

C U R R A H E E



A CHAPLAIN'S DIARY OF VIET NAM

CHAPLAIN (CPT) WILLIAM P. WEBB
JULY 1968 - JULY 1969

DEDICATED TO MY THREE
CHILDREN:

JEFFREY SHAWN WEBB

MEGHAN ALICIA TEDER

SHANNON AINE PONS

From time to time you have asked questions about my time in Viet Nam. This is my answer to those questions. What I have written is not for publication - it is for family. For months I have read and reread the diary I kept in Viet Nam. The format of this booklet is that of a diary. I have viewed slides of pictures taken there and in Hawaii. I hope you enjoy reading it.

This is for you!
I LOVE YOU!

DAD

C U R R A H E E
ONE CHAPLAIN'S DIARY OF HIS TOUR IN VIET NAM
CHAPLAIN (CPT) WILLIAM P. WEBB 1968-1969

I first became interested in the Chaplaincy when I was a senior at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. We had "Chaplain's Day" on campus and an Air Force Chaplain spoke during chapel. He briefly outlined the work of a chaplain and said he would be available for interviews following the service. I was interested! I became more interested after talking with him. I discovered chaplains did more than just sit in their office and read books. They actually spent time with their men doing the same things they did. I had always been athletic and that sounded good to me.

However, when I began to fill out all the forms required by the military I began to get cold feet. I had just been married to my High School sweetheart and I didn't like the idea of been separated from her. I knew the military often sent soldiers on a tour of duty that didn't allow the wife to go along. I didn't want that at all! I put the papers in a drawer and forgot about them.

Every-once-in-awhile the interest in military chaplaincy would come up. Finally, after nine years of marriage and three children, I thought a year away from home might not be bad. I enlisted in the Army and was sworn in before my church, the Bethany Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida. The next day I flew out of Orlando on my way to Fort Hamilton, New York. For the next two months I would be attending the Army Chaplain's Basic Course.

When I finished the Chaplain's Basic Course I was told, "Expect orders to Viet Nam within twelve months." My first Army assignment as a Chaplain was to Fort Benning, Georgia. That was a good place for a young Chaplain to learn the basics of Army life. I was fortunate! My Installation Chaplain was Chaplain (Colonel) Holland Hope. He was a veteran of many years and had a heart for helping new Chaplain's get started. Later, I would model my career as a supervisory chaplain after the example he set. He and Mrs. Hope made a good team.

While at Fort Benning I contacted strep throat. I have never been so sick and my throat so sore in my life. Mrs. Hope came to my rescue with some homemade chicken soup. After several days of eating nothing, her warm soup tasted so good. I don't believe I have ever had soup that was that good. Chaplain Hope called to say, "Don't worry about your Sunday services. I will fill in for you." A full-colonel was going to fill in for a newly commissioned captain.

Later, when I wanted to take airborne training chaplain Hope and my commander, Colonel Davis, a Medal of Honor winner, helped me cut through the red tape. When I first tried I was turned down because they said, "We are training only men who are assigned to an airborne unit." I replied, "Ok, assignment me," but that wasn't in their plans. It was Chaplain Hope and Colonel Davis who were able to pull the right strings and get me the airborne training. I have forever been grateful to them and very proud to wear that little badge.

At Fort Benning my first assignments were: Chaplain to CTC (a unit of clerks and WAC's), the Confinement Facility, and the Post Sunday School. Later I was assigned to the Basic Training Center. That was a job I loved! As a Basic Training Chaplain I did everything the men did. If they marched five miles, I was with them. If they crawled the infiltration course, I crawled with them. If they fired on the range, I was right there with them. Later, when I took training to go to Viet Nam, when it came time to qualify with the M-16, the Sergeant told me, "Chaplain, you can go home now." I told him I would really like to qualify on the M'16. In Viet Nam I never carried a weapon, but I knew if I ever needed a weapon there would be some around that I could pick up. To my amazement I not only qualified, but I fired EXPERT! They awarded me the Expert Rifleman's badge. That made an impression on the Basic Training Center personnel - an expert badge and an airborne badge - what a chaplain!

Orders to Viet Nam finally arrived. At first it seemed a long time away, but soon we were clearing post and cleaning quarters for our move of the family to Florida. Linda and I talked of moving back home - which would have been Orlando. But our children dreamed of moving back to our church field, which had been home to them. We found a cute little house on 2010 Spooner Drive, in Plant City, Florida. This was made possible by C.T. Lewis - a contractor who had taken this home in on trade. The date was 7 June 1968. This was the first home Linda and I had purchased. I was thrilled! The payments were \$100 a month and Mr. Lewis said, "If you don't want to keep it when you return from Viet Nam, I will buy it back." Thank you, kind sir!

Time seemed to fly and before I was ready I was at the airport getting ready to depart for Viet Nam. I have to admit I wasn't the strong airborne soldier when it came time to leave my family. Tears were rolling down my cheek. I actually sat in my airplane seat and thought about getting up and not going. But I knew I couldn't do that. So many others had gone before me and many more would follow. My pride wouldn't let me disgrace myself or my family. I would go and it would turn out to be one of the best years of my ministry to others.

This is a note I found in my suitcase. Linda has a habit of putting these little notes for me to find when I go on a trip from home:

"Dear One, thank you for leaving us in such good shape. You proved your love for us, and that means a lot. We will prove our love for you, daily, in our prayers and in our thoughts. Rest assured that a part of you will be with us at all times. We are very proud of you and thankful that God chose you to do His work. When He asked, "Who will go for Me?" thank God you forsook all and daily followed Him. This thought makes separation easier. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." Love Linda and Kids"

The first stop was in Oakland, California. The Army had issued me so much equipment I had difficulty carrying it. I wrestled with two duffle bags full only to have it taken away when I arrived in Viet Nam. There I was issued completely different uniforms and equipment.

The second stop was in Honolulu, Hawaii. There I walked around the airport and thought of Rest and Recuperation (R&R) which would come for me about nine months later. I just thought how nice it would be to share that time with Linda. I had been gone from home for only a few hours - but it already seemed like ages.

The third stop was on the tiny island of Guam. I thought of the battle of Guam during World War II. It was such a small, sandy place. It didn't appear to be much larger than the military airport. It was just a gas stop for the plane and stretch the legs for the soldiers. We were not there long.

The fourth stop was in Ben Hoi, Viet Nam. I was impressed with the beauty of Viet Nam from the air. There were lots of green vegetation growing. Ben Hoi was a large Air Force Base and Army compound. I was such a green horn there. I really thought when I stepped off the plane that I would immediately start receiving fire from the enemy. It didn't happen and it was there that I received my new uniform and I learned what my assignment for the next year would be. The assignment officer said, "I can give you your patch, but not the pay." I was assigned to the 101st Airborne Unit, 3d of the 506 Infantry Battalion, located in Phan Thiet, Viet Nam. I was a CURRAHEE! The reason I would not get airborne pay was that I arrived on 8 July 1968 and the 101st had been changed from an airborne unit to an airmobile unit on 1 July 1968. It didn't matter! I am very proud to have worn the "Screaming Eagle."

While I was processing in I strutted around like an airborne chaplain. I purchased some cigars and walked and puffed. At one place I overheard a sergeant say, "Here comes another airborne chaplain." It was in

reference to the cigar. I put it down and never smoked again in Viet Nam. I didn't want to do anything that would ruin my testimony.

Finally all the processing was over and I was on a plane to Phu Bai where I would meet my Brigade Chaplain, Chaplain Libby (Major). He welcomed me, told me some scary war stories and said my unit was the 3/506 Separate Battalion in Phan Thiet. We were away from the main forces of the 101st Airborne Division. Being a separate Battalion meant we had our own Engineers, Helicopters, and artillery - anything we needed so we could function. As the only chaplain I had my hands full trying to minister to 3,000 to 4,000 soldiers. I wrote this in my diary on 13 July, "I am happy to be here. I feel this is where the Lord wants me. I am anxious to start working with the men. I pray I can do a good job.



HEADQUARTERS - 3/506TH INFANTRY



GOOD PLACE FOR A FLORIDA BOY -
RIGHT ON SOUTH CHINA SEA

In reporting to the Commander, LTC Walter E. Price, he asked me how I planned on serving as a chaplain to his unit. This is basically what I said to him: "Sir, I believe a chaplain should be with his men. I plan on visiting the five companies in the field and having services for them. From time to time I will rotate among those companies and stay with them until their next resupply. I also have a responsibility to the Aviators and Engineers, along with the MACV people assigned in Phan Thiet. To visit them, and have services I will require time to do that. I plan to be on the go while I am in this unit." A big smile came over his face. He reached out, shook my hand, and said, "Chaplain, that's exactly what I wanted to hear." I didn't tell him I had talked with his former chaplain, James Burnham, when I was in Ben Hoi.

