

April 9th 1967

Dear Mrs. and Mr. Hart

Well they cut our rest period short again. The tracks have a lot of repair to be done yet but no time to do anything except the most needed repair. We did build a new set of tracks for our APC. One had a new engine installed.

Well the weather has changed. It is hotter they hell. there is no wind unless it is going to rain. Yes the monsoon struck last night with a cloudburst. So it is hot and wet.

Well there was a barbecue tonight. so that means up at 4 am and out by 6 to the area 10 mi. west of the big battle of the 21st. Here we go again. If I'm lucky I'll leave the field before the end of the month. and transfer to a easy unit. Maybe I'll be a dud MP.

Those pictures are nice. Here are some I drew while I had time during berm guard. It will probably be a long time before I draw again.

So I'll close for now. Ron [Picture here]

April 14 76 Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well it is back to the old grind again. We are on a mission again into the same area we went in November for Attleboro. So far there has been no sign of VC. They must have massed elsewhere. If the paper gets dirty it is because of water shortage out here. There's a lot of APC breaking down. They have been pushed so hard and long without over haul that stuff is breaking down.

We broke a torsion bar on a road wheel just while the track was parked and not moving. This left a wheel without a spring. All the tracks are boiling over lately. It hasn't rained for a few days now. but it is still hot.

Sat 14 Well time to write again. The last few days have found us breaking bush in search for any hidden VC camps. We have found only a few small ones hastily abandoned. Equipment is sure shot. One track engine finally quit after running on a cracked piston for a day. Road wheels are completely shot.

We almost saw action late last night. The Arvin camp at Soui Da was hit by wave attacks. We were on a stand-by alert. They had air strikes and armed helicopters over head.

The VC broke contact before a thunderstorm cut loose. The place was lit up with flares all night.

Today believe it or not there was time to clean weapons and clean up.

Well I'll close now, I don't know when we go back in perhaps I'll transfer before then.

Ron

20 April Dear Mrs. Hart.

Boy has it been hard to find the time to write. We came back into base camp so I have a light to write by tonight. The rest are either writing letters

or "tying one on" at the Club. TY10N.

The mission was a lot of travelling by APC through heavy jungle. We travelled in company size units searching for VC camps. We camped in a battalion size at night. There was only one fight in which some VC ambushed recon and hit the 50 cal turret with a RPG rocket. That was the only causality and VC encounter. The APC's however are breaking down under the punishment. Our track broke 3 torsion bars. A final drive and cracked a radiator from overheating. All road wheel need replacing because of loss of rubber in chunks from throwing the tracks so often.

2 other APC's blew engines. Many have had transmission, bearings etc. Tracks were being towed every day. Coming in today we stopped 4 times to put in 5 gallons each time after the water boiled out and water gauge read 240 F. That track of ours looked like a steam engine.

Got a letter today saying you got the stamps. I hope there are some there you can use. If I ever get to Saigon I'll find some Vietnam stamps.

Well they messed the MP swap, so I guess I'll put in a 10-49 for a change to a job in base camp. We are allowed to 10-49 for a safer job after 6 months in the field. They are suppose to honor them but knowing this outfit they deny a lot of them. Oh well I can at least try.

The wet season is here. It rains every afternoon. Now it is rather light but it will soon pour heavy in order to flood this country.

22 April Even here I'm so busy I can't even write. This place is more horrid even at base camp for work. We move out tomorrow. We had 2 days to fix the track.

IN BRIEF Yesterday we changed the radiator. A whole day wasted especially when it still leaked. Today we replaced it in the morning. No leaks. Then I broke the track to take it off. We then changed 2 road wheels and put the track on in 1 hour. But then the madding \$#@(\*&^^&%\$^% trouble started. This was a 2pm. the pin drove part way then froze in ,No amount of sledge hammering would budge it. So after fooling with that we tried to drive 2 other pins out to remove two blades and replace them to put the track on. One pin came out but the other froze. So did 5 others. Finally at 7pm we drove one out real easy but 6 blocks down. So we put in 6 blocks and finally got done at 7:30 in the rain. All afternoon was beastly hot.

I put in a 10-49 for transfer to Saigon security. All our old guys are doing this. They are fed up with this brigade, Always in a hurry and all the work. We can put them in after 6 months here. I've been here 7 months. 5 more to go. Ron

27 April Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well I have a chance to write so I'll write before the rains hit. This mission has been pretty good as far as busy work goes. We are part of a circle formed around 2 battalions of local VC trapping them Every day we tighten up the circle. The VC in this area are pretty well demoralized. Air strikes plaster the area all day. We have foot patrols in the day but no night

ambushes now. It is best to have all troops by the time at night.

We will be out from 10 days to 2 weeks, depending on the VC. I believe we will be out on operation Mahatton until 2 days before we go on another one. They promise this is the last one. I don't believe them so I submitted a 10-49 to go to Saigon and be assigned to security for the 4 months 19 days left here.

I bet you can't figure out the mess of string?. It happens to be a tiny hackimore, made from nylon. I made it one day while up on the 50 guard. It is completely adjustable. Maybe you can put it on some horse statue.] picture here of a short timer] I'm getting there. I will ETS before the 23 of Sept.

I saw a real character at camp Alpha. He had only a week left here. He wore a crazy wide brimmed soft hat, Even though he had an Australian accent he was not one. He was a typical Beatle Bailey, Sad Sack combined. His last name is Yokum.

I'm glad you like the stamps. I hope you can use them in your stamp book., If I ever can I will get some Vietnamese stamps.

It is not quite as hot all day as it usually is. Yet it still gets scorching in the afternoon. Boy does everyone stink from sweating in clothes worn for weeks. It didn't rain last night. I hope we get a short heavy rain so we can all clean up. they are not sending out very much water.

Just got a letter from you, See if this answers the questions. ]pictures here]

His mane should lay over on its own after it gets too heavy to stand up like it is now.

