from rice I believe; rolled out in huge thin sheets and put on bamboo flats to dry. Mama Sans carry stacks of it with them everywhere and use it as a taco shell, wrapping it around meat, fish, or just about anything edible they can get their hands on.

Boy am I thankful for plastic bags and American food packaging! So many guys get sick from eating ~~good~~ food in the villages. No wonder. The food is filthy and stands out in the open until it's sold.

Many of the Vietnamese laborers coming to work at Cam Ranh bring their lunches in small

Cheap bent-up Tin containers; their water or rice wine in filthy old Chlorox bottles! Just opening their bags to search before they leave, makes you sick from the rancid, ammonia smells. ☹
These people have NO COUTH!!

Even the nicely dressed girls will be sitting down in the pass booths and after a long raspy guttural sound, spit out a wad right on the floor. Makes you wonder. Cleanliness is NOT a Vietnamese trait. They'll pull a piece of food out of the garbage^{can} to eat just as soon as sitting down to a meal in the mess hall.

Glad for your letter yesterday. They bring the mail to us with lunch, which is much better than waiting until getting back at 8 p.m.

Have you had any Cardinals at the birdfeeder yet? I miss all the wildlife at home. All there is here are stray dogs by the dozen and an occasional sparrow. That, and COCKROACHES, COCKROACHES! We spray, but that doesn't seem to keep them from crawling all around our hostches.

4-5

14-16

108-109

85-87

148 157

166

204

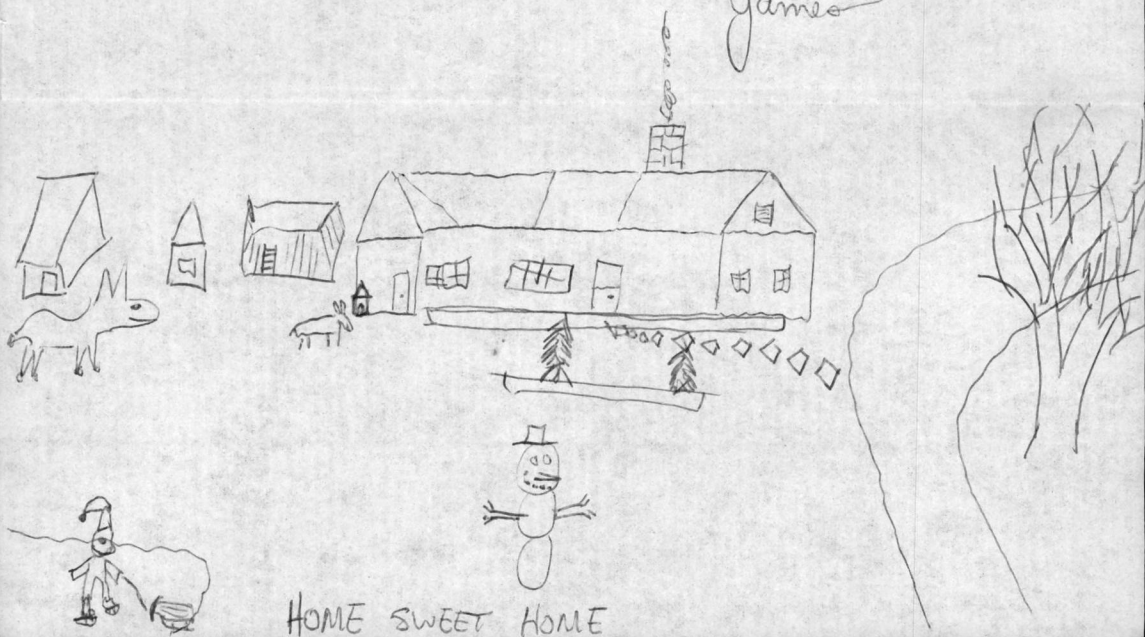
They're so huge, you don't want to step on them - too much to squish. So we try to just sweat them hard enough to kill. And wait for the next one. ☺

Well, today I broke 200 days and its all downhill from here on out.

Working here at "Mica" has its' advantages even though there's not much to the job. There's alot of Time to read and write letters. We just have to BE HERE for the workers that dribble through all day. In the afternoon there's about a 2 hour rush where they're lined up 50 yards!

Guess I'll close and write some more letters. ☺

Love from Nam,
James



HOME SWEET HOME

2.2.70

February 2, 1970

Dear Baa,

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Well, another year gone and you're really growing up. Does this mean you're too old to ride jenny? ☺

Guess what? I went swimming yesterday with some guys. Not in the ocean though, in Tiger Lake! Ya, there's a neat little fresh water lake just a few miles from my company area. It has a nice sandy beach and the water was nice and cool.

Nice to get 2 letters from mom in the last few days. It'll be good to find out how Al came out in the big ski-doo marathon. Wow, what a long race. What do his stitches look like? ha. He must look like a fighter.

No, I didn't mean the "RUSH" & "AIR MAIL" stamps. (to send me)
I bought a rubber stamp here in Cam Ranh with my Vietnam address, & I wanted an ink pad to press the rubber stamp on. (Just like mom's & dad's). But our company got some in supply now, so I got one from them with purplish ink. Sp/4 J. B. Reay
469 54 6618
Co. D 51 st Inf
Apo San Francisco 96312
thanks just the same !!



I'll be looking forward to that other package arriving. Shoes at last!

Beth, do you get 75¢/hr. for babysitting now, too? That wouldn't be too bad!

I sure miss your smiling face and rambunctious spirit. You must be getting to be a pretty good skier. Is Welch Village pretty neat?

Sorry no present, Beth. I'll remember when I'm in Australia next month! Love from your brother in Nam, James

~~Sheaffer~~
Inle
son

2.15.70

Sunday morning, February 15

Dear Dad, Mother, and girls,

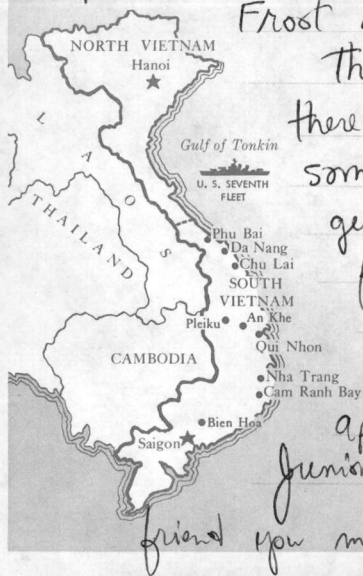
Well, it's been awhile since I last wrote. With TET, the annual Vietnamese Holiday, we were having double guards at night in the towers and some new bunkers were built and had to be manned. We were on 100% alert which meant no sleep until we were back to the barracks at 8 a.m. I worked 14 nights in a row and had last night off - finally - and now am working days again. Big break, huh? Had the night off and then up at 5 this a.m. to start working days for awhile. Well, at least I can catch up on letters, and it is nice to sleep at night. I just don't go for climbing into bed after breakfast!

