

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
COMPANY A 2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 503D INFANTRY
APO San Francisco 96250

18 August 1967

Mrs. Anita Cook
[REDACTED]

Dear Mrs. Cook,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 26 July 1967 concerning the welfare of your husband, SP4 Jon W. Cook, a member of my command.

I would like to first clarify the record regarding your husband's activities in this company. Since his arrival in RVN, he has been involved in four (4) actions: 3 March, 16 March, 9 April and 22 June 1967. These actions were sharp, and one was extremely so. Your husband acquitted himself well, and the unit is very proud of him.

Your husband has received two Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in combat, one as a result of a booby trap, resulting in a piece of shrapnel in the leg, and the other resulting in a second piece of shrapnel in the leg from a hand grenade. He has been awarded the Army Commendation for Valor, and has also earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB).

At present your husband's physical health is good. Medical records indicate no ailment that hinders his physical activity.

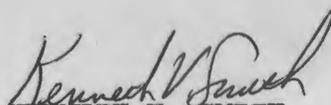
As Commanding Officer of this unit, I am not aware of any racial or educational discrimination. There is no written policy in the Battalion, Brigade, or in Viet Nam, which states that any man will be rotated off "of the line" after serving four to six months in a combat zone. The Battalion Commander's policy, and mine, is that only those people recovering from wounds shall remain in the rear area. As wounds are not received on the basis of racial characteristics, neither are "rear area" jobs awarded on this basis.

I too miss my wife, and my baby daughter whom I have seen for only three months. But I have seen the effects of Communism in a war ravaged East Germany, and in the destroyed areas of this country. The paper is full of pictures of civilians assassinated because they do not conform to the Communist way of thinking. The reasons that we are here are numerous, our service is necessary both on an individual basis and as a representative of a free nation dedicated to helping those people less fortunate and less free than ourselves.

In summary, at this time, I have no reason to question the physical ability of your husband to serve on the line. He is a good soldier and a good leader, and I feel that his experience is valuable to the new men. His ability to train and lead can very well result in the saving of lives. I appreciate your concern for your husband's welfare, and wish to assure you that the equipment, training, supplies, and leadership present here is the best that I have seen in my association with the army. All we need are the continued prayers and support of the people back home. If I may be of any service, I will place myself at your disposal to answer questions.

I hope that this letter has answered some of your questions and brought you some peace of mind.

Sincerely,


KENNETH V. SMITH
CPT Infantry
Commanding