



James Boyd Reay papers

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Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam
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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 Vietnamositis 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 B. Reay

I SHOULD BE HOME SOON



5 DAYS LEFT