Nice to know it's the middle of the month already. I found out last week that my R&R to Sydney is from March 5-12. Not far off!! Sure am looking forward to it. It will be fun to look up Aunt Fanny's son. Hope he lives near Sydney.

Thanks for the packages! The clothes and sharp alarm clock etc., arrived in perfect shape some time ago now, and the food is gone, already. I enjoyed those Frost Loops on guard one night! ☺

The BUBBLE GUM has caught on, and there are guys that come and ask for some from time to time. You just don't get stuff like that over here. Thanks for all the good food!

Thanks Kim, for the cute Valentine, and also the one you sent, mom. I appreciated them. Got some from the Juniors, too. Kim, was that letter from an old friend you mentioned... Lowell Christopherson?



2.15.70

Tet didn't prove to be any trouble to Cam Ranh Bay. Only one night did we fire our weapons, and that was only one tower - the one I was in!! Spotted movement outside the wire and when we shot up illumination, it looked like someone running, so opened up with a few bursts, but that was all. No mortars or ground attacks. 😊

That's great that Al finished the big race this year. Quite an accomplishment - stitches and all. At least he was reimbursed by Bombardier. Boy it's neat to think of the winter sports back home. I definitely will be going next winter.

Am feeling fine, but it's time for another shot. Smallpox shots are given once a year in the army and my time is here. Since being in the army, shots have become a pretty routine thing.

I'm really enjoying my Polaroid Colorpak II. It continues to take sharp/clear pictures.

He signed the paper for my extension now, so no longer can leave for home in June. I have no regrets whatsoever. I can't figure out these guys who leave Nam and then have 5 or 6 months to pull stateside. Yuck!

I wrote the Minnetonka Sun about a subscription and they started sending me the issues free! Not bad. Thanks for the Reader's Digests that you've sent from time to time - they're always interesting. There's always opportunities to read over here.

Take care and thanks for the continuing letters. Greet everyone. Love, James



2.21.70

Saturday, February 21st

Dear family,

Just 12 days until R&R! Sure will be tremendous to fly again. Even this close to being there it seems hard to believe that I'm actually going to be in Australia!

Last night I was reading through an R&R information booklet on Australia, and it mentioned some available accommodations at Coogee Beach - a suburb of Sydney. So if that's the same Coogee where John & Betty Batty live, I'll be able to see "my Kin" for sure! 😊

Guard shifts have been pretty changeable since we went off the double guard routine around TET. I was on Convoy to Phan Rang twice last week and have been switching from days to nights. Even spent two days working at our club. They're remodeling; painting, tiling the floor, etc. Would you believe - I spent one whole day filing floor tiles on the stage so the go go dancers won't trip on sharp edges. You see, they laid two thicknesses of tile. CRAZY?! That's the "modern - Action Army" for ya.

Say, what a surprise to receive another package from Rt. 3, Box 65 last week! Mmmm, those oatmeal raisin cookies were delish! Sure didn't last long. I got a kick out of Kim's note on top of the can - written on teachers workshop. Wow, wish I had breaks like that over here! 5



The Junior CYF sent me some PEANUTBUTTER Fudge on ♡. First time I've ever had it - and it was good. I'm sure Kerri Christopherson had a lot to do with the recipe - she's a PEANUTBUTTER nut. Ha.

It's hard to imagine you still ski-dooing, & me looking forward to waterskiing in Sydney Harbor soon! Love, James

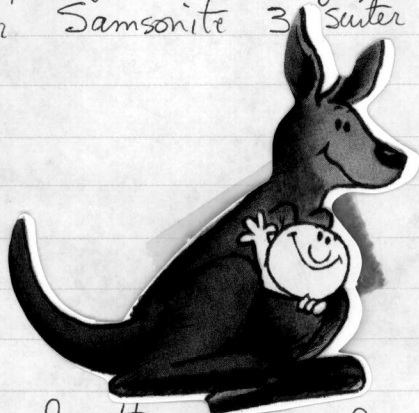
Com Ranh Bay, South Vietnam

March 3, 1970

3.3.70

Dear family,

I'm Australia Bound! Today I'm working at the check-lanes. Tomorrow I pack, and obtain my seat reservation. Then on the 5th I'll be air-borne (so to speak) on the best flight I'll have had in MONTHS. We don't even have to wear khaki's or any military dress, so it will be mighty relaxed and comfortable. Nice, huh? I have everything pretty much ready to go - film bought, etc. I bought another Samsonite 3 suiter, and also a briefcase



which will be good on the plane and excellent for school. Quite a savings in the PX on luggage, huh?!

It's been nice getting your letters. I haven't been writing much lately. I'm sure glad to have the clothes, alarm clock, etc. that you sent.



Guess what? Last week I was recommended to go before the E-5 (SERGEANT!) board. But without 15 months in the service they'd have to make a waiver & our Battalion doesn't do it. So maybe in April or May I'll have a good chance for a promotion! Because of my Infantry MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) I'll be sergeant rather than SP/5.

Dove from Nam, James

P.S. Don't be surprised if you get a ring Sunday morning. ☺





Wed. nite, 3/4

3.4.70

Dear folks & girls,
Just sitting here waiting
for a pizza. A friend and
I came up here to see what
they taste like. They're the frozen
kind so I'm not expecting too
much.

I'm really feeling good
now. My flight leaves
tomorrow night at 2140 hours.
Oh yes, for you civilians, that's
9:40 p.m.

Sure will be great to
really be free & on my own for
a few days. Just a few months
ago they extended R & R lengths
from 5, to 6 nites & 7 days.
Yipee!