I'm all set in the goodie department now. Most of the time I don't get a chance to dig them out of my bag.

Well it is near chow time so will close and mail.

Ron

PS An answer to the question of "Was is Hell" It is especially so because politics has tied one hand behind our backs. We can't fight the war the best way. If Hanoi and the ports were bombed out and all outside shipping to NVN blocked, Hanoi would be begging for peace in a few months. As t looks now this was will drag on for many more years. {picture here]

So I hear the colt thinks he is king of the hill. From the photos you sent comparing them with the one I took, He has gotten a lot darker. Some of the other horse nuts over here says he looks like he would be a good racer. I know I'll have to fix up a separate pasture for him at home away from the neighbors crazy horses. My buckskin gets in enough trouble with them as it is. Also I have no idea how he might get along with Socks or visa versa.

I hear the population {horses that is} is still exploding. Hope you don't have to much trouble loading the shy one. Speaking on riding in a trailer I wonder what Socks is going to think of it. If there is a good way of doing it I'll take him part way by train. If that doesn't turn out so good I'll have to take him in a trailer. My mother already told me the U haul horse trailer

will be sky high renting for that long trip. Maybe I can borrow a trailer at home instead.

Speaking of State Health regulations I had better check on Michigan's requirements. I don't think this amounts any more to other than the horse be free of a contagious disease. I'll probably run into the law that all stallions in Michigan get health checkups by a vet every so often.

[TWO PAGES OF PICTURES]

May 1st Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hart.

There is just enough action here to remind one to watch out. Other than that it has been a quiet mission. We crossed the river a few days ago. We set up a perimeter to protect the engineers that are rebuilding a road to Dau Tieng from Cu Chi. Well the Carnal chopper got too snoopy flying around and got shot at. It was forced to land. We opened up with 50 can machine guns. Of course half of them didn't work right due to lack of any test firing. A air strike then hit the are. We later swept it by track of course we found nothing. There are patrols galore and ambushes to keep us as busy as possible. The flu season is here. Half the company has colds of one form or another. The only way to get rest to cure one is to get so sick they have to carry you out. Example yesterday one was flown out after he passed out from high temperature. Another left after he got such a case of the GI's that anything he ate was out in an hour.

Today marks T-123 to T-144 days left in the army. I imagine Roy has its first Rodeo today. How do I know? I kept a Diary.

I still have my bicycle. The VC bike disappeared after the seat was broken. I keep mine in the tent so it doesn't get used much when I'm gone. I have a good supply of new VC bike tires, also a generator light, 2 tire pumps, extra chain, front bearings set. I couldn't use the pedals. They are a wrong size. Lately we haven't captures any bikes.

One of my buddies was scared he would end up here if he got drafted. So he let a recruiting officer talk him into going RA. He got into armor training . Well in 4 months he ended up as a replacement for 5th mech at Cu Chi. They go through about as much as we do. They do more attacking mounted than we do. I guess all he got going RA was an extra year in the army. I don't know what he did with his horse.

I hear it is very wet back home. No doubt it had been quite wet there. It is getting that way here. It is not unusual to get a full canteen cup of water from a cloudburst over here. Most of the dry creeks are now flowing again

Can't wait to get out of this mess. Ron

Monday May 6th Dear Mrs. and Mr. Hart.

Well we go back to base camp in 2 days. Then we will stay for 5 days until we go out on another mission. More broken promises.

At base camp we are suppose to have time to get haircuts, wash clothes, stock up on goodies, get teeth fixed, straighten out finances

problems etc. Not hardly. We won't have time for personal things. Instead we must fill sandbags, move tents, pull guard, go on patrols and do other harassing things. All the time we are in we still get up at 5:30am and at 4 am to move out by 5:30 on a mission. they want to send us back to the hell hole north of Soui Di. they are forever pushing us. I hope we get enough replacements to get the old timers off the field duty.

Even on the line for a few days they still have a patrol to search and research the same area., Can't stand to see us idle.

We finally got rid of the brigade CO. He finally got his star and left. So we will see what happens to policies now. One thing for sure they send out beer and soda on a ration basis every day. So we are finally getting our beer and soda ration regularly.

I hear in your last letter about the horse population explosion is really a going. I hear you are checking some of the farms for sale out there. Boy those real estate prizes are sure sky high. That sounds like the price of land near a large city. Back at home when a farmer's land value gets that high it usually is time for him to go into the home building business or sell and move before he gets taxed out of business. I imagine I'll start looking for a farm further out in the country some day. It won't be long and I'll be surrounded by subdivisions full of kids and bad tempered home owners.

Boy I don't like to ride the short cut to my buddies place at home. Last time I was on leave and rode over on the horse I was surprised to see the path blocked by a huge housing project already moved into by families with lots of little brats. Of course many lawns were planted right up to a paved road. One nasty homeowner blew his stack when I rode on his lawn to get out of the was of a truck.

For what little use I get of my bike I should have not taken it over here. However at the time I never knew they would try to keep us so busy. Every time I come back I have to do a lot of repair on it. No place to lock it and the drunks wreck it. They ride with flat tires until the inner tubes gets wrapped around the chain and ruined.

I have extra parts for the bike but it still makes me mad that I have to spend an hour of work before I can ride the bike. We stopped in base camp one night to drop off some track that broke down. We picked up another pet dog. It is a very small pup that is very playful. We left it at base camp until its case of jungle rot on its belly gets healed up. One of the scout dogs had to go in when he picked up some jungle rot.

I see why my mother kind of shocked me about high rental cost on a trailer. But then for such a long haul the price does go high. I'll probably rent a trailer if I can't borrow one at home. I imagine my parents will probably try to come out to Washington when I get out of here. That will save me 2 cross country trips. They will come with the Cree Coach. The truck will have no trouble hauling a trailer as it has a big motor and is fairly new. My grandma and grandpa bought it for their trips out west. They haul the house trailer with it. My grandma might come out if the market

business is not too heavy.

