

The longer I stay over here the meaner and more vitriolic I get about people carrying V.C. flags in peace demonstrations. I hope to God I never see it for I think I could easily start shooting. I think it best that we just stay away from anything like that. We have allowed a Fifth Column to exist in our nation that through the use of television media has completely demoralized our nation. This is a crime.

Well, love I miss you something awful as always. God I miss you.

The longer I stay here the more my sense of prospective is returning about where I am trying to go in life. The more dedicated wonderful people that I meet and the wonderful people that I meet and the wonderful (sometimes) Vietnamese people, the more I realize that this experience is going to be a priceless, and man building experience. For example the Chaplin here at the compound, is a veteran infantryman from the Korean war with a break in service of fourteen years. His meeting an old friend at Valley Forge Hospital, who was parlarized from the shoulders down, gave him a sense of mission. You know, "there is a war being fought and those men need me." I have never net a Chaplin who drank as much, cussed as much, or theartened to kill people before, but he does. He is the first Chaplin I have ever met that I felt I could talk to if I had a problem. He just relates to everybody.

I guess I sound fairly positive tonight. There is so much to say. I have seen so much and there is so much to come.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
17 August '70

Dear Judy,

This is your first full day in Hawaii. I hope that the days have not been filled with too much confusion. I cannot imagine how you are getting around without a car, but with your willsome smile I am sure you'll manage somehow.

I was going to watch MASH tonight but there were no seats, so I left. It looked like it was going to really be funny.

A V.C. high point of activity is expected this week. The ARVN is on alert in Can Tho. So far nothing has happened; nevertheless, I am carrying my rifle to work and back.

Today, I met a Bird Dog pilot who lives next door to the press camp. He is a nice fellow. He stopped counting the V.C. he had killed at 120 plus. He said anytime I wanted to go shoot a few in Kein Hoa provence he would be glad to take me. I am really anixous to kill a V.C. I know this sounds morbid and sadistic, but I am a soldier. N.B. Forrest said "war means fighting and fighting means killing." Of course, I do not intend to continue this after I have shot one.

Additional rationale! This may sound stupid, but I am going to be a soldier for only a few more months. To more fully understand the emotions or the psychology of the soldier, it is essential that I kill one gook or enemy or what have you. Maybe I'll be sickened by the experience or maybe I won't, I just have no idea what I will feel when I pull the trigger.

This is inhuman scriblings so I am going to change the subject.

I had several foreign correspondents come into the camp today. A Frenchman for the magazine "The Spectator" (same as Life) was going to go to Cambodia, but things did not work out. I told him about my french wife and Antione's. We talked about French politics, the French Foreign Legion, Algeria, ect. He was really an interesting fellow. Then a Japanese correspondant came in with his secretary and I talked to him about Japan and her expanding role in Southeast Asia. I just love meeting all these interesting people.

Like I said before, I really try to be friendly, interested in them, and helpful. It is the only way to build good press relations and it is just plain old politics. Even still though, I do not tell him much about the war.

Down in the Seven Mountains area this morning 149 fifty-five gallon drums of C.S. gas were dropped on a V.C. stronghold. We gassed the hell out of the mountain. Of course, you won't read about this in the papers. And you must keep your mouth shut about it. I really feel sorry for those N.V.A. bastards. C.S. is bad shit. Probably tonight they'll begin infiltrating off the mountain, back to their strong hold. All of their infiltration routes have bee sown with sensors. When the V.C. get close to a sensor, artillery fire is called right on their heads. Maybe tonight, we kill many gooks.

All of this operation was explained to us while I was excorting Colonel Leonard yesterday.

Today, I flew back to Dz-on to drop Colonel Leonard off. Dz-on is the home of the 11th Armored Cavalary, Cliff Moak's old unit. I thought about Cliff's memory while we were there. It made me very sad.

Today, I got some indications that I might be getting some people in. We are starting to really hurt. I have so much to read, especailly that which correspondants write about the war.

I have read with great interest about all the fuor of American airplanes flying in support of the Cambodians. The issue was blown all out of proportion by the news media. I can just imagine the screams of the television news media. I would just rather not think about it.

You know ever since I have been over here, I just do not get bothered by anything. I jsut show concern about the job to the point that I do not appear lackadisical. Getting upset about this bullshit would be a waste of emotional energy.

The discipline here is just plain gross. I used to bitch about Fort Bliss as you well know, but this might as well be a group of civilians. I have not been saluted by enlisted men countless times, and of course with the new haircut regulation all of them have the sideburns, droopy mustches and long hair. They look like shit. I have not heard of an Article 15 since I have been here. NONE ARE GIVEN! This is a disgraceful situation. Everybody that is worth a shit is getting out. I am determined not to go through my life biting my lip or always being disgusted with the sorry state of discipline in the Army. I just want to enjoy my life with my wife and sons (more I hope.)

Life becomes so meaningful over here. That constant fear of a child throwing a grenade

at you is always there like a black cloud over your whole attitude. Frankly, I do not like the feeling at all. The gift of life becomes truly precious over here, especially since I have so much to come home to.

As I practice writing like this every night, I feel as if my thoughts are flowing more easily through my mind to my pen. This is great practice. Wouldn't you know it, I have been writing so much to you that I emptied my first pen already.

I was figuring up last night that if I wrote an average of six pages a day to you this would be the equivalent of fifty-one typed double spaced pages per month. It would make quite a record of one G.I.'s impressions.

Well, it is getting on to being 2200 now. I am soon going to go to sleep. Last night was the first night that I have slept through the night since I have been here. I really felt good today.

The days are starting to fly. I have so much to do and so little time I refuse to count days. I think of them only in terms of assigned tasks. In four days I'll will have been here a month. Even though this one has really been bone jarring, already I find myself saying "Where did last week go?" Maybe we are going to make it.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
18 August '70

Dear Judy,

Would you believe that as soon as I sat down to write this letter, we had an alert. So, I grabbed my M 16, flak jacket, gas mask, and some ammo and headed for the bunker where we sat on our asses for thirty minutes. We man the northeast bunker and have an M60 machine gun.

All of this bullshit was in anticipation of a V.C. high point of activity the 19-23 August. About 2000 tonight the V.C. shot up a vehicle five miles out of town. Two U.S. were wounded.

I received you letters of 12,13, and 14 August today. I was very glad to get so many letters. Makes this God forsaken land easier to stomach.

Thank you for teaching Van to say "Da-Da" first. That really makes me feel good. I can not for the life of me understand why he likes to salivate so much. I hope he spit at the hippies.

.....
If you do not like the idea of Mississippi, get me the addresses of Florida's law schools and Alabama's and Georgia's. I'll apply for them all. I just want to be able to hunt, skin dive, and give my childern a somewhat rural upbringing. The Georgia coast would be nice, too.

As for mother building a pool, she will be disappointed. Our lives will be out own period.

Hey, you must hot have received that \$700.00 yet. Please let me know when you do.

My photographers took two pictures of me working at my desk. I'll forward them to you when you get a permanent address in Hawaii.

I am glad you received five letters in one day. Boy when I received a bunch like that I

read and read and reread them. They made my day.

Sasalito and Stanuon street sound like wonderful places except for the hippies.

I was so glad to hear that Norman and Eline had a son. I really kind of thought that they would have a girl.

Hey, forget about the Presido. I getting out of this man's Army.

I met a Captain Robinson tonight who is an M.P. Lieutenant Duffy sued to work for him in Long Binh following his trial. Duffy gave LaNasa the order to shoot the gook. To this day, Duffy says he did the right thing. Once Captain Robinson explained the circumstances to me I was appalled he was tried.

I DO NOT WANT MY SON AROUND DRUG ADDICTS. I do not care how amazed he is by their appearance.

My roommate just put a tape on and it sounds so great to hear a round eye's sound voice. I can not wait to get you settled and start calling and sending tapes. Right now is a bad time.

I was tickled to hear that Van talks to trees. It is comments like that that make me really feel close to my son. I am completely amused about it everytime I think about it.

Well, take care and good luck. Funny I would jsut love to sleep between clean sheets and take a hot bath.

O' well!

I love you,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
19 August '70

Dear Judy,

Boy, today was one hell of a day and the SOB is still going on at 2230. I'll be so glad to get out of this Goddamned Army.

Right now Mr. Sol Sanders of *U.S. News & World Report* is talking to General Cushman. I am waiting to take this guy back to the Press Camp AFTER crewfew. Mr. Sanders is an interesting guy. He is very critical of his fellow writers and he even told me that he spends one half of his time in replying to rebutting the Bullshit of the *N.Y. Times*.

20 August

Sorry not to have mailed this letter, but I have been busy as hell. The only free time I have had in the last two days was this afternoon from 1230-13345 and I slept.

Mr. Sanders mentioned to me that a graduate of L.S.U. who taught French in southwest Louisiana was translating the press briefings from French to English in Phnom Penh. I believe that our friend Chiang has returned to Cambodia. I have asked Mr. Sanders to mention us to Chiang when he returns to Phnom Penh.

21 August

On the 20th a Mr. Robert Clark of C.B.S. appeared in DMAC. He produces a thirty minute daily public affairs program. He was really a reasonable fellow. He spent ten years in the Canadian Navy before going into radio and television.

Before coming to Viet Nam, he spent two weeks in Isarel. Did you know that the Russian pilots are worthless. The jews flying the Phantoms just knock the hell out of them.

I have been so busy for the last three days you would not believe it. The days are just endless hours of work, work and more work, even to 2330 at night.

Unfortunately, everybody in the I.O. office got short at the same time and the organization went to shit. Presently, since I am doing three jobs and am just busy as hell. There is a lot of pressure associated with the job also.

General McCown returned from leave in Louisiana today. Although I have not had a chance to met him yet, he appears very trusting, gung-ho, and intelligent. His manner is much more comforting than General Cushman's. Cushman makes one feel so damned uncomfortable all the time.

I received three letters today. I am glad that you now have a permanent address. I have been told that since you are residing in Hawaii, I can draw cost of living allowance, also. To insure that I am absolutely legal in this endeavor please pay cash for your rent and you put the apartment in your name.

I was so happy to hear that your trip from San Fransico to Hawaii was pleasant and lots of people helped you. Watch that smile though, it can get you in trouble. Linda Coughlin can explain to you how to call me through MARS. My numbers here in Can Tho are: room, 931-2141 and work 931-2029 or 931-2802. As soon as you get a phone number, let me know. For us to talk back and forth from Hawaii will be considered a local call and will be free.

Please let me know if this address is going to be permanent, for I will begin mailing you pictures, silver, ect.

Also, let me know how your money is doing. Will you need another income supplement this month?

All your letters of late have been so touchingly sweet. That long one you wrote on the 14th was a tear jerker. I enjoyed reading it many times.

I have had an 8X10's mad of us at Van's baptism and Danny Boy. The color in the one of us is not so hot, but Danny's picture is absolutely beautiful. It was well cropped and really is an great reminder of home.

The V.C. down here have failed so far to start their high point. Intelligence reports indicate that they are running out of medical supplies in the Delta. The V.C. sound like the

C.S.A. in 1864, no men, no food, and no medicine. Given another six months, we just might pull the Viet Nam venture off. Most of the people in the country side do not like the V.C., it appears.

I just saw Patton in the General's Mess for a second time. I will be escort officer for the producer of Patton, B.G.(ret.) Frank McCarthy, the 26th and 27th of August. I am anxiously looking forward to meeting him.

That's really great about finding a book of Kipling's poetry. I am tickled to death to have it.

From the tone of all your letters, I guess you have really enjoyed your trip, San Francisco and Hawaii. That's great. New places are always so wonderful to see.

Hey your letter postmarked the 18th arrived the 21st. That's great timing. That's better than from Baton Rouge of Rockmount.

I sure would like to see Van and watch him do his tricks. I bet the little "tee wee" (Vietnamese for 2Lt.) is really cute. I am glad that you are enjoying motherhood so much. It is a good thing that you have Van with you. He is a physical tie with someone who needs you and your body.

Your visit to the Boruk's sounds familiar. I wonder what it is about my son that attracts people to him. He must have some genes that are special. Do you think other babies attract so much attention? I am really quite flattered by it all.

Listen, could you find out the address of Duke University, Emory University, and the University of Virginia Law schools. I am motivated to at least apply to some of the better schools in the south. Of course, I might not be accepted by any of them, but I'll try at least. Do not forget Tulane, also.

Would you believe this place is actually cold. We are in the rainy season right now, and just after it rains the temperature drops to the high 70's and everybody gets cold as hell.

Sometime in November and December the rains will stop and supposedly it gets up to 100-120 degrees. I keep telling myself that this is just like Louisiana, but I am starting to hate humidity. I just feel clammy as hell all day everyday and all night.

Well, it is getting late, and I have yet to get any decent sleep in three nights.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
19 August '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 14 August today.

I am glad that you like the silver goblets. They are six and a half inches high. I think that is the wine size.

The Lieutenant Colonel (the Deputy Corps G-2) accused me of not heeding his earlier statements about the non-releasability of confidential information. Unfortunately, he had never

mentioned this to me. I did not stoop to correct his error. Silence is strength. Besides I am leaving. Why let one ass-hole Lieutenant Colonel get under my skin?

I have been closely reading my news summaries and I am increasingly pessimistic about the chances for peace now that the Russians moved missiles into the ceasefire zone. The U.S. has been affronted but we are so timid and so weak willed we have no credibility. Alsoph has been calling the shots about Israel with historical perspective for the last six months and his has been right. He predicts now its only a matter of time before a new war starts, a war far more deadly than the last, including Russian combat support. Cross your fingers this does not come to pass. If the truce breaks down and Israel mobilizes there'll be a war and the U.S. will be involved this time. Unless we are willing to not back Israel, which may be in the wind.

