

#35

11 September

Chu Lai

Dear Family -

Another letter for you - it's not that I'm feeling (of course) virtuous - but that we don't have any power today & haven't since quite early last evening. Anyway - as a result, there's not very much that we can do - one of the dangers, I suppose, of over-modernization. Fortunately, we've only got a couple more months of this before the division stands down permanently. It seems I have the distinct (and dubious) privilege of serving in the only division in the Army which has been specifically designated to never be reconstituted - under any circumstances. It's probably just as well, inasmuch as the Americal has not exactly contributed a particularly stirring chapter to anyone's military history. The only question at the moment is if it can be dissolved before the latest round of scandals breaks (and they are there).

So much for the morbid (if it could even be called that) part. Tomorrow, if all goes well, will be my half-day off - so I can go to the beach and spend the whole afternoon swimming. I'll definitely have to bring a Dorothy Sayers or a Michael Innes along

with me. You mentioned something about a new *Tunes* - is it in paperback?

The package with the spaghetti (& forget the number, & have already tossed it away with the wrapping) arrived today - surprisingly enough with the spaghetti intact. We'll probably make it up into dinner tomorrow night. Along with it was Lois's letter with the clipping on the novel based on Grendel's side of the Beowulf story. It definitely sounds intriguing - let me know if you get the time to read it.



14 September
(continued)

Well, I had my half-day off Sunday and went to the beach to swim in the tepid bath-water we have here - and laid in the sun & watched the helicopters (the beach is part of their approach from the south).

I have something of a fable for you - or at least it seems like that - concerning a man & just medicated. A Pfc in a line outfit decided that he didn't care for the bush. Not that he minded the Army - he just didn't like the bush. - There's only one problem with that in Nam; there's really no place to go if you don't like your situation. However, Craig (our Pfc) had the solution - go AWOL in the Army, instead of from it.

He left ~~at~~ his unit while it was in the rear, at Da Nang, and pinned on a set of Captain's bars. He didn't stop there, though, which is what makes it so interesting. Rather than just wander around impersonating an officer, he created himself an identity - forged records (including finance), moved into officers' quarters, and drew Captain's pay. Everyone accepted him as an officer

on temporary duty from somewhere-or-another - and he got along quite happily for a little over two months.

Unfortunately, on the 62nd day, he happened to be run over by a truck. When the hospital checked his social security number as a matter of course, they discovered that it didn't belong to any Cpt in the Army, ~~therefore~~ looked further, and "blew his cover."

What they do with him when he recovers will depend, unfortunately, on whether or not the Army has a sense of humor. I don't give him much of a chance.

Not much else to relay. I love you all. Stay well.

Rob