If I'm lucky I'll get out Sept. 1st. I'll probably be held down in California till the 9th so I can take the early out. As it stands now any time between Sept. 1 and 22 I will leave Vietnam. Ron [picture here]

14th May 66 Dear Mrs. and Mr. Hart.

Got your letter today saying that the papers came on the colt. If you can get the spelling corrected to Likens. As far as drawing feet I see you sure got a job there. If I get time I might be able to make a few with the pictures I have of him.

We are out in the boondocks again. They told us we'd be in for 7 days. We got in early and they said 5 days. But in 2 days we moved out. Oh well it kept us out of the sandbagging. No one knows how long we will be out.

Well after looking at the pictures I don't think I could draw good enough sketches of Socks, The pictures are quite small to try to do a detailed drawing, It is getting dark also as I want to get this out tonight.

No idea what we might run into out here. We are about 5 miles SE from LZ Gold. If you remember the 221st of March? Where we are set up tonight is a maze of buried wires and abandoned bunkers including anti aircraft positions.

It sure didn't take long for the ground to get soaked out here, Near the hills the water oozes out of the ground and it is like quicksand, even in the woods. All creeks are full and water in the bomb craters is level with the ground.

Our base camp is still the same madhouse as usual. Another bunker collapsed so they are building another on top the ground. They still are arguing over a final model bunker.

We got 4 dogs now in the company. The last 2 we got in 2 weeks. All cures found in VC camp area. They are named VICTOR, CHARLIE, HARRY, DASEY. The guys sure got a joke going on their names.

Some one got a swamp deer. They are in a small pen here. You wonder how we can keep deer? Well they are as big as a large cat and look rat faced. They are the smallest deer known.

Well it is chow time so will close. Ron

May 17th Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hart

I just got my Quarter Horse Magazine. While quickly looking at it I came across an article on quarter cracked hoofs and a way to shoe to cure it. It kind of surprised me on how this method was done. It involves using a special shoe and a metal plate that is fastened with short screws across the crack. Both keep the hoof from expanding and contracting thus stopping the cracking process. [picture here]

Well in the boonies we are. On the 14 of May we searched an area and found 3 vehicles. They were 2 beat up land rovers and a small panel truck. We also found 30 bags of rice. Leave it to 3rd plt to find something unusual.

On the 15th we split up into platoon size units and Ho and mortars went to the logger area for the night. We found over 300 bags of rice, some in small caches and one big cache in a VC camp. We also got fired upon in the camp by 2 recoilless, which missed and small arms fire. We returned fire, the VC fled. The other elements rushed to the area. No one got hurt and it was all done before they arrived. We had been firing in their direction. They said they never seen so much lead flying overhead. 50 cal carries a long way.

We also found 4 VC ox carts. Yesterday we found 1 oxen and the other platoons found 6 oxen tied up. The VC must have been hauling rice when we came in the area. They then abandoned their rice, carts and later their oxen to get away from us.

Today we are in the middle of nowhere. It is all dense jungle. We are along a trail but so far have found nothing.

However a platoon of Bravo Co. nearly got wiped out by RPG and 57 recoilless. In rescuing them and hauling out the wounded, one of our trucks hit a mine. Oh well 3 guys got to stay out of the field for a while.

18 May No chance to finish yesterday. Today we went to Soui Da. I don't know how long we will stay here. One of our trucks strayed over to the edge of the road and hit a mine, no one hurt.

I'll be glad to get out of this area. It is all Junction City II area.. A very bad place.

Well I'll close for now so I might get it mailed. They are sure taking up all our time on bush beating and MOVE, MOVE, MOVE Ron

22 May 67 Dear Mrs. and Mr. Hart

Well it is exactly 8 months of hell now and a maximum of 4 more to go. We have been in the Arvin Camp of the boonies for 3 days now. We leave for Soui Da tomorrow then to Tay Ninh for an unknown amount of time.

The VC hate this place something fierce. Last month they tried a wave attack. The VC mortored this place every night. We have been mortored 4 times so far, even in the day. Most of the rounds are zeroed in on the Arvin camp. The first night here, the VC dropped 50 rounds in 2 minutes on the Arvins. No one got hurt as the camp is all bunkers. Those rounds landed on top of the bunkers. Artillery and our mortars started bombarding the VC mortar sites.

Yesterday the VC fired 2 rounds to check out a new site. Both landed in the Arvin camp. An air strike landed on the VC.

The VC are getting changed over to a different fighting. They are bringing from the north huge supplies of mortars and antitank weapons. The battle of March 21 shows that in all the RPG 2 found.

The 1049 went through. However in order to take it I would have to extend 6 months. I told them to stick it.. So I guess I stick out the 4 months left.

The weather here is hot as usual. We have gone on long foot patrols in

the jungles lately, we have found little.

We build bunkers here in case the fire gets shifted. There is a radar going all the time to detect and back track incoming rounds so our mortars can bomb the VC.

I guess you have heard that the Gung Ho brigade commander got his star and left for the Pentagon. So we have another brigade commander bucking for a star.

Well it is about all I can think of to write for now. Ron

Dear Mrs. and Mr. hart 29 May

Well for the first time this month I saw some horses. This was when we went to Tay Ninh. We stayed there a day then went to the bridge site beyond Trin Bi.

Beer and soda and pretzels were free the first night there. so there was plenty of partying. Yet it did not get out of hand. We slept in that next morning. The only things done was repack the track.

The night before we moved out we had a formation at 10pm. The battalion Commander decided to punish us [little babies] because someone went over the fence and got caught. Also because he found some paper and he doesn't always get saluted. So we had to turn in all beer and soda. Naturally they suddenly didn't have money to pay us back. We got up at 3:30am for an extensive police call {hands and knees} and left at 6:30.