It was nice to have all day off. What a treat to sleep until 9, and then shower after the morning rush - for a change.

There's just not much to say right now because I've got Sydney in my mind constantly, but that I'd say again, so long until I write from Sydney.

Oh, I almost forgot - I sure was glad to get your bundle of letters yesterday - mom, Margie, & Beth. So neat to know all the

3

3.4.70

details of life at home.

Do I sound homesick??

Nam tends to be a
growing strain. 😊

But I've got it nice here
in Cam Ranh.

well, here's the Pizza, *

so I guess I'll sign off
4 tonight. I'll probably
have a long sit before my
flight tomorrow so may
write again.

Do you ever have Sat. nite
pizzas & Friday nite pancakes
anymore? 😊 Love always,
JAMES

4.22.70

Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam
April 22, 1970

Dear Dad, Mom, and everyone,

Surprise!! Exclamations and exultations...a letter from your long-time-no-write-son, brother, and friend in sandy Cam Ranh Bay. That I'd bone up on my typing this morning and get a letter off to you.

First of all, I want to tell you about a new job that I have. I am now one of the two Company Armorers. Can you believe it? Me, a weapons specialist! Haa, that IS a good laugh. Well, it isn't all that technical really. Our main job is to issue, receive, clean and repair the weapons that our company uses. It keeps us busy, as there are guys going on and coming off duty at all hours of the day and night. I'm working the night shift this week. We change shifts every 5 days or so, working from 7 to 7. The hours aren't bad, and after we get in the swing of things there won't really be that much to do. We've been especially busy since we took over, because there's a big annual inspection coming up next month and we have lots to do to get ready for it. Like I just finished painting the floor of the arms room a little while ago. We've been painting, remodeling, doing complete maintenance on all weapons, cleaning ammo, etc. Keeps us busy, and helps the days to speed by a little quicker. Think I'll like the job fine. Sure beats pulling guard. And working the 12 hour shifts, we aren't assigned any extra details. (so far anyway) After we get through this inspection, I should have lots of time to read and catch up on letter writing.

Seems like the longer I spend in this Army, the better things get. Almost tempts a GI to RE-UP. HA. (NEVER!!)

Guess what? I just mailed off a \$100.00 check to Bethel College. I was accepted for the fall Semester, so am a college student once again. There are a lot of things to work out. I'd like to find a cheaper place to

live than on campus, I'll be looking for a good part-time job, etc. It makes it awkward to be over here until just a few weeks before school starts, but I guess things will work out. It will just be such a relief to be out of this country and out of this organization, so I guess it's just as well that I get right into something constructive.

Nice to get your regular letters. I bet Lawny's wedding was nice. How did Jon do in a tux and cast? Speaking of weddings, Mary Foly's big day is set for July 25th I understand. I'll also miss Keith's and Greg's in June. I'm going to feel like an old bachelor. Hope you won't mind when I'll be asking you to shop for wedding presents for them for me.

I think often of the fun times in Australia, but I'm also thinking these days of Tokyo and Expo '70. Yes, I plan to take a 7-day leave in July to visit another country. Japan seems to be becoming me--geisha girls and all. Haa. No, I really am anxious to see the largest City in the world (as long as no more subways blow-up!) and EXPO should be great, although I won't plan to fight the crowds there for more than a couple days. An R&R really doesn't have to cost that much, and even with the expenses involved with school, etc., it seems dumb to me to pass up this unusual experience to see another country so cheaply.

That's too bad about Mrs. Ye being laid up. Would you send me their address, and I'll send her a card.

I got another package from Aunt Emelyn yesterday. You should see how neatly and securely she wraps them. The cookies she makes are really delicious, and she always sends gum and candy, too. Boy, she's really sent a lot of em. I'll write her again this week.

After making the tape to you a couple weeks ago, and a couple others, I decided it was fun for a change, so don't be surprised to get another one sometime. I'll try to get a cassette tape so you can play it on Al's or Mollie's recorder. There are lots of guys that ~~make~~ tapes all the time and hardly ever write letters.

I'm glad the Australian souvenirs arrived. There should be a package coming from a Sydney gift shop for Margie and Kim.

Say, did my 25th Division Yearbook ever arrive? I paid for it last fall and it was supposed to be delivered to my home address. Did I send you the payment receipt for it? If it hasn't arrived let me know, so I can start writing them about it.

Wow, the Alaskan trip NEXT summer sounds great. Sorry I can't help out in contributions for the bank, but my military money is no good in the states. HA!

Glad the Astronauts got back OK. It's disgusting to get so little news over here. Really makes you feel detached. The military newspaper carries news to us two and three days old, and I usually pick up just spotty news on the radio...if you know what I mean. I'm glad to be getting the Mpls. Trib. but that's a week old when I get it too.

That was really something about Tim's accident. Sure was lucky not to be hurt seriously. There was an MP ~~and~~ killed near here last month while on patrol in his jeep. The other MP riding in the jeep was paralyzed--with^{just} 2 weeks before he was to go home. They had also swerved to miss hitting an oncoming vehicle (Vietnamese), but when Army vehicles leave the road, there's little protection on impact for the riders. I'm just as glad to walk to where I'm going around here--the way most of these guys drive.

Guess I'll quit here for now. Thinking of you all... Love, James

5.1.70

May 1st HAPPY MAY DAY.

Dear family,

Well here I am back in hospital blue pajamas, admitted to the Army's small hospital here in Cam Ranh. I was finally admitted yesterday after 6 of the most miserable days of my life. They say its the FLU. But I've never felt so miserable. I'm getting better now, but still can't eat more than a few bites at a meal.

7 nights ago I woke up sick to my stomach. After throwing up I thought I'd be OK, but the next morning I could barely force myself to get out of bed. Well, the first sergeant wouldn't let me stay in bed. He said if I was sick I had to go on sick call. I dreaded that because there are dozens of guys that show up each morning. It takes me less than 1 1/2 hours to see the doctor. Well, they prescribed 3 kinds of pills for upset

stomach and diarrhea and put me on 24 hours bed rest. This went on for 6 days in a row. I could barely balance myself to walk up to the dispensary for sick call, then they'd just take my temperature, give me some more pills and tell me that the flu's going around - I'd be fine in a day or two. My diarrhea got so bad that I developed hemorrhoids - adding to the pain and discomfort.

