

Monday Aug. 1st

Dear Mom and Dad,

I came back here at 8 p.m.. There was really a party still going. Guys still drinking beer even upstairs. They tore up a few beds and knocked over a wall locker. By 10:30 all was quiet.

We got up at 5 a.m. to get ready for the trip. We loaded on buses at 7 a.m. and left at 7:30. Had only one delay on the way to change a tire on the bus. Reached the pass at 11 a.m.. The snow is all gone except for small patches in the high mountains. In the next hour of travel you could tell the difference in the climate. Reached Yakima at 2 p.m..

I went out on the range on a detail. It was nice up there. Wasn't too warm and a nice breeze. It is dry as usual. The temperature was 95 officially at the time. You do roast in the truck as well as any place out of the breeze in the sun. The forecast for the next five days is above normal. High for tomorrow possibly 100 yet low in the 50's. Well tomorrow we start on the range firing. From the base you can hear the steers mooing and a horse whinny. Saw three in the range itself. The fruit on the trees are still green. Everything is irrigated, even the pastures near the river.

Well I will close now. I did take a roll of pictures and bought three slide rolls to bring home.

Ron

Aug. 8th 1966

Dear Mom and Dad,

This will probably be the last letter till I get home.

Things are finally getting settled. I got a ticket from here to Chicago for Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m.. I cannot at the present get a flight to Tri City Airport. They say there is no service from Chicago to either Tri City or Flint. I will have to take a bus unless the strike is ended before I leave. Right now Northwest has two special Military only flights, One at 4:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m..

Got a letter today with three slides.

Well if all goes well I shall be home early Sunday morning or sooner. Will close now,

Ron

August 29th, 1966 #1

Dear Mom and Dad

The plane flight went very well.

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There were two flights that left at 1 a.m. for Seattle. Both were United Jets and only a Dozen stand-by got on them. I got a picture of flight 147 as it flew over flight 2137. Chicago was so busy there was a line of seven planes, one left each minute and sooner. We flew at 3500 ft. the other at 3700 ft. The Cascade Mts. were real pretty. I got color pictures of them. I landed at 3 p.m. PST. Got at the base at 4 p.m..

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Over half of the guys that left first half are AWOL including Ed Shell. There are only seven fellows in 3rd plt. today. And only four are back from leave. One left today and one is processing to Fort Dix. One is getting out as he suddenly became sole surviving son. He is a dud anyway so no great loss. Those that are AWOL are going to get a court marshal.

Today we packed most of the stuff. The ice machine is here. I built a crate around it. Had every officer in our company say it was an excellent job. Everything not personal to us is crated and put in connex containers they also have ammo and c rations GI cans, 5 gallons, tents, cots in connex containers or 5 ton trucks.

Tomorrow I get KP. So I have to get up early for that again. Took two rolls of pictures from the plane. I bought four rolls last night inc. 2 of slides. Will close now,

Ron

PS There are lots of guys that complained they were home sick.

#2 Sept. 1

Dear Mom and Dad

Guess what I got stuck with? I was put in charge of loading the General cargo connex containers. There were all kinds of room. And we still had six left over. Of the ones we filled half was necessary stuff as tents, cots, poles, mess gear, etc. Of the unnecessary stuff was lumber, plywood, Even a box full of sandbags with sand. 1,000lbs paint, an ice machine. A box contains a Lt. air conditioner, two stolen mattresses and my cowboy hat. I even got a big box for my own use. It is 2 1/2 x 4 x 6 and contains my bike. Yes I'm taking it as they had the room and it is OK to take it. Actually it is being smuggled as it is not authorized but what a battalion doesn't know won't hurt them anyhow air conditioners aren't authorized either.

The first Sergeant even wanted to take a bike but couldn't find a used one in time to pack as like I, he found out at the last moment that there was lots of room and empty boxes. We took every scrap of wood we could find in the building. We even tore apart boxes, stole a pile of 2x4 form headquarters, tore down cupboards, wood partitions in the day room, supply room. Until we filled every corner with wood. They are finally finished tonight. There are only 40 persons around inc. Sergeants and Lt's. 16 men are AWOL. The rest are home.

Got a letter mailed Monday from home.

Next week is regular training, class, marching, etc. and nights off. The pictures are back. They are all excellent. Last night and even tonight I was telling as high as E5 where stuff was to go. The company commander was watching tonight until we finished. The biggest problem in loading was keeping the guys working. That was solved tonight when some Sergeants started yelling. We got done at 6:30 p.m.. Now everyone is gone. Will close now,

Ron

PS keep the slides. I can't store them.

#3 Sept. 5th

Dear Mom and Dad

Well Thursday night we jammed most of the connex containers full of wood. They found some room yet so I took two guys with me to grab a load of 2x4's. They loaded the connex on trucks as fast as I sealed the door with metal banding.

Then the worst deal, we had to prepare for a surprise inspection. The Sergeant and I cleaned up the bay in the evening. The other three got off detail and we set up our display and went to bed at 11 pm.

We got up at 4:30 for prepare for inspection by a four star General, who never showed up. However, a Major and one star general checked the place in advance. At 11 am it was guard mount. The OD was too busy on equipment checking to inspect us. I was lucky enough to have battalion guard as I got off at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. Those guarding Tacoma dock got off at 7:30 p.m. Sunday. The funny thing here is that. We had loaded weapons and the Tacoma guard had no weapons.