One of the first men I met in Phan Thiet was my Chaplain Assistant, Specialist 4 Mike Smith. I knew right away that he was a good man and I will have several stories that will prove that I was right.

It was a busy year. I think I earned four or five Air Medals just from flying to various units. During the year I conducted an average of ten worship services every week and there were over 1,000 professions of faith. I did baptize a few of these in the South China Sea. We built a chapel in which the men at LZ Betty could worship. Along with these experiences I collected some "War Stories" and just "yarns" that I would like to share with you. Here is what my time in Phan Thiet, Viet Nam was like. I have followed the writings in my diary which I kept for the year I was in Viet Nam.

On July 17th I had my introduction to what my year in Viet Nam was going to be like. First of all I found that I was welcome and accepted by the men. I know because they were teasing me. They knew I was new in country and they would ask me how many days I had left. Of course all of them would counter with I have 31 days or 63 days, or some number just to let me know they were short - at lease they were going home a lot sooner than I was. It was fun! I also had my first service. A platoon was going out on a mission. I had a communion service for them. That same night I went to the Aid Station. Wounded were being brought in. There were eleven - but none serious. Later that night there were a total of 28 wounded and 2 soldiers killed.

Going to the field to stay several days was both exciting and scary. The mosquitoes were not as bad as I had imagined. About 1600 hours (4:00 p.m.) we took several rounds from snipers. I was with B company. They captured two VC in a rice paddy. These men were probably warning other VC as we had APC and tanks. Later that night we were harassed one more time with rifle fire and mortars. The commander called in artillery and we sat back and watched a great display of fire power - what a fourth of July - well, at least it was July.

I was not impressed by the Vietnamese soldiers. We were in their country fighting their war, but they didn't seem to care. That was one part of the war that I really didn't like. I'm sure they had some dedicated soldiers. I just didn't see many of them where I served.

Of course soldiers dream about their wives back home. I remember one night I rolled over to put my arm around Linda - and poof! I woke up because my arm hit open space. Later that night I dreamed I was calling her on the phone, but I couldn't remember her phone number. Again I woke up, and I couldn't go back to sleep until I remembered the number.

I wrote earlier about my assistant, Mike Smith. He planned and carried out a scholarship program for Vietnamese students to attend the local Catholic High School. Mike raised over \$1,000 from churches and individuals in the states and the men in our unit. On the sixth of August Mike and I went to the Catholic School where he presented

scholarships to 52 students. He was a very proud young man. Mike also taught English at this same school. Not far from the school was an orphanage. Many of the orphans were of American decent. Mike would collect C-Rations that the soldiers did not want and take them to the orphanage. I'm certain he saved many lives with this good work.



SOME OF MIKE'S STUDENTS

One of my biggest concerns with the men is their use of filthy language. I warned them that it would get them in trouble some day. I told them they would return home and be with their girl friend, wife, or mother and the words will come out. Then they would be embarrassed. They just laughed. One of the men did tell me it happened to him on R & R.

Another problem is when some of the single men go on R&R they find bargirls that will sleep with them for the week - for a fee. They return to their unit in love. They want to get married. Many of these girls are in Taipei. These men don't seem to understand that these girls change men every week.



Today I went to the field with the men and we hiked over mountains. That was rough! I was out of breath and soaking wet with sweat. During the night it rained. Good part of that is it cools you off. The heat in Viet Nam is hot and muggy. The rain feels good. The next day as we came down the mountain we crossed a small bubbling stream. The water was crystal clear! There are parts of Viet Nam that are very beautiful. I

was with Charlie Company. As we cross the stream we made our way through tall grass and bamboo, someone spotted a VC in a tree and fired on him, but he was able to get away. The company commander decided that was a good place for us to spend the night. It rained all night and the next day. This took place on the 15th of August. I remember it because for two days it rained. I remember because I had to sleep in water. When I arrived back at LZ Betty - which is what our base camp was named - a shower, shave, hair cut and fresh cloths sure felt good. Some of the soldiers expressed surprise that the chaplain would be out there with

them and that I wasn't carrying a weapon. I didn't tell them that the Geneva Convention does not allow a chaplain to carry a weapon in war.

From time to time I would be visited by chaplains from other units. On the 17th of August - my tenth wedding anniversary - I was visited by Chaplain (Col) Richard Bell and Chaplain (LTC) Van Dyke. I was able to get us a helicopter and from ten to four that day we visited units in the field and had eleven services. I tried to call Linda on our MARS station, but it was being moved and wasn't working. I did write her a thirteen page letter. A lot was on my mind that night.

I began to feel like I was making some headway with the men when a First Sergeant came by to tell me he would be in chapel on Sunday. A First Sergeant has a lot of influence on the men. I was really enjoying my work in Phan Thiet. On one occasion I wrote in my diary, "This day I liked. I was busy with five services. I love to work with these men. The work is getting better every day."

Being in a war zone does not mean you are always wading through rice paddies or climbing some mountain while under fire. For example, on one occasion I flew to Thien Gion to be with "B" Company for the day. I ate with them and played darts and pitched horse shoes. Lunch that day was Chow Mein, and it was good! On another occasion I flew to Nha Trang to attend a Chaplain's retreat. It was held in the Special Forces Chapel and led by

Chaplain Bell. Saw my room mate from Chaplain's School, Carter Hudson. He was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. We had a long talk about our assignment in Viet Nam, going to Hawaii to meet our wives, and where we would like to be assigned next. That night I stayed with Chaplain (COL) Richard Bell. He lives in a hotel. We saw the movie "How To Save A Marriage And Ruin Your Life," a comedy. It was good and we watched it on the roof of the hotel where Chaplain Bell lived.



CHAPLAIN CARTER HUDSON - MY ROOMMATE IN CHAPLAIN'S SCHOOL



A GOOD GAME OF HORSESHOES

Back at LZ Betty, when the soldiers would return to get a little rest, they lived in large tents. The command was doing what it could to make life a little better. They began to build Quonset huts. These would be much better and hopefully safer. I talked with the XO, Major Edison Who said he hoped they could use a Quonset hut for a chapel. At the current time we were using the briefing room. I didn't know it at the time, or even dream about it, but later we would build a nice chapel with two offices and three bedrooms. That story will come later.

From time to time we get mortared at LZ Betty. The mortars don't worry you, unless they are landing nearby. When they start I just lie still and take note of where they are landing. So far they have been away from where I was. Mortars came in on the night of the 21st of August. Someone said there were 40 of them. The siren went off indicating we were under attack. There were VC inside our perimeter. They blew up our POL supply. No one was wounded or killed.

General Zais, 101st Division Commander, visited Phan Thiet on the 22nd of August. He attended a briefing in which the mission and work of the 3/506th Task Force was explained and presented awards to about 25 men. These awards were Bronze Stars, an Army Cross, and Purple Hearts.

Soldiers away from home have many problems. None are so heart wrenching than to talk with a man who is having marital problems. A young soldier came to see me. He had just returned from R&R in Hawaii where he met his wife. He found out she was pregnant - three months and he had been gone nine months. He was heart broken and badly hurt. He said he wanted a divorce even though he said he still loved her. They had been married for less than a year.



On the 25th of August I baptized my first men in the army and in Viet Nam. The first was Gerald Berry, a man from Greenwood, Mississippi and Eugene Whitto from Memphis, Tennessee. It was great! The Sea was a little rough, plus it drops off very quickly. We only had to take a couple of steps into the Sea for it to be deep enough to baptize. This was also my first baptism in salt water.

That night LZ Betty was attacked again. It was in an area the soldiers called, "Disney Land." This is the same area TET began back in the first of the year. There were 12 men wounded and 1 sergeant killed. The same night "B" Company and the TAC C.P. was in contact and had 17 wounded. Lieutenant Terry Weaver, "B" Company was wounded by one of our

tanks. They had a "cook off" and shrapnel hit him in the back. On the 28th of August I visited him in the hospital. I liked him very much. Discovered he will be paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of his life. That hurt! Lieutenant Weaver's call sign was "Ugly Duckling." I will never forget that name.