Also, I have recently seen two columns suggesting the state of the Army was bad. Maybe at last somebody is wising up. It's probably too late now though. Most of these undisciplined troops will probably have to die or get scared to death before they'll respond to discipline and the officer corps, being so scared of a false move is reluctant to impose it. I just can not wait to leave. Bluntly put, "I am too much of a soldier for the U.S. Army, even with a bad leg.

I got a letter from mother today and she says that the situation in the La. schools has degenerated to a bad state. Black and white are fighting each other everyday. I do not want to live in the south. I like Mexicans more than the Vietnamese. They have more get up and go. It's taking the Vietnamese time to learn it. How will we ever adjust to being without seafood, I'll never know. I like New Mexico. Please let me know how you feel about it.

Well love, tomorrow is Sunday. L.S.U. played Texas A&M tonight, half way around the world. I take another malaria pill tomorrow and get up at 0715 rather than 0630. The days just go by.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
22 August '70

Dear Judy,

I did not receive any mail today, but then nobody did so I did not feel too badly.

Today was a slow day finally and I was at last able to sit down and try to organize some ideas about what I was going to try to accomplish in my tenure.

I just returned from the library. While there I stumbled across a book, which while massively long, is a comprehensive study of war. The title is A Study of War by Quincy Wright.

I selectively browsed through the book and very quickly became enchanted with the book's contents. Mr. Wright spent a life time studying war of every major discipline of study and correlated it all into huge understanding of the dynamics of modern warfare. As I read page

after page I began to feel on of those moments of enlightenment which are so frequent in college, but almost non-existent in the Army.

Did you know that people either singly or as a race who feel either physically or psychologically inferior to others are more likely to accept violence or aggressiveness as a means of dealing with seemingly impossible situations. Having read these lines I never felt so aptly characterized in my life. Maybe I have reached a better understanding of myself. I guess my violent prone nature could be in part because of my knee and childhood frustration of not making high grades. Reading the passage was one of those mind changing moments.

As I read on, I began to realize that the American nation was led by absolute idiots in the Johnson administration. Leading a nation to war over an ideal, i.e, preserving freedom in Asia, our Army was required to become an "instrument of national policy" and not an instrument to defend our nation. Not that I am opposed to the ideal, because I think it is worthy; however, the nation and the Army should have at least been made to feel that the security of the U.S. and the security of South Viet Nam are inalterably intertwined. Since our leadership choose not to provide the common soldier with this kind of moral support his valor and sacrifice was subjected to charges of being "immoral."

The bitterness of this situation is going to be a hallmark of the American scene for many years. I know I shall never forget, and possibly never forgive President Johnson who by his personality was unable to provide the required leadership. The "peace-nicks" revolt over the war and so forth must be viewed as an example of just how bad his leadership truly was.

However, just because the situation at present is so repulsive to a soldier, he must make an effort to understand the peace people. But the peace people should read more history and make a better effort to understand the Army and its role in society.

Funny, I sound like an accommodationist. I am truly sorry I had not stumbled upon this book sooner. Evidently, President Nixon has read the book, because he is following this guy's recommendations. Remember when I said we might have peace in our time, well events seem to be moving towards an era of more accommodation. Practically, mankind has no other choice. The power of nuclear weapons makes unrestrained war obsolete as the English longbow. I think a lot of soldiers might be out of job in the coming years.

There, I feel so much more at ease with my mind over this Viet Nam situation. You know love, I feel so self confident again. A degree from L.S.U., a good career as a Regular Army officer in choice assignments, Viet Nam and a good law school degree will be a respectable series of achievements. Of course, top this off with a fine wife, a beautiful son, a nice car, fine rifles, beautiful knives, registered Irish Setters and we truly have a tremendous amount of happiness to be ever so thankful for. We are so very fortunate. Only recently like tonight have I ever felt so thankful.

I have been collecting black and white prints of all types from the office. When I come home we will have a huge photographic memory of this war.

Tomorrow is Sunday and I get to sleep until 0715. I can even come home early at 1700. That's a treat.

Tonight we had Vietnamese hard boiled crabs for supper. They tasted like shit. The General's Mess really provides outstanding food. I only eat two meals a day; however, I have not lost any weight. I have eaten in Vietnamese restaurants without getting the runs as badly as

Mexico.

Well the days are going by at a slower rate now than they were. Ever since, I received the picture of us in front of the church with Van and Danny Boy; whenever, I sit at my desk these pictures plus others are ever constant reminders of the good life together. Makes me think of you so much more. Maybe, I should hide the pictures for weekends or something. One can get to living in the past so easily over here.

Well, love it is getting late and tomorrow is another day like all the rest. Hey, happiness is your warm naked body between clean sheets. Oh! For the simple life again.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
23 August '70

Dear Judy,

Today was Sunday and like all Sundays we had to work. I get very tired of constantly going to work.

A bright spot appeared in my day with the arrival of my assistant, Lieutenant (J.G.) Edward T. Groenert. He seems like a very fine person.. He was a Sigma Epsilon or something or other from the University of Arizona. His wife is a nurse who is working in San Diego.

Tonight a representative from Indiana ate dinner in the General's Mess. He is a Republican. He was quite ordinary looking. He was followed along by a group of boondogling civilians. The poor SOB stood up to tell a joke and forgot the punch line! He was quite embarrassed by it all. He also did not bother himself to say anything to the Mess which gave me a case of the ass. We are half way around the world to protect that SOB and he cannot be bothered to give a speech.

I did not receive any mail today. And as a result I feel very low. I played a couple of games of pool and adjourned to write this letter.

I briefed Major General McCown today in the staff meeting. I was very nervous when I started, but it helped. I think I brought it off very well. After the meeting, I went into his office to tell his aide to set up an appointment for me to formally introduce myself to him. He came out of his office and shook my hand and we exchanged a few words. He is quite impressive. Unfortunately, he will be leaving in January.

The war goes on seemingly endlessly. I am down in the dumps, because I want to go home. Viet Nam is just an endless series of days and nights.

I am really serious about leaving the Army. Hardship tours are not my idea of heaven. Besides that if that goofball we had for a Congressman tonight can get elected, I should at least be able to work for one.

I wrote a long letter to my folks, mailed a card to Willie and Jane, and sent Richard a birthday card and letter. I had not written home in some time.

All appears well here. The V.C.'s expected offensive failed to materialize. If we make it to 5 September there is a good possibility that we will not be bothered by a high point until Tet.

The humidity here is unbelievable. Everything is always slightly damp. Even the paper we write on has a very limp quality about it.

I have many pictures and things to mail to you. Now that I have an assistant maybe I can get some of this done. I need to go to the dentist also.

Just endless days and nights of loneliness. You know life is just too precious to waste like this. Sure this experience is man building, eye opening, and all that, but it taxes the limits of one's depression threshold. Maybe it is what war is all about, just loneliness.

The information about the V.C. trying to influence world opinion concerning P.O.W.'s of the allies, I am in the process of getting it cleared for general release. It makes me sick to think that two U.S. Congressmen can be so easily used. I am of a mind to send it to some Senator like Barry Goldwater, or maybe send it to Dad to write Senator Long about. Anything to screw those Congressmen.

Well, the time is growing late and I am very tired. I never seem to sleep well at night and I wake up tired.

Van seems so far away from me now. I can hardly remember him. I can remember you vividly, because we have shared so much. Maybe as he grows older and when I spend more time with him it will be easier for me to remember.

Well, some SOB next door is choking his guts up again. Every morning and every afternoon he chokes for several minutes. He smokes all the time. Maybe he will die. It makes me sick to hear it.

We were lucky in the 5th Bn (C/V) 67th Arty because nobody smoked, but over here all of these ding-a-lings do. Early in the morning my stomach turns over three or four times with the Goddamned cigarette smoke in the latrine. The General's Mess is no better. I spend a minimum amount of time in the place, because of it, too. God, its offensive.

Well love write soon.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
24 August '70

Dear Judy,

I did not receive a letter today, but your package arrived in fine condition. I was so tickled with the book of Kipling's poetry. I have been reading it all afternoon. His poems about soldiering for the crown are so timely. Thank you! The choice was just outstanding.

Today, I think I finally accomplished something. The MACV Observer, a newspaper published in Saigon for all MACV personnel, had not been distributed in the Delta for a year at least. Well through the diligent efforts of an enlisted man in my office we discovered that the DMAC was not on the distribution list! Well, we are on it now, needless to say. I was so tickled by the discovery, because it is always good when one begins a new job, especially in the Army,

to do something immediately that causes people to raise eyebrows. I had been looking for something like this and it just fell into my lap. The discovery will effect many people too, all throughout the Delta.

Our maid made me some black pajamas. She really did a fine job. I am really going native. (Joke!)

I am so tired. I just can not sleep at night. I do not think it is the pressure from the job because really its nothing like being a Battery Commander. You know I learned so much from Colonel Milam. I guess the most important lesson was being cool, calm, trusting, and complementary. There is just no need to get upset about a damn thing.

General Cushman is on leave and everyone is happy that he is. He is very overbearing and somewhat cruel to his aide. He may be a brilliant man, but he isn't a leader with charisma. At least Patton gave his staff credit for having some sense.

I received a letter from my parents today. I was very informative. They are mailing my application to Ole Miss. She says that Van looks like me and that he is really a good baby. I am really proud of him. Could you send them a nice picture of him.

This morning I rolled off my bed which is the top bunk and busted the hell out of my left knee. I really felt like shit for a while. It is O.K. now.

Tomorrow, we have eight correspondants coming in to DMAC. I can not imagine what all of them want. I wish they would go home. Seven are from NBC and one is from *Newsweek*

The latrine is out of toilet paper as usual. You would think the Army could at least kept us stocked with that vital stuff. But then, the Army depots in Viet Nam are out. I should write my Congressman.

I have many pictures to send. Hardly any are of me. Most are of the war in general. I am also going to mail you catalogs of all the sources here in Viet Nam. When they arrive I want you to make a list for me in descending order of the things you would like.

Well, love the time is dragging and I miss your warm body and a hot bath something awful. Much love.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
25 August '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letters of 20, 21 and 22 August. Do not bother to send me toilet paper. I can wipe my butt with moss. I do intend to wear those clothes on R&R. So far I have had them on once since I received them.

Rick is going on R&R in September.

....

The General's Mess is a small officer's club and messhall for primary staff members and

the generals. I am the third to last ranking member in the place. I HATE unfriendly Colonels.

After receiving your letter about getting into a nice apartment I did not dream that you would not be able to get a job. I can afford to keep you in Hawaii without your working. I believe I can forward you \$600.00 per month every month, but I will have to borrow \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00 to go to law school. So please get a job.

Shortly after the 1st of September, I will find out the exact date I'll be going on R&R. Just looking forward to it makes me extremely happy.

....

If it makes you feel better none of my letters since I received your address are going to the Marina Surf Hotel. If one is down there, it is stale news by now.

Do not forget that we have automobile insurance to buy. Have you forwarded the necessary information to USAA?

Well native, anytime you like you can put your bra back on. I really do not mind, but it just struck me funny on here you were going without it.

From the sound of your apartment you must have picked a penthouse. Gosh woman!

I have been tired all day long. I did not sleep a wink last night. This afternoon I was busy as hell. There is always something to do or work on that should have been done yesterday. God, I am worn to a frazzle. My new assistant seems very trustworthy and he learns fast. I am really lucky he appeared when he did.

All I want to do is get drunk for a night or two. I really feel tired.

Right now I am sitting in my counterpart's office waiting for the SOB to get his incompetent ass back here.

Well, he showed up and myself and a sergeant drove this German female airborne qualified, pear shaped, hard eyed correspondent five miles out of Can Tho to the RVAF Base at Binh Thuy. Of course it was pitch black the whole way.

I want to come home. I am just plain beat.

I met Mr. Horrocks who writes for Newsweek today. He laughingly agreed with Agnew. It was just that he was so harsh about it. I nearly fell out of my chair. That's the second major newsmagazine writer that has told me this.

Well, it is late and I am very lonely and tired. Your letters perked me up but some of the things you wrote today really hit me hard.

I miss your warm body.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
26 August '70

Dear Judy,

Today, I received your letters of 9 August, 18 & 19 August. Lake Tahoe sounds like a

wonderful vacation paradise.

I am saving all your letters so don't worry about my throwing anything away.

Your letter of 18 August was far more optimistic sounding about employment as a teacher, than your later letters which for so reason I received today. I feel much better about your letters if there is some note of optimism or happiness. I am sure my letters effect you the same way. Boy, when the news is bad, I really get depressed fast.

....

I am so proud of my son. He is really growing up fast!! I cannot imagine him with teeth! Or for that matter even being coordinated. I miss him. Also, he sounds like he is such a happy baby. That most of all pleases me the most.

I have not heard from Rick, since I called him. He is too concerned about marrying Frieda to take any chances.

Boy to go surfing right now would be a dream. To taste the salt water, sink my feet into the soft hot silver sand would be out of this world.

Please continue to include the fast breaking news in your letters. So often I do not hear about what is going on.

Well, today I earned my hostile fire pay for the year. I escorted Mr McCarthy throughout the day. About 1500 we were 1500 feet over a V.C. area where some Cobra gunships were killing some gooks in a tree line. We flew around the area for a while watching the gunships, when all of the sudden some SOB started shooting at us.

I bet you would not think that you could hear small arms fire over the roar of a helicopter, but you do. It was a strange feeling. Scared me shitless.

Then we flew south to another hot area. There I believe I saw an example of some of the bravest Americans I have ever seen or heard of. The LOH (Light Observation Helicopter) pilots get right down on the ground over the V.C. to try to pin point their location. I just could not believe what I was seeing. Just incredible courage. They must have brass nuts. These guys do it day in and day out-50 feet off the ground staring eye ball to eye ball at Charles.

General McCarthy was a fascinating personality. He is interesting and interested in people. I have throughly enjoyed being with him. Remind me to tell you about him on R & R. He had so much so say.

