

Chu Lai
February 3

Dear Family,

I just got a whole slew of letters from you, postmarked Jan 27-29, plus a very nice one from Tricia. Lois's letter came a few days ago, but I've only just gotten around to writing. There really isn't very much to report (there never really is), but I should point out that in regard to any more packages, it might be an idea to wait. It's possible that the division will be closing out, which means that, if it does, I'll be going to another unit, possibly the 101st Airborne just a little north of here, or to an advisory group. Anyway, it'll be months before that happens but I'd like to check into it a little first. Packages generally take much longer to arrive than letters; there are people here who still haven't received Christmas packages which were sent to them. Since, when one changes units, one's mail tends to be messed up for a while, bulky items might get here faster if you waited. However, that might not be the case at all - so I'll just have to look into the situation and see if there's anything I can make a judgement upon. There are, though, two items that you can send me right away. The first is a new pair of reading glasses in the same style frames. The ones I have now are in terrible shape and I can't get a new set made up by the Army. My medical records (the original set) are missing and it's against regulations to make up glasses from a "civilian" prescription. Also, could you see if John's brother or Robert Feustel have an old set of PFC stripes, the kind you pin on to the collar of fatigues. They're virtually impossible to get over here for some reason.

Beyond that, there isn't very much to say that makes interesting reading. I've settled in quite well, and have no complaints. The people that I work with are for the most part quite pleasant and we get along quite well. The night schedule is working quite well and I get more than enough sleep. It will also please my Mother to know that I am quite deliberately stuffing myself - so there's little danger that I'll come back looking emaciated. I get quite a bit of reading done and the library has a number of fairly interesting things - I'll have to start on Roland Bainton's biography of Luther, which I always meant to read and somehow never quite did, but since it is available I now have no excuse. Also, the library itself is almost unused (most people are illiterates, and often normally literate people become illiterate for the duration- something I refuse to let happen to me) and is thus very quiet and pleasant. It has thoroughly comfortable armchairs with footstools - quite a surprise here!

The weather is still surprisingly brisk for our location, for which I am thankful. The sea (South China, to be precise) side location prevents the area from becoming unbearable at any time of year. However, from what I see in the newspaper, you people must be freezing. Tricia wrote about her sliding down their driveway in her car; if that's any indication of what things are like, I should be grateful to be in a more temperate clime.

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What else? In re a teapot, don't worry. Ther's a large coffee-maker in the office and since the coffee's all instant, we use it to boil water. So, when we get tea from the mess-hall, I can make that once in a while. When I'm not in the office, I'm asleep. Also, several of the people here have their own refrigerators - so there's an abundance of cold soda during the day-time.

And I guess that's about it for now; I'm afraid I'm not very inspired tonight. I'll time how long your packages take to get here and we can go from there. Be good. Love each other. Remember that things are very quiet here now. Also remember that I love you all very much.

Rob