

This is a recording and \_\_\_\_\_ and I just want to see how the sound effects coming in and uh, I think it's a little bit loud right now and I'll stop and play it back...Roger out.

Like I'm saying, I'm trying to make a recording, and it's kind of hectic around here, you know I don't ever have any real privacy so I just kinda came outside here. It's near the flight line, anyways, Alpha Company, so, it's a flight line. Alpha Company flight line is, you know, right near our flight line. And, sun's just now going down. It's been a pretty nice day. Getting kind of hot over here though. Well, I'd say it's around 100 today. But, uh, you know, I'd rather have it hot like this than rain. I just thought I'd send you one of these tapes. If you would, you could buy you a cheap player, whatever the cost, I don't know. You could get one for around \$20. And, uh, if you'd like, you can even take it out of my money. I really don't care, you know, as long as you get something to uh, listen to the tapes, do whatever. I know listening to a tape is much better than just writing letters. There's \_\_\_\_\_, it sounds better. But, uh, things here lately have been pretty hot. I'd say in the least they've been pretty hot. For me they've been pretty hot. Man, they have been pretty hot. But, uh, things really get hot around February 21st.

On February the 21st, my, uh, pilot got shot through the leg, and \_\_\_\_\_ got pretty bad. The crewchief and I managed to put him back in the back seat and uh, fortunately enough he's not gonna lose his leg. He'll keep it. But he only had 20 days left in the Army. That's the real bummer about the whole thing. He's a real fine person. And, we shouldn't even been going in that area and he went back in. In this certain LZ and \_\_\_\_\_ they were mortaring the LZ at the time we went in. \_\_\_\_\_ and it was really ridiculous. That damn Colonel, you know, you know the way Colonels are. He was about 6,000 feet above the air, in the air, he wasn't getting shot at, so he didn't really give a damn, so he said, "Ah, you people go on back in there, and

get your ass shot off," so we went back in and we got \_\_\_\_\_ got hit. It was a real bummer. He's a real fine person.

And, let me see, what else. Oh, yeah, on February 23rd, I got shot down. \_\_\_\_\_ it was nothing more than a \_\_\_\_\_ piece of shrapnel, \_\_\_\_\_ fuel line and uh, we had to bring it in on an emergency landing at Firebase 31. Firebase 31 has really got a unique history. It didn't last but about a week. It was overrun by a NVA battalion of tanks and uh, I think after about five minutes, after we left the ship there, on Firebase 31, we left our helicopter \_\_\_\_\_ heavy artillery. But, this \_\_\_\_\_ thing is really a bummer. Really depressing. So many people getting killed and \_\_\_\_\_ Richard Nixon, as far as I'm concerned can just...hell, I don't even want to talk about it. The man disgusts me. He's a warmonger. That's all you gotta say. He's got the whole thing planned out, disguised and masquerading his plans with a so called uninvolved withdrawal. You just get into worse mess now than he ever has been. He's got it all figured out, too. Richard Nixon \_\_\_\_\_ and he wants Laos and Cambodia and probably North Vietnam. \_\_\_\_\_ because by that time the young people of the United States will change the government. At least I hope so, I think the man's a damn fool. Oh yeah, I sent you the door pin out of one of my, the helicopter number is 288, that got shot down on Firebase 31 and door pin is the little thing that goes in the door when you pull the door back on the Huey helicopter, if you don't have that little pin in this thing, if you get up high in the air, the wind will blow it off. It's just a little tiny pin, but one tiny pin, you know, can cause you a lot of trouble if you don't have it in there. But, uh, we got taken off that mission yesterday and will probably go back on it in a month.

You see, we got 20 helicopters, which is a normal strength of a Huey combat assault Slick company. Right now, we don't have but six helicopters. You see, you can see for yourself everyone is

getting shot up and pretty bad. Helicopters are really being damaged bad and uh, we really have a lot of people over here to shoot at you but I think everything's gonna be alright. You know, you just gotta maintain one's cool. And, you know, that's what I'm trying to tell you mom, just don't get worried, I mean, hell, I mean, you know, this life's just a real sucker, you know, I mean, you're gonna have the green machine on you and sometimes you want to know what it'll finally evolve in to. This is no more than a little economical conquest for some fools who want to make a lot of money or have their name put in the paper. It's got me where I think as much I love my county, but I hate my government with a hell of a passion, that's all I got to say about it. And, uh, if you could've seen Firebase 30 and Firebase 31, you might have a little understanding of what I mean. People think war is good. Hell, people think it's good when their not in it. You'd get it in it a while, and you see how good the war is.