Yesterday we had a patrol which ended up a monstrous 10,000 meter one and all in dense jungle, Boy were we beat. Not only that I got the ----- . I had to take that 90 recoilless along. Orders of battalion. Of course it can't be used out there anyhow.

Tonight is a company ambush. It will be one of those long days with a mission like 3 meals of C ration taken along. We expect to run out of water so the purifying tablets are coming.

So when I get the chance I'll write again. Ron T-117 or less of hell  
{picture here}  
{pictures on top of this letter}

3 June 67 Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well only 3 1\2 months left here, goodie goodie. Today we are set up on the road between Soui Du and Dui Lac {Attleboro} We are close to the village. The farmers come out to tend their fields by the mountains. We are on the east side. We check their 10 cards every time. We picked up a AWOL from the Cambodian army. As usual we have a mess of peddlers selling anything from coke to souvenirs. We got ourselves a barber to come down so we can get haircuts. They bring French Bread down too {watch out for the boll weevils baked in it} Otherwise it is good.

There is little action down in war zone C. The big action is by the DMZ. They have moved several leg units north so much of 3rd brg is securing base camps.



However the VC infiltration continues. A spotter plane saw several elephants in the plantations north of Dau tieng loaded with 40mm rockets and RPG's. Some VC stole 3 APC's from 1st div. They caught the guys sleeping. As a result a platoon from 3-22 making a patrol in the plantation was wiped out by them.

We will be moving from here soon. All kinds of rumors are out. One is a 30 day palace guard of Dau Tieng. One is a sweep between Soui Da and Trai Be. No one knows.

I may try for a R&R in July. If so it will be to Hawaii. If I can get this I'll try to make it over to your place for a few days to call home, see the horse, get a little bit adjusted to civilized living. You'd be surprised on the big percentage of R&R to Hawaii that keep on going home. Of course they take a chance if something happens that causes them to miss their plane back. The weather is no longer so miserable hot and now there is a nice breeze all day. It even gets cool at night now. Oh yes it rains every afternoon but not very much yet. [picture here]

The rice is being planted in plots ready for transplanting. The fields are being plowed. Along the mountain a banana plantation grows. Would you believe there are big fields of sweet corn planted along this area. It is all close together and some fields are 10-20 acres in size. All is man and animal cultivated. There are a few tractors being used

So will close for now. Ron

Dear Mrs. Hart June 6th 1967

Well we are at it again. I was lucky to get on a small day light ambush patrol, so I could sneak out writing paper. We are on a 7 day mission of which 2 days have past. But it is a 24 hr day type thing. That is we walk all day and ambush patrols at night. Everybody. and no rest for the weary or a chance to shave. We live in the same wet stinking rotting clothes, day after day, dirty and unshaven.

So far not too much action. We found a base camp with the cooking fire still burning. There we found what Charlie couldn't take at the spur of the moment. We found some ammo and claymores as well as some rice and other gear. The bunkers were well built to live in and even had pictures on the wall.

Yesterday on our search and destroy we ambushed 4 VC along a trail. However the mascot dog had followed us out and spoiled it by barking at the VC. We did capture one with his weapon. No casualties on either side. We also got 2 bikes with food supplies.

The dog got in the way of a bullet and got hit in the back leg. so it got dusted off with the VC prisoner. Charlie company found another base camp and 100 tons of bagged rice.

Well my short timer calendar says 108 days or less. So it won't be long before I get out. The chances are very slim on that R&R that I might not take a second one at all, so I don't end up spending \$300. so close to ETS.

I guess you still got at least 16 horses yet .If my memory is correct. Still a lot of horses. I also remember I came over your place one week before Memorial Day. that was when you had Ronnie Cox.

Speaking of kids there are sure a flock of them in this country. Most of the 8-14 year olds smoke cigarettes and know all the naughty things. However most of them behave well. We sure had everything at that last place. Beer, soda, ice ,a barber, laundry etc. Let me know what you find out about that health certificate stuff. It's going to be bad enough to get him home as it is.

When will this war stuff ever end? I see Israel and UAR are having a go at it. I hope we stay out of it even if they blow themselves away. Oh well they have been fighting since the Bible came into existence. This war has been going on for 20 years. Ron

17 June 67 Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well it has been almost 2 weeks since I wrote last. I wrote home just now too., Today we set up along a road so had time to clean weapons and write.

RUSH RUSH RUSH RUSH DRIVE all the time, 25 hours a day, 8 days a week. That has been the last 2 weeks. It was only suppose to be one week. but the battalion CO asked for another sector and killed our morale by lying to us and then telling us what he did on the day we were suppose to go in. We do more walking then a leg unit. We walked 30,000 meters in 7 days. All of it was in thick jungle with 2,000 of it in knee deep water. We also made numerous side patrols and had an ambush patrol every night. It was common to miss meals. "you will be back before noon" was heard a lot and ended up an all day walk. I spent 5 days and nights with wet clothes and fat. We had no time to change them.

Later we didn't have any clean clothes to change into. Everyone smells bad. Many of the guys have been taped up because of jungle rot all over their legs, Yet they stay out till the legs bleed. Many are getting rotten feet. The LT got a VC in a all by himself charge of a 3 man base camp. So you see we got gung ho leaders and they can't understand why we aren't gung ho either. The rest of the week have been through a vast rice paddy swamp. So wet feet all day.

Well I might get an R&R in early August. I don't know where yet. If it is to Tokyo or Tiapia I'll buy some things at greatly cut prices. That one couldn't normally afford back home. I won't be spending it all on running around like I did last time.

Well It won't be long before I leave this place. I found a piece of VC bamboo rope. It was newly made and is used for Ox Yolks. I found it in a VC base camp. It will make a good stiff Bossal.

The VC don't seem to use stamps in their highly censored mail system. They do keep extensive diaries. We almost always find lots of letters and other paper work.

