

#14 (?)

Chu Lai  
May 26

Dear Dad -

This is just a very brief (that's all I have time for) "I finally made it" type of letter, "it" being SP4 (properly "Specialist Four" and pronounced "Spec 4"). It's definitely a nice turn of events, for two reasons: First, I'm no longer a Private First Class, which is generally pronounced "peon" around here (anyone in Vietnam who is less than a PFC has definitely messed up somewhere along the line). Second, and from a practical point of view more important, my base pay goes from \$180.90 to \$249.90 a month, most of which is going into the bank.

SP4, as you've already gathered, is the equivalent of Corporal. However, the only corporals left in the Army are Sergeants who've been busted, and a few people in Artillery who were promoted that way. Everybody else, no matter what his arm, is promoted in SP4. After that, one goes on either to SP5 or Sergeant (i.e. a Buck Sergeant, a three-striper), but it's unlikely that I'll ever have to worry about that. Draftees tend to remain at SP4, unless they can convince someone that they want to go professional (something I'd have a hard time doing, to say the least.).

Anyway, promotions were made at the section party I mentioned to you that we were going to have. A couple of people were decorated and a couple promoted, and everyone of us (including the section Officer-in-Charge, who, for a change, is a decent person) wound up being dumped head-first into a forty gallon drum of ice water that was being used to cool beer and soda. Definitely a bit of an awakening.

This is what the pins (on fatigues) look like:



That's about it; I've got to get back to work. All my love.