Yesterday on Firebase 31, we hauled off enough damn dead people. They had 'em lined up out there like a zoo or something. I've never seen anything like it. It's just stupidity. The ARVN's don't even know what they're doing. You CA 'em out into an area, and they're so damn scared, they won't even move. That's the reason they're all getting killed. They won't even move. And when we come to pick up, they hang on the damn skids to try to get out of there. They're like a human wave attack on your damn helicopter. You've got to kick 'em in the mouth, kick 'em in the head, kick 'em everywhere to keep 'em off. A Huey Slick won't carry but about nine ARVN's and hell, we have carried as many as 20 out of there, hanging on the Slicks, grabbing 'em by the head and pulling them there to try to keep 'em from getting killed. But you still can't help but feel sorry for those people cause they really didn't want this thing to happen anyway. Just minding their own business. Some \_\_\_\_\_ cracker-jack politician said, well, I believe I'll start me a little war here, get some excitement going since things are getting kind of dull. In fact, those people don't

even know the people we CA'd in Laos didn't even know they were going there until we put 'em down on the damn ground. That's pretty bad in my book. People didn't even know what they were going in to. Then, they're just terrified. They have no sense of judgment. They just panic too easy if you know what I mean. If you meet a Vietnamese, you would understand these people, but this is not the time or the place...like I say, this is not the time or the place for a conquest, \_\_\_\_\_ Laos, they have, if you went into Laos, you would have to do more than what they're doing. I'm not saying it's so much as the ARVN's fault as it is the Command's fault. The Command don't even know what the hell it's doing. I mean, it throws them out there on the damn mountaintop and expects them to do damn wonders. It's just like throwing a bunch of dinks, 800 dinks, can you imagine 800 ARVN's being attacked by 6,000 NVA. I mean, you can see why they're getting their asses kicked. It's just that plain and simple. It's the United States Advisors and the Vietnamese higher ups don't know what in the hell they're doing. They're just dicking around with people's lives. Just something you don't fool around with in my book. It's really giving me a case of the ass, you know what I mean.

I'm kind of tired of talking about this war. Just uh, the whole thing just kind of gets me down. All I want to do is get out of Vietnam and live my life and be left alone. You know what I mean? I sure do miss home a whole lot. Not to be back in those good ol' woods right now and I guess things are kind of quiet. Sure would be nice to be back, especially coming up Spring time. You know, I was, always my most favorite time of the year was Spring time. I remember me and Harry and Butch used to go fishing out there, where was it? Mosses Lake, big old lake. I remember Butch would go crazy trying to catch 100 damn fish. Never have seen nobody like him. He used to go out and if he didn't catch 100 fish, hell, he just wasn't happy. Had to get him down. Sure can't knock the old boy cause there ain't many people like him around. Him or Harry. You know, I can't say enough for my brothers. You know, cause I



couldn't pick two finer people to be my brothers I don't think. Never have met any anyway. But, uh, I kinda miss playing softball and stuff, too, if you know what I mean. Tell everyone back home I really appreciate them all writing me. I've gotten a lot of mail. I believe a lot more mail than I got when I first come over here, you know, and uh, I really appreciate it. It really helps things to come in out of flying and get a letter. You know, it really helps things. Just kind of brightens up the day. In fact, that's really the only thing I really look forward to each day.

But, uh, I really like working with these helicopters. I learned a whole lot, you know. They're really weird machines. In fact, I even got to fly one a little the other day. I didn't know what I was doing, but uh, you know, I was just sitting in the copilot's seat and uh, this other pilot, he's a real crazy joker, you know, we had an easy mission that day. And he, you know, he just kind of said, "You got it?" And I said, "Yeah, I guess I got it." I don't know, I guess I had it. But, uh, I just kinda floated along there and I made about one or two turns. Wasn't nothing spectacular. Cause I sure as hell couldn't land one or pick one up, I guess. But, uh, you really gotta think a lot about these guys that fly these helicopters. To me, they're really brave, fantastic people. The, uh, I would like to come back to the States and uh, go to crewchief school and on a Loach. Loaches are real small helicopter. Looks like a little spider or something, you know. And they're real small and they are used mostly for carrying generals or colonels around, you know, some kind of recon mission, just real light stuff, you know. But, uh, you know, I'm learning a lot. I still got a whole lot more to learn and I plan on doing that. But, uh, oh yeah, enough for helicopters.

Listen, what I'd like for you to do, Mom, if you would. I don't know how much money I have at home, but, I would like for you to send me a money order. Now send me a money order, not a check, for \$150. Take it out of my bank account. Cause I'm going on R and R.