Have you found out what shots the horse might need yet? I forgot if I asked you or not. Home says they will find out about possibly shipping him by train. Of course I would go along.

Well the rains hit again for a while. Most of the paddies are getting flooded now. The sweet corn planted near the mountains has tasselled out and has ears on it. All paddies are plowed or being plowed and the seed rice is several inches high. All is hand work.

Well I hope the colt behaves himself. Will close. Ron  
[pictures here]

22 June Dear Mrs. Hart. Rain drops on the paper.

I think this sums up any problem if you replace the potatoes with all the patrolling we do.

There has been no contact or sign of VC lately. We are securing some artillery north of Sous Da. So tomorrow we try again. We are suppose to go into Tay Ninh for 2 weeks. There is a catch an IG inspection. so the complaints will be many.

I may have a R&R in August. It will not be Hawaii but some far east country. I will take advantage of some ridiculously low prices. I won't go on any girlfriend spree like everyone else does. It cost too much. I don't indulge in a lot of beer. In fact I never drank it till I got over here but I never have more then one can with the guys. It don't taste that good anyhow. The guys drink it to get high and plastered. Some even get the VC pot. Almost all VC are dope addicts.

I guess the horse will have to go all the way by trailer. I checked or I should say my mother checked the rail rates. They are sky high, of course that is the stall type setup but it goes by weight too. Still sounds funny.

25 June. On the 23rd we went into Tay Ninh. Of course in the brief stay there of 1 day 2 nights they had us busy all the time and I lost my flashlight. I got another one and some candles at the PX. We were suppose to stay there 14 - 21 days. to repair tracks and pull berm guard. Instead we are doing road security. I like that better at least no one bothers us here. They harass the hell on us in base camps. We will go back to Tay Ninh in a few days.

That PX is sure something. It has the biggest variety of stuff and yet it has nothing. If you want shoes, clothes [civilian] wax, TV sets, refrigerators, model airplanes. and other such stuff like carbon paper fine. they have it. Yet of stuff we need, no paper, envelopes, pens, 135 film etc. some PX. I'm stocked up enough to not be hurting for stuff yet.

[picture here]

While we were in Tay Ninh the VC mortered 3rd brg. and the Helo pad. at Dau Tieng again, damaging 28 choppers and 48 men wounded trying to get the choppers of the air strip.

Tay Ninh City is the usual busy lumber town along the south side is the small lumber mills, with electricity powered band saws cutting mahongany

logs hauled from Trin Bi by Ox carts. The cabinet shops along that street sure have some beautiful hand crafted cupboards, tables, beds, etc. Many are done in modern style. Some have the oriental look. All are well finished and varnished. Would like to get out and really look over the stuff. But as usual all towns are off limits to 3rd brg, 4 div. troops. I would like to get a hand finished show ox cart . Of course I can't. They can build some nice looking hand finished mahogany carts. Such carts are hard to wreck. We have trouble destroying the wheels of VC carts.

Oh yes I saw 9 ponies. 2 were buckskin. They sure are odd looking horses.

So maybe we will get a little rest on road security. At least none of the patrolling stuff like on the search and destroy missions.

88 days of Hell to go, 88 days of hell left. hopefully less. [picture here]

Ron

30 June T- 82 and a wake up Dear Mrs. Hart

Well only 2 to 2 1/2 months left in hell. So am counting off the days. Some guys have charts counting down the days. Some charts are of nudes that are the charts that start from the legs to arms then on down. Some charts are camouflages bands

Today we went in to Tay Ninh. the 3rd plt. are taking up berm guard, gravel pit guard and 2 ambush patrols. Don't know how long we will be here. Rumors have of another big mission soon.

Well the rainy season is sure around. Towards the afternoon it clouds up and showers. sometimes we will get a cloudburst in the evening. If ambush patrols are out they might get rained on all night. When it quits the miquetes are awful.

The sweet corn is ready over here. I see a lot of Vietnamese eating corn for lunch. They steam it husk and all. We buy bread from them lots of times. Usually paying 15 cents a loaf. There are 2 types, one 24" long and 2 " in dia. another is 16" oval 4 inches in dia. It tastes like a type of French bread. We have to watch what type of person we buy it from .In some areas the bread sold is full of bol weevils. Most of it near here is free of bugs.

They sell all kinds of home made clothes. Usually they ask way too much for it. So we always try to jew down the price. We usually can do so. The peddlers try to sell watches that he gets at \$5.00 for up to \$20-\$30. We are wise to this though. some guys have bought them at \$10.00. They are made in Vietnam.

Anytime we set up along a road it isn't long before the Vietnamese arrive with coke, beer, bread, clothes , other goods etc. When we leave the kids dig up our trash pits in search of C rations, etc.

The mail is messed up again. I didn't get my horse magazine this month. Still haven't got your package yet. Well have to write to the magazine and have them send them home.

Well if time keeps flying it won't be long before I can swoop onto that big

iron bird for the USA. T-82 and counting Ron.  
[picture here]

4th of July T- 78 and a wake up. Dear Mrs. Hart.

Here is something I bought off a peddler. It is so thin and light that I can put it in the envelope. Today we are back at the laterite pit guarding it. We will have a ambush patrol tonight. near there again. The last one was miserable. It rained all night.

Well I got a good deal again. On the 11th I am going to Dau Tieng. I will ride shotgun on a truck going to Saigon. I'll be in Saigon for 4 days then come back. That will be better then a R&R or 3 day pass as I'll get tdy pay for it. I'll also be able to tour Saigon for 4 days.

Well it isn't too bad here even though they always have us on some kind of guard. We do get a chance to go to the PX and it finally got restocked.

I was able to get envelopes and film. Still no sign of your package yet. They must have sent it up to Plaku by mistake.

Did you find out anything about interstate regulations or if the horse would need any shots or certificate to travel to Michigan? I hope I don't run into any problems there when I get out of Vietnam. I hope Socks is behaving himself. Lt. Likens kids me about naming a horse after him.