I'm so disgusted with Army doctors and the medical set-up. It was the sixth day before a doctor actually put me on the table and examined me.

Rather than going on with all the maddening details, I'll just say that I'm glad my CO called the dispensary and told them to do something for me. So yesterday afternoon I came back up here and they admitted me to the small ward here. (the big Air Force hospital is on the other side of the base)

The Dr. still ~~says~~ says it's the flu, but I hope I'll start getting some pep soon.

I've had some strong cravings for things like frozen Welch's grape juice, frozen orange juice, pop sicles, etc. - SOME DAY. I guess being sick away from home is about the worst way to be homesick.

I feel so much better at least being here under constant care. It's so much less hassle to get meals, use the latrine, etc.

I was glad for your letters this week and for the package, too. Wow! Girl Scout Cookies! What a touch of spring. And I'm so glad I'm getting short.

I'm sure I'll be coming out of it soon now. I'll write again soon.

Love always,

James

5.3.70

May 3

Dear family,

This is the 9th day of my "flu", with little change. They took a third blood sample today and some more tests. Also, my medication has been changed to some different pills. Oh well, I guess they're bound to hit the right combination one of these times. "

They've been bringing my mail each day, & today one of the guys brought up some cans of juice. You'd think they'd keep something to drink in the ward, but all there is, is water. It's nice to have some fruit juice.

Glad for your letter yesterday. They say I have a tape too, so I'll be able to hear your voices when I get back to my hutch. Is the tape recorder you bought, the reel type or cassette type?

Wish I'd get an appetite back. I can

only eat a little bit at each meal & nothing at breakfast. (they never have ^{fresh} fruit)

We been sleeping good at night now, but still seem to sleep half the day or more.

The Dr. keeps telling me "another 24 hours and you should be fine." He's sounding like a broken record.

at least I'm clean and comfortable in the air-conditioned ward. And the days go on: Till later,

Love Always,
James

1. Has margie's & Kim's package come from Australia?
 2. Has my 25th Div. yearbook come in the mail yet?
 3. What do I need to do about getting my new drivers license? I'll like to write for it so I'll have it before I get home.
- THANKS.

Cam Ranh Bay Air Force Hosp.
Thursday, May 7th

5.7.70

Dear family,

100 DAYS! Tomorrow I'll be a 2-digit midget. Sure sounds good.

11 months ago today I reported to Oakland to come to Vietnam to fight the war. Today I sit reading books and leisurely writing letters in a comfortable, air-conditioned ward of the Air Force Hosp. Two days ago they transferred me here and after a disgusting 3 hour wait to see a doctor, (they misplaced my records temporarily) he examined me and admitted me.

This morning on his rounds the Dr., a major in the Air Force, told me they finally found what's wrong. It's some kind of parasite. Seems to be fairly common over here, most often from eating

gook food. A lot of guys spend considerable time in the villages and eat in their restaurants; Grubby little places that they are.

Well, I got it from an Army mess hall, from Army inspected food and water. Doesn't really surprise me much.

I'm feeling somewhat guilty being in the hospital now that I'm feeling much better and starting to get my appetite back. But the doc said they'd probably keep me here a week, so I'll just make the most of it.

Wow, this is a far cry from the wards in Cu Chi. From the outside, the wards look shabby, but inside they're just like stateside. Tiled, waxed floors, central air-conditioning, regular adjustable hospital beds, televisions, book racks, good florescent lighting, etc. I've been sleeping with my socks on so far because I'm not used to the coolness in here. It's really too cool I think. Well, it sure beats sweating though.

The set-up here is just like a little village of wards, all connected by covered concrete walkways that lead to the chapel, messhall, etc.

Those of us that are able, walk to the messhall for meals. Boy, I'm glad to be getting back my appetite. These guys in the Air Force sure eat better than soldiers!

It's a cafeteria - standard set-up in the A.F. I understand. The food is much better and there's more of a choice. It's nice to eat off of ~~glass~~ plates rather than plastic trays.

It was kind of funny at first to walk to dinner in my blue P.J.'s and hospital slippers, but the sidewalks are full of the hospital-clad patients.

The doctor said they'd be starting me on 3 drugs today, so here I go popping

pills again. At least they know what they're prescribing them for this time, rather than the standard pills for "the flu."

The doctor said these parasites are very difficult to detect, but I wonder why the Army couldn't find 'em in 10 days, and the Air Force found 'em in 2. I don't sound too loyal, do I? 😊

Again I say, it's miserable being sick in the Army. If I had this ^{"disease"} at home, I could easily recuperate at home, but in the service I'm much better off in the hospital than back in my unit. That's one reason for crowded hospitals in the armed forces. Many of the patients are nearly well, but are kept in, because life in an army unit, is far from life in a home situation. ... If you can grasp my train of thought.

Another luxury here at the hospital which I didn't expect, is ice-cold water when-ever I want it. there's an automatic

5.7.70

ice-maker just down the hall. Whenever I want some, I just push the button to fill my plastic pitcher with crushed ice and fill it up with water from the tap... which reminds me - we've got showers with hot water, and flush toilets! Yup, I'm definitely enjoying this. It's almost like an in-country R&R.

And it's all completely free! Yes, I can thank Uncle Sam for all the free medical care we've received in the service.

I hope they'll bring my mail over sometime, though I doubt if they will.

Guess I'll have somewhat of a stockpile when I get back next week.

Well, I should write a couple more letters so I can mail these when I go to lunch.

Take care. How's the garden coming? Plant a bean, tomato, etc. for me. I'll be there!!
Lotsa Love, James

Friday night, May 8th

5.8.70
Cam Ranh Bay Air Force Hospital
Ward 11, Bed 11



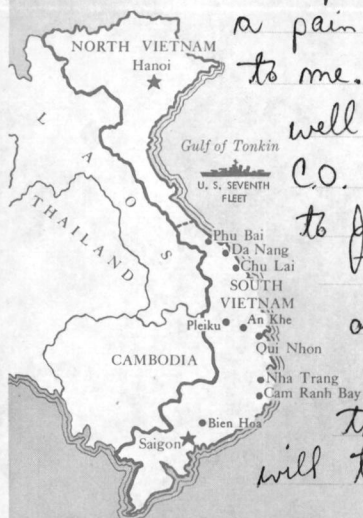
Dear family,

I was just thinking today that yesterday was the 5th anniversary of the big night of tornadoes in the Twin Cities. Remember Hi-C was meeting at our house? What a night!