Charles was active today. He is getting his ass kicked though.

Well love, today was exciting, scarey, interesting, and educational. The only emotion I felt when I was being shot at was how the hell I could get out of the way. Then I started telling the door gunner to start shooting back, but he didn't. Nobody was excited but me.

Don't worry. Just think about those LOH pilots.

Much love.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
27 August '70

Dear Judy,

Today was a good day. I escorted Mr. McCarthy again and we went to some interesting places. We flew to a secure district and met the district chief and his American counterpart.

This district chief (Major Can) runs operations at night, is honest, and speaks English well. His units killed 16 V.C. two weeks ago and captured a V.C. district chief.

Then we took a sampan ride six kilometers down a canal that a year ago was V.C. controlled. Today, there are no V.C. in the area. Old women would bathe naked in the same canal that everybody pisses in.

We had lunch and then flew out to the 7th ARVN Division at Dong Tam. This was the worst part of the trip. Anyway, I said goodbye to General McCarthy and flew back to Dong Tam for the return flight to Can Tho.

He was personal friends with General Patton, Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. His comments about Burton and Taylor were interesting. Burton is capable, intelligent, alcoholic, sex driven, arrogant and a tremendous actor. Liz is the same except for being foul mouthed and not arrogant. They are very destructive together and do not respect social rules of etiquette.

General Patton was just like he was in the show. It showed his strengths and weakness, too. I asked him about Ike's decision to stop Patton's gasoline and he told me that he asked the same question of none other than General Omar Bradley. There was just not enough gasoline or artillery ammunition.

When I got back to the room, I put on my bathing suit and went swimming. I then lifted some weights, took a shower, slept a half hour. Then I had dinner with the Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and a staff member from Kissinger's National Security Council. I did not actually meet them, but I sat fifteen feet from them and following their introductions listened carefully to their conversations they were having with the General.

The thing that sticks in my mind the most about these guys was how much they felt the same way all middle-class Americans feel. And they were mirroring President Nixon's feeling too. Boy, more than ever, I think that Nixon is our man. Of course the television news media (C.B.S. and N.B.C.) are biased against the President. They talked like they were engaged in a war to redirect this country back to the path it should be on.

I wanted to meet them and talk to them, but they were leaving right after supper.

I want to go to law school so badly. Just seeing those guys who are doing the kind of job I want to do just motivates the hell out of me. I really think that you would enjoy that kind of life also. The pay is \$35,000.00 per year.

The longer I stay over here and travel throughout the Delta I realize how great or better said enormous the American public's misunderstanding is of what is going on. The situation is fantastically complex. One thing is known. If the people were given a chance they would not vote for the V.C. They just don't like them. There are only 2,000 V.C. in the Delta. The other 9,000 are N.V.A.

The V.C. have run out of medicine and ammunition for a sustained assault. The Cambodian operation knocked the hell out of them. Once again the American people are not being told how badly they are hurting.

Well, love it's another lonely night. I still do not sleep worth a damn. Tonight I am more tired than I have been in a while. I also feel more relaxed.

Tomorrow is going to be a hell of a day. A four man television crew and some writer for

the *New York Post* are due to arrive tomorrow. These bastards have run me crazy for the last week. O'well it makes the time fly.

God, I want to come home.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
28 August '70

Dear Judy,

Today, I did not receive a letter. So far, this is two days. Gosh, I get so low when the letters don't arrive. The mail system here is all screwed up, which is par for the course.

I just finished reading an open letter to the President in the July 28th issue of *Look Magazine*. It was by a resigned Army doctor, a neurosurgeon, who worked on boys with neurological problems from wounds in Viet Nam. Pictures were included. The doctor was not for the war or against it, so he stated; however, the experience made him question the war's purpose. I think he is a sensitive man.

One thing was obvious though. *Look Magazine* made a blatant attempt to cause revulsion with the Viet Nam war. The photographs were gasly, even horrifying. They went beyond the bounds of good taste. The made excellent use of the photographs to impact upon a visually conscious younger generation. I will never allow a *Look Magazine* in my house. We have a fifth column in our nation's media that is determined to use its vast power to weaken the spirit of Americans and hasten war weariness. It is also interesting that it, the article, coincides with the Hatfield-McGovern amendment before the Senate.

I do not like my country right now and I am not especially proud of it. We were lead by such complete idiots during the Johnson Administration. The failure of his leadership is so massive, so encompassing, so complete that we, the average middle class citizens who always somehow end up fighting our nation's wars afe being isolated from our scared traditions by our more "respected" leaders. The national Democratic party has lost its grip on the hearts and minds of the American people. Their protestations to end the war that they involved the nation in on other than honorable terms can only be compared to an old man who has a heart condition who has determined to f--- himself to death in a spasm of orgastic fury.

I am completely sickened. My son will be taught never to forget or ever forgive them either. At least, I can give him that.

Miss America was here today. She really was not very perty which was surprising. In fact, of the seven, only Miss California was decent. And my roommate from California said she looked like any ordinary California girl. You are far more beautiful than Miss America. How about that! Even my roommates said it. As a side not General McCarthy thought you were beautiful, too. I count my blessings every night.

Well love, just thinking about your body drives me up the walls. I kep thinking about R

& R. Hardship tours are for the birds. Never again. This is bull shit.

Not much happened today, I was able to get some paperwork done, plan another briefing for General McCown and get my jeep completely overhauled.

You can not imagine how much I enjoy reading Kipling. I just read and reread his poems about British soldiers.

Just think in three days I'll be finding out when I am going on R & R. Just reaching that date is a mile stone. We will have a sensual week to look forward to with anxious anticipation.

Kiss my son and give him a hug. I cannot imagine what he is like now. He was so young when I left. I imagine he has changed tremendously, he even has teeth. War is bull shit.

I miss you so much.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
29 August '70

Dear Judy,

I am sorry I was out when you called. Please call again soon. I got so excited my heart started palpating. To hear your voice again would really been an unforgettable treat! The other number you might get me at is 2207, the General's Mess.

Today, I did not receive a letter from you. Tomorrow will be the fourth day. Fortunately, I received a letter from Mother which kept me from getting too low.

I didn't really accomplish that much today. No correspondants were here so it was very quite. I was ten minutes late for the weekly staff meeting. I just completely slipped my mind. I had relaxed too much. I do not really give a shit. I'll do the best I can, but never put out like I did for Colonel Milam. There is just no need to get excited about anything, except R & R, leave and going home.

The showers are not working tonight and we are due to have another Goddamned alert at 2200. For some reason, these people think the V.C. are going to mortar us to disrupt the Senatorial elections here tomorrow. What a pain in the ass.

My secretary thinks you are very beautiful. I work her ass off making her retype things maybe five times. I keep her busy. She will be having a baby soon, three months from now. She lost her first one because it was premature. Her husband is a draft dodger, which pisses me off.

Tomorrow I go see the General again and formally introduce myself. I hope I am not ten minutes late.

War is bull shit. This separation is for the birds. This is bull shit. I am tired of it, feel dirty, and want to go home. O, well I cannot start hating it now. I have to long to go.

I am sorry this is going to be a short letter. I just do not have much to say, except that I want to crawl in bed with you.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
30 August '70

Dear Judy,

Today, I received a letter from you after four very depressing days. It was about time. I just kept getting lower and lower.

I was glad to hear that you are getting squared away to take care of Van. I am sure he is much more comfortable and happy.

Boy, you really sound conceited about those interviews. You are probably very right, for the most part most of the world is not as smart as you are. If you substitute widely you will probably be hired soon. That will be best.

I am so glad to hear that this address is permanent and the phone is also. I hope you did not sign a year's lease though. You might not be there a year.

You called today while I was talking to the General. By the time I got back to the office fifteen minutes had passed. I had the MARS station call you twice, but you didn't answer the phone. Because it is a local call you can call me anytime for almost nothing. At least we have that.

I can't imagine Van pulling on things like a gym set. He must have really changed.

My room is so filthy and cluttered, to have a woman around would be great. The food is so institutionally flavored, too. I miss a big sandwich with real fresh bread. The humidity is unbelievable. Those Clorents you sent me were water soaked and soft just from it.

Our young are very uneducated, undisciplined, and spoiled. Unfortunately, our college administrators are not standing on principle enough. The price to the future generations of Americans will be grave. The people who are most at fault are our judges and legislators. We need some strong men today desperately.

My conversation with Major General McCown was most interesting. He told me stories about the press that were far worse than you can imagine. Often cases of pure unadulterated libel, especially in the 1962 and 1965 period.

All those editorials about anti-American in Saigon are a bunch of crap! Every Vietnamese I met and talk to I ask them to tell me honestly, "Do you want the Americans to go home." To a man everyone has said "no." It is just another example of unethical press which is not restrained by stringent libel laws. The story of the American press in this conflict will someday be one of the saddest chapters in the history of American journalism. America has been fed so much pure crap that our younger generation is starting to reek for the smell. I am sickened by my country.

I told John Coughlin that you had contacted his wife. Linda will probably be some kind of comfort to you.

The books arrived as you know by now I am sure. They are a big help.

I'll get hung up on my son if I want to. He is special.

You like pearls. You like jade. You love living in Hawaii. Gosh, woman how will I ever support you. I'll be damned if I'll stay in the Army for security either. We better start getting in the mood to accept a period of poverty in our lives. The service is going to end, but it is only a stepping stone. The struggle is about to begin.

A Study of War is published in abridged and unabridged editions. If you are interested go to a book store and order the unabridged version.

Obviously, I will come home a happier man. Everybody is just floating on a cloud when they leave this place. Viet Nam has been such a part of our consciousness that I still can not believe that I am in the land I have heard so much about. Its just not what the papers tell you. It is a hundred times less dangerous than what you think. A great deal of this war is just being bored and lonely. I need you. There just isn't anyway to get around it.

I ate dinner over at my counterparts house today. He is a 1Lt. named Tri (Tree). His wife is eight months pregnant and she looked very sweet, but dumb. Lieutenant Tri is a high school chemistry and physics teacher. They are so very poor you would not believe it. Lieutenant Tri must teach school at night to make ends meet.

We ate dried octopus with beer for the entrees. And then we had salad, rice, soup with fish balls, and bananas. I ate a little of all and will probably shit for the next two days. I brought him a bottle of Countrea which I paid \$3.00 for a present. The meal probably cost him the equivalent of \$30.00 U.S. to us.

I took my malaria pill tonight and I feel funny. They always make one feel funny inside.

Well love, please write something everyday and call anytime you like. I miss you so much and get depressed so quickly when I do not hear from you.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
31 August '70

Dear Judy,

Today, I finally received your telephone call. I was so happy and so excited to hear your voice again that I was really at a loss for words. It is one of the brightest spots in my whole month and a half in this God forsaken country.

This separation is so emotional jarring that I have not yet accepted it. I keep saying to myself that it is only a bad dream that will pass shortly and I'll wake up and find that it really isn't happening at all. I am so depressed.

Being a very junior Captain in a Major's slot, and being a novice information officer, I am constantly on pins and needles. I have no idea how I am doing. Many of the Lieutenant Colonels I must associate with are just damn unfriendly and to all to it all I know nothing about

working on a headquarters staff and further I feel just plain lonely as hell.

You have picked a fine time to stop writing me. Thanks.

I watched A Man Called Horse again in the General's Mess. It was really great. Only the thought of all the killing just made me sick. I just want to get away from this place. But, it is the cross I'll bear for a "man building experience." God, I wish it would all end.

Tomorrow I will be mailing you money orders totalling \$800.00 You are to save, not spend, as much as possible.

I try to say to myself shape up and face it, and submerge yourself in your work. But the motivation just isn't there. We are making some progress straightening out the mess my predecessor left me, but it is slow. Every area of the office needs attention. Of course, the personnel situation is as shitty as Fort Bliss, and the supply is even worse. Top it off, the discipline of this headquarters just does not exist.

I did not intend to write to you because of your not writing has given me a case of the red ass. But I would not have been able to sleep if I did not tell somebody my inner most thoughts I feel somewhat better now.

Sometimes when I lie in bed, I imagine a mortar round coming through the ceiling and I get so frightened. The ever present danger is hard to live with. I want so desperately to see my son again and to hold you. God I hate this place.

That damn lump is in my throat and I fell gross. I feel I walk the tight rope between utter insanity and sanity everyday. I never realized how much emotional support I received from you until now that you are so far away.

Funny that in the mist of this separation this realization dawned on me. I have known it all alone, but until now I never felt it so deeply.

War is hell.

I have been getting as much news as I can about America and it sounds like the place is going completely to hell. Bombing, shooting police, riots and the Congress are so completely senseless. Our stupid college educated punks do not realize what a wonderful place our homeland is. The realization is so apparent when one is away. To see rolling piney woods in early spring or the west Texas badlands in summer is a dream that is so refreshing. America is beautiful and I miss her too.

Well, thats enough crying and sobbing in my beer for one night.

Please write more often.

I love you more than you know.

Mike

The following selected articles appeared in the August 1970 issue of The Delta Advisor. This issue of the paper had been set up in early July, before I arrived to become the Information

Officer for the Delta Military Assistance Command.