It's not that I don't get paid...like I said, it's not that I don't get paid, because I do. It's uh, it's just the fact that uh, they send all my money home and I can't get down there to tell 'em that I want some money for my R and R. So, therefore, you're gonna have to send me this money back. And also send me two shirts and two pants and a pair of shoes if you can. But uh, I don't know how much of my money they've sent home. I guess I've got a pretty good amount in the bank. But, anything you need, if you need any money, \$75, \$100, \$200, \$300, \$1,000, you know, you just go ahead and take it out of mine, no sweat. Cause I don't want you to get in a bind or anything. But uh, money can be a hazard. Money is about the last thing a man thinks of over here, but I know, back in the States, it can be a valuable asset at times.

Hey, oh yeah, I got a letter from Mona Smith and little Kim. I got me a letter. She's really a good little girl. I guess if I ever had a little sister, I guess I'd have to pick her. She really is a card. Weird little girl. But, uh, I really appreciate getting letters from Mona. She really is a real squared away person, if you know what I mean. I never have met anyone quite like her. As far as just being a good person goes, she's just a good person. But uh, be sure to tell John and \_\_\_\_\_ I said hello. Tell John I said not to work too hard this Spring, and I won't be there to help him. But, I guess if I were there I wouldn't do a whole lot of work anyway. Never was prone to work a whole lot, but I'm working a pretty good bit these days.

When I say I work 18 hours a day, that means I've put in about 18 hours a day. I'm usually out at the flight line about 6:00 and I usually get through cleaning my gun at night around 9:00 or 10:00. Oh, that's not 18 is it? That's just 15. Oh, that's not too bad. Oh, correction there. But, Mom, if you're worrying, I want you to cut that out. I was, well, we're in \_\_\_\_\_, worrying never did no good about nothing, if you know what I mean. And, uh, I just can't see it.

How's Brian Wayne doin? I don't know why I'm just, weird, I just can't think up a whole lot of things to say. They're just kinda coming to me all in a flash. But, uh, he sure was a mean little devil when I left. I thought he was gonna put it on me there at Butch's one time. I know he'll change. He's changed a lot since when I come home. But, uh, I'm gonna go on back to the hootch and finish taping this. It's hard to think. I don't know why, I just have trouble thinking these days. But, uh. I'll see you later.

Here's, we've got a young man here name Pineapple. We call him Magnet Man in our company. He's a...I think during the past week, Magnet Man was shot down once or shot up twice, three times. A total of three times. Magnet Man was a \_\_\_\_\_ you heard that. The man of much, no what is that, much endurance. Much endurance. It takes a lot of character. Anyway, Magnet Man is Hawaiian, he's a Hawaiian/Canadian. We call him pineapple. Anyway, Pineapple, what do you think about this flying into Laos, I want your truthful opinion. (No \_\_\_\_\_) No \_\_\_\_\_, in Vietnamese, No \_\_\_\_\_ means "I do \_\_\_\_\_, anyway, we got \_\_\_\_\_ mission for a little while and we're just kinda cooling it, you know, and uh, \_\_\_\_\_ Pineapple. Flight \_\_\_\_\_ heading Southeast, 50 man formation. Hell, I want to ask some more questions here. Anyway, what do you think about our platoon sergeant. This is Steve Lowell, he's from New York. He's a Catholic religion. What religion are you Pineapple. He's Catholic or something. God knows what, but he attracts bullets. He'd better be some kind of religion cause he needs it. He's still alive. Comin' live at 5, this is WLAC, Nashville, Tennessee. \_\_\_\_\_ soul. \_\_\_\_\_ Say something Steve, this is Steve Lowell, he's gonna say something. He's from New York. Believe me, I'm having a hard time talking. I ran out of things after about the first half there and God knows, I can't think of anything. Steve say something here. (Well, we're fighting this war over here and we get it \_\_\_\_\_ down like Mike said. Sergeant Evans, you know, you just gotta mess around with this, get his hair cut and



