

5 March 1966

Hi there Cruz!

How's everything? All finished by now, I hope. Have you taken your registration exam - or whatever it is? How did you do? I expect nothing less than the best, you know.

You don't know how ashamed I am for not writing for so long. But please consider the conditions here (as well as the source). Lately we've been having some pretty heavy fighting here and between that at night and working in the daytime I somehow don't feel much like writing. But today is different! For the last week we've had bombers all around here really tearing up the jungles. The last couple nights have been "fairly" peaceful, but those bombers make you wonder whose side they're on! They really rattle the earth! I hope they keep it up because we're all but positive they're going to make a big try to take our base camp. Frankly, I'm worried,

but it's one of those things, huh? Things can't stay rosy forever, huh? (But I would like to see it that way ONCE!)

Guess who got another promotion? Little ol' me!

I am officially the youngest SFC (Sergeant First Class) in the Army. SFC is only 2 steps from the top - unless you count officers. Aren't you proud? I sure am. But I sure lost a lot of friends because they're jealous. In a way I don't blame them because I would be too if I had 20 years in and some punk kid with less than 6 was promoted ~~to~~ ahead of me! That's the way life is! In case you wonder - I'm making \$590 a month now, so it looks like I'll make it awhile longer.

Only 23 weeks and 4 days left. It seems like forever. I will be one happy little boy to get out of here. I'm pretty sure I'll go to Germany. That way it should be at least another 4 years before I have to come back here.

Notice how messy my writing is getting? I think

it's because I hurry so much lately. Like you say - it sure would be wonderful to re-live a few of our better years without worries, anxieties, etc. How about the years between '56-'59?! They were the best, I think. Of course, our values are changing now and we consider different things as good, better and best. Huh? Anyway we have some fine memories!

I just noticed quite a paradox in your letter. Remember you wrote it on a Saturday night - and you asked me what I was doing? Well, that particular Saturday night (between 12:30 and 2:00 in the morning) I was dodging mortars! That was the night of the first big attack we've had here. You should have heard about it. They dropped about 180 rounds on us. 5 hit within 100 ft of where I was. Excitement, adventure, intrigue - wow!

I could tell you a lot about living conditions, etc., and what to do about them, but I would be philosophizing. Facts are that it's an extremely backward country filled with extremely religious (and/or superstitious people) who have no desire

for improvement - because they don't know life any other way. A man won't look for a doctor because his wife is dying of malaria, hemorrhage after birth, cancer, leprosy, etc. First of all, he doesn't know (or trust) doctors - besides he's seen many others die this way and he figures that's as much a part of life as eating their rice every day. Amazing? Yes, but very much understandable. The aid that is here is split so often by graft that it's 0 when it gets down to a village where it can do some good.

Please don't forget to send me your new address - wherever it may be!

Anyway - don't pay much attention to all my griping and complaining. I'm just homesick. That's a normal childhood disease, isn't it? Ha, Ha.

Good night, cuz. Write again soon.

Love ya,  
Hank