COMMANDING GENERAL'S MESSAGE

I believe you should know how the IV operations in Cambodia have influenced the course of the war. This campaign was a team effort involving forces of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam, Vietnamese Navy, Vietnamese Air Force, U.S. Army (principally the 164th Combat Aviation Group, advisors and support elements), U.S. Navy, U.S. Marines Corps, and U.S. Air Force. The statistics telling our success in battle are 5,000 enemy soldiers killed in action; 900 detainees; 13,000 individual weapons, 700 crew-served weapons, 300 tons of ammunition and 150 tons of rice captured. The kill ratio was 16 to 1 in our favor. More important, we drove the enemy out of his sanctuaries in Cambodia, where his troops used to train, rest and re-equip. We have destroyed many of his most important bunker complexes and supplies. No longer do the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army have the advantage of inviolate bases right next to the border of South Viet Nam. Formerly giving aid and comfort to the enemy under the Sihanouk regime, Cambodia is now our ally. South Vietnamese armed forces will now operate in Cambodia as required. We have upset the VC/NVA timetable for aggression and dislocated his logistic support system so that his high points of offensive activity lack the force they used to have. This does not mean the enemy has given up; he will try to make a comeback. Our success in Cambodia does mean we have gained time for building the power and confidence of the South Vietnamese and Cambodian Armed Forces. We have made more probable the preservation of the legitimate government of South Vietnam when the U.S. forces are withdrawn. These are achievements of which all can be proud.

Hal D. McCown
Major General, USA
Commanding

ORPHANAGE CONDITIONS IMPROVING SLOWLY

Can Tho-Throughout the cities and countryside of the Republic of Viet Nam small children face a fate that they don't deserve, many finding themselves homeless orphans.

The reasons and ways this happens are not important. Whether it be a Viet Cong raid or the fact that their village or hamlet became a battle ground of the war the child still seems hopelessly lost with no one to turn to.

Lately, however, stress has turned from placing many of these children in orphanages to other directions.

"More than 50 per cent of the children now in orphanages still have at least one parent living." Said Mr. Richard C. Holdren, Director, CORDS Refugee Division. "The present goals of the South Vietnamese government are to unite these children with their parent, providing government (monetary) support if necessary."

Other aims, noted the director, include the establishment of a line of day-care programs to watch over the child while the parent is working.

“Even if the child’s parents are deceased, an effort is made to join the child with his or her relatives, to have he child live with them.”

The CORDS director also noted that the groundwork for these programs began as far back as 1967, when a task force from the U.S. government toured Vietnam for a three-week period.

“One of the groups strongest recommendations was *not* to foster orphanages,” he said, “but rather to keep the children in some kind of a home environment.”

This idea was also stressed in an unclassified message from COMMUSMACV, which stated: “U.S. Forces overseas contribute generously to programs for homeless children. However, building orphanages at an accelerated pace or giving excessive support may result in the abandonment of children by underprivileged parents and the breakdown of family responsibility.”

The (GVN) Ministry of Social Welfare states that the present number of orphanages is adequate; therefore U.S. Forces *will not* assist in construction of new orphanages or major additions to existing ones. All efforts will be coordinated with the PSA and assistance restricted to upgrading standards of existing facilities.”

Though building of new orphanages is frowned upon by government officials, orphanages presently in existence can still receive support from the Vietnamese government, as well as the frequent help from the American GI’s stationed in Viet Nam.

Non-government orphanages applying for financial aid from the government must undergo an intensive study of the orphanage and its conditions before the aid and support is granted.

And example of eh orphanage situation in the Mekong Delta is the Providence Orphanage located near Can Tho.

The three building orphanage housing 178 children is presently being run by Sister Anicet, who has been working with this orphanage for the last six years.

Overcrowdedness is, of course, one of the main problems faced by Sister Anicet and her small but efficient staff. Within the last few months the overcrowded situation at the orphanage has been steadily increasing and as a result Sister Anicet has had to refuse admittance of anymore children. Eventually, however, this problem, like the many others facing the orphanage, is hoped to be overcome. How and when is anyone’s guess.

Over seventy-five per cent of the children currently being cared for at the orphanage are between the ages of one and six, which is representative of other orphanages throughout the Delta.

“It’s hard to believe,” stated one American G.I., “how these children learn to live with each other under such circumstances. At a quick glance however, (referring to the Providence Orphanage), I’d say these children are presently receiving excellent care.”

Supplementing the orphanage’s small income are donations form throughout the world, Sister Anicet pointed out that donations from the United States are always coming in. Other than money, some of the donations received by the orphanage include clothes, food, medical supplies and toys.

“What’s it like caring for 178 small children?” “It’s a 24 hour job,” stated Sister Anicet “but we all enjoy it.”

Besides the enormous task of feeding them on a small income of 200 piasters monthly per child received from the Vietnamese government, Sister Anicet must ensure that the children are clothed properly, given frequent medical check-ups, and receive a somewhat “basic” education.

American servicemen stationed in Phong Dinh Province have also contributed greatly to the orphanage. According to Sister Anicet some American servicemen are helping the orphanage financially, by contributing piasters to help pay the employees. Other, however, like members of the U.S. Navy at Binh Thuy, have donated 200 baby chicks while still others, like members of the U.S. Army engineer battalion in Can Tho, have helped construct a much needed water tower at the orphanage.

The adoption rate at the orphanage is not the highest around, but the orphanage has been responsible for 57 adoptions last year.

According to Sister Anicet, seven of those were sent to the United States, with the remainder going to Germany, France, Finland, and various other countries.

As the sun sets and the 178 children are sent to bed, Sister Anicet and her staff relax for the few pre-dawn hours of quietness and meditation before another day begins.

Though the loss of the orphan in this war-torn country may not be as good as those in other parts of the world, it has become evident that the South Vietnamese government is not standing still, but rather making an attempt to improve the situation.

Chapter 3

Can Tho, RVN
1 September '70

Dear Judy,

Well today, I received a letter from you. It was postmarked the 29th. The letter really made me happy. Letters are better than phone calls because they are something tangible to hold in one's hand and reread. Telephone calls are still out of this world.

I was glad to hear that you were able to purchase a stroller for a reasonable price. That shows good sense.

....

My roommate is drunk and he has left to go screw a whore. Probably the same one that

he screwed last night. His wife is expecting a baby anytime now. He is O.K., but I do not think I could live with myself if I partook of the fleshy pleasures down the street.

We might be able to get a good price for the Cougar in Hawaii. Additionally, it may be to our advantage to sell it, because of the long time for shipping it back to the states.

Good luck with the cake contest. If you win the \$25,000.00, we are in fat city. You are a good cook so I have some hope.

R & R means to me complete submission into organistic rituals that haven't been seen since Helen ran off with Paris to Troy.

John Coughlin is the general's aide. I doubt that I can get home three times.

Thank you for teaching Van to associate my picture with Da-Dee. He is a fine son. I wish I could see him now.

Yea, songs like "Galveston" get on my nerves too. It just hits home with a terrific punch.

Maybe, I am going to do something decent in my life time, if I ever graduate from law school. I have never considered my looks as being a point of strength. Funny, I have never thought about my looks in any terms at all. My secretary told me I should not wear glasses. I would look younger. She thinks with glasses I look like an old man.

You know the Vietnamese mature so slowly compared to Americans that you just would not believe it. All the Vietnamese I have met think I am in my early thirties. They are very shocked to discover I am only twenty-four. A fifteen year old Vietnamese bou is as mature as a ten year old American. The difference is just that great.

My knees are bothering me I am having to be on them more than I like. Thank God, I have the job that I do.

I am mailing a hell of a lot of photographs to you about the war. I have many larger ones I plan to bring with me on R & R. They will give you some idea of the sights of the Delta. Included are pictures of Vietnamese women who appeared in "The Delta Advisor." The first thing I did as editor was to get rid of the Vietnamese broads and put American broads in the paper. Some of the pictures of the children are delightful.

A catalogue is included in the package so make a list of what you want.

It's getting late and I am going to close. I really miss you so much. I feel very lost. But this little time of separation will come to an end. To be together again even when mad at each other is still a hundred times better than being separated. I hope when we are together again that we never try to dish out as much hate to each other as we did at Fort Bliss. Only when one has been placed in the situation I am in, of fearing daily for my life, that one realizes how completely stupid such a course of action is. Life is just too short.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
2 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letters of 28 and 30 August today. They really made me feel great.

Sounds like the experience of living alone is really teaching you a lot about this corrupt world. It's a hard place. I really won't mind doing my job for the family unit again. I would much rather be cussing about car insurance and assembling baby beds than ever being alone again.

I am going to send you an allotment of \$300.00 per month. If you get a job, use the allotment to pay off the car. Then when we sell the car, the money we receive will be free and clear. And it can be added to the savings deposit of \$300.00 per month at 10% interest. I think maybe we'll make it. As a Captain in the active reserves I'll be paid \$90.00 per month on top of \$235 and a pittance for a disability maybe \$23.00.

CS gas is a sort of tear gas only much more irritating. The gas operation killed twenty-two and fifty were knocked unconscious. The press knows nothing about it, either.

Yes, the television news media and much of the printed news media just flat stinks. The terrible thing about television is it makes an expert out of the ordinary citizen. An expert on a subject that is very complex and can only be presented verbally at a rate of 120 words per minute. The problems of the world are far too complex to be summarized in 240 or 360 word telecast with any validity.

This war is on the downhill side now. The N.V.A and V.C. are hurting far worse than you can imagine. Defectors are coming in at a rate of 100 per day in DMAC alone. For every defector, we get names of two or maybe three of the infasturture. Then pressure is applied to their families. The N.V.A. are so desperate for medical supplies that two days ago a platoon broke into an orphanage and killed many children with hand grenades. A totally senseless and barbaric act. They stole some medicine and left. Of course, the corruption here among Vietnamese officials is rampant. There is always some bad with the good.

I cannot imagine Van bursting out of his clothes, or even holding a cookie in his hand. I am really missing a lot. He must be a scream when he misses his mouth. Wars are shitty.

I'll try to refrain from writing letters that are too depressing. It will be hard though, because when I sit down and start writing all that is built up in me for the day just comes out in a rush. The letter I wrote a couple of days ago really was bad. I felt horrible. But then I felt better because I had told you about it. So take all of my bitchings with a grain of salt.

Boy, you really sound like you are taking everything in. That's great. You can submerge yourself into the culture and many years from now you will be some sort of expert on many places.

You may take your bra off when I am around for R & R or leave. That is if we ever go outside. I do not plan on getting sunburned.

I am allowed to bring back five quarts of liquor. So do not worry about buying any booze for my arrival.

Maybe I did not make myself clear about the newsmen. Mr. Sol Sanders of U.S. News and World Report and Mr. Nichols Horrocks of Newsweek told me they thought Angew was on target with his remarks. I'll be meeting the Time bureau chief shortly and I plan to ask him too.

Damn few men adjust to this place and want to stay. For a bachelor Viet Nam is a dream, but for a married man with a beautiful wife waiting for him it's just plain B.S.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
3 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 29 August today.

Mother has praised you to me a great deal, because of your calm handling of him. He is a fine son. I sure hop he does not follow the footsteps of many of our younger generation, or I'll disown him.

I must call Rick and talk to him about getting married. Their separation will be coming to an end though. I wonder where they will be going after he finishes his tour over here. He'll still have eleven months to go.

There isn't much to tell about, for the last three days I have done nothing. Soon there'll be a great number of correspondants down here and we'll be busy again. Tomorrow, I am going flying with the General. It should be an interesting day.

I received a letter from home today. Richard had printed a nice note. I was really pleased that he do so well.

Keep writing I really appreciate the letters.

Woman, I miss you something awful. I know this is a good experience, but I sure get tired of it. There is one thing about Viet Nam men really become close, like brothers. It teaches one to be sociable too. The loneliness will kill you if you aren't.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
4 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 30 August today. I was so glad to hear from you again. Nice long letters are wonderful, I usually read them three or four times.

First of all I want to say that much of the news you read or hear and see is just pure horse crap. I base this judgment on the fact that I read everything that is published about Vietnam in the newspapers, newsmagazines, and television news scripts three to seven days after it is published. Additionally, I review a weeks television news broadcasts in sixteen millimeter usually one month late. With few exception the average accurate objective reports that I come accross constitute less than fifteen or twenty percent of everything that I read. So let me say this

if you want to get the picture. Magnify the good you hear and read by 200% and believe 10% of the bad.

My task is to get newsmen to the right spots to tell the real story of the Delta. The dynamics of pacification are so complex and the American people have been told so little about it that it is a crime. I could not begin to adequately cover how the process works in 3,000 words. It's not a simple task. Massive efforts by the ARVN, by the New Life Development people (U.S.), Land Reform Program, Agriculture, Phoenix people, MATS teams (U.S.), the school teachers, the Vietnamese Information Service V.I.S., the psy ops people, and the Regional and Popular Forces are all part of the story. Once the full weight of all of this effort is thrown into a V.C. area the pacification rate skyrockets. It can be set back by corrupt leadership, but if the leadership is aggressive the back of the V.C. are broken in three months once the G.V.N. moves in. I am sure you have not heard of any of these programs. In all of my eight years of following this war on television and in the print media pacification meant very little to me. One must see the process in action to appreciate it. Believe it or not the people want the G.V.N. The G.V.N. means schools for their children, mid-wives, village elections, free land, miracle rice, money to build village projects, open canals and road ways to get the crop to market, and security. The V.C. cannot possibly offer all this and the people know it.

The strength of the V.C. in the Delta, including the N.V.A, is eroding fast. In fact I would describe it as they are faltering! The Senatorial elections were held August 30th and the V.C. were expected to try to disrupt them, but the voter turnout was heavy. The V.C. mortared some district towns while the elections were going on, but that only made the people mad because some children were killed. The point is that if the V.C. were so strong they would have been in the villages and towns bombing the polling places. The renewed attacks are plain B.S. Some units (V.C.) in Keim Hoa province have not received AK 47 ammunition since the Cambodian attack. Whenever, the V.C. get around ARVN troops they steal their C-rations. They are just in bad shape.

Right now there is a massive effort at pacification in Keim Hoa province, the very heart of the V.C. movement. In six months we'll have it broken. Rallies are coming out the woodwork by the hundreds right now. Of course, for every V.C. infrastructure person we get usually names several more. You can imagine the loss of face of the V.C. when in six months their very heart is going to be pacified.

