

Thursday June16 #36

Dear Mom and Dad,

Got a mis sent letter today. Got some information today. I will try to get home in the last week of August. Possibly sooner. I'll have to wait and see how that works out.

Today was kind of mess up. We were supposed to have a squad ATT. Instead we ended up walking 10 miles in order to have to be picked up and sent back for a command information meeting at the theater.

They really goofed up. We will have to take the company ATT over again. The company commander and the first Sergeant goofed it, also the patrols went off course and got wiped out by their own men.

Got 2 enlargements of some good pictures. I will send the original size home.

Friday. Got the rest of the copies back..

Today we got prepared for an inspection. We also had drill marching and Lt. Flicks weekly Vietnam class. Also PT. It is much cooler today, yesterday being in the 80's today about 70.

Guys are already broke. I don't know what is happening but I got only \$40 left with \$10 loaned. I will fix up a package at the end of the month.

Sometime in late fall the company's job will be to secure roads and clear them. They won't mention it but I will probably be in Vietnam at the end of September. We will still be a mechanized unit. I will be home before I go. My job will still be antitank but will probably be destroying bunkers or clearing out tunnels. As of now we don't know what we will do there or where we will go.

Am waiting for the weekend. Will close now.

Ron

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Sunday 14 June #37

Dear Mom and Dad

Got the package with the clothes and goodies.

There was no inspection yesterday. Instead we cleaned up stuff. I got moved out of the room the squad leaders have it now and only 2 in a room. the bike is in one with the lock on the door and I have a key.

Left late on pass yesterday, 2 pm.

Had some very good home grown strawberries for supper last night.

I left at 3:30 to come back here so I could write a letter and get stuff for tomorrow squared away.

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The big bay here is quiet now but probably between 8 pm and 1 am it will be noisy.

Guys that still have money are getting stoned at the PX. Few guys took a pass as they are broke.

Will close now.

Ron.

Monday June 20 #38

Dear Mom and Dad.

Our first days will be getting everything cleaned , checked etc. so we can go out in the field. Wednesday, Thursday. Friday and have everything wet and dirty for inspection Saturday. Typical of A Company. For marching today we were told to draw weapons. then told we didn't need them so the rush was on to turn them in and fall out at the same time. As far as going to Vietnam, chances are just as good to go to Korea or elsewhere.

Tuesday Got my pictures back already. Today was preparing for field trip. I got everything squared away for tomorrow.

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Well I will close now.

Ron

Saturday June 25th

Dear Mom and Dad

Took a long trip to Rainier training area. It was a hilly twisty road. Made a mock attack in the evening. While the other fellows went to bed 5 of us from each platoon went on a patrol against HQ company. the 2 that went in from us got detected. and 2nd platoon got the password by acting like one of their men. They only got stopped a few times. They marked destroyed on 5 tracks, 15 trucks, 5 jeeps and poisoned on the mess truck. I bet HQ company commanders was mad at his men.

Thursday morning we set up a road block and patrolled a mile long area. I stayed with the APC by a 50 caliber machine gun. Weapon platoon was the aggressor. At 11 pm that night we moved out by APC on a blackout drive on the twisting road. 3 tracks threw a thread. A command track tipped over going downhill when it threw a track.

It held up the formation for half a hour. It took 4 hours for the 20 mile trip.

Got only 3 hours sleep each night. We came back in Friday noon.

Surprise, we had to prepare for full field inspection for today. That kept us up till midnight and we got up at 4:30.

Had inspection outside, then foot and wall locker. Got out on pass at 12:30

Got back here at 9:30 I have to get up at 3:30 am tomorrow, Will close now.

Ron

Friday July 1st

Dear Mom and Dad

I have been out in the field for the past 4 days, so no letters in between. I got 3 out in the field and one today all from home.

Monday we got up at 3:30 am, Went to the field 19D at 6 am. Got set up at 7:30 the platoon went on patrol. I was compass and map carrier. With an estimate locations I got within 75 yards of location. The rest of the morning was spent in fire team movements. This I just watched. I set up an ambush by compass course. then lead the platoon on compass bearing into it.

Had C rations for noon and hot chow for supper. After supper there was a 20 mile trip by track to Rainier training area. Set up camp at 9 pm and went to bed. It rained all night. It was so damp in there. It rained from condensation on the roof.