I did all kinds of counseling in Viet Nam. One night a young man came in to talk. He had extended for a "Commo Sergeant's" job, but now his Lieutenant wanted him to be a team leader on the LURPS. This was a job he has always wanted, but he is afraid it would hurt his parents and cause them to worry more. They lost another son in Viet Name back in 1963. His parents had given him permission to extend for the Commo job because it would give him an early out. He will probably take the Commo job though he would really be happier with the LURP team.

I was sick on 6 and 7 September. I came down with a fever and chills. I had several blankets on but still shook with chills. The Doctor came by my room about 1830 and gave me four different pills. I was to take one for the next 20 days. He said I had amoeba dysentery. The only thing I could think of was, "I wish my wife was here to take care of me." When I was feeling better I used the time to rest and catch up on my Bible reading.

Though I was very weak, I did the Sunday services in the briefing room. For the first time LTC Price, our commander, was in attendance. After the service we talked. He would like to get a field organ for us to use. That would certainly be helpful. Right now we don't have any musical instruments. I lead the singing and sometimes I don't get us started in the right key.

I was a little upset with the priorities we have among the command. For the most part, there are only a few permanent buildings on this compound. The men are sleeping in tents. The 192d Aviation is erecting a new building and it is going to be a club - a bar!!!

On the ninth of September around 1730 they brought in 5 wounded and one soldier killed from "A" Company. They had been wounded by a land mine. I was with this company just four days ago. I knew most of the men. The First Sergeant, although he doesn't attend chapel, said, "Chaplain I'm so glad you went with us the other day." One of the men kept hollering the names of the men who were with him. The medical team kept assuring him that everyone would be alright. I hope they are right.

Chaplain Bell and Catholic Chaplain Van Dyke visited Phan Thiet. Chaplain Bell talked with my commander, LTC Price who told him, "We are uptight with our chaplain. He likes to be out there with the men." This made my feel good! Chaplain Van Dyke comes down about once-a-month

and offers Catholic Mass for the men. The more services I can have lined up, the better he likes it. I like him! He is a good man!. We had services on a mountain. There was an artillery unit located there. I was amazed - when they fire one of those big guns you can actually see the round come out of the barrel and watch it travel its arc to the valley below.



Today, September 14th, I experienced what it is like to have someone shoot at me. Mike Smith, and I, had visited the Catholic Orphanage and were on our way back to LZ Betty. There was a long stretch of road that was cleared of all vegetation. No trees on either side of the road. We were driving along, enjoying the breeze, when suddenly we heard this noise . . . WEEEEING. There was no doubt someone was shooting at us. We both ducked down in the jeep and Mike put the pedal to the metal. We were out of there and back at the base very quickly. I have always said, and believe, that it was the friendly (ARVN) forces of Viet Nam. I maintain that because they missed, but I will never forget that sound.

Part of my duty as chaplain was to deliver Red Cross messages. Some of these were fun - like telling a soldier he was now a father. Some of them were more serious - like telling a soldier a member of his family had died. One of those occasions was to a MACV soldier stationed at Tui Hoa. I traveled there to tell him his sister had died. I found out the last time he was in Viet Nam he lost his mother and father. I could imagine that he became a little worried every time he saw a chaplain visiting his unit.

Received word on the 15th of September that we were going to build a chapel. First Sergeant Gammel said he could get the lumber. LTC Price told me to see the S-4, CPT Langrift. He promised his help and support with the plans and men. Looks like work will begin immediately.

Mike Smith was presented a certificate of achievement for his work at the Catholic High School and Orphanage. This was done at a ceremony in the Section Headquarters. I was disappointed they didn't give him an Army Achievement Medal. If I had only known better and had the experience I would have pushed for this, but I was green to the Army. Later in the day Mike asked if he could talk with me. It seems he had become serious with one of the girls in the high school. He wanted to marry her. I encouraged him to finish his tour in Viet Nam, go home for a little while, and if he still felt the same about her, to come back and marry her. I have heard later that is what he did.

Visited "A" Company to spend some time with them in the field. I went looking for a certain young man who had gone out with me three days before. He had just arrived in country and I could see he was scared to death. I talked with them then, and now I wanted to follow up and see how he was doing. I walked all around the perimeter but couldn't find him. I asked the Company Commander and he told me the young soldier had an accident the second night out. He was setting up a claymore mine that was accidentally set off and it blew off his hand. He won't have to worry about Viet Nam or being in the field any more.

"A" Company was planning an ambush for the night. About 1700 hours we had a small war! Automatic weapons fire and mortars made for a rather exciting evening. The next day "A" Company was engaged in several little fire fights. I saw two VC (Viet Cong) running for their lives. Our soldiers are really good fighters. As I was leaving "A" Company took fire from an AK 47 Machine gun and B40 rockets. I found it exciting. Maybe if the rounds came closer I wouldn't. One man told me - "just to see a chaplain out here in the field raises morale by 70%." His comments certainly raised my morale. Back at LZ Betty I visited B Company for a party on the beach. We played volleyball and ate steak. That was certainly a nice way to end a good day.

On the 19th of September the entire Battalion was "standing down." There were a large number of them that that were going back to the States (DEROSING). All five companies had a party on the beach. I went to all of them - had three steaks. What a way to fight a war! LTC Price presented medals to those who were going home. In the afternoon I went for a ride on a LARC in the South China Sea. This was manned by the Coast Guard. They picked up eleven VC. When we returned it was apparent many of the soldiers had a little too much beer to drink. I remember "Standing Crow," an Indian was so drunk he wanted to fight everyone.

Had an amusing letter from Linda. She and my son, Shawn, were talking about brothers and sisters, and he said, "I wish I had a brother." Linda answered with, "OH." He asked, "Why don't you get us one and surprise Daddy when he comes home." Now, that is one thing I don't want to happen.

On the 27th a new Catholic Chaplain arrived in Phan Thiet. Said he would be here for three or four weeks, but if he could have his way he would just stay here. AN INTERESTING NOTE: This Chaplain "Shea" would later become a Major General and serve as The Chief Of Chaplains in Washington, D.C. I had written this in my diary about him, "Took Chaplain Shea out to C Company and he stayed with them. I think he is going to be alright. He seems to want to work."

I wrote this about "B: Company, "Gave services for "B: Company today. They were very receptive. I always enjoy going to "B" Company. I like their commander, CPT Knowlton and I like the men. They have a good spirit." I like going to the field, talking with the men and having services for them. Every time I go it doesn't necessarily mean I will get to have a service. On October 2nd I went to "D" company. They were participating with two other companies in forming a cordon around a village and searching it. The men in all three companies were spread for miles around the little village. On the 4th "D" company was ambushed as they moved at night. Three men were wounded and one man killed. I talked with one of the wounded when he was brought to the Aid Station. He said he had been in the Army eight months; two months and Viet Nam and now he was wounded in the leg. That's a big change in your life in less than a year!

On the 3d of October I flew to Bein Hoa, to the 101st, and received some good news. They informed me that I would spend my whole tour in Phan Thiet. That was good! I feel at home there and enjoy the work that I am doing. They also gave me a tape recorder that I can use to play music in chapel services at LZ Betty.

Whisky Mountain was one of my favorite places to visit. It was a mountain that rose up beautifully from the valley floor. It served as a place for artillery, but most especially as a radio relay station. There were only a few men on the mountain, but its steepness afforded them great protection. On one occasion I was involved in a long discussion with the men about divorce and marriage. They were very interested in my



interpretation of 1 Corinthians chapter seven. I can imagine someone among us was having trouble in their marriage. It is surprising how often that happens when couples are separated by war.

Visited with "A" company and stayed with them a few days on October 8th. Met a new Lieutenant who had just arrived. His name was Agnew, a cousin to the Agnew who became our Vice-President. That night they killed a VC. He had a letter in his possession from his family. He had three children that he had asked about. This information struck a cord in my emotions because I have three children. This man was buried so his family will never know exactly what happened to him. War is terrible! This incident also made me realize that our enemy isn't just an "it" or a "thing," but they are people with feelings just like we are. The next

night we walked for six hours - from 1900 to 0100. We walked through fields, over hills, through rice paddies, canals and ponds. We walked over one log bridge. It was rough! When we stopped I didn't have any trouble sleeping. CPT Bates told me they may have a weapon I can take back home. I certainly hope so. I want to take a souvenir back to Shawn, not to play with, but to display. NOTE: Shawn is now 49 years old and he still has the Russian Carbine they gave me. While with this company we came across a base camp of the VC. I took four baskets, a lizard trap and 2 axes. I have these displayed in my home today.

