

Monday, Nov 21st (I think)

Dear Gentlings -

I must apologise for being so lax about writing. To be truthful, amongst many excuses such as "I have to write Nancy every day" or "I have to pay all my bills" or "they keep me too busy", tho these have had some effect, I haven't written because I've been too lazy! As soon as I get off work at Fort Lewis - I head into town to drink some Loganberry wine and chase girls. Needless to say, I never caught any (girls, that is) until 4 days before I left, but it was a fun 4 days. Anyway, I apologise for not writing.

Now that I'm here in Vietnam (more to come), I do have time to write - mainly because I must get mail from home or else I really will have a breakdown. If you all can spare the time, I wish you would try to write. I'm curious to know if Stu is still up there, and, if so, how you're doing - I would even rather be in horrible Philadelphia than in ultra-horrible Vietnam.

I left Washington exactly a week ago, and
(over)

flew to Saigon via Honolulu, Guam, and Manila. Saigon wasn't bad. We stayed in a hotel with maids, air conditioning, and running water (you wouldn't believe the quality of these things, tho), but we were close to sort of a civilization. While we were there, 5 Vietcong were killed, and I was attacked in the market by 7 or eight Vietcong (I'm sure) shoe-shine boys who grabbed me by the legs and wouldn't let go until they'd shined my shoes despite my struggling and screaming "No Money" (which usually does the trick). When I refused to pay them, I was rewarded with the title of "Cheap Charlie" which I'll forever treasure. Here at Cam Ranh Bay, we live in tents (just like boy scouts) and stay filthy and sandy and disgusted. They say there's a PX (store) over the hill, but as yet I haven't been able to walk over there. Maybe today. To be honest with you, I have always felt I could take just about anything, but if I can smile thru this god-damned year, I'll be quite sure I'm Superman himself. I haven't been over here long yet, I and I try

to be as open-minded as possible about it as I can, but so far the American occupation of this country seems to have done two things to these people: 1) it's made whores out of the women, and 2) it's made beggars out of the rest. Vietnam is similar to the poorest areas of Mexico and I have no doubt at all from what I've ~~seen~~ seen so far that the standard of living here would have to be multiplied several times in order to sustain any semblance of free capitalism. I truly think some sort of socialist economy would be best for these people. They don't give a damn about anything except where they'll get their next meal. It's really pathetic; the ones who work, work so very hard, but there are so few of them, and they'll never get ahead. Capitalism will never work in a society which is as class oriented as this country. Maybe things will appear different as I stay here longer, but so far it's just ~~as~~ as I thought it would be.

(over)

Have a Merry Christmas and be thankful
you aren't here - it's really bad. I may send
a few local t-shirts back if I ever get a chance
to buy any, but don't count on it.

Take good care of yourselves and give
my best to the rest of your family. Don't for-
get to write if you can.

Sincerely,

Bill

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