

17 May 67

Dear Mike and John

It was real good to hear from you. The feeling was something like getting on the train to go to camp for the first time. I meant to write not only to you but to Dennis also; the time goes by so very fast that I always put letters off until the very end. If you see George tell him he had better write or there will be trouble when I get home.

I am glad you said something about the demonstrations. Most people who write to me are afraid to mention them. It is good to see that there are still some people who care enough to say and do what they feel is right. My morale is great (95 days) and don't feel you are preaching to me. Before I came over I thought it was a just move, patriotic, and my duty. In the passing months I find this is not true. If I told you all of it, I would sound corny. Maybe I was fooled by American propaganda but still I'm glad I came at least I know what is happening over here. I don't have to take LBJ's McNamara's or Wayne Morse's word on these conditions.

The greater majority of troops here are just like the American public. They really don't know what is happening. They meet only the girls in the bars and judge all Vietnamese by them. Sure they have all the LBJ and "McArmy" answers, "We have to stop Communism, the Vietnamese people need our help, and do you want to fight in Oregon". I don't believe people really want to think about Vietnam. Before I came over I wondered what the real story is and today I still don't know. It is a confused mess with many questions and few answers. I have found a few answers to my questions - - the American people are being fooled, Ho Chi Minh would probably win an election (free or not), stepping up the war won't necessarily stop it, and what do most people feel toward American, freedom and Ky.

Why are we stopping Communism in Vietnam – why didn't we step in Tibet or Hungry in 1956? What would my defense be if someone questioned why the killing "just following orders". Sounds like the Nazis at the War Trials. Are we showing we are a great and powerful nation by killing and destroying? The reasons for helping the Vietnamese deal with man's universal freedom and not economic? Does Robert Strange (that's his middle name) McNamara have his hair styled by somebody from the Department of Parks?

I am all for peace demonstrations. I don't see how anybody can be for anything else but peace. We talked over the demonstrations and I have to defend them. Most of the guys are satisfied with hearing that the demonstrators were "Pinko Commie College Bastards", only the "Beatniks" march - the responsible people are never mentioned. It is easy to slip into this groove for then everybody throws pity on the poor soldier. For very selfish reasons I am glad I'm here; I needed to find out about myself. I could not have kept faith with myself knowing that men were dying over here. Now after these many

months I see both clearer. If more people got off their ass and did something instead of talking then we would have less experts and more Americans. Anti-war does not make one Anti-American. People must start thinking for themselves; I know for too long I was one who didn't. To be honest I was a clod and a boring fool because of it. I can't say Vietnam changed me but I have grown. Enough of this shit.

How are you doing in school? Pat Rose (you remember her) tells me you are still there physically. What are you doing if Rowan's and McSherry's are out? I hear Billy's is better than ever at its new location.

Speaking of getting laid – that is one of the things Vietnam is noted for. If they could ever export it - they would be the world's next great power. Some of the women are very beautiful and the other extreme is here too.

I really can't wait to get out of this stupid Army. I hate it so much – at least I only have to play the game for a few more months. They even broke down and promoted me to Spec 4 – Wow!

What are your plans for the summer? I better go – write when you get a chance. Good luck with finals.

Larry Soldier

P.s. This letter is not as long as it looks – short paper.