Well I guess that is all that is new for now. Happy birthday even though I found out too late. Ron

Eve of the 11 T-72 and a wake up. Dear Mrs. Hart.

Got your package today. It got missent north. the APO no was wrong by one number.

Got a letter from home with a bit of planning in it. My dad is going to try to get an extension trailer hitch hooked up to the pick-up truck that carries the Cree Coach. That way we can hook up the trailer. and have a place to cook and sleep as well,. The Cree extends 2 feet beyond the bumper making an extended hitch necessary

I'll try to let you know as soon as I can find out and get orders on my exact ETS date. They will probably process me out from Oakland. Although I hear that they are setting up a processing place at McCord..

Last night we made a quick dash to Dau Tieng. The company will leave tomorrow for road security. This place is on all kinds of alert and the bridges have heavy guard on them. The 101 VC regulars and another unit are close and have manuvered in to hit us on any of 5 sides any night. The culvert bridge to Sou Da has been blown out twice in the last week. The 2-34 which is in the field securing that road has been hit twice with moderate causalities both times. We are reactionary force in case of attack here.

Day after tomorrow I take a 7 day TPX riding shotgun to Saigon on a convoy. I'll have day or two in Saigon itself. So that will be nice to get away from it all

So will sign off for now. Ron

17th July Dear Mrs. hart.

Well I'm back from Saigon and back to the field again. Did I miss out on a bad one? Our first platoon got wiped out while securing the road. 2 tracks were demolished. What was left they brought into Dau Tieng. Track 11 was missing the entire side and roof. 14 lost its roof and front end. Both were hit by up to 8 RPG's at once. 3 KIA's 25 WIA's in other words all but 4 men profiled or killed. Weapons were twisted like pretzels. They lost all their gear in the fires that burned out the tracks. The 2 Arvin camps along the road were wiped out. The fight lasted from 1am to 4 am. Our platoon was point to the fight. 32 track got hit near and on the TC hatch by 4 RPG's. The TC was only wounded. The track I ride in the 50 gunner in my place got bullets fragment in his face and lost a finger .When a VC round splattered against the 50. I've counted 4 gouges on the mount and shield and one broken piece in the barred assembly as well as gouges along the front right and a hole in the ammo can. DEMOLISHED  
So I lucked out on a profile. Before the end of the fight all of 2-22 and 10th Cav were involved. The VC had a large number of RPG and automatic weapons. [pictures here] I took pictures of the mess. It looks like a pile of junk.

I saw over 100 ponies between Saigon and Cu Chi. I even saw a Vietnamese riding one. Most were pulling carts.

I bought a new camera which I mailed home. It is a Yashia J7. the most complicated expensive single reflex 35 mm camera sold. I paid \$95.00 for it. It cost over \$175 in the states.

Well I hear Mr. Hart visited my place. He would like our top soil is what was written in a letter from home. So it won't be long before I can ETS.

Well for a while safe, will close before it starts raining again. Ron

20 July Dear Mrs. Hart.

I got a very delayed letter dated the 30th. But that is the fault of this mailing system as the address was correct. Some where in that mess is one horse magazine and 3 Reader Digests.

Well the trip is getting pretty well planned. All that is needed is my ETS date. I'm glad all that is needed is the health slip and not a lot of red tape. My dad says he will put an extension on the trailer hitch on the Cree Coach truck so they will drive that out.

My mother told me Mr. Hart came out to visit them. I hoped he liked the plane ride. The jets are mice to ride in. Our military planes are lousy to ride in. I'm still in Tay Ninh my track broke down so the driver and I stayed back.

The track broke a universal joint to the final drive making it unsteerable. It was fixed in an hour. However the company was up to Sou Da by then. We may go out today. If we can get a 50 cal machine gun for 14 track. and if the company gets out of the paddies and back on the road. In the meantime no berm guard, ambush patrol etc. We are just on a vacation

with the cooks and other duds at our supply camp.

The Tay Ninh, Dau Tieng road is still dangerous at night. The 34 cav. was attacked but as they have tanks the VC did not fight long.

2 months left in the army as of today. Unfortunately they can still keep me in the field 7 weeks yet and it would be just like them to do so.

Well that is all for now. Ron

Dear Mrs. Hart 27 July T-55

Well here I am today sitting on a outpost by a village. We are securing the road by day and set up in company logger at night. It has been pretty quiet along here. We have found a few grenades in a mud paddy one morning, as well as the night before a dump truck hit a small mine [no one hurt]. Only things to worry about here is being caught with a mob of kids and have some brass show up.

I guess it is nice and safe over here now. I hear on the news there is next to open warfare with the trouble makers in Detroit. Don't know what people expect to accomplish by all the destruction. That area of Detroit. When I last seen it is all overcrowded and about as slum looking as back streets of Saigon. I guess in Saginaw some outsiders are trying to stir up trouble in the 1st ward.

[picture here]

It rains every day now around 4:30- 5pm and sometimes half the night too. The weather varies too. It has been cool except in the mornings when the nice breeze is gone. Some days before it rains it gets quite hot. Last night it was cold after the rain. The people had to wear jackets. I read in the paper of a place hotter then here. In a town in Iran during a heat wave the temperature melted the asphalt roads. It was 188 in the shade. Everyone stayed under shelter. Glad I'm not there. So that is all for now. Ron

4 August "the fruit cake came through OK"

Dear Mrs. Hart.

The days are too slowly swindling down. After a 2 day mission chasing Charlie we are back on the road.

The corn season is going full blast. These people are crazy over sweet corn. Only trouble is that the corn is white field corn and they prepare it in such a way as there is little taste to it.

The 2 day mission was supposedly a blocking force for 3-22. It ended up we did more S and D. then 3-22. We also spent half the time mired in quicksand like mud. There was signs of VC everywhere. C company found a base camp with 4 VC in it as guards.