I spent ^{part of} a last night under my bed. I woke up at 3 a.m. to the sound of the alert siren and people yelling and shuffling around. When I flopped under my bed, then I heard the incoming rockets. Quite a few of 'em. Sounded like they were hitting close. It wasn't until the alert was over at 4:30 a.m. that I realized how lucky I am to be sleeping in such a comfortable bed! In a way I was glad to be in the hospital, as otherwise I'd have to "suit up" and go to the bunkers or towers. But on the other hand, while under the bed I couldn't help from thinking of the sappers here last summer that ~~threw~~ charges into the wards. Well, I didn't really hear any report of damages or casualties, but I assume they were light.

That postal strike a few weeks ago must've been a pain, but I must admit it was advantageous to me. All servicemen got a 6% raise as well as civil service employees. Yesterday my C.O. came to pay me my dividend, retroactive to January 1st. I received a nice \$65.00. Tim probably got \$80 or \$90 with his rank of E-5.

I'm feeling good. The doctor said this morning on his rounds that it will take 4 or 5 days for the pills to take effect.



5.8.70

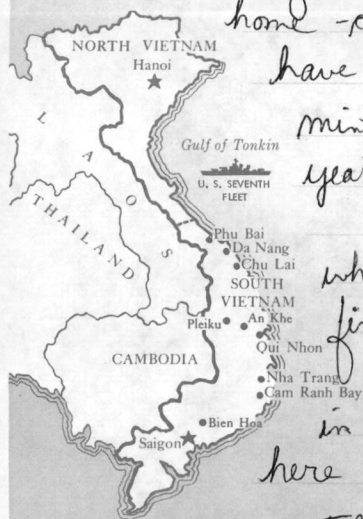
She's been reading a lot of paperbacks; today, *A* mystery and *The Glen Campbell Story*. She had some fun with puzzles, too. The Red Cross is really good with supplying things to do.

There are more females here than I've seen during my entire tour over here! Most of them are nurses and Red Cross girls. The nurses wear slacks and oxfords!

The occasional alerts and rocket attacks at Cam Ranh remind everyone of the war, but otherwise we're quite detached from it. Of course you never know — no place in Vietnam is really SECURE. Doesn't say much for all of our years of efforts here does it?

All the news of campus disorders and rioting is sickening. I'll be glad to attend a college without worrying about getting gassed on the way to class, or being blown up during a lecture.

We had a delicious steak (grilled!) dinner tonight. I'm going to miss this Air Force chow. Of course no food compares in the slightest way to home-cooked meals. And it'll be nice to have iced-tea with MINT again. Is our mint patch going to thrive again this year?



I'm sure anxious to hear that tape when I get back to my unit — and finish that last package from you. I'll mail this when I go to breakfast in the morning. The only mailbox around here is in the dining hall.

Till later - Love from Nam, James

5.12.70

Cam Ranh AF Hosp.

Tuesday, May 12th

Dear family,

They finally brought my mail over yesterday and I was glad to get the manila envelope and all the reading material. Also, they brought over the tapes and a recorder! What a blast it's been listening to those tapes. Yes, dad is quite the "HAM". I would have expected mother to do most of the tape, but it was a nice surprise to hear so much from dad. I never dreamed how neat it would be to receive tapes. Just wish we would have started sooner! I'll be making another as soon as I get back to the company.

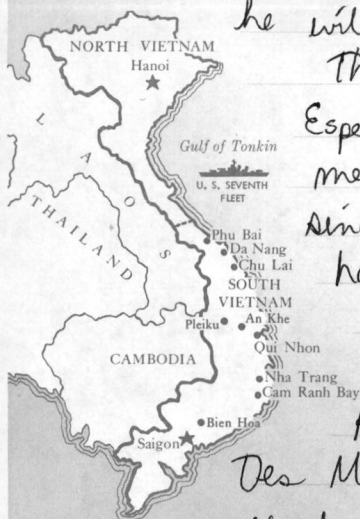
I'm almost back to normal now. Guess all the pills I've been stuffing down 4 times daily, are doing the trick on those rotten Vietnamese parasites. I should be discharged tomorrow I think. I'm glad - just sitting around day after day gets to ya. It has been a nice rest though.

I'll be listening to the tapes a couple more times and then will send them on to Tim. I'm sure he will get a charge ^{out} of them too.

Those sound effects were great, dad! Especially the frogs at the pond. Made me homesick. I haven't heard a frog since last May. I don't think they have any over here.

May 16th will be the anniversary of my graduation from Infantry AIT.

Remember, I flew from Ft. Polk to Des Moines and Chuck Rye's fiancé met us with his car.



5.12.70

It's been a long, eventful year since then.

Boy, Margie, are you ever good on the piano. You've come a long ways from those days of "Scotch Heather" and "Television Sleuth," etc. Keep up the good work. Is Kim still taking lessons, too?

I have to smile everytime I think about those tapes. I was sitting on my bed listening to them with the earphone and wanted to burst out laughing a thousand times, but I didn't want to be embarrassed ~~for~~^{by} stares from all around the ward. I could go on and on about how good it was to hear everyone, Charlie & Sean were so cute; Mom, your song was great, etc., etc. I'll comment more on my next tape.

Well, I guess I'll close for today and write- (or TALK!) next from my hootch.

Have fun in the garden. Too bad I'll miss most of the wedding. Ha.

Oh, I got ANOTHER package from Aunt Emelyn this week. Boy, she's really been sending them regularly!!

Love from Nam,

James



5.15.70

Friday, May 15

Dear family,

One more day and night in the hospital and then I'll be taking my pills in the privacy of my hot little hootch.

