

July 14, 1970

Dear Ogden,

Thank you for your letter. I know etiquette books all say never to apologize in a letter for not writing, but I do owe you an apology for being so derelict in getting in touch with you. I should have written long ago - and meant to - but, championship-caliber procrastinator that I am, I kept putting it off.

I want to thank you for writing to Mr. Maynard about Susan and me. On the basis of your letter, he invited us (and Lnts, as well) over to meet and talk with him in Saigon. It was this meeting which turned out to be the crucial factor in Susan's and my assignments. We had, the day before, discovered that the powers-that-be had us tentatively assigned already: Susan to Ninh Thuan, me to Ben Hoa. When we met Mr. Maynard, and also Mr. Jacobsen, who dropped into the office while we were there, we jokingly asked what would happen if we wanted to switch assignments. Mr. Jacobsen said if we decided we really wanted to, it could probably be arranged. The more we thought about it, the better the idea sounded, and we decided, on the basis of interests and earlier preferences, to ask for it. We told Mr. Maynard; he picked up the phone, said,

"About the two girls, Maughan and Crane: switch 'em." And it was done! I have not had any cause to regret it. Ninh Thuan is a beautiful province, with a wide variety of scenery, ethnic groups, and, of course, problems and challenges. I am deputy to Mr. La Bombard, who is chief of the development operations division in province: NLD, refugees, Civic action, the Filipino CDO's, VSDP, etc. - everything connected with

community development in practically any way is involved with our office. I shall probably be concentrating eventually on the area's greatest untapped resource: the women. In many ways, this does not appeal to me; but it does present its fascinating aspects and some intriguing possibilities!

You were right when you spoke of mobility. I have spent most of my time so far in constant traveling around the province: by jeep, Scout, and, marvelously! helicopters. I've been in large villages and tiny hamlets, and have

seen and done many fascinating things I'd never done before, including, three days after I arrived, acting as ad hoc interpreter for some JUSPAO fellows whom I accompanied to a hamlet, ^{2 miles away} about 7:30 AM the morning after the hamlet had been hit by VC. We were the first non-inhabitants into the hamlet that morning, getting there well before any GVN officials. It was that morning I also saw my first (and so far, only) dead VC. Not a pleasant sight.

The province has sporadic action: an occasional hamlet has some contact; operations are "launched" in the secret base areas; helicopters sometimes get fired at; occasionally a vehicle may draw sniper ~~fire~~ fire if the driver is stupid enough to be where he knows he shouldn't really be at that time of the evening or morning. Actually, however, the province is quite pacified, with little to be concerned about vis-à-vis daily safety, above common-sense precautions. On the slightly

humorous side, the men on the air base are
confined to base and are ^{thus} for the most part, ~~confined~~
convinced there is an armed VC behind every water
buffalo. The most serious close incident was the
night about 2 weeks ago when the VC dropped about
seven rounds into the city - in the block across the
street from the province chief's house.

The only real drawback for me has so far been the
fact that I am, except for 3 Red Cross girls, the
only US female in the province and even some
beyond that. I live on a MACV compound on
the edge of Phan Rang: private room and bath, of
course, and very nice. The men are ^{also} very nice; but
sometimes it gets a little wearing.

Of course, to the Vietnamese - especially the
women and children - I am the best thing to hit
the province since Bannum & Bailey! I have badly
startled a rather large number of Army, Air Force, and
Navy troops as well! They can't believe they see a
US female in some of the places they've seen me!

On the whole, it promises to be a most
enjoyable and challenging tour.

I hope things are well with you and at VTC
in its new building.

Maybe eventually I can get ^{back} to VTC for lectures
and consultation!

Sincerely, Mary Mangham

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