I did not mean to launch into a tirade about pacification, but the process works and works well. The brightest true facts about the Delta are that 85% of the children are in school, and only 46% of the village chiefs and officials are being reelected, and their average age is around forty. The younger aggressive leaders are coming to the front.

Also we will be moving into Base Area 470, one of the last strong holds in the Delta. And it is going to drop like a ripe plum, once the pressure is applied. So you can see the V.C. are in serious trouble.

Oh, while I am talking about reading television scripts, reading one of those things without the television picture is an education. The inability of the medium to adequately cover a topic is shockingly apparent. In fact it is just downright frightening that such awesome power can be generated by visual images devoid of intellectual content. It is just a crime.

About those helicopters and flack jackets, Jack Anderson is full of crap! The flack jacket

was not designed to stop a direct round, and it won't; however, it will stop grenade fragments.

The more I deal with and be around the press the more I realize that the requirement to sell copy, regardless of the truth, colors American journalism. This is why we need strong libel laws like England. This crap has got to stop.

I spent the day with the General today flying around the Delta. Once again I learned some more about the country and the General. He loves to quote Stonewall Jackson and General Patton, "Do not take counsel of your fears." When we left Fort Bliss, I never thought that I would ever met another leader like Colonel Milam, but I have. Like the Colonel General McCown is a walking motivator of men, and unflappable as the Colonel. He has a kind word for all and bubbles with enthusiasm.

Nixon does not have to negotiate a damn thing. In a year when there are few American troops here, the Delta will be pacified. There is nothing going on in II Corps; it is almost pacified and III Corps is not far behind. I Corps is hot, but not as hot as it was even a year ago. I really think we are going to pull it off; we are going to win this war.

Well now I have been away from my son as long that he is completely different now from what I remember. For this reason war is B.S. Never again.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
6 September '70

Dear Judy,

Today, I received your letters of 1 and 2 September. I was tickled to death to receive them.

I had not realized that every Democratic potential presidential nominee voted for the Hatfield-McGovern bill. Mike Davidson wil never forget these cowards. I really don't think the American public will either. If the Democrats think Agnew is frightening the public that is the supreme irony of this incredible era. Americans are frightened all right, but not of Agnew. They are frightened that eight years of Democratic rule has resulted in a disallusioned, war weary nation.

I read the article about Military Justice in Newsweek. I have read worse. Over all, given a liberal slant, it was fairly accurate. I have seen commanders over here exercise undue influence. James LaNasa's and Lieutenant Duffy's case are especially the supreme example of misuse of a commander's authority.

The CIA attempted to assinnate ole Fidel in August of 1963. Fidel said, "I'll reply in kind" and three months later we had a dead President. I have known this for five years.

I get newsmagazines over here, but often two or three weeks late. The Viet Nam news I read fairly quickly, but the national news about politics I am far behind.

Right now I am listening to a special AFVN radio program about Bob Dylan. It is great

to listen to him. For some reason music just soothes my jaded nerves.

My son really sounds like a happy hard-nosed kid. I can not imagine him having enough strength or coordination to "buck" himself out of the yellow seat. I am missing too much.

I met the Time bureau chief in Saigon yesterday. He is a young fellow, graduated from Harvard in '63. He was impressed with what is going on in the Delta. I told him that I had followed the war closely since 1962 and until I came to Viet Nam pacification had no meaning to me. What would he think about doing a Time essay on pacification to explain the dynamics of it to the American people. He thought it was a good idea, but the research would take two months. I agreed with him. So I have hopes that shortly (three months) you might see something in Time about pacification.

Thanks for the list of schools. I will be writing to them tomorrow.

I want to go to these law schools in order, U. of Virginia, Duke, Tulane, and any of the other state schools. You sure sound like you want me to go to Florida. Maybe you are right. We might be happiest there.

You have been quite crazy to think that you were not good looking or attractive. I do not think the Army experience initially helped our marriage one bit. It began so idealistically and was shaken so thoroughly and abruptly in the first year that the search for self discovery lasted over another year. Maybe we both understand each other better, because we have had so much to endure. Viet Nam will be a long remembered experience. The more I fly with the General the more enthusiastic I become about my job and the war. I am learning about the war at a level of command that will make me an expert on the Delta war and Vietnamization's successes and failures. This is an education, not a war effort for me. I am lucky, but then a man makes his luck by prior planning. I'll give myself an A+ for this one. Now if the U. of Virginia law school will accept me, the whole world is before us. The sky is the limit.

Today, we flew with the General out to an outpost that had been overrun last night. The district was in the heart of V.C. country in Vinh Binh province. About fifteen people were killed, including a family of five children. Each one was shot in the head, then the father was dragged out to the front of the outpost and shot through the head. The V.C. are murderers, and far more brutal than you can imagine. I got the call to fly with the General on short notice and had to bust my ass to catch the helicopter. I did not take my weapon! Once we got to the outpost I was scared. Everybody was armed, including the General, except me. One of my more stupid days. We did not get shot at, but there was machine gun and M 16 fire close by.

AFVN is playing records of 1955, like "Sincerely" "Unchained Melody," ect. It's great to hear the old songs of my pre-teen period.

All I can think about is dim lights, champagne, and you. All are part of an every present dream. My memory of you is so strong that it keeps me straight. I think I really love you woman.

Today the V.C. overran three outposts out of some 3,500 in the Delta. It was considered a bad night for the G.V.N. The ARVN just do not have ass-kicking leadership. Leadership is what is lacking. This war could be ended in one month if everybody got pissed at one time and went out looking for the V.C. Having seen this military force, more and more, I realize that the American soldier, when well lead is the world's finest fighting machine this world had ever seen. We are just great killers. I love you,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
7 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your long letters today. I sure was glad to hear from you. I did not mean to be so caustic in my previous letters, but when I sit down to write you my heart and soul pours out on paper. It is the only release I have for my petty fears and insecurities, so do not cry. Most of it is B.S., anyway. When I wrote you the letter, I knew it might upset you, but it was the way that I felt.

I am so happy you are going to get a chance to see our old friends again. To be there, when Rick and Freida get married would be a real treat. This Goddamned war will end soon I hope and we'll all talk about it as grandfathers with our grandsons on our knees someday. At least in Patton's words, "I did not shovel shit in Louisiana" while the war was going on.

.....
Your call came through today also. I sure was glad to hear from you again. To hear your voice even if only for three to five minutes is great. I have tried to call you several times but have yet to get through.

I went swimming tonight and did some weight lifting. Sure feels great to get some exercise. Just imagine having a swimming pool and sending the kids off to grandmothers so we can skinny dip in the pool.

I have renamed the sports column in the DMAC FACTS from "The Big L" to "The Ragin Cajun." A new regime has come to power in the DMAC-IO and I want as many people to know it as possible.

Tonight Lieutenant General Ewell, the military advisor to the Paris Peace talks was in the General's Mess. I overheard him say that we might see a fairly slopply cease-fire maybe. Then after dinner he said that he did not expect the North Vietnamese to be very agreeable to anything for a long time. So there you have the straight poop about what to expect.

As I reread your letters, your very calm approach to my protestations about this or that is soothing to me as it is probably to Van. What would I do without you? Just do not lose your cool.

.....
The longer I work in my office the more I realize that my predecessors did not accomplish a damn thing. I am rebuilding the office from the ground up. Fortunately, my personnel situation is in outstanding shape for the next four months. About January, we start rebuilding again, but at least my assistant and administration NCO will be here a year.

Dad wrote and said that the L.S.U. Alumni News would be interested in an article about Major General McCown and DMAC. I am excited about it.

Being separated from your body is abnormal. A man was made to sleep with a woman,

and I want to be with you something awful.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
8 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letters of 4 and 5 September today. I am really sorry I made you feel so bad. It was not my intention.

Today was my ninth consecutive day with my bowels running every five hours. Lieutenant Tri's food did me in. That's the price for good relations with my counterpart. Sure makes me have a foul mood.

I tried to call you tonight, but could not get through. Maybe tomorrow I'll get through.

I attempted to get the intelligence officer to release the information I told you about concerning a V.C. propoganda campaign to implicate the allied P.O.W. camps as being cruel, ect. Well, I got my butt embarrassed by a Lieutenant Colonel who made some unfounded accusations. I was so mad I was ready to start swinging. But, I bit my lip and said, "Fuck it." If the Army does not want to use damaging evidence to protect itself from idiot Congressmen I am leaving. I owe it no obligation.

Today, we learned through a V.C. rallier that a three man delegation led by a Soviet Major General was in the Delta in June of 1967. Later a ten man Red Chinese delegation came in. The Rallier will be given a lie detector test. As soon as the results are forthcoming, I'll let you know. This kind of information will have international repercussions and should be made available to the American public. Keep your mouth closed about this because I do not know its security status of it, and it might be false.

The longer I am in this job and observe newsmen, the stronger my belief in censorship for wars, all wars. Never again should the national press be allowed to prostitute the valor of the American serviceman. I wonder how many thousand boys died because the media divided out nation. It is a crime.

What do you suppose made Van so grumpy all day long? I miss him so, even his worst moods. There is something about one's child that must give parents an undying patience. It is a very natural love of a parent for a child, I guess.

Do not hate the Army. One of the most valuable lessons I learned from Lieutenant Colonel Milam was not to get upset about things I could not control in the Army. Applying this attitude has helped me immensely in this job. There is only one way to deal with irate people is to keep your cool. Getting hot-headed demolishes one's capacity for rational thought and it damages one's judgment. And since I am leaving I really am not that concerned. Of course, I want to be the best Information Officer DMAC has ever had, but I won't die if I am only second best. I volunteered for this shit too. So remember that. I was crazy to volunteer to be hot, dirty,

catch diarrhea, be bored, lonesome, miss a wonderful year of my son's life, but in a small way I am beginning to develop a sense of pride about it all.

I could not live my life without participating in the most important issue of our era. Even being shot at and living with constant fear is giving me one hell of a lot of self confidence. Gene Swanson was right when he said that after being over here one learns to not be scared of any mortal human.

Also a spin off of this experience is my belief that the common man of our nation must always remain individually armed. The V.C. walked all over these people, because Nyugen (Joe Doe) had no idea how to shoot a rifle. It is interesting that after eight years of war, we finally wised up and started arming the people. America was led by such idiots for so long in the Johnson era. Now that we have a revolutionary minority in our nation's midst, we must not allow our nation to ever become disarmed. The armed common man is our nation's greatest bulwark against oppression. Besides that Americans are the world's best fighters, either as an individual or in a group. We are just plain savage.

Well, love I really miss you something awful. If it makes you feel any better, today, I ordered you a present from Pacex. You might receive it in a month if you are lucky. I'll give you some hints. First, there are twelve, second its silver, third you have wanted some for years, fourth the are especially great for drinking frosted mint Julip's a la Milam. If you don't know by now what it is, I refuse to provide anymore hints. As the year passes more nice things are coming too. Just for you.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
9 September '70

Dear Judy,

Your long letter of 5 September arrived today. I am glad that you received so many letters in one day. Mail sure does make one's morale go up a 100%.

Tonight we had a show in the club. The entertainment was B+ over here. The bands are Phillipino and one of the girls was an Aussie. Actually, round eyed women especially Americans are more good looking than orientals. As I see more and more Vietnamese women I really do not believe they are all that good looking.

We have a cute bitch who is married to an ARVN 2nd Lieutenant and she works in the Officer's Club. One night my roommate, Jerry Jackson, gave her some peanuts and she walked over to the corner of the room and spit them out on the floor. We nearly fell out of our chairs. That little episode is only a small example of the huge cultural gap that exists between the Vietnamese and the Americans. Can you imagine your brother, Don, marrying one and having her spit out chicken bones in your mother's dining room! It would be a scream.

Yes, it is getting more difficult to bear the separation. Especially since the shock of parting is beginning to wear off and we look down the long road of two months. But it will pass like all things do and we will have profited from the experience. I never want to go through this

again though.

I would place my estimate of faithfulness somewhere in the neighbor of 50% is a more reasonable figure. Those bastards at the (th ARVN Division were a bad lot. There the percentage was lower.

Oh! Did you know that Louisiana bonus for serving in Viet Nam is \$250.00 I am really tickled over that sum.

Boy you are right about the errors of English usage in the Bulletin. This week was even worse. We corrected a draft and had my Secretary type it and take it to the printers. The bitch screwed it all up.

Do not listen to the news! Those people have no idea what they are talking about. In another eight months, the V.C. are going to lose the very province where the V.C. movement started. Operations are beginning to move into the U Minh forrest also. I receive the latest enemy positions, contacts, and intentions everyday. If there were even the remotest possibility of here being 80,000 V.C. troops, I would tell you. The news is just full of crap.

The bombings and police shootings have greatly distrubed me. Maybe we should consider living somewhere away from all the freaks. Over justice system must become more harsh or the people are going to start carrying weapons and shooting first. America is such a wonderful land with so much promise. Only after being away from it in a developing nation can one really appreciat what our forefathers and fathers have wought. Those educated idiots who are waiting for the revolution have no idea what the word means. Terror is required for any revolution and terror against people is the most horrible example of human conflict imagineable. A few more bombing incidents with massive casualties and you can forget civil liberatities. Any long haired hippie is going to become an enemy and people, especially former American G.I.'s, are going to start shooting. The saddest part of it all is no jury will convict either side.

I said before that Nixon's great task might become one of restraining a rightest counter-reaction and maybe I 'll be proven true.

I have some more pictures to send you. One was taken in a helicopter the very day I got shot at.

Parting from R & R won't be nearly so bad. We will only have six months to go then and I'll be home again in that time. So keep your chin up love. You will get used to looking at the pictures and not becoming homesick after a while. You'll get to a point where you can look at them and not feel so bad.

After this year of travel, I'll be ready to settle for a three year period. After that, maybe back on the road. Maybe I could get a job with the government. That could get us to Europe. That would be swell.