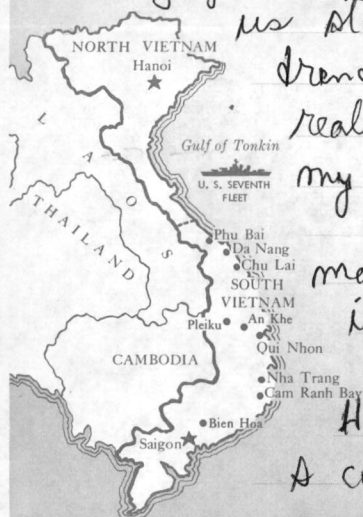
Three days ago my foot swelled up some and was very sore. I could barely walk on it. The doctor said it was a common - arthritic - side effect of intestinal troubles. I feel like an old man at 21! Arthritis! Well, the pain is nearly gone now and I'm feeling fine.

Yesterday afternoon the Red Cross sponsored a boat ride on Cam Ranh Bay for "the boys in the blue p.j.'s". Alaska Barge & Transport supplied a nice big boat and we had a good 2 hour tour of the bay. It was great to get some sun again.

However, being away from my air-conditioned ward was a little difficult to adjust to. After the first hour we started hitting choppy seas and the spray was really coming over the top and sides. Most of the guys scrambled inside the cabin, but a few of us stood right at the sides and got drenched from wave after wave. It was really refreshing. Wish I would have had my camera.

I've been sitting here in bed this morning thinking about how exciting life is going to be ~~when~~ in about 92 days.

It's so dull to have a plain, sunshiny, HOT day for weeks on end. Boy how I could go for a nice thunder storm.



5.15.70

Perhaps you've gathered from the slides that Cam Ranh is just sand, sand, and more sand. It will be great to see lawns and trees and flowers again.

Who's going to be the first one in the pool this year? I betcha, NEXT year it will be ME! ☺

Well, considering that I have no more relapses or side effects, I'll be out tomorrow and will write next from my hootch.

Bye for now.

Love from Nam,
James

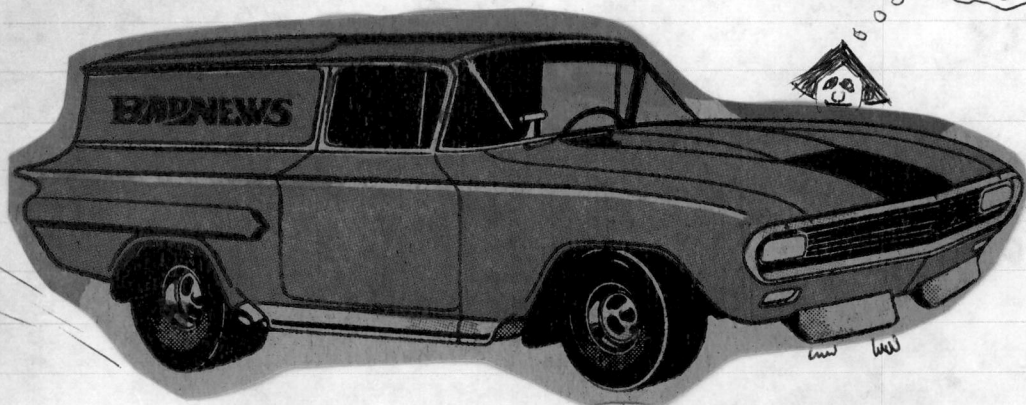


Cam Ranh Bay A.F. Hosp. ☹

Sunday night, May 17

Dear Marge,

THAT'S
BAD NOOSH,
GT!



... My doctor didn't show up again today, so I have one more 24 hour period of captivity in Ward 11.

Oh well; another day of air-conditioned comfort; another day away from "barking" sergeants.

I'm feeling great now and am looking forward to getting back in the groove at D-51st. After all, she's got nothin' to sweat with less than 90 days!!! 😁



Well, tune in tomorrow, same time, same station for another up to the minute report on our mystifying series of:
♫ ♫ ♫ (EERIE ORGAN music) "WILL J.B.'s DR. release him from WARD 11???"

(SICK, & KNOW!)

from 'NAM again,
James

Saturday, June 20

6.20.70

Sp/4 J.B. 77

469 54 6518

Co. D 51st Inf

Apo San Francisco 96312

Howdy!

Just thought I'd drop a line during my lunch break today. We've been working at Myca ("Meek'-a") Checkpoint for 4 nights, but didn't last night so am on details today. We've been painting the whole company area = Infantry Blue. Naturally - as is always the case in the army - we had to hunt 1/2 the morning for the brushes, ladder, etc. I ended up with a 1 1/2" brush. Real slick, huh?

Received my application from the Veterans administration yesterday, so I can start filing for my GI Bill checks. ☺

Yesterday afternoon I went for a boat ride! It was a lot of fun. We went out on a 30 or 40 foot army boat. By the way, the general of Cam Ranh Bay has his small private yacht docked just down the shore from my company.

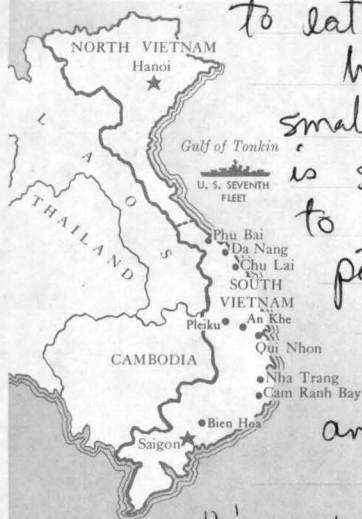
We went to shore across the bay, anchored the boat, and swam around. We knocked some coconuts out of the trees but they were too green to eat.

Weather is still scorching, but the small breeze coming across the bay is somewhat of a relief. It's kinda hard to write on my lap here out on the patio. My chaise lounge is a real luxury!

Monsoons are starting again here, and it rains every afternoon.

I'm fine - bored, but healthy. Hope

everything's OK on the homefront. Anxious for your next letter. Last one I got was written June 9! Love from Nam, James



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY, FATHER! ☺

6.21.70

Sunday morning, June 21

DEER KIBBERLY Maw-gwet Way,
Can you come out to play?
But don't go near the watta,
To chase the ducks away.

Hardy-Har-Har! Ask grandma Reay
about that poem.

Well Kim, I was really happy to get a nice long letter from you, along with 2 from mom. I had some "good readin'" yesterday - sounds like you're having a fun summer. Wish I could say the same.

Wow, Al sure has the ANIMALS at his place. Who cleans all the pens? ☺ Can't wait to see them all. Do you think Buck will turn out to be bigger or smaller than TOK?