Our chow was in very small amounts. They ran out of bread and most everything else before the line ended. Also ran short of C rations Thursday. There was lots of bitching about that. Also food stealing. I lost 4 cans of extra C's to a thief. Some guys lost whole C meals that they put in their bag for later.

We were aggressors against the 10th cavalry unit. We were to make an attack at 2 am on their base camp. Our good old dependable company commander fell asleep at the CP and as a result 2 tracks got away from us without knowing we were there. We caught one lone track when we attacked. Half were sleeping in it. 10 cav. pulled out. they sent a patrol to find us. They didn't know the password so got wiped out by us. During the day 2nd platoon got chased by 10 cav. and got captured, So did our CO commander. We stayed at base camp

Today is payday. I got \$79. today.

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Will close now as it is 10:30 pm

Ron

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Sunday July 17

Dear Mom and Dad.

Well Friday night we had the first thunderstorm I've seen in this state. It was fairly mild compared to around home. Got out of inspection Saturday. I didn't see the visiting Secretary of the Army but tomorrow is a parade for him.

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Came back here at 8:30 temp was in the 70's today. This week we have a parade and 2 days of bibwac. There is a possibly I may go to Yakima again before I come home. We float the tracks this week. We may fire some laids.

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I had fresh garden peas and raspberries for supper tonight. The cherries out here got frost bitten believe it or not. Will close now

Ron

Thursday July 14th #42

Dear Mom and Dad

I've had a cold since Saturday, Sunday afternoon it caught up with me. I laid in the sack all afternoon in order to shake it off. When I found out we would be in perimeter defense all night I decided to go on sick call. It took half an hour to process through the medic. I got to Brigade Medical headquarters tent. I had to wait here until they had taken care of a injured person from a jeep wreck. They were sewing stitches in a bad cut in his knee. He had quite a few bruises. Seems though he tried to turn a corner too fast and flipped the jeep throwing him and his buddies out. One was unhurt. This kid and the other buddy went to Madigan.

I had just a bad cold with a temp of 101. I slept in holding which is 3-24 bed tents. Had breakfast there and was released with normal temp. All it took was a good nights sleep to break it.

The troops flew out by helicopter. I stayed at base camp. when the Hueys came back I got some good close ups. They really kick up a windstorm. A few tents got blown down.

In the afternoon the troops came back. I was in charge of heating water, 2 others took their tracks and poncho. So we ran a shower service. Everybody took a hot shower with a 5 gallon can outside. This was much better then the cold Nasqualley river.

Tuesday I got KP. I scrubbed out of the wash barrel, all kinds of black grease. No wonder guys get GI shits and colds. Seems like it coats everything in that place. A company mess hall in the field is a greasy mess.

Had guard on the mess hall at night only a half hour walk.

Wednesday we set up a road block against the enemy. We saw few aggressors but a company of them attacked the base camp. When they reached the perimeter the cooks maintaining HQ companies etc. were waiting.

Too bad I had KP Tuesday. There was a big party on the eastern perimeter along the border. The GI's gave the civilians some money and got beer, goodies etc. even a few girls and horses. All this while the Sergeant was gone.

We got rid of our dud commander. We have a new one that lives in Michigan. After the field problem he told the guys what was happening and how they fit in the problem. Something LT Flick never did.

We came back from Wednesday's road block. Had chow and was back on perimeter in half an hour. I only got 2 hours sleep. We were up at 3 am to fill in foxholes, pack, eat and move out. We cleared road blocks and arrived here by 9:30 in the morning.

Spent all day Thursday cleaning stuff. Friday we cleaned and prepared for inspection. I have guard tonight. Tomorrow we have a visitor. He is General H.S. Resor. secretary of the army. He is a 4 star general. The highest I've talked to is General Collins a 2 starer.

. Well I'll close for now.

Ron

Saturday July 2

Dear Mom and Dad

Well today is ruined. It is cold and pouring rain.

I got to bed at 11 pm last night. Was woke up at 3 am by 2 guys that came in STONED. they brought up 4 quarts of beer with them. One broke a bottle against the wall. Later he swept it up. They both finished the 3 bottles , Hid them in the trash can and after a lot of bitching and arguing went to bed at 4:30. Even the Sergeant couldn't get the one out of bed for reveille. Strailey was late and Selenburger never did come back today. So Snelenburger is AWOL. He will catch hell Tuesday. From what I know he went home for the weekend. It is possible but not allowed by a 3 day pass which he doesn't have.