They got the VC's and stayed there for a hectic night of no sleep. They reconed by fire all night and got snipered at. 3-22 got 150 rounds of 82 mm mortars on them. Most of us stayed awake all night.

Well it has rained a lot here. The Dau Tieng -Tay Ninh road is flooded in places from over loaded culverts. All the paddies are planted now. Yet

give a few hours of hot sun and the muddy road is all dust.

NEW VARMENT. A VC TICK. This bug is the first one I've seen. It was on a guys leg and could not be burned out.

Well violence flares around the nation as usual. Our mayor in Saginaw stopped it quick by issuing a proclamation allowing store owners to post 2 guards with loaded shotguns inside the stores at night. If anyone tossed a fire bomb, broke windows, or tried to loot they could shoot to kill. The riot which was mostly hoods looking for an excuse to start trouble stopped.

Detroit was not a race issue it was just plain lawlessness in mass form.

So I'm 47 days short. Will close for now.

Ron

PS finally able to attend a church service for once. Last time a month ago.

11 August T-40 or less Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well from now on I miss out on all daytime patrols, night ambushes, foxholes digging and other harassment. I got a new job as 76 xray. There is just 3 Em, a 1st Lt. and a Captain that live in the 557 which is a oversized APC. where on can stand up inside. [picture here]

My job here involves working on the chopper pad, distributing supplies, taking orders in for resupply and fixing the loads to be extracted. This is only one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon and 2 in the evening that is used for my job. The rest of the time is just the normal details necessary in living in a track as we move each day/ but still leaves a lot of free time. We pull a radio watch each night.

Well the day before I went mountain climbing. The company had a patrol up a small peak of the Black Virgin Mountain. [near Ba Den] The peak only exceeds 1000ft. and is very steep with much loose boulders and dense jungle. Because it is usually so damp all the time the vegetation had gone wild here. [picture here] I saw plants here I have never seen else where in Vietnam. There is also a nasty type of poison needle vine that causes quite a rash on certain guys. I should have taken my camera. but didn't because it rained twice during the day and I didn't have a plastic bag for it. The view of the plains was tremendous.

Oh yes the 25th has got us permanently assigned to them

My new address is. HQ Co. 2-22 inf. 3rd brg 25 inf Div APO 96268 San Francisco California.

Ron

PS Well time is getting short. Won't be long.

13 August T-38 or less Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well I am coming along real well on my new safer job. I sleep in a big 557 APC. My job here as I my have told you is resupply of battalion that is the 4 of us. Take in request for supplies, send them in where other personal fill them out. Then we guide in the supply choppers and break down supplies . Other then that we can good off. Only 4 hours a day is taken up in



most of the work. We get all the port calls here to pass on. There is a good chance of a drop on my port call of several days. I won't know till 5 to 7 days before I am scheduled to leave [pictures here]

So I may end up leaving here for Oakland with out much notice. Send me your phone number. I don't have it anymore.

Well the rest of the company is busting their backs as usual. They have S and D all day, ambushes all night.

Well I got a surprise. My Mom and Dad bought a horse trailer rather than go and rent one as they figured I might get one anyway. so everything is all set. I may catch my folks off guard if I get an unexpected drop on my tour. I believe I'll try to get a hop to Mc Cord AFB.

Well getting short. Ron

26th August T-25 Dear Mrs. Hart.

Boy am I short. I still don't know my exact ETS date. I will know it only 5 days before I leave the country. If I leave around the 9th- 15th I will probably go straight home so I don't mess up the vacation schedule. I'll then come to Washington with the family. Otherwise If I EST near the 21st then I will come to Washington instead. Of course I'll call up to let you know what I will do in either case. Send me your telephone number. I lost the paper I had it on due to water damage in my wallet.

Well my job here is going along OK. I can sleep half the day if I want or if we set up by a water point that day I can do my laundry. The line companies are securing the roads by day which isn't bad. But at night they have 2 ambush patrols per company. Of course those are pretty miserable on rainy nights.

Well this is all I can think of for now. I hope the next 25 days race by.  
Ron

Sept. 2 1am Dear Mrs. Hart.

Would you believe T-18? .I'm hoping sooner as they don't tell us of a drop tell 5 days before Zero. I'm still out in the field yet. Am going to make a PX trip today.

We started on a 11 day search and destroy mission which was abruptly ended yesterday. The VC are threatening an attack on several of our pet villages. Some villagers have told us that the VC plan a complete block of our supply road to Dau Tieng for 5 days [to harass the national elections] They may terrorize some villages as well. The bridges have been rebuilt again when they were blown 2 days ago

We are starting to get replacements in larger numbers which is easing the personal shortage. Lots of port calls coming in. I hope mine is soon.

Well my camera finally gave up. My petri range finder 35mm camera broke down. The diaphragm or lens opening that controls the amount of light entering the camera fell apart inside. So I guess It is to the repair shop as I can't fix it..

The supply choppers sure hate working for flame. They get shot up almost every time. Still awful hard to get clothes ordered. Yet I wash my own in order to have any clothes at all. Seems though the quarter master laundry and the personal handling it have a habit of losing up to 50% of it. Even worse is when some moron in rewriting the list of what's in the bag forgets to put the names of several dozen personal laundry back in his laundry bags. Or when it gets sent to one place and our resupply moves to another. Results it ends up in a forgotten corner of the supply room. I found some of my laundry 2 months later that way. It was all ruined from dampness. More hell is being raised about it now as some of the lost stuff is belonging to Captains.

So nothing else is new except they can't get any dog food for the scout dogs. The kind we do get won't keep long. It gets wormy. It is brand name dog food {prime}. We cured some kids of raiding trash holes. Seems though they ate some dog food and got sick on it. Now they don't touch it in their raids after we leave a campsite.

