

April 21
Chu Lai

Dear Family -

Another boring week. I had my first half day off in quite a while and did my "Spring cleaning" and a few other odds and ends. Also finally got things straight with finance, so I'll be getting some back pay on my next pay check [they didn't realize that I was a PFC, so I'll be getting the difference between that and my PV2 pay for the last three months added to the next months pay.] In addition to the allotment I have (a certain amount taken out each month and put in Soldier's Deposit) I also opened a checking account with American Express so that I don't have to carry too much money around with me. The nice thing about that is that it pays 5%, paid by the government to encourage saving and avoid inflating the Vietnamese economy (a lost cause, some prices are up something like 500% since the Americans arrived).

I found a copy of Till We Have Faces in the Special Services library. Although I added something about to that gradually-increasing and never-to-be-finished tape that I may or may not send depending on whether or not it's ever finished, I'll add something here. First of all, it was in paperback, a Time-Life series of encapsulated wisdom for the busy workingman. The introduction with which they burdened it seemed rather embarrassed to admit that Lewis's concerns were religious, and the result was rather funny. The book itself is quite beautiful, although the character of Orual, the ugly sister, bothers me. Was Lewis creating a "masculine woman" because he felt that he could create one more effectively or convincingly than a more "womanish" woman? Or is she really very womanly [no, "female", the word "womanly" connotes concern with an ordinary woman's occupations]? Or did Lewis think that perhaps he couldn't portray a woman's personality convincingly, while he was actually doing an excellent job. Nb: It's dedicated to his wife, cf. A Grief Observed and admiration of her spiritually tough qualities. Oh well; The Time-Life people missed the whole point of the second part - which really isn't as hopeful as they think. I.E. There's sometimes something almost depressing in the inexorableness of divine love and the demands it makes. I suppose that's a necessary counterweight to the idea of the joyfulness of Creation.

I think the last letter (which I failed to number) was about #8 in my system, which makes this #9 - As you can see, my system isn't much of one. I received the package with the rye-crisp and cheese in it.

My apologies to Mrs. Anderson and the library for not writing my thanks. The books arrived some time ago. After removing a few which especially appealed, I took the others (it was quite substantial) down to the hospital when I went to visit some of my friends from Ft. Ord who were wounded a few weeks ago. After they decided to take what they wanted, I gave the box to one of the medics, who was delighted - It seems that they were in need of some. So, the books did quite a bit of good; please tell Mrs. Anderson or show her the letter.

As for R&R: I still have a few months before I have to think about it. I'd rather come back from it with slightly less than half my tour to complete. There is

an in-country R&R center, China Beach - which would be quite a saving. Still, Australia tempts me; first, because I'd like to hear people speaking English who don't ~~xxxx~~ wear green suits all the time, second, simply because it's a good opportunity to visit the place and one that I might not have again.

I've received letters from Jack, Zach, Maggie and Sarah, none of which I've had time to answer. There was also an Easter Card cum letter from Nora, more or less religious (the card part) in nature (hear, hear). I may have to start doing something like typing letters on stencils and running them off, if only it weren't an obnoxious thing to do. In the mean time, I let a scandalous amount of time run between my answers to people. I am most culpable.

It's beginning to get warm, and I'm glad that I took the time to put a ceiling in my hooch - tin ~~xxxxxx~~ roofs don't do anyone any good. I also have (did I tell you?) a second-hand fan. I think it was a reasonable purchase, after all, I'd hate to end up like the tigers in what may become a banned classic. (Sensibilities being what they are, I doubt there's much market for Sambo these days.) Anyway, it falls under the heading of preventive maintenance.

The 28th the Adjutant General's offices (about 150 of us) are having a blowout, and, for some reason or other, I've been selected as a bouncer [!]. However, the work isn't all that strenuous and one is permitted to participate in the party. It should be fun. [11 A.M. to 6 P.M., on the beachfront, decent food for once]

Be good; take care of each other; I love you all.

A handwritten signature, possibly reading "Toda", in cursive script.