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A very crazy thing happened Tuesday night. One of the guys who is a nut anyhow got a little drunk and went crazy although it was more of a self punishment temper tantrums. He is no longer with us as he shipped out the next day to another outfit. I bet they have fun with him.

Tomorrow we have regular training. The Sarge wants to borrow my maps of the post for map training class. I got five maps of all of Fort Lewis. The 1st Sergeant threw them away.

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. Well we only get up at 5:45 tomorrow. So I will head for bed. I bought two packages of Rit dye in Spanaway, So I will be busy with the laundry tomorrow. Will close now,

Ron

Tuesday Sept. 7 #4

Dear Mom and dad

Well I got stuck on another project. I have to build some boxes to lock up weapons while we are on the boat. I got one nearly finished today. I have rows of pistols and places for m79 grenade launchers. I have to build two more similar boxes to hold all the weapons. So tonight I got guard anyway. I did get the post here instead of at Tacoma dock.

I heard on the radio this morning that a Starlifter transport jet exploded at Mc Chord. I did hear a bang at 6:30 a.m.. But thought it was revile at the main post area. From the picture in the paper it was quite a mess. They have been making practice landing runs here so it has been noisy. None of them flew today.

I dyed my underwear last night. I also bought three extra underpants and dyed them also. I used the washer. It worked real good. I washed pants afterwards to clean out the machine. Other guys are getting dye now.

Got two letters one mailed 3 and 6.

. Well will close now,

Ron

Monday Sept. 12th

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well I think the rainy season came back although it was nice today. Saturday was nice out except it got cloudy about evening and started to rain.

Today we had the usual dud classes. There was bayonet practice which the 45 were left out. Also, machine gun assembly and disassembly. Which I tore apart and put back together in one minute. I started supervising loading connex's today. We quit at 4:30.

We are going on the Gorden. *Actually, shipped on the Walker.* We are taking another boat. There will be 3000 troops on it in all on several boats as well as all our cargo.

Tonight I am dying some clothes a darker color as well as some I missed. I also did my walking tonight.

Already, I am feeling the inconvenience of shipping out. We have to take our own silverware and cups. Lt. made us turn in all bedding except for one blanket. For the next week we will sleep with one blanket on a bare mattress and pillow. Soon we will have to take mess kits. Soon we will go to another mess hall. Well will close now.

Ron

Sept. 15

Dear Mom and Dad

Well we are not leaving on the 17th but instead next week. We will be sailing on the Walker, when it is repaired. The 1st and 8th moved out on our boat yesterday. I may send home more of my pictures, but that depends on how conditions are over there. I cannot save any letters over there. There may be a stretch of a few weeks with no letters. As mail will only be taken off the boat while at dock. I'll know only when I'm on my way.

I am finally finished with the packaging detail. I even gave a class on compass. One of the Sergeants had an appointment and asked me if I give the class, So I did. There has just been classes and PT this week so we haven't done much.

A strange thing this week. All the guys are going to bed at 9 p.m. lately. Evidently it was a rough leave for them. As far as the AWOL's there has been about seven court marshals already. And article 15's waiting for those late only a few days. There are special court marshals waiting for the long AWOL's including Ed Shell. They are not getting away with it. A platoon in Charley company is in for it. Seems though some guys got plastered and had a riot. I counted 30 broken windows in that bay. So they are restricted for a while.

Well I think we will still get a weekend off. This is a surprise to me but only because of the change in boats.

I have no idea on how the picture developing service will work. But I get combat pictures I will have to hold on them and develop them at home.

Got a letter yesterday and one today from home.

. Oh yes I think you have read of guys sniffing glue. Well there is a nut around here that does just that. He walks around with a dazed look. Well will close now.

Ron

Sept. 18 66

Dear Mom and Dad

I am doing laundry tonight. The lines were jammed again so was unable to call home.

Found out more about the boat trip. The boat sails Thursday. The trip should take 14 to 18 days. We are not going to Pleaku but instead to the Delta Country. I don't know exactly where. There will be no mail during the trip. But it will be waiting for us at the end of the boat trip. Same thing with mail sent.

We pack our bags Monday and have a practice drill Tuesday. I've got most the stuff I need. So, I am all set. The guys that were AWOL are going to catch the KP on the boat so the rest of us should be on the deck sunning ourselves and probably wishing it was going the other way.

Our mission over there will be two months training then it will be missions every few days. Lasting from a few hours to a day. We will probably use the tracks a lot but some missions will be on foot.

Well that's all I can think of for now. Will close

Ron

Last letter state side Wednesday.

Dear Mom and Dad

Well this is the last night here. I am sending a picture back. If you send pictures they should be of the Polaroid or black and white until I learn more about the situation over there as we have to destroy mail and I may have to tear up pictures is we are on patrol and get mail.

We will exchange our money for a special Military currency. This changes every six months. It is good only on the base there and is intended to keep US money out of Vietnam. They cannot use this money.

We have been warned in advance that tomorrow we will be treated like little kids by the navy. With 3000 troops on board it is going to be cramped.

It should be wild here tonight. Everyone is getting stoned. Even the sergeants and LT. We are now sleeping on one blanket and mattress. The phones are jammed. My next letter I will mail from Okinawa. We will be restricted to the boat. No one gets off there. So I will close now,

Ron