On October 17 I had been in Viet Nam 100 days. I wrote this in my diary: "Strange I haven't hated the tour as much as I thought I would. I really like my work! I like these men. This doesn't mean I don't miss my family - I do. But I have the constant hope of going home. It is great to feel needed. A number of times officers and enlisted men have said, "'It's good to see you here chaplain.'" That makes the trip worthwhile."

The 19th and 20th was a day of rest! The reason? A Typhoon! For a Florida boy the typhoon wasn't bad. It came within 40 miles of us. Just like in Florida I slept through most of it. I took advantage of the situation by reading a book and voting by absentee ballot.

On the 22d "D" company was involved in another skirmish. One American was brought in wounded and one killed. Talked with the wounded man. He was from Kansas. He was upset to see a friend killed. There were eleven VC killed. Two of those were young boys about twelve years of age.

In a service conducted in the field a wonderful thing happened. At the end of my sermon I gave an invitation, "Now who will lift his hand and say, Chaplain I take Jesus as my Savior." One man did exactly that! He lifted his hand and said out loud, "Chaplain I take Jesus as my Savior." Amen!!! On another occasion I met a Sergeant who had just been assigned to "A" Company. He was from Plant City and had attended the Bethany Baptist Church when I was the pastor. A small world!

Sometimes I get jobs that are really fun. Like - delivering birth announcements. On one occasion I delivered the announcement to Lieutenant Rivers who had been a football player at West Point. I told him he had a cheerleader. He gave me a cigar. I don't know if I smoked it or not. I probably did!

Chaplain Green, 101st Division Chaplain visited me on 30 October. LTC Price told him, "Chaplain Webb is a very great asset to this Battalion." That made me feel very good.

On the 1st of November I caught a ride with a helicopter pilot that was new to Viet Nam. I think we both had a very exciting day. When he took off from LZ Betty the skids dragged the grounds for several feet. I began to worry right then. It seemed to me that he believe he was a "hot pilot" and wanted to have a little fun. The way he drove and zigzagged only made me think he was too dangerous. When we arrived at Whiskey Relay Station, which was on top of a mountain affectionately known as "Tity" Mountain by the soldiers, it took him three attempts to land the chopper. I know that is not an easy task since the mountain comes to a small edge for landing, but I sure hope he learns quickly, or I don't get him again.

The second of November was a day I will never forget! Not that I was on a dangerous mission - even though I did think I was going to die. Let me tell you about it. I started the day with my daily routine of going to the resupply point and flying out to wherever the chopper was going. I came in around noon and made my way quickly to the dining facility where I had time to only grab a glass of chocolate milk. That was a big mistake! Then I went down to the South China Sea where a Coast Guard Cutter was waiting to take me out to the USS Waller. This was a Navy Destroyer that had given our soldiers some off shore support. I thought it would be nice if I could go out and conduct a worship service for them. When I boarded the Coast Guard Cutter they asked, "Chaplain, are you in any hurry to get out there?" I replied, "No!" And, that was my second mistake! I think they put it in low gear and all the way out we went up and down with every wave. By the time we arrived at the USS Waller I was seasick. The first thing I had to do was to ask the Navy, "Do you have a place I can lie down?" I'm sure they had a big laugh over that! They were very nice. They took me to an air-conditioned room that had a very nice bed. That was something I had not seen, or experienced, in five months. It only took me a few minutes and I was feeling much better. They then took me on a sightseeing tour of the ship and gave me several mementos, which I still have today. I had a worship service for them in which sixteen men attended. After the service I was invited to have dinner with them. I began to wonder if I had made a mistake joining the Army. Dinner was like eating at Morrison's Cafeteria. It was very good. Then it was time for the Coast Guard Cutter to take me back to LZ Betty. Going back in was not a problem - I have a wonderful memory of my day with the Navy.

The next day was more like Sunday in the States. I had two morning services and spent the afternoon reading and resting. Even took a couple of half-hour naps. Later in the day I was to conduct services for the 7/17th Cav, but their chaplain came down and he said he would give them coverage. He seemed like a nice man. He had been in country one week.

Received a package from Linda: books, crossword puzzles and a package of "Shake-a-pudding." Also learned that "Whicky," Linda's grandmother, had a stroke. I know this has her worried and upset because she is very close to her grandmother. Mailed Whicky a Vietnamese doll. Hope it cheers her up.

I do not understand politics! It drives me up the wall trying to understand the Vietnamese. I heard today they refused to meet with the North Vietnamese at the peace table. They refuse to do this but have no trouble accepting our money, guns, equipment and American lives. Chaplain Richard Bell, the Corp Chaplain, dropped in tonight. It is great having someone of his maturity come and talk with me. I hope someday I can be more like him.

On the 10th of November I had an experience I've never had before. On Sundays the MACV people give me a chopper to visit their units. Normally, there about five US personnel who work with the South Vietnamese as advisers. I visit them, talk with them and hold services for them. Today, at one of their sites, I had only one man show up for service. I asked him what he would like to do. I thought maybe he would just want to talk or maybe sing some hymns. He said, "Just preach to me," and I did.

I counseled with a young soldier from "A" Company. He had killed a VC and he was concerned about his own spiritual condition. He said, "Chaplain, he didn't even see me, and I shot him twice." I assured him he had nothing to worry about. We discussed war and he seemed relieved. These are good, young men and it hurts them to be thrust into a war where they have to kill other young men.

Received a fruit cake from Jane Dukes. She was a childhood friend. The cake was very good. I like fruit cake! Most soldiers here don't. They only know about the fruit cake in the "C" Rations and that is not very good. That's ok - because I don't mind eating the whole cake by myself.

Received an invitation by a First Sergeant to visit his hooch. He wanted to talk with me personally and he wanted me to promise that it would be just between us. He said, "Sir, I want to get right with God." He didn't know how happy those words made me. I read the Bible to him and explained the Scriptures about salvation. Then we prayed together and he invited Jesus to come into his heart. This moment is one of the highlights of my tour in Viet Nam! Now, I don't have to keep it a secret - because when a person becomes a Christian he is going to tell everybody himself. Thank you God!!!

It was terrible! Two men were brought into the aid station at 1545 hours. One was a major and the other a captain. They were advisors for

the MACV unit I had visited just last Sunday at Hoa Da. They had stepped on a land mine. The Major will be fine, but the captain may lose a leg. His leg was blown nearly off at the knee. In pain the major said, "Why couldn't I have been assigned to an American unit? The mine we stepped on was in our own compound."

LTC Price, in the briefing tonight, talking about making good use of helicopters, said, "The Chaplain is the best hitchhiker in the battalion." Everyone laughed. Received a large package from Bethany Baptist Church - candy, cake, magazines, nuts and goodies." That will pick up my morale!

Had a little excitement just outside the perimeter of LZ Betty tonight. The gun ships really shot up the area. Old Charlie had a rough time - if he was there. Those gun ships will either make believers out of you or kill you.

On the 19th of November I counseled with a Specialist that I like. It was painful for both of us. He had been caught with marijuana in his possession. I talked to him like he was my son. Tears were in his eyes. He told me he was not on the stuff. I hope not! He was suppose to leave for home in three more days. He was to get married.

Visited hospital in Nha Trang and Cam Rahn Bay. About once a month I visit hospitals to see soldiers from our unit. Sometimes I go to Bein Hoa or Vung Tau. The soldiers seem surprised to see someone from their unit - especially the Chaplain. While in Cam Rahn Bay I looked up a boyhood friend, Dennie Westbrook. This world is not so big after all. We grew up together in Orlando, Florida and now both of us are going to make the Army a career and both are in Viet Nam.



On November 20th two men were brought in to the aid station. One was slightly wounded and the other had been killed. The man killed was due to go home in 57 days. He had already purchased a new car. That night LZ Betty was mortared. It wasn't bad. The good news for me - THE CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION WAS STARTED TODAY. It is being built across the street from the airport.



Chaplain (COL) Bell came by to visit and he advised me to apply for indefinite status and Regular Army. I think I will! Two men were killed today when their small (Loch) helicopter crashed. Talked with a young man who wants to be a preacher when he returns to the States. He had killed a VC and it was bothering him. I imagine that does hurt, but I know God understands. I know it is not a sin!

On Novemb4er 22d I flew to Bein Hoa to visit the stockade for LTC Price. There were several men there that he wanted me to see "if they were ready to soldier." I think they are! While there I picked up some altar supplies and communion trays for the new chapel. I was disappointed in the Chaplain at Bein Hoa. He curses and drinks. He was partying and drinking with a group of men while I was there. I'm sorry he has slipped to their level.