The V.C. are rallying now to legalize their status in the expectations of a coalition government. We are getting a higher caliber V.C. Hoi Chanh, but they do not want to talk or are very evasive. We have known they wanted to do this for some time. These individuals were being targeted for death by the Phonix program and this might protect them they think.

Our intelligence is really quite good. Much better than the newspapers lead you to believe. Don't worry I am safe and anyway the V.C. are crumbling in the Delta. I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
10 September '70

Dear Judy,

I sure was good to talk to you over the phone today. I really made me feel good all over. I just finished writing a long letter to mother and daddy. I had not intended to write five pages, but once I got started I just can't stop. Everything jsut comes out in a rush and I jsut keep the old pen diligently moving accross reams of yellow legal pads. It is proving to be wonderful practice and I guess I enjoy telling everyone about what I ahve seen or learned.

I am happy you got a job. I did not want you to work while I am in law school. We should have another child, pretty quickly, also.

As soon as you can could you please buy a small camera in the PX and take some color slides of Van. I can get them blown up here.

Today, I bought a historical novel by F. Van Wyck Mason titled *Rascal's Heaven*. It's all about James Oglethrope and his settling of Georgia in the early 1700's. This guy's discriptions of the woods, brooks, mountains, and indians gives me a tie with my homeland that is so far away. It really is enjoyable reading.

The new Vietnamese Commanding General here is one hell of a fine soldier. He is tough and a hell of an inspector. He is the best the South Vietnamese have.

I went flying with the General today. He is a fine man. Daddy has sent me a positive reply to my inquiry about writing a story about General McCown for the alumni news. I am tickled about it.

Well love, I think I am going to go do some weight lifting and swimming. It sure makes sleep easier.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
11 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 7 September today.

I sure will be glad when you finally get the car. At least you'll have an opportunity to get out and see more of the island.

We received some intelligence today that the V.C. and N.V.A. are kidnapping childern to take back to North Vietnam. This is the same thing the communists did in Greece once they started to lose the war. These kids are to be retrained to become good commies and will be sent south ten to fifteen years from now.

The more I read about what's going on back home the more concerned I get that the terroristic attacks against police, judges, the military, ect. Are leading to a state of fear in America. The V.C. movement gained momentum when policemen started being shot. I have read newspaper accounts that U.S. policemen are sometimes scared to make an arrest in a ghetto, so they do nothing out of fear. This is the same tactic the V.C. used to force mediocrity upon civil servants in the South Vietnamese government. The situation is going to get worse before it gets better too. There is no telling where its going to lead. We will probably have this smoldering situation in our nation for quite awhile.

You should not spoil Van too much. He won't be worth a damn. I sure would like to see him. I bet he is really different. I cannot imagine him grabbing a spoon, or bucking himself, or even stomping his foot on the table. He must really be developing fast. All I remember is a small, warm, sometimes smiling bundle. I do not like being away.

I am finally starting to get my feet on the ground a little bit. Time seems to pass ever so slowly, but somehow the days begin and end and all the sudden a week is gone by and I must take another malaria tablet. I have lost count of how many days I have to go. Everyday, I wish I was home though. I just do not like being alone. Somebody else is spoiled for you.

Tonight I watched the "Savage Wild." It was really refreshing to see a movie of the wide open spaces, mountains, and wildlife. For one and a half hours, I was not in a hot, humid, flat, filthy land, but in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. America is more beautiful than you can imagine when one is so far away.

I have almost decided to apply for law school in the fall rather than the summer term. Once I get out of this place all I want to do is dance beneath the diamond sky with one hand waving free, siloweated by the sea-- let me forget about today until tomorrow. Two or three weeks on the beach in Florida alone together could be as great a time as Cozumel. Alter all it will be the end of an era again, and the beginning of a new life style for three years. We could really relax, get sunburned, and stay high all the time. They would truly be happy days again.

If you are pregeant again it's probably best anyway to have the kid on the Army before we quit for quite awhile.

Good luck with the job. I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
12 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 6 September today. Everytime you write about Van I am amazed at how fast he is progressing. I won't even know him when I see him again. I sure do not like being away from you and Van.

....

Being over here I can understand the saying "There are no athests in a foxhole." Even in

Can Tho the unknown fear is hard to live with.

If you want a little girl so badly, you'll probably have you wish. Like I said in my last letter if your are pregeant again it's a surprise that is totally unexpected.

I really feel the same way you do about writing at night. It is sort of a few moments when we really communicate, even if we are cramped by the physical separation and the medium.

What do you think about living in New Mexico, love? With the number of radical incidents increasing in our cities and the possibility of some serious racial troubles and conflicts in the south, I have given consideration to living in the southwest. Of course, we will have a heated pool or my name is not Mike Davidson. The longer I remain in this unbearably humid climate the more I never want to get close to a humid state again. If you think Louisiana is bad, in Can Tho, the paper clips rust, my small scissors have rusted along with my fingernail clippers. Photographs do not dry all the way through and writing paper stays in a permanant state of mushiness. You can not imagine what this does to your complexion. On just can not get clean.

There's a million people in New Mexico, plenty of open land, clear skies, a wonderful climate, deer, elk, bear, big horned sheep, and bird hunting too. I would be easy to have some horses. Of course, I love the sea, but one cannot have everything. If I make enough to build a swimming pool, we can surely afford to go to Cozumel for two weeks every year. Then we would be giving up quality college football games like L.S.U. and Ole Miss. Please let me know how you feel about it.

Today, I talked to a correspondent who had talked to some Commies (V.C.) in Cambodia about the American bombing campiagn over North Vietnam. Did you know that in communist circles our failure to bomb or mine Haihong harbor is considered a JOKE! They just cannot believe we were so stupid. It sure makes a soldier feel bad about his leaders. I am continually amazed at how bad President Johnson's leadership was. His failure of leadership was colossal, just unbelievable. We were led by complete idiots during this war. Not one of those bastards had read a history book, and they repeated the same errors as the French. It is just incredible.

Please clip things out of the newspaper for me. They are treasured bits of information about home. Also could you mail me recent newsmagazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* and *U.S. News*.

Tonight in the General's Mess we had a movie on called Johnny Cash. I cannot wait to see it. After the movie I am going to go swimming and do some weight lifting. My body is so weak. There was a time when I could press 160 pounds five times. Now I can bearylly press a 100 pounds five times. Just working out every once and a while had filled out my arms and chest again. It sure feels good.

Well, love I am going to quit for the day. It's Saturday afternoon and there is not a damn thing going on. So I wrote this letter on Army time. In one week, I will have been here two months. Its hard to believe it. I am already meeting people who have longer to go in country than I do and it makes me feel mighty good.

I miss your warm body.

Love,

Mike

Note-Included with this letter was an article from the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* newspaper. Its contents are reprinted at the conclusion of this chapter. It represents an accurate picture of the strengths of the V.C. in the Delta at this time. My office furnished most of the information for the article.

Can Tho, RVN
13 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letters of 8 and 9 September today.

Yes, I am happy that you have a job!

It's just plain unnatural to be separated from one's spouse. It's just no fun. Lately, I have been able to get a hold of you really easily if I call at noon Can Tho time. Any other time and I cannot get through.

I can not imagine my son in a high chair. This is my last war. This is bull shit.

I am glad you are developing some self confidence about having a good figure. It's all a matter of self discipline. You can be any way you want to be for the next fifty years.

The Eakin pool is large, but only five feet deep and heavily chlorinated.

I cannot understand how you cannot be happy when you write at night, because every night you write means one less day to wait.

Yes, you have done tremendously well for being alone. It had been a good experience for you.

Today, I talked to you on the phone. It sure was good to talk to you again. I spent the day at a Province Senior Advisor' meeting just listening to what is going on in the Delta. Things look good throughout most of the area; however, our biggest task now is to eliminate the V.C. political structure.

I received a reply to my letter to the Editor of the L.S.U. Alumni News and he said he really would like an article about pacification and the Delta. It might make the December issue.

Since you are going to work, I plan to send the \$300.00 into savings this month and forward you some cash if you need it.

....

Soon (maybe another month) I'll find out when I am going on R & R. Cross your fingers for December.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
14 September '70

Dear Judy,

Today, I did not get a letter and I feel like shit.

It's so easy to get one's mind screwed up here. I feel as if I am making hardly any progress at all and I have no idea whether or not the work I am doing is pleasing the General or not.

You would not believe the disorganization and the rat's nest I took over. The place was barely running. Everything is having to be done over to achieve a status of bare semblance of military order and functioning. It's just incredible. I have a whole shit pot full of ideas, just like I did at Fort Bliss; however, the problems encountered to make these ideas bear fruit are almost as frustrating.

Of course, there is the every present danger that some correspondent is going to really screw over the Delta or that I am in my gullible way might talk too much. The situation keeps me in a constant state of turmoil.

.....
Today, it was 110 degrees in the sun. My body constantly is perspiring. The humidity is just unbelievable. My sergeant, who has been here fourteen months, says that it gets even hotter in the dry season.

To say that I am a happy, enthusiastic person now is an overstatement of the greatest magnitude. I just want this incredible experience to end. It's hard to drown out the loneliness in booze because it just does not work.

Since we go to work seven days a week and really have so little time to ourselves I feel that I am almost a zombie. Because there just is not enough work to do seven days a week many hours at the office drag by and this breeds a sense of complacency. To accomplish a task today or tomorrow almost makes no difference. Days have no meaning. Only Sunday when we have to be at work at 0800 and get to come home at 1700 is a break in the tedious monotonous routine of everyday working.

I just do not understand Army officers like majors and colonels who can accept their money without going up the walls. My whole personality just was not geared to accept it. You know in Colonel Milam's battalion we were a group of young Lieutenants after performing far above our capability in jobs of considerable importance. Here on a higher headquarters staff, everybody has one little tedious routine job that in most cases an aggressive Lieutenant could fill.

I am so happy that my job call for some projection of one's personality and a chance to discuss world events with knowledgeable people. At least, I have that.

It's late and I am about to go to sleep. So you can get the picture of the way I feel. Heat your room to 95 degrees. Put some sheets on the bed that have been slept on for three weeks, then rub yourself with sponge filled with hot water and when you feel good and clammy climb into bed.

Today some intelligence reports indicate that the Cambodian operations were a bigger success than we imagined. The G-2 characterized the situation like that in Greece after the aid was cut off. The V.C. are in truly bad shape. No food, no medicine, and no ammunition. Some

battalions have been told to cut ammunition expenditures by eighty five percent. Nixon pulled off a brilliant manuver. It's ashame that the news media has so warped the attitude of the American people. It's a crime.

Well love tomorrow will come much to early and will pass much too slowly. I hope to hear from you soon.

I love you.

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
15 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received you letter of 10 September today. It was so good to hear from you after a day without a letter.

I an glad that you were not pregeant. As much as I would like to have another child for me to be away this year is bad enough without you being pregeant.

I did some checking on my R & R orders and my chances for getting to Hawaii for Christmas are about 50% and for early January 65%-35%. Cross your fingers.

U. of Virginia is the top rated law school in the country. If I were accepted to a top flight school, seriously, Judy I think I would attend it.

The radio just announced that in New Orleans some Blank Panthers shot at two policemen. Baby, I really do not know if I want to live in the south, or not. I know for sure, I want nothing to do with a large city. The life style I some day would like to achieve is a fair degree of affulcence, an inquistitive questioning but disciplined orderly family unit, with a few close friends, but many acquaintances, a degree of involmnet in public affairs but not at the expense of each other, a very spacious open airy athletic environment that will teach our children the worth of our traditional values. And I almost forgot a very eclectic house with things of many lands and reflecting your love of the traditional and my many mascline interests. So that's it love. Finally, at the age of twenty-four, having been out of school two and a half years I can finally put my finger on where Mike Davidson would like to lead his family unit. Please write and let me know what you think about this. I can tell you one thing I DO NOT LIKE HUMIDITY! Today was so unbelievably hot I could not believe it. Any physical walking or moving caused a profusion of sweating. El Paso spoiled me.

Love, why did you have to wait three years to start building up your boobs and getting your weight down? You body is going to grab my attention and I have no intention of letting go for six days. I think that all I want to do is hold your naked body for the whole time we are together. Forget swimming or sight seeing or anything. I just want to get close to you as I can and hang on for dear sanity.

How did Van feel about getting his butt filled with shots? Has he gotten to the point where he will grin at the doctor when he gives him a shot? When he does he'll be my boy.

Today, I flew with the General. We visited three province capitals, a district town and a villege. You know the program that Rick's involved with? Well here in the Delta, the V.C. I. (Viet Cong Infastruture) that are targeted are assinated. Their bodies just disappear too. We must defeat the V.C.I. or we lose. Thus, far we are making some progress getting the V.C.I.

Well love its getting late again and I am going to quit writing.

Today, I spent two hours in the library reading news magazines and a copy of National Geographic. Almost for a brief time I was not in Viet Nam, but in a world of my own that I miss so much.

I can barely stand to be away from you and Van.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
16 September '70

Dear Judy,

Today I did not receive a letter. I feel very low.

The weather has been unbearably hot. Unfortunately, the worst is yet to come. After November when the dry season sets in its going to get even hotter.

I have had a head ache all day. I have been busy with several correspondants who just dropped in without my being notified. So it's jump through your ass time. It is also the week we get our final copy and begin setting up the newspaper for next month. So we have been busy.

I tried to call you today but I could not get through. None of the MARS stations were tied to Hawaii.

Think long and hard about living in the southwest. How about Santa Fe, New Mexico? I hate humidity.

I wrote a long letter tonight so I feel almost written out.

I have be talking to third country correspondents and without exception all think we appear very weak in the world. The German-Russian Accord is recognition of this fact. It stuns my ego as an American to believe my country is becoming a second rate power. It also makes me very bitter and I can see somebody scape goating the liberals once the body politic in American comes to realize what this national insanity of placating our young has done to us. I foresee some bitter name calling ahead.

