

17 March

Dear Barry,

By now you should have readjusted to the routine of a 1st Cav pilot officer, I'm sure, a perfect L&R in Honolulu. When Kathy & I were there, we both agreed that Hawaii would be the perfect place for you & Dee. Am anxious to hear what you thought of it. Did you make The Top of the Liliha? And did you catch the Surfers act while there? We liked it so much that if I must go back to a troop unit after St. Hill, I'll probably try for an assignment with the 6th Infantry at Schofield Barracks.

Am becoming increasingly anxious about the situation in I Corps. By now you must be deeply involved in the heavy action I've recently read about on the coast. I'm sure I lack most of the facts, but the Khe Sanh setup certainly looks bleak to me. Today our Brigade Commander departed to assume duties as the Chief of Staff of the northern tactical zone for Gen Rosen whom he worked for in IFFV. He's being replaced by a Gen Allen who was the ADC of the 101st.

Tuy Hoa continues to be our ballin' point. Our DS Bn, #1503, is still working the foothills west of Tuy Hoa & is the only element of the 173d remaining in the Tuy Hoa area. The rest of the 173d is in and around Kontum & Pleiku with 1 Bn still securing Camp Ladelfe in An Khê. The

contact here remains light but steady. D Btry has had 34 counted kills in the last 5 days, so we're feeling pretty good right now. Our mission is primarily defensive - to prevent the enemy from massing in the hills for an attack on the population centers & the air base at Tuy Hoa. If they'd let us move down into the valley close to the town we could really make a dent in enemy strength around here, but the chiefs at HQ insist on holding that HQ. Wouldn't be surprised if I & R05 (64 days) out of this area.

We lost another Bn commander last month. He is missing. Apparently his H/B went down somewhere between Kontum & Tuy Hoa. He was quite a wonderful person, a Major. Del Camp & he were filling in temporarily for Col Whitbeck who was killed in the TET action until Whitbeck's replacement arrived. Well Col Nizick is finally here. Seems real sharp. Right now I'm trying to work an L&K to Bangkok starting 25 April. Hoping he'll let me turn the battery over to my XO while I'm gone so some captain doesn't come in & screw things up. If he says OK but that he's replacing me in April rather than May, the hell with it. I still intend to make Bangkok even though I don't get 6 months in. Definitely want to pick up some jewelry for Kathy while there. Kathy got a letter from Mary Overby recently & she

never ceases to amaze me. She really keeps tabs on everyone and is aware that we'll be at St Hill in July already. Anyway she offered to help us get housing in Artillery Village & for that I'm most thankful. Seems they can't get on foot but I'll have no trouble since I'll be in school. Sounds most unfair but I'll never tell.

Enclosing a picture of one of the silliest couples around taken this past Christmas. It's one of my best fix, you lucky dog. See how unselfish I am?

Haven't planned anything as of yet for leave, but I'm starting it off by having Kathy meet me in San Francisco. Then we'll probably take a cottage on the Jersey Coast for awhile & teach Ricky to swim in the ocean. Boy do I ever miss them. The war has become sort of repetitious for me lately with very few different situations arising so I've been thinking about them more & more. If that sounds as if I'm becoming lax it's not meant to as the kid is more security-conscious than I've ever been & D Boy's sense of mission urgency has never been keener.

Eve mentioned something about hearing that the 4th Div was pretty tough. It's bullshit. Remind me to tell you about some hairy, hairy nights at Dak To last November with those losers sometime. Just the thought of the Gwy

prosses me off since then.

I really get the ass about your Career Course situation. You're one of the few genuine young "artillerymen" I've met even after a year here. There just aren't many good people around in the Army. I thought flight school was a mistake for you when you left Campbell, because I was thinking of you after you in Vietnam for you after you got your wings. Didn't think that it would keep you in your branch pattern, & it probably won't. But it sure looks as if it's going to slow you down. Don't get the ass & resign, Bar; just get out of Army Aviation & back with the ol' tubes.

Beth & "The Toast of Mendoza" are two of my really favorite good buddies. Can't wait 'til you get to Hill so we can match up Annie & Rick. What an irrepressible combination they'll make!

Well, magnet-ass, stay cool & safe. Hellos to your studly family from all the Trageemburns.

Warm regards,
Dick

PS Where are Tom McFarlin & Steve Bliss these days