Returned to Phan Thiet on the 23d. At 1215 a First Lieutenant was brought in. He had been shot and he died. I had talked with him recently. He had asked that I make arrangements for him to take marriage instruction as he was planning on marrying a Catholic girl.

Sunday, November 24th I only had one service at LZ Betty. It was raining and the choppers weren't flying. I get a little down if I cannot get out to visit the soldiers. I'm really down today. Received a letter from Linda and it sounds like she may not be able to meet me in Hawaii. I really want that more than anything, but money is a problem. That seems to be the story of my life - never enough money!

On the 25th LTC Price gave me a very nice endorsement for my indefinite status. If I get this it means I will stay on indefinitely in the Army and work toward a career.

Two men were brought in wounded. One was shot in the leg. It was broken so he will be going home. The other had been shot in the stomach. The Doctor said he would make it.

We had a Captain from Division JAG office visit Phan Thiet. I talked with him and he said our battalion was the best in the Division. I

don't know what the standard for judging that was . . . but, nevertheless I believe it. It is November 27th and we have another typhoon off our coast.

THANKSGIVING WAS A GREAT DAY! I HAD SERVICES AT LZ Betty and then flew to "D" company in the field. Had dinner with them - turkey, dressing and all the trimmings. Had service and 40 men came. That is a large number for a field service. Back at Betty saw the last part of a USO show. It wasn't much to brag about. The men are beginning to receive Christmas presents. One soldier gave me a tree. I have it up in my office. Received a box of clothing from Bethany Baptist Church in Plant City, Florida. Will take it to the Catholic Orphanage.

On 30 November I had a memorial service for one of our soldiers. LTC Price said he liked the way I did it and wanted to make it a policy to continue with similar services in the future.

Company had a going home party for Lieutenant Hayes. It was good! They served steaks and had men playing guitars. One man had played on the Grand Ole Opry four years. I'm going to see if I can get him to play for chapel services. First Sergeant Poe was commissioned a First Lieutenant today.

Chaplain Van Dyke, Catholic Chaplain, came down from Nha Trang. The S-3 gave us our own chopper. We flew to four different units for services. While riding in the chopper I looked down in the floor and there was a baby chicken - about one week old. It sure was glad when I picked it up. Had the best meal I've had in Viet Nam at Firebase Sandy - Fried chicken and rice. No pun intended! We did not eat the baby chick.

On 5 December the USO group "Cascades" presented a Rock and Roll Show at 1630 hours. The soldiers really liked them and so did I.



DOCTOR HYLAND IN BLUE



Played volleyball with the Medical Platoon and Doctor. It was a very enjoyable time. Chaplain (COL) Bell came by to visit and he advised me to apply for indefinite status and Regular Army. I think I will! Two men were killed today when their small (Loch) helicopter crashed. Talked with a young man who wants to be a preacher when he returns to the States. H One man from the 17th Cav was brought to the Aid Station. He had been killed. Got upset by a Sergeant who told a young soldier, "Your mother died - go see the Chaplain." That was a pretty sorry way to tell a man such bad information. I'm sure it won't happen again. Talked with a young man who wants to be a preacher when he returns to the States. Talked for over an hour with a medic. He does not want to go back to the field. His platoon has lost three men (not his fault) and he is afraid he cannot do his duty. He is also afraid of being killed himself. Since coming to Viet Nam his opinion of the war has changed. He is now against it. He feels that most of the Vietnamese are VC and the rest don't care. Doctor Hyland is not sending him back to the field. I spoke with the Doctor about the problem.

On 8 December I received my first Air Medal. Mike Smith, my Assistant, was promoted to Specialist Five. He deserved it!

Had a little scare today as I was leaving "C" Company in the mountains outside of Song Mau. The rotar blades hit the top of a tree and it sounded like an AK47 machine gun. I made a quick dive for the floor. It was funny afterwards - but very exciting. I'm glad it wasn't serious as we would have been sitting ducks. On this occasion there was no real big danger, and I thought my life was in jeopardy. I remember another occasion when it was just the opposite.

On this occasion I was visiting one of the companies. I planned on being with them for several days. Everything was going pretty much according to routine when suddenly a rifle shot rang out. Everyone hit the dirt! At that moment I didn't have my helmet on. I was looking for it when a soldier came crawling to give it to me. As I saw him coming I was so afraid something might happen to him. I would not have been able to live with that on my conscious. As soon as it started; so it quickly ended, but the sniper did not go away. Every time we would move, he would fire. Each time we had the same reaction - we would take cover and try to figure out where the fire was coming from. This happened a number of times during the day. Then Headquarters decided they would move the whole unit. I don't know why, but I'm sure they had a reason other than our being harassed by a sniper. They sent in big Chinook to pick us up - one platoon at a time. The first Chinook came in and picked up a platoon. There was no problem. I was scheduled to leave on the second Chinook. It landed and we all ran to get on board. It lifted off and I thought I was safe. I found a seat and leaned back again to the wall of the Chinook. I felt good! We had made it! Later

I would learn that the men left on the ground thought we were going down. We took a lot of fire and they were sure the Chinook would crash. They began to move to try to rescue as many of us as they could. The Chinook was shot up so badly that it could not go back out. On this occasion when I thought I was safe, my life was really in danger. This is life! You never know what may be lurking around the corner.

Lieutenant Cosgrove, our S-1, told me LTC Price thought a lot of me and it was reflected in my OER. I hope so! Received my OER and it was good. It recommended I be promoted ahead of contemporaries and both Rater and Endorser said I was the finest Battalion Chaplain they had seen.

Mike Smith put up our Christmas tree. He said it was the first one he had put up. He never had one in his home. He seemed to enjoy it. We played Christmas Carols on the tape recorder while he decorated the tree. We also went to the Catholic orphanage and decorated them a Christmas tree. We furnished the tree and the decorations. Carried a few presents and 12 gallons of chocolate milk.

On the 16th of December I attended a Chaplain Day of Reflection at the Special Forces Chapel in Nha Trang. The subject for discussion was "Vietnamese Customs and Taboos." While there I visited the hospital.

A private was brought in on the 19th shot in the back of the head. The Doctor said he wouldn't make it. I thought he was a good soldier. His wife died while he was here. He has two or three children a brother is keeping for him. He had extended so he could pay off his home before he went home. I found out he died at 1700 hours in Long Bein.

On December 22d I had my first Vietnamese dinner. The people of Phan Thiet invited representatives of U.S. Forces to eat with them. They took about 15 of us to a restaurant. We ate with chopsticks. I know I had rice, intestines, shrimp, bamboo shoots, and who know what!

After much delay I was able to fly to several MACV sub sectors and pass out some Christmas gifts. Met CPT Vernon Davis at Song Mau. We went to Junior and Senior High School together. Had two candlelight services at LZ Betty and MACV Headquarters in Phan Thiet.

On Christmas Day Santa Claus, and I, spent the day visiting



soldiers in the field. I had services for them and he passed out gifts. Made me feel a little uneasy standing by a man in a red suit knowing there were probably some enemy soldiers watching us. The Dining Facility got some Egg Nog - they said especially for me. Sure was good!

Chaplain Van Dyke, Catholic Chaplain, came down and we went to "B" Company for services. It is Christmas and there is a good spirit everywhere! On the 30th he and I were busy all day. We had four services at four different units. I have noticed that places where the Commander pushes the service we have better attendance. An example is Firebase Sherry. There was a time when four or five was good attendance. The new commander, CPT Gilliam, goes around telling the men about chapel and has 15 to 20.

On the last day of 1968 I did a little reflecting. I wrote, "This has been a great year. I have enjoyed my work very much - though I do wish I was home with my family. After tonight I will be able to say "I came to Viet Nam last year and this year I'm going home." Oh God please bless my family and me with Your guiding hand. Protect us all. And, may we be a blessing to others in 1969."

The New Year - 1969 - began with the men on the perimeter firing their weapons. We were not being attacked - they were just celebrating the beginning of a new year and being one day closer to going home. Someone did carry the celebration a little too far as the tossed a gas grenade into the Staff Toilet and Bathroom. My room was just around the corner from this and I did catch a whiff of the gas.

I started the New Year off right by having services for "B" and "D" Companies. I have come to realize that I feel better if I am busy and out visiting the soldiers.

A young soldier came wanting me to help get him home. He had gotten a girl pregnant and the doctor was expecting difficulty in delivery. They were not married. He wanted me to convince the girl they should get married now. I refused. If they were already married I would be glad to write, but not under the circumstances he described. It's not my job to convince someone they should get married. Besides I had the feeling he just wanted to get out of Viet Nam.