I saw Walter Hardy yesterday. He is stationed in A company near the north Fort. He was down here visiting Mike Parks.

It rained all day, all night Sunday. It is still pouring rain at noon but shows signs of breaking up. I'll take off in the afternoon. Went to the movies instead . Finally stopped raining at 7 pm.

This week we go on a 10 day problem. I'll try to write in between if possible.

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Straity went AWOL and Snelenburger is still gone. I talked to Walter Hardy again tonight. It is getting late again so will close now,

Ron

Saturday

Dear Mom and Dad

This letter is being written from the field. It is the first chance I've had a access to my stuff to write. This has sure been a week of change 99.

Tuesday we got up and got our equipment ready. then first change. We moved out to the field at 4 pm instead of early in the morning. Of the next day. Well there went my planned evening. Also they caught a lot of guys without Sterno, goodies etc. and showers. We got out in our position and at 8 pm got settled in to a line defense.

Wednesday morning we got up had chow and at 11:30 loaded in out tracks for a large mobile defense exercise. Thanks to good ole company A's leadership we were forced to miss noon chow. In order to keep a schedule. Came back from that at 6 pm. Oh well we were finally doing things a mech unit is suppose to do. Thursday we went down the road to secure intersections and other points on the road for Brigade convoy. Our track secured a road junction. We stayed there for 14 hours. Had four meals of C rations and water was hard to get.

Friday we brought up the rear of the convoy and ran clear operations against ambushes. We finally arrived near the base camp, because of some stupid idiot that marked the may wrong we ended up in the wrong place. At 6 pm we arrived here and set up part of a perimeter defense in the wood line. Then the case of the ASS started. We started to dig in. We couldn't get any water. 5 minutes of digging we were ordered to move back 100 meters into the prairie. There was no camouflaged at all. We were a perfect set up for any enemy that wanted to pick us off if he set up in the woods. Everyone was mad cause we were doing such a stupid thing. And, of course ,Ft. Lewis prairie is all rotted in stones. We were told to dig in and then stop. It took them an hour to make-up their mind to finally put us in the proper position. This was 300 meters further down and back in the woods. We then dug our foxholes properly and they were not dress it right and cover down so an aggressor could shoot down a line. At 8:30 we had chow brought to us. Oh yes no water to wash out mess gear. At 9 pm we pitched tents dressed it right and cover down . It took an hour to position the tents. Finally at 10:30 pm we were to go back on line for night defense. They goofed off an hour before finally getting us on line. After an hour later we moved again to another defense position. This meant making up 50 percent before the watch ended. Grabbing all our gear in pitch blackness and setting up again. Only got 2 hrs. sleep last night. The 100% humidity came back in the morning. It is just cloudy and hazy mist.

We had chow, finally got shaved and cleaned from a steal pot of water, and went to bed at base camp for the day. So I thought, Buffalo goofed. We got up at 10 am in order to move our tents a few feet. It is now 11:30. It will probably take all day as they are moving a few at a time. Are using a transit level to line them up and just plain wasting our off hours and tearing up the ground. Seems as thought we are a little off alinement from the other platoons. All the other units were all set in yesterday noon. Many guys had showers last night, but A company is still trying to achieve perfect alignment, They even moved our mess area a few feet. This involved tearing down the big tent and moving the stoves and other heavy gear. Also digging new garbage and gasoline holes. We still haven't moved tents yet. We hurried up and tore down the first row and hour ago, Now we are waiting for the Buffalo with weapon platoon mortar transit to find a location. He will probably goof up and set us on magnetic north instead of grid north.

Oh yes one person has to tear a tent down to move it one inch.

Saturday we went back to perimeter and dug in next to the border fence. Some of the neighbor kids came down and were talking to the guys. They even filled canteens and got goodies for a few of 15th platoon all while the platoon leaders was else where. We came back in the late afternoon . We got out shower gear and loaded on a truck and went on a 10 mile trip. We took a bath in the Nasqualley river. It is a large as the Tittabawassee river with very strong current. It is also ice cold. No one got in water above their knees for long. The river is glacier fed. When we came back we were all dirty as we have to take some very dusty roads and then had to post air guards. So there was no hope of cutting the dust by tying down the canvas.