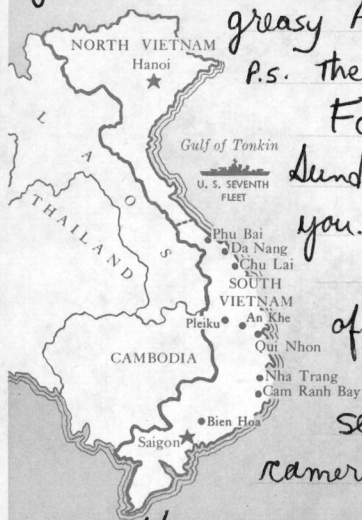
How do you like the embossed "stars" on the envelope flap? Cool huh? I got the embosser in one of the boxes of crackerjacks that dad sent. HA.

It's 7:00A.M. on a sunny Sunday. I was up at six to shave and eat breakfast: mealy Army pancakes and gummy Army oatmeal. I didn't have the stomach to try the greasy Army eggs'n bacon or the concrete Army biscuits. P.S. the orange juice and milk was great!!

Formation is usually at 7, but at 8 on Sundays, so I'm spending this time writing to you. Aren't you thrilled? Yuck, Yuck.

Say Kim, I was reading through some of your past letters awhile back and noticed that you mentioned once about sending me some pictures from your "free" camera. WHASS HASS HAPPENNNND? ^{! Sick}

Honest, I promise to take good care of em. If there's one of



6.21.70

page 2, of a two pager that's turning out
to be BAD NOOSH.

you, I won't even throw darts at it. (oh, no)

I'm sitting at the picnic table and the sun is already up and making everything HOT. I'd love to go in for a swim but it won't be long before we have our formation. BOSH! Take a dip for me in that nice cool, clean, fresh pool water.

I'll probably be painting again today. Church is at 10 o'clock and the chapel is just down the walk a bit.

It's nice to have everything close by. The chapel is real nice. Small, but comfortable. It even has a little steeple and one of those small organs.

Does "BAA" really play the clarinet?! Wow, she hasn't even had lessons has she? Maybe she should get in the school band. Can't wait to get that tape from you guys where Beth plays a solo. I told all the guys that my sister plays the clarinet so they're all anxious to hear it. 😊

'Still practicing the piano faithfully? Keep it up!

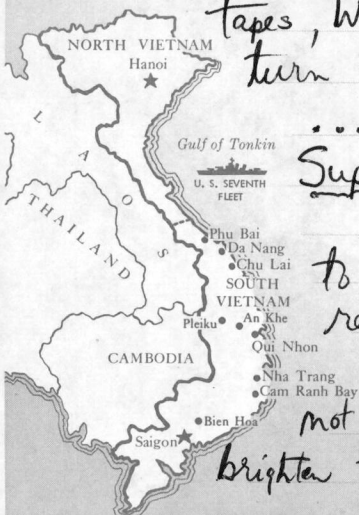
You usually think of hearing church music on Sundays but all we hear around here is soul music.

The "soul brothers" are constantly playing Aretha Franklin tapes, Wilson Picket, etc. And of course they turn the volume WAY UP! (DAY OR/AND NIGHT)

.... Of course when they play the Supremes I don't mind.

Guess I'll bring this little hen scratching to a close. Thanks again for writing. For a real thrill, why don't you and "Bridge" (etc.) make me a tape all on your own? It's not REALLY that hard. And it would definitely brighten the day for a lonely soldier in "THE NAM." 😊

Love you - Jammer



Cam Ranh Bay, NAM
July 21st

7.21.70

Dear EVERYBODY,

I'm SHORT! Bought myself a short-timer stick to carry with me these last days. Don't want to FORGET that I'm short!

It's really been fun getting your letters. Girls, your tape came just today and she's been having a blast listening to that. HEAVY! ☺

Congratulations Mom on your success with Pam's reception. Quite a job!

Seems to get harder all the time to write letters. There's just not much to say, except ... I'm glad I'm going home soon!!

Shipped my whole baggage last week. It was real mifty. A whole crew of gooks came to my barracks (or should I say HOOTCH?) and crated it up right there.

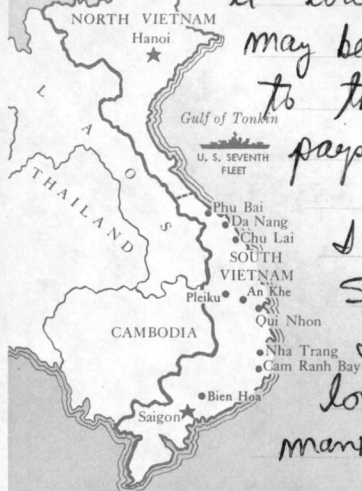
It filled two boxes the size of a large trunk. Got everything in but my lounge. Guess I'll hafta' sell that.

All I have to bring home is my suitcase, camera, and a few odds and ends ... namely - MYSELF! It (the whole baggage) will fly to California and be trucked to Mpls. They said

it will be there within 30 days, so it just may beat me home. Great! They deliver it right to the house. Nice, huh? I think the govt pays 30¢/pound to the commercial haulers.

Guess what? Tomorrow morning - early - I leave for 2 days on a convoy to Dalat.

Some people wonder why, being so short, but I just want the experience. Never been on a long convoy before, so I volunteered. I'll be manning a M-60 machine gun on a truck or



7.21.70

gun jeep. This run to DALAT is just 2 days and they never get hit. Hope to get some good pictures.

Ray, I wonder if you could understand anything on that last tape I sent. If not, I'll just hafta' tell ya about Japan when I get home. It was neat! Expo and all. Had more fun than I did in Australia even. I found out that the batteries were weak in my friends tape recorder, so it recorded too slow.

I was supposed to have last night off, but we had a yellow alert all night. I haven't had a free night since I got back from "YA-PAN" on the 10th. They're expecting to get rocketed again in Cam Ranh. Sure will be nice to get away from all this in just 24 days and a wake-up.

Am anxious to see Timber next month. I bet he's really cute and peppy. Wonder if he will be as good a traveler as Buddy has been.

Not long until you'll be leaving on vacation. Grandmother Crosby wrote that she'd have to turn down your offer to go along. I'll be getting a letter off to you after I return from the Dalat Convey - and before you leave on vacation Aug. 1st.