Today, our small Post Exchange received a number of small refrigerators. We brought one for the office. I don't know if this is strictly according to Army regulations, but I do know my heart is right. We will keep Cokes in it so the men can get a cold drink when they want.

Had a fine day in chapel services at LZ Betty. The attendance was excellent. There were three Lieutenant Colonels in the service - two

were Commanding Officers. Our Dining Facility caught on fire tonight (5 January) around 2215 Hours. It was quickly put out. A gas stove had exploded. I was glad for morale reasons - especially my morale.

I went to three companies - so that made this day special to me.

We had one young soldier brought in wounded tonight. He had been shot, but the bullet passed thru the lobe of his ear and through the flesh of his neck and out just before reaching his spinal column. He was that close to being killed or paralyzed. This is January 7th SO I AM HALF WAY THROUGH MY TOUR IN VIET NAM.



On the 8th a group of 13 Vietnamese soldiers were brought in wounded. Only one was serious and he had a broken arm. Most were so minor an American soldier would have been ashamed to come in for that same wound. For example, one of them was wounded by shrapnel in the hand and legs. The doctor gave him a tetanus shot and it bled more than either wounds. In fact, the medic had a difficult time deciding which was the wound and which was the tetanus shot.

Chaplain Van Dyke made a surprise visit today. He had his own chopper so we hit Sherry, Sandy and Whiskey Mountain. After my service a young man came by to thank me. I had spoken on "Suffering." His mother had suffered with an illness. He said I had helped him. It makes you feel good when you hear from the soldiers and you know you have helped them.

Remember the soldier I met who had played the guitar on the Grand Ole Opry for four years? Today I had him play his guitar and sing for us in the worship service. This marked the 200th service I have conducted in the six months in country.

Have a feeling of belonging tonight. I had the opportunity to tease and be teased by the men with whom I work. That spells "acceptance" to me. Attendance was down in chapel service because "B" company had to go out. Firebase Sherry was being attacked. Fourteen of the enemy were killed. Had a long talk with a Lieutenant tonight. He was serious about wanting to serve God in some way. I pointed out all the opportunities of service he has in the Army. I believe now he will stay in.

Received word from Linda that she could sell the Lake Front Lot we have near Orlando for \$4,000. She is checking it out as this is probably the only way we will be able to meet in Hawaii.

Our men were in contact with the enemy today. They killed 18 VC. We only suffered three slightly wounded. All three will be ready to go back to the field tomorrow. A Sergeant came by my room tonight and he made us some tuna fish sandwiches. Talked with another soldier who was scared. He had seen several men killed who were beside him. He was very frightened.

Had a real disappointing day! I waited two hours to get to a platoon of "A" company only to find out they were too busy for me to conduct services. Finally a Lieutenant said I could have a service and then as I was walking around the perimeter telling the men they announced a hot meal would be served. Guess who is going to come in second when a hot meal is offered a soldier in the field? I just packed my bag and left. I feel like not going back to that platoon, but I will.

The chapel was started today. They say it will take about three weeks to complete it. My spirit was raised tonight by the First platoon of "D" company. There were 30 of them who attended a service. I spent most of my day acting like a sidewalk superintendent - watching and helping with the chapel. Two wounded were brought in at 2145 hours. One of them, a Sergeant died. I have been here so long, and know these men so well, that it really hurts when I see them hurt. That's when I get angry with Charlie.

On the 18th I flew to Beinh Hoa on my way to Phu Bai for a Division Chaplain's meeting. John Allen, an old friend is the Division Rear Chaplain. I am staying with him in his air-conditioned hooch. This afternoon he took me to Saigon. Saigon is a typical, dirty Vietnamese city. It is large! There were lots of cars, trucks and motor scooter than most cities, but it still was dirty. I noticed many women in Saigon dressed like American women. I also noticed



CHAPLAINS FRED MADDUX & JOHN ALLEN there were a number of American women there. Later John took me to the Cholon PX - which was just like a PX in the States. The next day, Sunday, I assisted John with the services at the Beinh Hoa chapel. Then I flew north to Phu Bai. I met Chaplain (LTC) McMinn, the new 101st Division Chaplain. He seemed to be a very nice man. At the meeting I saw Fred Maddux, a Chaplain friend from Fort Benning. After talking with him I know I have the best assignment an all Viet Nam. That night we watched a movie, "Yours, Mine, and Ours" starring Lucile Ball and

Henry Fonda. It was in the Generals Mess at Camp Eagle. I enjoyed it. I also noticed that Generals fair very well in times of war.

On the way back from Phu Bai to Phan Thiet, I boarded a plane in Beinh Hoa where the load master was President Johnson's son-in-law, Patrick Nugent. He seemed to be a very nice young man. At least he was serving his country and doing his part. I was so happy to be back in Phan Thiet. I wrote in my diary, "God help me to minister to these men. May I never look upon this as just a job - but may I always approach it as an opportunity. These men need God - let me tell them about him by the way I live and speak.

It seems to me that enemy activity is picking up in the AO. There seems to be more enemy movement and more enemy contact. The VC are attacking more firebases and small villages. Our men are killing more of them. Maybe, they are getting ready for TET, which is less than a month away.

On the 26th of January we lost another soldier. There were also two others wounded, along with a Vietnamese scout.

Went to one platoon of "B" Company. The platoon leader gave chapel call like I think it should be given. He told his men, "Leave one man on each position and the rest can go to services." As a result we had 15 men from only one platoon. Tonight two more men were brought in wounded. Both were hit in the leg. One of them may loose part of his left foot. Had a chicken supper for Mike Smith, Chaplain's Assistant, who is returning to the States. He has served with me for six months. He was here when I arrived. When Mike left he was given a cigarette lighter by the Battalion and he didn't want it. He gave it to me. I had my name engraved on it, and I still have it today - even though I don't smoke.

We have a new Commander of the Battalion, LTC Manual Alves. He is very different from LTC Price. LTC Price was sort of easy going, but LTC Alves is the hard charging John Wayne Type. At this time there was a lot of dislike for him among the officers. I counseled with one man tonight who wants out of the Battalion. He says he can't work for LTC Alves. Later, the men would come to really like LTC Alves. But right now the going is very rough.

January 30th was a good day for me. It not that I did a lot, but it was just a feeling I had as I worked among the men. Everyone seemed so friendly. Received a note from LTC Price. He had written a letter of recommendation to the Home Mission Board, Chaplain Commission for my Indefinite Status. It was Great! I only hope I can live up to the confidence he expressed in me. Received a litter from Linda stating a "Waiting Wives Club" had been formed in Plant City, and she joined and

enjoyed it. I think both of us like Army life! God help us to be a good witness to the men and women we meet and serve.

I introduced a new plan for field services which seems to be working fine. Now I hold short, 15 minute services. The resupply stops for this 15 minutes and the men can come to services if they want. I believe I will get more men to attend this way.

Attended a party for Major Edison tonight - 1 February. He is our XO for the Battalion. I told him I had my first mixed drink in his honor - "coke and ginger ale."

The trusses for the chapel were finished today. They will be put up tomorrow. This is Sunday, but it is the only day we can get the crane for lifting them.

New assistant Terry Spaulding, from Lexington, Kentucky, arrived today. He is a smart, nice young man, and he is a Baptists. We are going to get along wonderfully.

A young man from a Firebase was brought to the Aid Station with a possible heart attack. Before he arrived we were discussing what he might have. I said, "hyper-ventilation." Sure enough, when they checked him, that was his problem. We are all glad I was right!



KARINSKI AND TERRY SPAULDING

On the 2d I flew with LTC Vincent, MACO Commander, to one of their sections, Luong Song. The soldiers were very thankful that he and I had come. One man told me, "sometimes we feel like no one cares about us out here." I can easily see how they might feel this way. They are Americans, isolated from other Americans as they work primarily with the Vietnamese soldiers.

The 3d was a fine day! I was busy with three services in different locations. Chaplain Van Dyke came in and he was delighted we could go to three locations. He is spending the night in Phan Thiet. When we returned to LZ Betty I rode in a LOCH helicopter. That was a first for me. That "little bug" will only seat two people and it can sure move fast above the tree tops.

Carried Chaplain Van Dyke to various units so he could have Catholic Mass. I had recently been to all the places so I just spent my time walking around and talking with the men.