I am taking slide pictures of the 10 day field exercise. So you can see what it is like out there. Will close now.

Ron

19 June 66 Tuesday. #46

Dear Mom and Dad

Here are my official PFC orders. About 8 others in our platoon got PFC. I knew of the 3 weeks in advance.

Yesterday was the parade. The whole division was down there. It was for one of the Generals. About 10,000 men were there in uniform. All the families and high brass were in the stands. The parade lasted a hour. We practice all morning . We did quite well for once.

Today we took the APC out to the lake. After as short class we rode them across the lake. The door seals work good on our track, no leaks. All tracks have bilge pumps. One track got down in the water. He pumped for 15 minutes. There must have been a very bad seal in this track.

The weather the past few days has been quite nice. I wonder how long it will be this way? Partly cloudy high 60's low 20's 50 at night.

We got shots today. Tomorrow starts 3 days out in the field. We got a battalion ATT next week and then we are done with AIT from then on we do advanced individual training. Well that is all for now.

Ron

Saturday July 23

Dear Mom and Dad

I would have written a day sooner

We had a good field problem. We got up at 5 am. Moved out at 8. arrived at 9:30 in the assembly area. We had all day to dig fox holes. I had a perfect 90 position. It was pointing down the center line of a paved road. the platoon leader called my fox hole a rock garden. I used a lot of large stones to make a small wall on 3 sides, then put the dirt on one side. This made for a neat fox hole with dirt only 2 foot in front of it.

At night we had 50% alert. Almost everyone was as there will be sleep then aggressors were sneaking down the road. Some had infiltrated in. They got the password and tried to sneak out. I asked 2 where they were going. They started running so they got shot at. I took a prisoner when I caught one trying to tippy toe down the road. A squad of them tried to sneak in the position across the road and I got them in a cross fire. They took off. Thursday we had mech attacks on the woodline. On the way there our tracks had to dodge steers and range horses. They are not too scared any more of the noisy tracks.

We came back here at 9 pm. I was in bed at 11 pm. All day Friday was spent in cleaning our stuff. I got the strips and have 4 pairs sewed on already.

Well our day was practically ruined waiting to get off. We finally got off at 2 pm. the battalion AIT is worse then I thought. We get up at 3 am. It will be 5 sleepless days and nights. There will be 2 battalions of aggressors after us so we will be out numbered.

On August 1st I will go to Yakima. I don't know how long we will be there. It will be for more 90 training. I may be able to get leave on the 15th of August, but definitely between the 15 Aug. and 2 Sept.

Well tomorrow I'm stuck on KP. That is about all I can think of to say now.

Will close

Ron

PS Hang on to the pictures. No since sending them back. If I can come home soon.

Thursday 28 July

Dear Mom and Dad

Only 1\4 of the company are PFC are present.

This is written from the field. I

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As far as the field problem goes they goofed and woke us up an hour later. We got up at 4 am instead of 3. We left at 6 am in APC for the field to weir prairie. We had only a short delay. When we arrived we set up part of a brigade perimeter defense. We did not get moved. I dug a regulation 90mm position. then we went through the usual dress it right cover down of tents at the assembly area. We slept there that night.

Tuesday we were assigned a blocking mission. We sat up a line defense along a road. I've never seen our food served so skimpy. Even the platoon leader is complaining about the small portions of food especially when we run out.

General Richardson came and visited the brigade today. The package came today. It had the socks which I can use. Also lots of goodies. I had to throw out the bread. It was covered with mold. probably from the hot weather. It is hot here today, even in the shade.

I guess this mess hall must have us on a crash diet. We are still on a tiny meal. We had a burnt snack for supper and no milk. If this is like this in Vietnam ,the mess hall will probably be torn apart by mad hungry troops.

As much as possible we've tried to treat the problem like the real thing. Still administration crosses it up. Half the guys don't have the password. too many vehicles go in and out on their own.

Well Friday finally arrived. the temperature reached 87 yesterday and about that today, under clear calm skies. So it is hot. I got 4 letters today 3 yesterday.