name tags and things. Well, Mike might not make it home because I think he's gonna kill Sergeant Evans by the time he leaves here, so, but otherwise he's doing okay. And here's Mike again. Here's some more intellectual.....) \_\_\_\_\_ You'll find this tape'll probably be more of high spirits. One must keep hisself in high spirits flying these helicopters because he knows if he doesn't keep in high spirits during the duration of his tour over here, a fella's gotta kind of keep, you know, slap happy and you just can't do all these....if he does this serious thinking, he'd probably go crazy. Lord knows what (Lord knows everything don't he?) Boy, it really was a nice day today, wasn't it Pineapple. (Sure was, I had CORD mission) He had a CORD mission. A CORD mission is, you probably don't know what that is, but that's one of these missions where you go and get to \_\_\_\_\_ pad and there's so many nice people around you just want.....Civilian Operation for Rural Development. In other words, he didn't get shot at. Or rehabilitation. Lord knows, Magnet Man needs rehabilitation. If anyone needs it, he does, I guarantee you. But, we're just kinda sitting around the hootch. I kinda, I tried to fix up my hootch today. Don't tell me your problems. (Is that thing still goin?) Yeah, it's still goin. Get down on the ground. Non stop? (He went down to Da Nang, came back up and went to Quang Tri, came back down to Da Nang).....(Running shuttle run. People get off, more people get on, .....Okay, I want to go this way, we'll be there in about five minutes.....run in.....) Yeah, by the way, people think helicopters can do anything, you know. Make it fly, push a button or something. They think you can do anything with a helicopter. The other day, this thing went down, and this guy, you know, this thing was leaking oil, leaked something like seven quarts in five hours, and that's really bad conditions. So, this fellow, we sat down on this place called Vandergrifft, and he said.....anyway, this guy said, \_\_\_\_\_, he said, you know, he kind of got out and said, that's our cat there, his name is dog. He's a siamese cat and he's not gotten any bigger in the past month. God knows he's skinnier



than...looks like a blood tic that ain't had no blood in a long time. But, anyway, there it is. Anyway, this dude down on the fire, this Vandergrift, this airstrip like place, and uh, you know, he expected wonders out of that ship, you know, he said, like push a button, make it go. We'll see you Pineapple. That's Pineapple. He's just leaving. You know, just push a button, make it go. You know, \_\_\_\_\_ just grab a hold of anything and get out. I don't blame 'em, I guess I'd want to get out too. They'd grab a hold of anything. Jump on you, grab hold of you, do anything to get out of those firebases we got over there. But, uh I believe I'm gonna finish this tape when I'm thinking better. Cause I don't know, I just can't think too good here. I'll catch you later.

Well, here I am again the next night, which is around March 3, and everything is going good, I guess. Didn't even have to fly today. Oh yeah, I flew an hour and a half. Flew to Khe Sanh with the Major. Major Lloyd, he's an outside guy. He's not like the rest of the majors in the Army. He isn't a Cobra pilot. Cobra gunship pilot. He \_\_\_\_\_ pretty tough people. They have a very hard job. They \_\_\_\_\_ really risk their lives every day. And he's just the kind of guy that just don't take any thing off of anyone. He's just that type of man. He does stick up for you. He doesn't have to. In fact, he's just about the best man I've ever seen in the United States Army. He is a real fine person. But, uh, getting back to home, I wish you would, if you send a tape back, I want to leave the next side of this tape naked so you can tape me some and send me back on this side, so that way you won't have to buy another tape. It's really hard to tape these things cause you sit here and there's nothing really happening, you know, that's really worth talking about. You're not, you know, if I was talking to you, I could talk, but uh, I'm just sitting here talking to a mike. I've got a few questions, you know, like, well, let me see here, if you would, tell me \_\_\_\_\_ and you know, stuff like that, how's things going, you know, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, and write and tell me about Bryan, tell me how Bryan doing. If you can, get him to say something on the tape. I want you to maybe get Butch and Janice to say something. \_\_\_\_\_ words. And you know, I just want to hear a little bit from everyone. \_\_\_\_\_ if you can. It might be a big hassle making that tape though with all that, huh? But, uh. I'm gonna \_\_\_\_\_ tape so, you know, you can hear my voice. I don't know if it's changed any or not. I guess I've changed in the short period ever since I've been gone. I don't know, about a month and a half, two months ago. But, there's one thing, this crewchief I've got, he's from, I think he's from Iowa. He's a real good guy. He said there's one thing about life, you know, no matter how bad it is, how bad the war is over here, you've always gotta find something good about it. No matter how bad things are, if you can find something good about it, then it is bearable. And that's one thing I believe I've learned about life over here, to live in this world, even back in the States, a person's got to find something good about it. Even something real small and minute. Got to have some little thing he takes pleasure in. If it is nothing more than just being yourself, you know. And I guess that's just what I take pleasure in, is being myself. I don't know, hell, even what I'm gonna do when I get out of the Army. I'm thinking about going back to school. I might take a, I don't know, computers. I'll take up something. I'm really not worried about it right now.....War puts people in strange moods and makes 'em think completely different. You know, everybody has their own little world and they just kind of live in it. And there are so many different worlds in the whole world, that it's really strange, you know. Like I say, two or three years ago, I was going to college, and I had it made, real nice, and then I'm over here, but, now I believe I'm a better person, maybe then when I was just going to college having it easy.

I tell ya, it's a great pleasure just to be able to have a place like the United States to come home to. Have a mother like you,