On the 5th one man was brought in wounded under his right arm pit. One doctor had a difficult time finding a vein for a blood transfusion. Doctor Hyland reached over and with one hand hit the vein immediately. Doctor Hyland is one of the best Doctors I have ever known. That is the sentiment of all the other soldiers here in Phan Thiet. That is why he is affectionately known as "Doctor Kildaire." He is tall, handsome, and better than the TV Doctor!

Today is the 6th of February and I received the best news since I have been in Viet Nam - Linda will be able to meet me in Hawaii. We will plan on an April date. That way, when I return to Viet Nam I will only have about two-and-one-half months to go! I don't know where she was able to get the money, but I would guess that her Grandmother Whicky and Granddaddy Bill gave it to her.

Had to visit the 192 Aviation tonight to console a young soldier. He had just received word his cousin, with whom he had been raised, was killed over here. He was very upset. He will be able to act as the body escort, a tough job, but at least it will get him home for the funeral.

On the 7th I traveled to Cam Rahn Bay to visit with the Chief-of-Chaplains. Afterwards I went with a group of chaplains to the Officer's Club. They had a floor show consisting of one man and two women. They were very good, in fact, it was the best entertainment I have seen in Viet Nam. Carter Hudson, my roommate in Chaplain School, was there. He has orders to go to Fort Bragg. They have given him a 12 day drop so he can report in earlier. The lucky stiff!

Had some trouble getting back to Phan Thiet so I took advantage of the time. Had my first steam bath and massage. It was great. Later I found out that these baths did not have a good reputation. I can assure you that nothing took place that would compromise my reputation or witness. I spent the afternoon with Dennie Westbrook, my boyhood friend. Finally found a chopper from the 7/17th Cav that had come to Cam Rahn Bay for supplies. They took me back to Phan Thiet.

On the 9th the city of Phan Thiet was hit with numerous mortars during the night. There were five Vietnamese killed and 15 wounded. During the day a Mohawk plane had difficulty on the runway. As it was taking off its landing gear collapsed. The fire engine had to come out and hose it down.

On the 10th I visited "D" Company for a service. The men's attitude and morale is very high. Everyone is expecting a TET offensive to start

very soon. "B" Company was in contact with the enemy and they have killed six VC.

Counseled with a young soldier who came in tonight. His platoon was in contact and two of his friends were wounded, but not seriously. He was upset and crying. He does not understand the purpose of this war. Who does? He couldn't understand the politicians partying while men were being killed in their rice patties. He is a good man! Even though he doesn't understand he will go back and do his job.

On the 12th of February I wrote, "There is big contact in the AO today. It is going on about five minutes out by chopper. It is between Phan Thiet and Whisky Mountain. Our whole battalion is out there. We will be hard put manning the perimeter tonight around LZ Betty. It is estimated there are six companies of VC out there. So far we have had three men killed. One was a soldier I had talked with recently. He wasn't supposed to out there, but he slipped out with a supply chopper and was killed immediately. At 2130 Hours casualties were still coming in. One Lieutenant was brought in wounded in the arm. It wasn't too serious. LTC Alves, Battalion Commanded has promoted him to Lieutenant. He will be put in for an award as he charged a bunker and put a mortar tube out of action.

The result of the contact was 66 VC killed. We lost three men and had 17 wounded. LTC Alves had me have prayer, in the briefing room, for the three men who were killed.

February 16th was the best day, attendance wise, I have had at LZ Betty and at MACV. Had a memorial service for "A" company. LTC Alves' chopper crashed at LZ Betty today. He received a cut on the head. Major Danner had a bad cut on his head. One of the Door gunners was killed. The other three men were only slightly injured. Those choppers are nice to fly but are dangerous when they crash. My prayer tonight is that "I will be a good chaplain - pointing these men to God."

On the 18th "B" Company had a Spec four brought in wounded. He had set off a booby trap. He was wounded in the face, left hand and legs. I am told he will be blind and lose his hand. I helped take him off the chopper. I hate what these VC do to our men. My feeling for them right now certainly isn't Christian.

Went to the 7/17th Cav today and they gave me 20 gallons of light green paint for the inside of the chapel. Secured tin for the steeple from 192d Aviation and nails from our S-4. Our S-4 has white paint for the outside of the chapel.

The 19th was a busy day! I like days like this! Had two communion services for "C" Company early this morning as they were going out to the field. Chaplain Van Dyke came down and LTC Alves gave us his chopper to visit Sherry Firebase. Sherry wasn't cooperative as they were more concerned with a CMMI than with worshipping God. My best attendance was with "D" Company. We sang hymns they picked from a book. One soldier recorded the service to send home. There were 37 present for the service.



MEMORIAL SERVICE AT MACV HQS



A WELL ATTENDED FIELD SERVICE

On days that I cannot catch a ride to visit the soldiers I work on the chapel.



A CACHE OF RICE

I visited "B" Company, who has been in the field about two weeks. They have found 20 tons of VC rice. Their morale is very good. Captain Durre will be going to Bangkok for R&R. He was stationed there and knows where to purchase good bronze ware. He will get some for me to send to Linda.

February 22d proved to be one of the most exciting days of my tour in Viet Nam. At 0200 Hours LZX Betty was hit

by mortar and zapper attack. The attack centered in the area just 30 yards from my hooch and in "E" Company. I was awakened by the incoming mortars. I put on trousers, boots, flack vest and helmet. Terry Spaulding and I moved to the front sand bagged area of the building. When the mortars slacked off we moved to the aid station. The Commander of "D" Company and a Sergeant from "E" Company were killed. They were both really great men. I visited "E" Company and helped a detail pick up pieces of flesh. The VC were inside our perimeter and had blown up our ammunition dump. Around 1200 hours there was more contact in the

AO. "Brought in one wounded and one soldier killed. There was contact all over the AO. The 173d was brought in to help us. Report was that our Battalion had killed 14 VC last night. It looks like the TET offensive has started. Saigon, Bein Hoa, Long Bein, Phu Bai, Camp Rahn Bay, and many more places were hit last night. They are expecting them to hit us again. Had a service for a company of the 173d and a memorial services for "E" Company. Everyone is a little jumpy! I remember when the attack was going on and I was in the Aid Station, I was very tired. I was sitting on a stretcher, leaning over rubbing my eyes. Our S-1 came in, Lieutenant Belzter. He took my arm and asked, "Are you alright." He thought I had been wounded. Bless Him!

On the 26th I left Chaplain Van Dyke on Whiskey Mountain. Before I started my service he had said, "There are no Catholics here." So when I finished I called for a chopper. Then I saw him conducting a mass for three men. I went on and sent another chopper back for him.

On the 27th I had a memorial service for two men. That night I sat on the cliff that rose from the South China Sea and watched the movie, "The Green Beret" with the men of the 192nd. The words of a Lieutenant pretty much sum up my opinion of the movie. He said, "I saw the movie in the States, and over here. In the States I thought it was a good movie; after being over here it was like a comedy."

WOW! I had a service for "D" company before they went out to the field. There were 67 present. This company has had some bad luck recently - losing their commanding officer, and several wounded. Tonight we were hit again! This time by mortars at the outpost. One man lost both legs. He was sitting on top of his bunker when a motor hit him directly. It wasn't a pretty sight to see the mangled flesh and protruding bones. I found out later that he didn't make it. Another man was killed in the AO from "C" Company.

On 2 March two slightly wounded were brought in. They had been shot by our own men! It was an accidental discharge. One man was brought in for a snake bite. It was a cobra. He was given anti-venom serum and will be alright. This reminds me of another "snake" story. I was at the aid station when they received a call that a soldier was being brought in because of a possible snake bite. When he arrived he was screaming his head off. He was very scared. This was his story. He had gone to relieve himself. Digging a small hole in the ground, he then dropped his pants and squatted down. As he did his foot broke a small twig which hit him in his rear. He thought he had been bitten by a snake and started screaming. A little shot calmed him down. It was funny, but I would have had the same reaction. I have five services today. This makes me feel good.

Received my R&R allocation tonight. It is for 10-16 April. Now I have a date to eagerly look forward to seeing Linda.

Had a special service for "C" company on the 3d. They have lost several men lately and were feeling pretty down. I told them it was now up to them to finish the fight their buddies had started.

On the 4th I had services for all the companies in the Battalion - six! They were all going back to the field. The services were held on the C-130 pad.

Visited Hospitals today in Xuan Loc, Vung Tau, and Long Bien to see our wounded men. I was happily surprised when I visited one man, by the name of "Ashley," whom I had been told died of his wounds on the 28th of February. He is doing fine and will be ok.