I could go on and on about the way I preceive world events as you well know. Unfortunately, Iam frightened of what I think I see. Just pray to God Nixon is right. I think we are courting diaster now.

Having an opportunity to view an insurgency first hand is a hell of an experience.

Insurgencies are the most difficult of all wars to fight. American has not been savage enough. The V.C. are increasing their attacks on innocent civilians. Every move they make is political and violence is only an extension of their political philosophy.

Tomorrow, I go flying with the General again. We are going to visit a P.O.W. camp. I am looking forward to seeing it.

Well, please write soon.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
17 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letters of 11,12, and 13 September today. Boy, I sure was happy to read every single word you wrote.

Enclosed is the article you mailed to me. This is the kind of crap that has destroyed the will of America to fight. I have called the shots as objectively as I could. If you deleted everything that I took issue with you would have an accurate prospective of what is going on in the area.

Like I said before you are getting five percent of the story and that five percent is seventy-five percent distorted. This article is a perfect example.

....

I would like to take the seven days of leave in April. Also, I think I am going to stay the whole year. Six weeks more isn't a long time, and a months vacation before law school will be a much needed rest and it will be truly a second honeymoon.

I have not heard anything from Ole Miss.

Even if you do not have much to say, your descriptions of the daily activities makes me happy.

The Vietnamese husbands are henpecked, too. The farmer's wife is a slave for the man.

....

You so cleverly stated that "I became and object of unrest." I truly believe we are on the verge of a rightest reaction in America that will be something to behold. It's ashame that the Democrats can not get their shit together. It is dangerous for one party to become overwhelmingly strong. However, they have dug their own graves.

We will have a measure of peace when we get control of the television media. It is just so powerful a political weapon to be run by an unscruplus click. It must have govnmnt regulation. This would go a long way towards defusing our country.

Today, I visited Phu Quoc island, just south of Cambodia. An N.V.A. and V.C. 26,000 man P.O.W. camp was on the itinerary. The visit was fascinating. Only when you actually see the plant can you get an idea of the effort the N.V.A. have expended. The ARVN guards do not

take any crap off of them either. They'll shoot them in a minute if they cause trouble. The facilities were spacious, clean, and adequate.

Phu Quoc island is a paradise. It is just as beautiful as Cozumel, even the water. An enterprising Vietnamese could make some money if he built a hotel on the island. To see the clear open sea again was so refreshing. Some G.I.'s do go skin diving there.

Well, its late again. I am lonely and I miss your warm body.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
18 September '70

Dear Judy,

This is going to be brief because it's late and my letter writing time was interrupted by an alert. I hitched up my gear and played combat.

Today I talked to you on the phone. It was great to hear your voice again. It was three minutes of pure pleasure.

Operations will be beginning soo to clear the V.C. out of their last strong holds in the Delta. The results won't be decessive, but over a six or seven month period we'll gradually eliminate their base areas. Then we must kill the V.C.I.

The office I am running was in horrible shape when I took over. It is not like starting a new organization, because, I must unravel all the mistakes of my predecessors.

A New York Times correspondent wrote a typical article about the 9th ARVN Division. Boy the American press is sure full of shits.

Finally, my NCOIC arrived. We can at least begin to make some progress. We have so much work to do.

September is speeding by. In an hour I will have been here two months. There are times when it really drags though.

Soldiers, have been lonely since the time there were soldiers. After seeing the P.O.W. camp, I realize how fortunate I am to be going home in ten months. Those poor bastards own country does not acknowledge them. They could be in jail without the love of a woman for another ten years. I thank my lucky stars for the good looking, volumptous woman I married everyday. This will pass.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
21 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 16 September today. I also talked to you on the phone. Boy, that was a real treat.

I am glad that your job is not very demanding. You will feel more relaxed when you come home in the afternoon and in a better mood to take care of Van. It's ashame you have to work, but it's ashame we are separated by miles of ocean and a war.

The situation in the middle east continues to grow worse. Travel back and forth between capitals of the world by many statesmen is a profound indication of how truly dangerous the situation is. I am praying to God that the Russians do not push us much more than they already have. The prolonged and largely unfair criticism of the Army and the Department of Defense have done their damage and the Russians know it. I am scared. I do not want my country to become a second rate power. Yet, I feel so helpless to prevent the challegene. As you know the Russians exceed us in ICBM's and total deliverable megatons. During the Cuban missile crisis we had five time more ICBM's than the Russians. The psychological advantage is with the Russians today thanks to the decisions mad by a conscious objector, Rober McNamera. Bet you did not know he was a C.O. So many of his decisions and recommendations to President Johnson were so wrong and now we pay the price.

The news journalists have been quite unrestrained in their criticism of Nixon's weak stand in the middle east. Their inconsistancy amazes me. The New York Times gives Nixon hell about his war powers in Viet Nam and then turns around ans wants him to move firmly in the middle east. The Goddamned idiots.

There has not been much going on. The V.C. are trying to build up a force for another highpoint in November. If they do attack they'll only lose more troops. Many of the V.C. units are 90% N.V.A. We were so stupid to stop bombing North Viet Nam. They are the aggressor and their homeland is being spared. Of course, Johnson mad the decision. Gosh, weak leadership is so dangerous in war.

Last night Captain _____ finally became a father. His wife had a little girl. We were all awakened at 0400 to the sound of the telephone ringing. He's still looking for a peice of ass downtown though.

Finally, my personal status in the office is bright. My slot roster id filled with generally good people. We are making some progress straightening out the mess that was left to me.

The days sure pass faster when I stay busy all day. I have nine months and eighteen days to go. Ever so slowly I am coming to the realization that we are going to be separated for a long time. Fortunately, I have the opportunity to met many interesting and important journalists. I am becoming so politicized by the experience. Even more than I already was. There is so much to say that needs being said. I have yet to met an officer who says he'll ever forget or forgive the liberals. If we back down in the middle east, and the American people think that we have , a rightest reaction is going to be so deep so widespread it going to be something to behold. I hope Nixon moves with a sense of historical prospective. At least he's read his history. Just cross your fingers.

Van is sure a heartbreaker. I would really like to see him. He was so small when I left. I look at the picture of us in front of the church at Fort Benjamin Harrison and I imagine how he looks now. Did you realize that on October 4th, he'll be six months old? Where is the time

going?

You know for the first time I am really beginning to develop some self confidence. Viet Nam is truly a man building experience. I'll be glad when it's over, but so proud for having served. I guess that's why I am here. My son is going to think his Dad is all man or my name isn't Mike Davidson.

Well, love it's late.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
22 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 17 September today. I am happy your job involves a minimum of effort.

....

I do not know what I want for my birthday or Christmas. My material needs are being met. I have achieve a measure of comfort here.

It's raining outside. Our compound will probably be flooded again like it always does. I am always glad when it rains because it gets very cool at night. When the sun is out it's just as intense as El Paso. One can get a sun burn really easily.

I am starting to develop more confidence when dealing with these newsmen. I have developed a measure of skill at answering pointed questions with generalities and I feel more aware of what I am saying when I talk to them. Also, for some damn reason I feel a little more glib. The battery taught me a certain series of lessons and this job is proving to be some of the best training for a lawyer I could ever have.

Vice President Ky is going to visit America and I would not be surprised if he praises the American people for their generosity and sacrifice. He will probably say the war is on its way to a successful conclusion. I sincerely hope that he says these things, because the American people need to hear it. Maybe in six to eight months with a Republican Congress, President Theiu will speak before a joint session of Congress. AS more time passes, the peace liberals are being pushed to the left, or are looking increasingly like the weaklings they are.

Attorney General Mitchell's wife is a scream. She is really funny. Everytime she opens her mouth a series of silly, goofy thoughts about liberals pour forth.

The first weekend we are back in Louisiana we are going to Antoine's for dinner!

Write soon and tell me how much money you'll need for this month. I have been postponing buying a camera for a month. If you are in good shape, the next month I would like to start saving \$500.00 per month at ten percent. This must start 1 November if I am to save enough for law school. I do not want you to have to work during the law school period.

Well, love tell Rick hello for me. I do not have his correct address. I have received a returned letter I had mailed him.

I love your fine body.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
23 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 15 September today. For some reason this letter took eight days to reach.

Did you know that when men come home from Viet Nam and get in a car the sensation of driving 60-75 miles per hour is so foreign that they get frightened? This passes quickly though. I rarely ever drive in my jeep faster than 25 miles per hour. One does get somewhat used to the frustrating traffic. It does not pay to get upset, because I have another nine and a half months of this B.S.

The Hawaii Municipal Building sounds like any typical Army installation. I'll be so happy not to have to deal with a huge "moving paper fantasy." Did you know that Brigideir General Cushman can not buy more than \$200.00 in money orders in one month without the headquarters Commanding Officer, a major, signing a statement verifying General Cushman legally earned the money. The rule is an incredible affront to the dignity of all officers.

For some Goddamned reason, I have been having a headache, and feeling dizzy around 1700 the last three nights. I sure wish that it would go away.

I am glad Van is through with his shots until April. The poor kid probably felt like a wet mop hanging over a clothesline. I hope he has adjusted to your absence and is feeling better.

Today, I left my job and flew with the General all day long. We flew to the Cambodian border in the vicinity of Chu Duc. We visited one of the worst districts in all Viet Nam. I stood in the shadow of a hill in which the 18B N.V.A. regiment has its headquarters. It's so funny to look up to a peaceful section of real estate and know that the enemy is up there waiting. It's frustrating because the enemy is pinpointed and the Regional Forces and Popular Forces of the district won't go kick its ass. Everything you have ever heard about the Regional Forces and Popular Forces, if its bad, it happened in Tien Binh District.

I have written one half of the article about Major General McCown and the Delta. I have been taking pictures also. Unfortunately, I have not been satisfied with them. So I'll just keep on taking them and hoping.

I received a letter from Dad today. He says the fish are not biting, but he and Richard

have been hunting and Richard even knocked down a bird forty yards away! He must have really been pleased.

....
Well, love everybody means one less day to go. I think my thoughts are exactly the same as Gene's were. Not a single day goes by when I do not think about being somewhere else, like in bed with you.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
24 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letters of 18 and 19 September today.

It sounds like your job is really easy. Keep pleasing your boss and maybe you'll get a raise. By the way, I have been wondering if Mr. Shultz will let you off for six days when I arrive for six nights.

You must rally be building your body. I am glad to hear your body is looking so good. When I come home to stay, you better stay just the way you are.

Go native if you like, and buy a Mu-Mu per month if you like. There are so many oriental peices I would like to bring home to remember this place with, too.

The Vietname culture is interesting but so different from out our. Every once and awhile I can understand how Americans can fall in love with this place. If there is one thing lacking in the whole society, it is any sense of getting in a hurry. The women are completely submissive, and so I hear, are unresponsive during intercourse. And additionally, so I am told their kissing techique is fifth grade level.

....
The American pubic does not get the true story because it would not sell.

Today, I visited Tinh Binh villege south of Can Tho. Scheduled today was a demonstration for the people (farmers) about how to grow 1R20 miracke rice. The miracle rice doubles the crop yield per hectre, and they can grow two crops per year. We took some pictures. Many people were being exposed to 1R20 for the first time. The demonstration was being presented all over the province. It is the type of small successes that daily ever so slowly are making the V.C. look like the turds they are.

Everyone is going to bed and tomorrow is another day, just like all the rest. Everyday, seven days a week we work. Many times there just isn't enough to do. I am keeping extremely busy. The last six days have been hectic as hell. I wish I could have a few short hours to myself to regin my senses again. I feel very much like a Zombie. One who goes to work day after day without a terrific amount of enthusiam for the job.

I am so lucky to have the job that I do though. The slot requires a major and I am a junior

captain. I am meeting many journalists and learning more and more about the American journalist. The other day I got to talking about pacification to an Aussie A.P. writer and it was one hour before I stopped. I guess I have learned a lot. He wanted to quote my name in the story, but I talked him out of it because of the peace freaks who harass one's family sometimes.

I love you sometime awful.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
25 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 20 September today.

I am sorry not to have been able to call Thursday or Friday. The week started off slowly and gradually has built up to one hell of a busy week. Jumping through our ass every two minutes. There is just no way an Information Officer can keep from pissing somebody off. I continuously have some colonel pissed, because I am expected to control the correspondants like troops.

Right now we have an ABC, NBC, and CBS television crews in the press camp. All of them are trying to go to Cambodia to film an operation going on.

It is the height of the rainy season and it is raining like hell. Tomorrow we'll be flooded. One of the things that makes its appearance in the rainy season are tiny flying green bugs. Right now, as I write this letter in my room, I have four of the little bastards on me. There must be a thousand in this room.

I am very glad that you like Santa Fe. It sounds like the town that I would like to live in. The fact that it's a state capital is an added bonus to a lawyer. If we stayed there forty years I would own the place.

....

Today, I had fresh boiled crabs for lunch. They were terrific. Then we ate some kind of soft, orange sized, mush melon that was delicious. In all it was quite a treat. We were eating with the Commanding General of the 21st ARVN Division.

Well love its late, I am tired, I just want to come home. There is just too much to do. I could do a thousand things without getting on top of my job.

I love you more than you know.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN

27 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 22 September today. I was delighted to hear that you like my idea of Santa Fe, the house and all.

Today was a great day, because you called me. Getting a phone call from you made me feel so good I took the afternoon off and slept. I did not go to the General's Mess for supper either. Instead I ate two sandwiches from the snack bar, drank two beers, went swimming, worked out with weights and now I feel relaxed for the first time in two months.

Please do not feel shocked at my decision to remain a full year. I know it disappointed you, but my decision was based on sound reasons. First, it will mean two more pay checks, and secondly, it will mean a two or three vacation on the beach before the three year grind of law school. It is worth an extra five weeks apart to have some time together to relax, get sunburned, drink all day, and generally submerge ourselves in each other again.

