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August 18th Letter from Don Yeager to the Yeager Family

Don Yeager

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AUG 18

DEAR MOM + DAD -

Aug 18

GOT YOUR LETTER, INCLUDING THE ARTICLE; THEY SURE DID SCREW UP ABOUT ME. I ALSO GOT THE BOX OF TOWELS - THANK YOU. THE RECEIPT IS FOR MY DEPOSIT OF THE \$500.00.

YESTERDAY, I MAILED HOME A PACKAGE CONTAINING SOME OUTDATED INDO-CHINESE MONEY, A COUPLE OF LITRE NUTS, A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL FROM OUR OWN ARTILLERY THAT BARELY MISSED ME ONE NIGHT, AND MY WRISTWATCH YOU GAVE ME WHEN I GOT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. THE CRYSTAL IS CRACKED, & IT LEAKS MOISTURE, & IS DIRTY. I WANT TO KEEP IT, TO GIVE TO ONE OF MY KIDS SOMEDAY. I HOPE IT ALL GETS HOME OK. I CAN GET A CHEAP WATCH OVER HERE, ONE

(2)

THAT GLOWS IN THE DARK SO I CAN PULL GUARDS & KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS. I'VE WRITTEN A COUPLE OF LETTERS SINCE THE 31ST, SO I GUESS YOU'VE RECEIVED THEM BY NOW, BUT IF YOU HAVEN'T, IT'S BECAUSE OF THE MAIL SCREW-UP OVER HERE. WHEN I'M OUT IN THE FIELD, I GIVE MY LETTERS TO THE DOOR GUNNERS ON THE CHOPPERS WHEN THEY COME IN. I SUPPOSE THEY OCCASSIONALLY FORGET ABOUT THEM, BUT THEY'RE USUALLY PRETTY RELIABLE, AS MANY OF THEM WERE ONCE LINE DOGGIES ALSO. THESE LAST TWO WEEKS WE'VE BEEN OPERATING IN THE FLATLANDS AND VILLAGES. WE'VE BEEN IN SOME HAIRY FIREFIGHTS, & I'M SORRY TO SAY, WE'VE HAD ONE GUY

(3) KILLED, + SEVERAL WOUNDED BY VARIOUS MEANS. NOW WE'RE ON PERIMETER GUARD AT L. Z. ENGLISH, SO IT'S PRETTY SAFE. I CAN FEEL MYSELF CHANGING IN MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS ALL THIS, + SOME GUY SAID I ALREADY LOOK OLDER, BUT I DOUBT IT. I'VE SEEN A LOT OF CIVILIANS DIE AS A RESULT OF INDISCRIMINATELY THROWN HAND GRENADES, + CARELESS BURSTS FROM AN M-16. I'VE SEEN ONE PERSON DUMPED (DEAD) DOWN A WELL SHAFT, + ANOTHER WHO DIED MOMENTS BEFORE THE DUSTOFF CHOPPER ARRIVED, BE PUT ON, + THE CHOPPER MEDIC FOUND OUT THE GUY WAS DEAD, SO THEY THREW HIM OUT OF THE CHOPPER. ALL THIS +

④ MORE IS WHAT I'VE SEEN, & I THINK I'M TAKING DEATH RATHER CASUALLY. I STILL DON'T LIKE TO SEE IT, & I DON'T BEAT OLD MEN + WOMEN LIKE MANY OF THE MEN DO, BUT I THINK IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME AS MUCH AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD. NOW, I THINK OF WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE I LEFT, ABOUT THIS TYPE OF THING GOING ON FOR ALL OF MAN'S HISTORY, WITH NO FORSEEABLE CHANGE IN THE FUTURE, AND I THINK I'M "GLAZING IT OVER." IN ANY CASE, IT'S NOT GOING TO DRIVE ME CRAZY. WAR IS WAR, AND I'VE STILL GOT 10 MONTHS HERE, & ON THE LINE. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW AND IF I CHANGE, & IN WHAT WAYS. DID I TELL YOU I'M THINKING OF

PS: THE REASON YOU DON'T HEAR ABOUT THE 173 IS BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY OUTFIT RECEIVING JOINT PAY; THE OTHERS ARE JEALOUS, & THEY'RE BIG & CAN GET MORE CONTROL OF THE PAPERS. THEY'RE DIVISIONS; WE'RE ONLY 1 BRIGADE.

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EXTENDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL 5 MONTH TILL MY E.T.S. IN NOV., BUT THIS WILL ALL DEPEND ON MY RANK, AND WHETHER OR NOT I CAN GET THE KIND OF JOB I WANT, WHICH WILL BE IN THE REAR AREAS, LIKE AN KHE. IF I DID, I WOULD GET A GOOD LEAVE, & COME BACK WITH LESS THAN 4 MONTHS TO SERVE HERE. THAT WAY, I WOULD ALSO HAVE A CONSIDERABLY LARGER BANK ACCOUNT. MARY SAID SHE HAS FROM FEB 1 TO FEB 10 OFF, & SHE WOULD LOVE TO COME TO HAWAII, SO I ~~WILL~~ ^{WILL} TRY TO GET MY R&R FOR THE FIRST OF FEB. I HOPE YOU CAN BE THERE AT THAT TIME. WRITE & TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF

⑥ THIS PLAN. I THINK THAT MARY'S PEOPLE WILL HELP HER OUT IF SHE'S SHORT ON FUNDS, BUT IF THEY DON'T, I'LL LEND HER THE MONEY. WHAT'S THE LATEST WORD ON JACKIE'S MONEY AT CAMPANILE? I HOPE YOU ROAST THEM GOOD. WELL, I'M IN GOOD SPIRITS, + MY HEALTH IS OK, + NOBODY'S SHOOTING AT ME RIGHT NOW, SO I GUESS EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT AT THIS END. I'LL GO DOWN TO THE SHOWER POINT + TRY TO SCRUB OFF SOME JUNGLE ROT THAT'S ON MY NECK, + I'LL DROP THESE LETTERS OFF TODAY. I'VE WRITTEN 8 LETTERS TODAY! THAT'S AMAZING FOR ME. SAY HI TO SHARON + SUSIE, + FAT MICK + LINDA. TELL MICK TO JOIN THE COAST GUARD - THEY REALLY GET OVER. TAKE CARE. LOVE, Don