Love from Nam,
James



SHORT!

SHORT!

SHORT! SHORT! SHORT! SHORT!

8.5.70

Cam Ranh Bay
Wed. nite, August 5

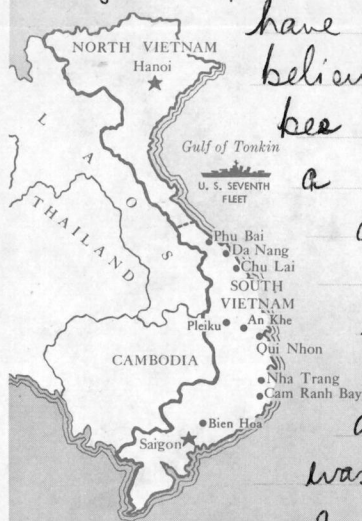
Hi Kim!

You asked me to write to you, so here it is!
Greetings one more time from Nam.

Wow, it's been neat to get so much mail from all of you the past couple weeks. Mom keeps rollin' out the letters and the letters from you girls have been a blast. HEAVY! 😊 And, the pictures. Boy I love to get those pictures. Now I really know what the Camaro looks like - and the pets at Reays, and I remember again what ~~that~~ that beautiful sparkling pool looks like. Can't wait...

Well, I've got this lousy ear infection again. But the Doc gave me some drops, so it's clearing up again. He told me to stay out of the water for 2 weeks, so it looks like Reays pool will be my next splash down!

Anyway, I'm becoming pretty wary about these ocean waters. There are scads of jellyfish everywhere, even washing up on shore. You know they have all kinds of little tentacles, and believe me, they STING! It feels like a bee sting and stays red and sore for a few hours. Some guys have even gotten big welts from 'em. The little ones are about the size of a half dollar, but they dragged one out on a stick the other day as big as a basketball. Grrr! It was purple and all oozy and sticky looking.



II.

Wish I knew why there are so many of em.
 Anyway, it will be good to get back to clean,
 safe water! (LOVE THOSE POOLS!)

Well, you're on vacation as I write this and I
 wish I could be there with you. I bet the ferry
 ride was fun, huh? You'll hafta' tell me all about it
 in about 10 days **SHORT!!** My
 short timers stick goes everywhere with me these days.

Tomorrow I go back to the Air Force Hospital
 for one final check-up on my parasites. (The Dr. told me
 to see him once more just before I went home.) But
 I'm feeling fine, so I'm sure they're not started
 up again. (Those ugly little things!)

I'm sending a few things along. I thought the
 article on Alaska was interesting. I bet things have
 really changed since 1961!

That claim slip mom sent me init for my baggage.
 It's for the money that I was saving over here in the
 Soldiers Savings at 10% interest. Hope the check
 comes in the mail by the time I get home.

Kim, be sure to thank Beth and Marge for
 their letters, and thanks for yours, too!

It was nice to get the big envelope with
 all the stuff to read. And I'm looking forward
 to my last package from home!

I'll sign off for tonite.

C U sooooooon!

Love, Jammer



Sp/4 J. B. Reay
469 54 6618
Co. D 51 st Inf
Apo San Francisco 96312

Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam
August 1970

Dear Family, Friends, Civilians, and Draft Dodgers!

In the very near future the undersigned will once more be in your midst, dehydrated and demoralized, to take his place again as a human being, to enjoy the well-known forms of freedom and justice for all, and to engage in life, liberty, and the somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. In making your joyous preparations to welcome him back into organized society, you might take certain steps to make allowances for the crude environment which has been his miserable lot for the past fifteen months. In other words, he might be a little Asiatic from Vietnamesitis and Overseasitis and should be handled with care. Do not be alarmed if he is infected with all forms of rare tropical diseases. A little time in the "Land of the Big PX" will cure this malady.

Therefore, show no alarm if he insists on carrying a weapon to the dinner table, looks around for his steel pot when offered a chair, or wakes you up in the middle of the night for Guard Duty. Keep cool when he pours gravy on his dessert or mixes peaches with his Pre-Sweetened Kool-Aid. Pretend not to notice if he eats with his fingers instead of silverware and prefers C-rations to steak. Take it with a smile when he insists on digging up the garden to fill sandbags for the bunker he is building. Be tolerant when he takes his blanket off the bed (and leaves the sheet) and puts it on the floor to sleep on.

Abstain from saying anything about powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, fried rice, fresh milk, or ice cream. Do not be alarmed if he should jump up from the dinner table and rush to the garbage can to wash his dish with a toilet brush. After all, this has been his standard. Also, if it should start to rain, pay no attention to him if he pulls off his clothes, grabs a towel and bar of soap, and runs outdoors for a shower.

When in his daily conversation he utters such things as "Sin loi" and "Numbah Ten," just be patient. Simply leave quickly and calmly if by some chance he utters "Di di" with an irritated look on his face, because it means no less than "GET OUT OF HERE!" Do not let it shake you if he picks up the phone and yells, "Reliable, Sir," or says, "Roger Out," for good-bye, or simply shouts, "Working!"

Never ask why the Jones's son held a higher rank than he did, and by no means mention the term "RE-UP." Pretend not to notice if at a restaurant he calls the waitress "Numbah One Girl." He will probably keep listening for "Homeward Bound" to sound off over AFVN Radio; if he does, comfort him, for he is still reminiscing. Be watchful when he is in the presence of a woman--especially a beautiful woman.

Above all, keep in mind that beneath that tanned and rugged exterior there is a heart of gold--the only thing of value he has left. Treat him with kindness, patience, and tolerance, and you will be able to rehabilitate that which once was and now is the hollow shell of the happy-go-lucky guy you once knew & loved.

Last, but by no means least, send no more mail to the APO, fill the refrigerator, get the civvies out of mothballs, fill the car with gas, and get the women and children off the streets.....

BECAUSE THE KID IS COMING HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SIGNATURE: _____

James

A cartoon illustration of a man with a beard and a bow tie, carrying a suitcase and a bag, with the text "I SHOULD BE HOME SOON" above him. The man is walking towards the left, carrying a suitcase in his right hand and a bag in his left. He has a weary expression. The text "I SHOULD BE HOME SOON" is written in a curved path above his head.