Today I received a personal letter from Colonel Sudderth, who is in charge of the personnel office of the Air Defense Branch in the Pentagon, asking me to reconsider my decision to resign. He also said, "you have placed yourself among the top of all Air Defense Artillery Captains." No small thanks to Colonel Milam. I might reply and ask about the chances of going to Israel. I might reconsider for an opportunity like that. We would have to be together or I would not accept it.

I am so happy over your raise. Everything is really going our way after a few months of disorganization. It just goes to show you that people with initiative can make a place for themselves in this world.

Sounds like you are moving with people who have lots of money. With your beautiful body, southern accent, and tough looks, you are probably the talk of Mr. Shultz's friends. Knowing you, you are probably loving every minute of it too.

I was glad to hear that my son can take shots without crying. Makes me proud of him.

You think I won't be glad to come home from work again? I'll be cooing just like my son to get around you again. This is a hell of an eye opening experience, because it teaches one what is most important in life.

I feel the same way you do about letters. I get off by myself and read and reread them until I have absorbed every word.

Well love, I can not wait to see you again. Please write soon.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
28 September '70

Dear Judy,

I received your letter of 23 September today.

.....

Today was a very slow day. All the correspondants went home, yesterday. I spent the morning studying briefing folders about five of the sixteen provinces in the Delta. Throughout the afternoon, I worked on the article for the L.S.U. Alumni News. I have written the thing out, but it is rough and I am rewriting. I get enormous satisfaction from writing. Maybe I should be an editorial writer.

The letter from Colonel Sudderth for a few hours really made me think about the rightness or wrongness of my decision to go to law school. After a night's sleep though, I was my same old self again. We will truly miss the people and the travel associated with the Army when I leave. He told me I could have go almost anywhere I wanted. Three years in Europe would not be bad at all. But time is running out; I can not afford to spend another year in the Army if I am going to begin my career before age thirty.

The situation in America appears to be going from bad to worse. Maybe we are on the verge of some bloodshed. In a way I hope so. The average man wants order and a degree of discipline in his society, and I think it's approaching a point where he's ready to lynch some people. There's more of us than there is of them.

The Russians sub base in Cuba is another indication just how weak we appear in the world. No thanks to our idiot liberals. God, I despise them all.

Last night it rained V.C. incidents in the northern part of the Delta. Two small outposts were overrun. Nothing happened around here though. Last week we killed 781 gooks. That's quite a few. On an average we kill about 3,000 per month.

Today, I felt somewhat contented with the situation here. The days can not pass fast enough to suit my burning desire I have to get you in a room with me alone.

Those pictures you are going to mail me will really boost my morale. Heh! I need some underwear. Our mama-son has a bad habit of losing them. In fact, she has lost all of them. Could you mark my drawers with some kind of indelible ink. I need six sets.

Well, tonight is a night just like all the rest. After I finish this letter I'll probably go have a drink or two. It's the same old routine day after day.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
29 September '70

Dear Judy,

I did not receive a letter today and I feel very low.

I spent the day copy editing my article about General McCown. I spent about one half the article about the General and one half about pacification. With photographs I intend to increase emphasis on the General.

Journalistically, it's a perfect feature for a newspaper. The leads strong even. I feel

pleased with it, but am concerned I did not devote enough copy to exactly what the General does. The General has not seen it yet. I hope he is pleased with it.

The last two days we have had no correspondants. Boy it's been great I sure hope that it continues.

Almost everyday my assistant gets a big package. I am continually amazed at the volume of mail he has received. I jokingly cuss about it everyday.

Enclosed is Colonel Sudderth's letter. I thought you would like to read it. The offer is tempting; however, I was looking at a brochure about Colorado today and it sure looked great. I just can not wait to get back to a dry cool climate.

You know love, I have never worked with so many just down right rude people in all my life. I'll be so glad to live and work without impolite people. A small law office with four or five others filled with relics of my past, a chance to study and read everyday and maybe do a little writing is a dream of heaven to me.

This business of dreading to hear the phone ring is not my idea of a quiet relaxed life style I want. I think you can agree with me in this respect.

Nothing much happened last night. The V.C. went into hiding again. More and more I believe the North Vietnamese should have their teeth kicked in. There is no other way to stop this war. God, we were led by such idiots during the Johnson administration.

Tonight another person left the staff. Boy, I just can not wait to my night comes next July.

There are just damn few days which go by that I don't think about going home and starting a new life with my good looking mistress.

Kiss Van for me. I am anxiously awaiting those slides.

Woman, I miss you.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
30 September '70

Dear Judy,

I did not receive a letter from you today. However, at noon I received a lovely note from LTC Salley, Transportation Officer for Fort Bliss, Subject' Warehouse Fire.

SIT DOWN NOW!

Paragraph two of the merry greeting is quoted, "The extent of damage to your storage lot will be determined as rapidly as circumstances permit. However, it appears that you may anticipate extensive damage if not total loss of your property."

Boy, I am trying not to get pissed off at the Army, but sometimes its hard.

I talked to John Coughlin about it and he says that Fort Shafter has a really good claims office. You will have to deal directly with the J.A.G office there. Don't sign a damn thing until you are positive everything is straight. Once we find out how extensive the loss was, an

inventory must be conducted and the current values of all the items determined. Then it may be six months until settlement.

Truly love, I am just sick over it. I was so stupid not to have gotten some household insurance before leaving Fort Bliss, but I (1) doubted anything would happen (2) felt we would be reimbursed by the government anyway.

You know lately my judgment about this incident and even about coming to this place has been a little weak. Boy, I feel stupid. We'll overcome this some way.

It's hard to write about anything very happy right so I'll close.

Gosh, I really wish you were close now. I feel so low.

Love,

Mike

Can Tho, RVN
30 September '70

Dear Folks,

I received your letter of the 23rd today.

Mother, you may be right aobhut my going to Oxford or living in the south. You have been right before when I have , in a moment of despair, almost gone off on a hair brained course of action.

But, there's a strong attraction for both Judy and I to return to the southwest. One things for sure after three years, I just want to live a very stable quiet life.

A small stuffy law office with relics of my past is all I really want. To set and read and maybe do a little writing, is my idea of a great occupation.

Lately, I have become so disgusted with the way this war has been fought and is being fought that I make it a point not to think about it. It is so obvious who the aggressers are and yet we stopped the bombing. We were led by absolute complete idiots and total idiots in the Johnson years. The North Vietnamese are savage and yet we spare their homeland. It makes me puke. Boy, I am bitter. I never want to put on the uniform of my country again in defense of my country if we are led by weak men who take "counsel of their fears." I am only a junior captain and I feel this bitterness, I can not imagine how great it must be for the generals who ran this war. They sure do a good job of hiding it.

I received a letter from Fort Bliss today detailing how all our household goods may have been destroyed in a warehouse fire. Now we go through a six month claims process. Boy, I am just sick over it. I have written to Judy. She'll probably shed a tear or two.

I am trying not to get a case of the ass at the Army, but its hard not to.

I go to work at 0715 everyday except Sunday when I go at 0745. I usually spend everyday doing some paper work, briefing correspondants and arranging briefings and transportation for them. I have lunch from 1145-1345 and return to work. About 1730 everyday

I go to a daily briefing on all the operations and engagements of the previous day. Usually, about 1815-1830 I go back to my room. About 1840 -1850, I go to the General's Mess. Infrequently, I have a double rum and coke, then eat at 1900. If there are no farewells or birthdays I get out about 1940. Then I come back to the room, write letters, sometimes go swimming and weight lifting, then over to the Officer's Club for generally two to four burbon and waters depending upon how I feel and then to bed about 2200-2300. Everyday, its the same old routine. About every third day, I fly with General McCown all day. We visit usually the problem areas. I look forward to getting into the helicopter, because I love the wind in my face and I love to seat on the edge looking out. It's a good feeling. The engine noise gives me a hell of a headace everytime though. So that's my day.

I can not get Richard a Chinese pistol. Those damn things cost \$150.00 unless one kills a gook with one.

Enclosed is the weekly fact sheet we publish.

Write soon.

Love,

Mike

Because of the administrative confusion and shortage of personnel in the Information Office in the month of August, the office was not able to get a paper to press. I have chosen to include two articles that appeared in the Pacific Stars and Stripes in September 1970 that are of some interest. The first was based upon information furnished by my office.

REDS UNDERSTRENGTH IN DELTA

By Sgt. Rich Liefer

CAN THO, Vietnam- There are about 9,000 fewer enemy troops in the 16 Mekong Delta provinces of IV Military Region now than during Tet 1968, although present Red strength authorization call for about 23,00 more than were authorized in 1968, informed sources say.

The sources attributed the disparity between actual and desired force levels to the dwindling recruiting base the enemy finds in the Delta.

Nine Communist regiments consisting of 9,500 North Vietnamese Army troops and 8,170 Viet Cong soldiers operate in the Delta now, sources reported. Authorizations call for 55,880 troops they said.

At the beginning of 1968, the Reds had five regiments made up of 26,800 men in the delta while 32,550 were called for, sources said. They said the Communists have a recruiting base of 134,000.

Of the Delta's six million people, 88 percent are relatively secure, nine percent are

contested and three percent are Viet Cong, the sources said. Almost three-fourths of those in the three percent category live in Kien Hoa, An Xuyen or Vinh Binh Provinces, they reported.

Kien Hoa Province in the northeast part of the Delta has a population of 550,000 people and is probably the most VC infested, the sources said.

They said they believed the Cambodian operation destroyed or at least interrupted the Communist logistical system supplying the Delta. An enemy deserter reported 30 percent of the Cambodian supply caches had been destroyed, they said.

The ARVN and their American advisors in July launched a special pacification campaign to bring greater security to the populace and root out the Viet Cong infrastructure, sources said.

Sources said Americans in military assistance teams now advise village chiefs instead of Regional Forces companies as in the past.

They reported the number of Regional Force and Popular Force companies and platoons have increased 50 percent each since January 1968 and the number of Peoples Self Defense Force troops has also grown.

Ninety-two percent of the villages have elected governments.

LT. HUA'S DEADLY DELTA PROWLERS

By Sgt. Philip McCombs

CA MAU, Vietnam- The two ranks of Vietnamese troops came to attention with a bone-jarring snap. Starched and polished they stood like sticks the sweltering Delta sun with only a twitch of a jowl to betray that they were human.

"They're killers," said an American captain. "I've led American troops in battle. I'd rather lead men like this."

The 974th Regional Forces company has become famous throughout this region in the southmost part of Vietnam for its daring exploits and the slaughter it has inflicted on the enemy.

It's commander, 1Lt. Phan Thanh Hua, is described by American advisors here as a brilliant military leader and tactician who has young men clamoring to join his command.

"There are no American advisors with Hua," said Lt.Col Donal E Sawyer, Ba Xuyen Province Senior Advisor. "What do you want to do? Slow him down?"

On August 31 last year a small provincial reconnaissance unit was reported surrounded on the fringe of the U Minh Forest by a battalion of the 273rd NVA Regt. Hua's company was combatly assaulted into the area and reportedly killed 54 seasoned NVA troops, suffering only a few of his own wounded.

On December 14th local intelligence reported a group of Viet Cong preparing to mortar friendly positions. The 974th reacted instantly killing 12 and capturing five weapons.

At 4.00 a.m a few weeks later the 974th ambushed five NVA sampans deep in the swamps of the U Minh, killing 16 Reds and capturing a load of equipment.

"The enemy sent a woman and a baby in the lead sampan," said Hua, "I let them go through, When the main body came into view I attacked them with two platoons, keeping two in

reserve.”

Hua and his men most of whom were born in the area and lived here all their lives, know the terrain, the people and the psychology of the enemy. Though their area of operations is large- a seven mile radius in the flat rice lands between CA Mau and the enemy-infested U Minh- little escapes their attention.

Equally important they are serious soldiers. At a time when it is fashionable to wonder if the Vietnamese can ever get up to snuff as combat troops, Hua and his men would seem to be the proof that they can.

They train and work hard, and they are physically tough. Sawyer reported that Americans who have tried to keep up their swift pace across the swampy fields and forests have had to be medicated for exhaustion.

They fight aggressively, going on operations several times each week, not only in their own area but as a reaction force for trouble in the U Minh. Sawyer related in which the 974th seized the initiative air assaulting directly on the enemy and inflicting many casualties.

“I’ve watched the entire company board helicopters in 35 seconds,” said Sawyer. He said the 974th was one of the finest regional force companies in the Delta in maneuver and assault techniques.

“They don’t waste time,” he said. “They insert, sweep hard and fast and if they don’t find anything they get out and try somewhere else.”

Hua has been a soldier since 1968 and the commander of this company for five years. He holds 27 decorations, many of them for gallantry in action, including the American Bronze Star with a “V” device. Many of his troops are heavily decorated.

“I retrain and improve my men constantly,” said Hua through an interpreter. “Twice a month all the troops meet to discuss all the local intelligence reports.”

Hua, whose wife and nine children live in Ca Mau, while he spends most of his time in his isolated mud hut outpost west of the City, was a farmer before he entered the military. A high Vietnamese province official expressed regret that Hua would probably not be able to go far in the national military structure, “because he does not have an education.” The official also pointed out that Hua has made a considerable sacrifice by remaining in the military while his pay is too low by itself to support a family.

There’s a price on Hua’s head. The V.C. recently mined his hootch Hua escaped the blast and continues to go about his quiet and precise deadly business.

There are other effective regional force companies in the province, Sawyer said, but none as outstanding as the 974th. Those companies will be responsible for province security according to the 1970 plan of the Allied Command. Whereas efforts up to now have been directed at improving the fighting qualities of such units, the emphasis in this new year will be on developing a unified village intelligence and defense system over a wide area.

“We are optimistic,” said Sawyer.