

#25

July 25
Chu Lai

Dear Family -

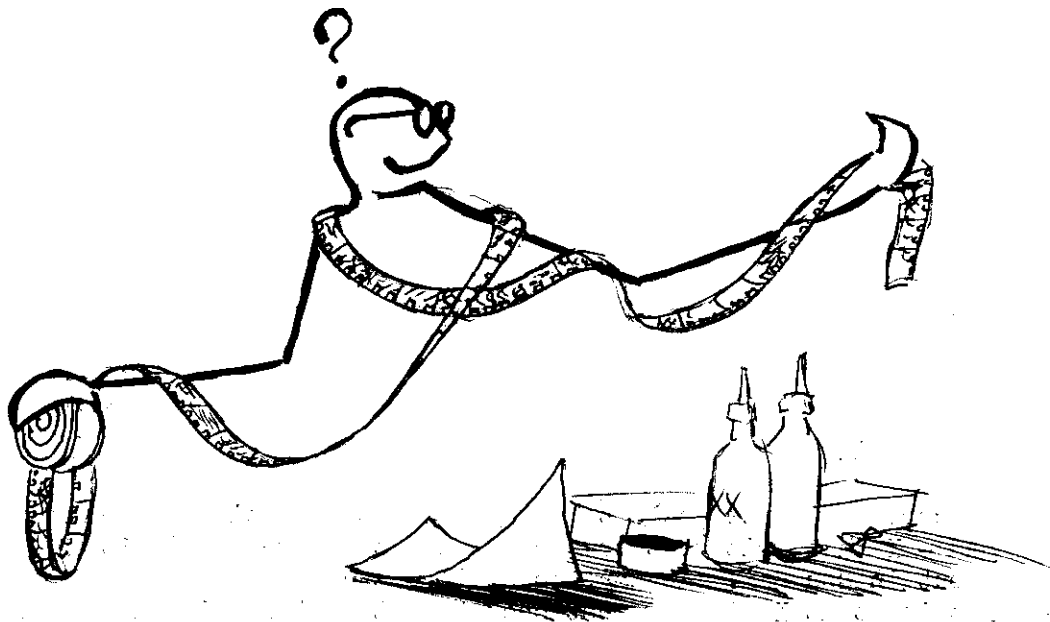
My correspondence seems to always be deteriorating, however maybe its not all that bad - I just write rather slowly, and there really isn't all that much to write about in Chu Lai. Anyway, to begin - packages #1 and #2 have both arrived safely; I think that I already mentioned that the Dinner in #1 has already been made, with quite good results, and #2 is waiting for my next $\frac{1}{2}$ day off, which I'll have quite shortly. I also received the books from the library.

Lois mentioned that Tom DiGilio had written - however, I really don't know anything about that; apologize for me for not having replied, but nothing ever arrived. Of course, I'd always be delighted to hear from him. I think that I mentioned that Alan had written about his new family - and one of my friends that I mentioned got hit back in March has dropped a few notes; he's doing rather well and is waiting impatiently for a medical discharge so that he can go back to school. Sarah and her accompaniest put together a tape of their one-and-only professional performance, rather good, but unfortunately obsolete by today's rapidly-moving tastes - all folk-type music.

Some ~~of the~~ information about the camera: As I mentioned it's a Minolta SR-T-101, a 35mm Reflex camera (i.e. through-the-lens viewing, which is quite a difference). It cost (I might as well tell) me \$123. I found an ad for it for \$249, discount - that is, for more than twice as much - even at a discount. There are slightly less expensive versions, and the same camera can be purchased with a less expensive lens - however, this seems to be the best arrangement, as a compromise between cost and efficiency. For something that can give quite a few years service, it seems to be quite a reasonable initial outlay. As for the additional lens, I am looking into the situation - but I don't want to wind up with anything that will not be in constant use - and I do want simplicity, rather than walk about with some incredibly complex layout.

What else? Despite our replacements, we are rapidly losing people in the office and things are becoming correspondingly busier for everyone who is left. I'm beginning to think that if I'd been sent to the field when I got here, I would have been far less harried. Some of the people who were taken out of the field as replacements are already asking to go back on the grounds (quite true) that they have less chance of being hurt and aren't bothered as much by the brass.

Oh well, seven months down and five to go (quite possibly four, with a Christmas drop) that's quite an accomplishment in itself: It seems rather odd to realize that in a couple of months I'll have to request an application form from Chicago so that I can get in a request for financial aid for the year after this by January. (Of course, I'm just on leave-of-absense, but any money at all will help.)



I've picked up a roll of color film so that I can take photos of the area around here for you - black and white really can't give the proper impression of the landscape. I'll have them processed at the PX (color is virtually impossible to all but the most dedicated amateur to develop and print) and have them sent to you, so you can have some idea of what the place really looks like.

Love
Bob