

Chu Lai
May 28

Dear Family -

I'm finally beginning to think about R+R... probably taking it some time at the end of August or in September, which really doesn't seem that far away. I think I'd probably choose Australia - simply to be among people who speak English and who don't wear funny green suits. I suppose it's rather provincial of me to want to seek out the most Anglo-Saxon environment available - but I really want to bathe myself in the language. It becomes a bit trying after several months of, "Mamma-san; you give me beaucoup number-one shine today, you bic?" I sometimes ^{suspect} that Mamma-san speaks far better English than one supposes; maybe she's seen too many WWII flicks and decided that that's the way she's supposed to speak. I do give the woman credit for being a superb businesswoman - the fringe benefits she manages to milk out of sweeping floors and shining boots are incredible. Right now she's trying to figure out a way to smuggle and contraband refrigerator of the base.

It's beginning to get quite warm - but I've probably already written that some time

ago - so I'll say it's getting warmer. And I am particularly glad that I invested in that fan, which is doing yeoman service without complaint. (It also can be kept in my locker while I'm at work; but then, nearly everyone owns one.)

Almost 5 months in-country; I feel that's quite an accomplishment. My fatigues have had most of the color bleached out from incessant washing & my Pfc pins are losing their "subdued" finish, so I'm no longer distinguishable as a newbie - though, thank heavens, I was never treated as such. About all I do is work and eat and do a little reading every day, plus innumerable inane conversations. (Keep sending those puddings.) (Oh, yes; Melba toast is better than Rye-crisp.)

My higher education comes through. Sitting in the office during a lull, I started folding & snipping at a mines form, making a snowflake - something I haven't done in ages. I tossed it away, but when I came back from lunch, found it pressed in sheet acetate and stapled to the wall. It makes a rather odd contrast with the maps, charts, & other tools of the trade that form the principle motif in our office's decoration.

2624
I'm still reading the Panofsky book; there's something about a well-produced work that is extremely satisfying — and it is well printed & laid out. I suppose when I get home I'll deluge myself (somehow that word-choice doesn't look right) in books... touching them, smelling them, admiring them — maybe even reading them. It's rather hard to believe that when I'm done with this garbage, I'll still have 6 months left to do in the Army. However, I suppose it isn't that long. When I get back, though, I should have maybe a 30-day leave to spend with my family.

What else? Not a lot, as always.
Just my love.

Rob.