So will close for now. Sounds like I'll have a trailer broke horse by the time I get there. Ron

5 Sept. Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well I just said [a few] in the rush and excitement of the last 2 days I lost your telephone number. Oh well I'm going to call home before I go anywhere so I should be able to get the number form my folks.

I have my rotation date. I get on the Freedom Bird on the 15th. so I have a 6 day drop. Some guys are not so lucky. they got extended a few days due to the large rotation.

Well excitement aplenty last night. Charlie was out to raise hell on the eve of election day. A mounted roving patrol was hit by a small VC force that was going to harass the village. The lead track took a RPG in the fuel tank. It burned all night. The battalion swept the area all night under flares. We had to call in an emergency resupply off lares for the mortars. They fired nearly 300 flares last night.

Most suffered burns in the track who's gas tank exploded. The scout dog was burned up. A replacement who had just came to the field for the first day out there, was one of the casualties. The first Sergeant and company clerk were out for the night too. I bet they were really scared. The APC is all burned out . The fire being so hot that even the track pads were burned up. The rubber liners of the road wheels burned out. and the fire was so hot the roof melted and even the 50 barrel is bent.

Well it is only 10 days and a wake up to go. Ron [pictures here]

Dear Mrs. Hart. 7 days to go & awake up 8th Sept.

This chow has suddenly gone terrible. there is a new change over in cooks and they are lazy.

We are in base camp for a few days then the field again. I'm going to

try to stay in for good now.

The last few days for A company were HELL. They were on a S and D on foot near the mountain. When they ran into a reinforced company of VC. The tracks came to their rescue quickly. Still the intense fight lasted 4 hours in which we withdrew, The VC also sneaking to break contact. The VC weren't going anywhere either as they can't move past a mountain. Over a thousand rounds of artillery was poured in under an a hour as well as hundreds of mortars. Charlie was till there the next day. 5 troops died and 30 wounded. Many quite seriously. The VC had recoilless rifles and rifle grenades.

Our resupply was sure busy. we had to order 25,000 rounds of 50 ammo and gobs of other supplies.

The next day 21 air strikes tore up the side of the mountain. another sweep was make . The VC still there. More artillery and airstrikes were called. then the place was gassed out with CS. Well so much for the war.

Before I leave Vietnam I'm going to try to get some telephoto lenses for the camera I sent home . That way I can get some bargain prizes on the stuff as I do want to get one. I'm going to end up shopping for civilian clothes. Everything in my bag at base camp is destroyed by rot. Seems through the tent collapsed in a rain storm. So that is all for now. Ron

27th Sept. 1967 [Home in Saginaw, Michigan]

Dear Mrs. Hart.

Well we cut our trip in half and made it home in 4 days.

The trip was OK but I'm sure not going to trailer a horse from such a long distance again.

Socks got over his scare quickly. We stopped for lunch at a large open spot up in the sagebrush 10 miles east of Ellenburg. The horse behaved real nice. Boy was he stiff when he got out. He only whinneyed once and after that kept on nuzzling me while I walked him. His next walk was in Idaho in the evening. We found a road side rest in the west end of Montana for the night 10pm. Boy it is hard to find places to stay. At 2 am the horse woke us up. It got real cold out and he was cold. I put the wool army blanket on him and ended up sleeping with him the rest of the night. He was all right.

I walked him in the morning with the blanket on and didn't take it off till 8am. He gave me a sour look when I did remove it. Oh yes the blanket had one heavy clip type pen to hold it on. Socks behaved real nice all the next day. On the third day he loaded without the use of a butt rope. We stayed at the relatives in Verndale, Minn. I wish he had a corral that I could put Socks in. That place is sure a poor farm. That night Socks started to get tired of the trip. He was very restless in the trailer. Guess he couldn't sleep too good in there. I ran out of ways to keep him calm. So we decided to get for home. I am yesterday morning to 11:30 pm 831 miles, What a horrible distance to drive. Socks got four walks that day. But that first hour when we left he had a little fit. He started to jump kick etc. He even managed to

break-out the front window when he got both front feet up in the feed box. This went on for 10 minutes. We kept on driving and finally he settled down. then we had a few troubles. We had a flat at 3 am. changed it without any trouble. At 7 we stopped for breakfast in Wisconsin. That horse just couldn't wait to get outside. He was quite cranky the rest of the way home yet didn't mess around in the trailer any more. He also broke the butt chain.

Socks was put in the barn as soon as I got home. I gave him some hay then we closed things up and left him in the dark for the night. He was sure tired. So were we. He even had pillow wrinkles on the side he laid down on last night. Soapy sure didn't like being kicked out of his barn .It rained all night. But he has a shed out there to stay in.

This morning he was all rested and friendly I put him out in the pasture. Soapy was in another field. Soapy made a bigger fool out of himself, in whinnying, bucking around and running all over. Socks was pretty good about it. He just cantered and trotted about, then lost interest and started to eat the grass. GREEN GRASS TOO Later Socks wanted in as it was quite cold and rainy out. I went out called him and he came up. He followed me up to the gate.

Socks is sure getting the attention now. Poor ole Soapy just gets left in the rain. In all socks was pretty good on most of the trip. If I could have put him in a corral on the third night he would have not acted up on the last day. However he would have spent a very cold night in upper Michigan. It snowed there last night. In all Socks travelled 2,518 miles in 4 days. He made it through with only a few scratches and bruises on his front legs from his free for all that morning. At least he likes it here. He will eat corn now. and also my hay. I'll sure have to watch that the kids don't feed him corn as he will end up as fat as Soapy.

Slowly I'll get reorganized at home. Tomorrow I'm going to get the barn started for Socks.

Will close for now

Ron

PS Excuse the rough hand writing but I sprained my thumb. The horse behaved real well on the halter. I had him running and trotting in a circle and even in his playing and jumping around he never tugged very hard on the rope. Had a lot of people think he was a race horse.