We got up at 3:30 am packed up and spent all morning guarding the road. In the afternoon we attacked a mock village. Wearing gasmasks. This was plenty hot and they had 2 guys with flame throwers loaded with real tear gas powder. That place was really fouled up as it was cleared all day and one had to mask miles from it We had to put out a fire that started in the dry brush with our mask on as it is the real stuff. We got back here at 6 pm.

I will definitely come home on the 15th. Now that the strike is settled. I will put in my form tomorrow. After pay call I will spend the weekend and next up at Yakima for 5 days. Will close now.

Ron

Tuesday August 2

Dear Mom and Dad

Yakima, Well this morning it was 54 by 4 pm it has reached 95 degrees. Although it didn't feel like it on the Plateau.

Well another crazy record is out. It is called "they took you away and I am glad". The girl friends version to the other one.

There was quite a wild time last night. About half of the guys here went into town and about 1 am started coming back plastered. There were a few near fights and lots of beer cans around. It was also very noisy.

Our day for 90 and 106 was messed up. We couldn't get clearance for 90's. We have at least 6 rounds per person to fire. The 106 people have 400 rounds available for the 4 weapons and their 4 men crew. So this afternoon we went to the 50 caliber range. It wasn't too warm on the plateau except in the afternoon. The wind quit and people started seeking shade. Still one could stay in the sun without sweating. However back at base it is hot. At 7:30 it is better now. I am under a tree and a nice breeze is blowing.

Wednesday the guys had quite a beer blast again, The ones that raised trouble have got the guard and KP tomorrow. and are restricted. The permanent garrison of 100 guys had a beer blast that tore up the PX and NEO club, so they are restricted.

It was nice day today. It did not feel to warm even though it reached 95 today. But then it is cooler and dry in the plateau.

We fired 90mm and had all the ammo we needed plus more. the 106 fired all day with us and still have 250 rounds left. I fired 6 rounds in various positions. I hit 4 tracks altogether at 300-400 meters. I fired the first round today and hit the target at the track level. Only 2 others of the weapons were hitting on target. The other must have not been bores sighted properly. Some were way off in a kneeling position. I hit the pile of junk simulating troops at 400m. the next 2 times on position was standing, I overshot the target. On a 2 shot rapid fired competition exercise. My competitor overshot, I undershot. I got off another round before he did and got a direct hit. My competitor got a hit. Next time on competition my assistant nailed the target. The competitor missed. We switched positions, when I was given the command to fire I opened up within 5 seconds in kneeling position and hit center at 400m. while I was assistant, I reloaded faster.

The 106 had competition firing. They tried the hit and run. They drove the jeep out, loaded, fired and moved out. they tried this only once for all 4. In all the crews left behind 1 loader, had live rounds fall of the jeeps getting away. Even had the squad leader fall off. They also missed their targets. Later they had competition firing of 2 rounds at 2 targets in 15 seconds.

Thursday the 106 crew no 1 set another quick time, 5 seconds for fire and reload. Also 38 seconds for hitting 4 targets at 450m, 900m, 700m, 450m,. They are finally getting most of the 400 rounds shot up.

Today everyone fired the LAW. I was unable to get a used one as they were ordered to turn them all back after they were fired. For only 4 1\2 lbs including launcher and projectile. It can do a lot of damage at quite a surprising range.

We had rain showers today. It was much cooler out there. I found a piece of petrified wood. It is of the very hard minerals. Will scratch glass. The ground here is red clay with iron and volcanic rocks.

The bay was as quiet as usual. There was a green apple fight. The mess was cleaned up afterwards. There were fewer drunk last night. Tomorrow we leave for the main base in buses. It's been almost like a vacation up here yet we got training. Also lots of sleep and a warm place for once without dampness.

Friday last night was party night. The guys raised hell with the MP at Yakima. Something they wouldn't dare do here. They threw apples and yelled insults. The MP's had all kinds of patrols out, there are only a half a dozen on the whole post. So you can see why a hundred half drunk would pester them.

We left at 11 am and got here at 3 pm by bus. I sent in 2 rolls of film, one color, one color slides. I also brought back 3 rolls of slides to bring home.

Well, they have been firing machine guns and explosives here. We fire m16's next week. If things work out I will make it home by Saturday morning. Will close now

Ron