

Phu Bai, South Vietnam

Dear Civilians, Friends, Draft Dodgers, Etc.,

In the very near future the undersigned will once more be in your midst, dehydrated and demoralized, to take his place again as a human being with the well known forms of freedom and justice for all to engage in Life, Liberty, and the somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. In making your joyous preparations to welcome him back into organized society, you might take certain steps to make allowances for the crude environment which has been his miserable lot for the past twelve months. In other words, he might be a little Asiatic from Vietnamese Overseasitis and should be handled with care. Don't be alarmed if he is infected with all forms of rare tropical diseases; a little time in the "Land of the Big PX" will cure those maladies.

Furthermore, show no alarm if he insists on carrying a weapon to the dinner table, looks around for his steel pot when offered a chair, or wakes you up in the middle of the night for guard duty. Keep cool when he pours gravy on his dessert at dinner or mixes peaches with his Sengans VO. Pretend not to notice if he eats with his fingers instead of silverware and prefers C-Rations to steak. Abstain from saying anything about powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, fried rice, powdered milk and artificially flavored ice cream. Do not be alarmed if he should jump up from the dinner table and rush to the garbage can to wash his dish with a toilet brush; after all, this has been his standard.

Take it with a smile when he insists on digging up the garden to fill sandbags for the bunker he is building. Be tolerant when he takes his blanket and sheet off the bed and puts them on the floor to sleep on. Also, if it should start raining, pay no attention to him if he pulls off his clothes, grabs a bar of soap and towel, and runs outdoors for a shower.

When in his daily conversation he utters such things as "Xin Loi" and "Choi Oi" just be patient. And simply leave quickly and calmly if by some chance he utters "DiDi" with an irritated look on his face, because it means no less than "get the hell out of here." Don't let it shake you up if he picks up the phone and yells, "Sustain, Sir" or says "Roger Out" for good-bye, or simply shouts "Working."

Never ask why the Jones' son held a higher rank than he did, and by no means mention the word "extend." Pretend not to notice if at a restaurant he calls the waitress "Numbuh one girl" and uses his hat for an ash-tray. If he gets misty-eyed when he hears "Homeward Bound" on the radio, comfort him because he is still reminiscing. Be especially watchful when he is in the presence of a woman - especially a beautiful woman.

Above all, keep in mind that beneath that tanned and rugged exterior there is a heart of gold (the only thing of value he has left). Treat him with kindness, tolerance, and an occasional fifth of good liquor, and you will be able to rehabilitate that which was once (and now is a hollow shell of) the happy-go-lucky guy you once knew and loved.

Last, but by no means least, send no more mail to the APO, fill the ice box with good cold beer, get the civics out of the mothballs, fill the car with gas, and get the women and children off the streets -

BECAUSE THE KID IS COMING HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Yours truly,