The next day, March 6th I visited the hospitals in Nha Trang and Cam Ranh Bay.

LT Jones is the new Commander of "B" Company. He is most cooperative. He told everyone to knock off resupply and attend chapel. Two newspaper men from Nha Trang, and a magazine crew "UPTIGHT" took lots of pictures of the service. I hope it is put in the magazine. Of course, I will never know because I don't think I have ever seen the publication. GOOD NEWS! We will have our first services in the new chapel this coming Sunday. Today a pulpit was made and it and the altar area was stained. Everything looks nice. It will be called the CURRAHEE CHAPEL.

Two men were killed today, March 8th, when their Loch Helicopter was shot down. They were with the 7/17th Cav. Had a prayer for them in the briefing tonight. Chapel is ready for services tomorrow! I am quite upset tonight! Someone in headquarters Company has messed me up and gave my R&R date to someone else. They have done the same thing to Sergeant Watts. He and I both have already notified our wives of the date we are to meet. I hope they get it straightened out. I don't want a different date and I'm sure SGT Watts doesn't either. Fifteen mortars came in tonight but none were near us.

On the 9th of March we had our first service in the new chapel. We had seats for 75 and there were 69 people in attendance. It was wonderful! Everyone seemed so pleased with the service and the chapel. I preached my sermon, "The tree Crosses," which is one of my favorites. I also served communion. LTC Alves named the chapel, "THE CURRAHEE CHAPEL." I HAVE MY R&R STRAIGHTENED OUT. Now I will be going on the 12-18 of April. Three men were brought in wounded - only one seriously. The bullets broke both his legs. He will go home! He was also shot through

the scrotum. I hope he will be alright. He was a real trooper - took everything really well.

Two young VC were brought in tonight. One was 10 years old and the other 15 months. Their parents had been killed in a fight in the jungle. LTC Alves asked me to get them in the Catholic Orphanage. I did! I felt so sorry for them. How afraid they must be. Just looking at them made me want to cry.

Counseled with a Sergeant tonight. He had received a letter from a friend saying "your wife and my husband are making out together." Of course he was very upset. He has been married for eleven years and his wife's letters are still coming regularly and there has been no change in her letters. She says she loves him, and looks forward to R&R and his coming home. I told him I thought his friend was sick. She is age 50 and has menopause. He has never had reason to mistrust his wife and I told him he should not start now. I sure hope I'm right on this one.

LTC Alves sent me on a mission to Long Bien to see if I could get some money for chapel pews. I visited Chaplain Gifford who told me how to apply for pews.

Today, 18 March, I picked up my R&R orders and mailed three copies to Linda. Secured a set of Horse Shoes, Dart Board, Volley Ball set and exercise equipment to use at chapel.

On the 19th there was one man killed in action (KIA). He was a Specialist from "B" Company. The first sergeant said he was a soldier who was well-liked by everyone. Visited one platoon of "A" Company who were working way off in the jungles and mountains.

On the 20th a Jewish Sergeant was brought to the Aid Station with his foot shot up. The doctor said he may lose it. He was very calm. He did not complain of pain. He took it like a real man. I am proud to be associated with men like him. I spent a most enjoyable day with "D" company. I ate some chicken that had been cooked by the ARVANS (Vietnamese soldiers). It was good!



On the 21st three men were brought in slightly wounded by our artillery. The Company Commander had made a mistake calling in his coordinates. Visited "B" company. They had just killed an NVA (North Vietnamese Army Soldier). His brains were

COMPANY COMMANDER ENJOYS CHICKEN

literally blown out. He never knew what hit him. He was shot by an M16. Seems like every night at LZ Betty we are being mortared. Received the Cathedral Lights for the chapel today. Lieutenant Cook of "B" Company had a close call. He was walking through the mountain jungles when he came across a VC. He killed him! Not knowing if there were others he started reconing by fire. Just as he fired his last round he stood facing a VC. He swung his weapons round and the VC gave up. The VC had a round in his weapon and LT Cook's was empty. The VC didn't know this. LT Cook got an enemy prisoner and a souvenir - the weapons of the VC.

On the 23d I had a service at a MACV site, Thien Giou. In the nine months I have been in country this is the first time they have wanted one. They were almost overrun a few nights ago - maybe this made them think a little differently about God?

On the 26th Terry Spaulding, chaplain assistant, and I moved into the living quarters in the chapel. It took all day to move our equipment and have things put in place. We do not have the ceiling light yet, so we are using lamps. We have an extension cord running to different rooms. Since we covered the windows with plastic it keeps the sand out, and also the air. We will need a fan. Three men came to see the chapel tonight. They said, "You will certainly have something to be proud of when you go home." Amen and Amen!

Today Terry and I built a latrine for the chapel. This was a unique experience. We just went out 25 feet, or so, from the chapel and started digging a deep hole. Then we piled rocks in the hole and placed a six inch round piece of PVC pipe into the rocks. The pipe extended about 3 feet out of the hole. Then we filled the hole with sand. Around the pipe we erected a five feet tall solid fence. This was to protect our modesty as we were right across the street from the airport.

On the 29th a young soldier was brought to the aid station. He had an accident! He founded a LAW and was playing with it. It exploded blowing off his right hand and both legs below the knee. It was a foolish mistake! I will never forget the look on his face when they brought him in. He was holding up his right hand, turning it around, and the expressing on his face was, "where has my hand gone?"

Two men were killed today - 31 March. One was a soldier from the 16th Engineers. He was killed by a road mine. The 192 Aviation had a man killed in a chopper crash. I was happy about one thing. As I was working in the chapel yard, I saw three soldiers come to the front of the chapel and each had his picture taken. I think they were going home! It made me feel good to think the new chapel was one of the good memories they would take home.

Today is "April Fool's Day" and I went under 100 more days in Viet Nam! But who's counting? Terry Spalding went to the Bein Hoa PX and purchased both of us a Ricoh camera. Each camera was only \$99.00.

On the 4th we had our first evening service in the chapel. There were 24 in attendance. I am happy and very satisfied. I am tired tonight. It is the tiredness I use to have when I was a civilian pastor. A tiredness that comes after expending a lot of nervous energy during the day. It is a good feeling.

It is Easter and I am thrilled with the attendance at the "Sunrise Service. We had 61. Thank God! Jesus lives! The sunrise service was held on the cliff that overlooks the South China Sea. What a beautiful place for a Sunrise Service. Attendance in chapel was great! Our largest crowd yet! There were 100! We had men standing around the walls of the chapel. At MACV Headquarters there was a woman present at the service. She was the wife of a civilian employee. This is the first woman I've had in a service in 9 months. Oh what a thrill this day has been. The Catholics also had 100 in chapel. Every chair taken. People were along the wall and standing in the door going out of the chapel.

Today, 7 April, tile was put on the floor of the chapel. That was hard work!



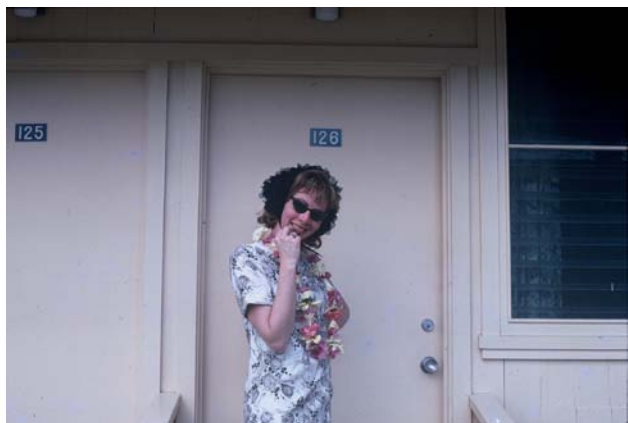
On the 8th I planted shrubs around the front of the chapel. Today's highlight was the baptism of SSG Ronald Blankenship in the South China Sea.

Had a good service with 3d platoon of "C" Company. I get good support from Lieutenant Thompson. His father is a Nazarene minister.

BAPTISM OF SSG BLAKENSHIP

It is the 10th of April and I have flown to Bein Hoa for R&R. Went swimming in the Air Force swimming pool. It is the 11th and I am on my way to Hawaii. I feel like I did on my wedding day. I am nervous and anxious. I sit and anticipate what it will be like. I count the hours and figure out when she will leave Orlando and when I will arrive in Hawaii. This is a very exciting time! It is hard to go to sleep.

Arrived in Hawaii on the 12th. A bus carried all the soldiers to meet their wives at Fort DeRussey. When we arrived they had the wives lined up in a long hallway. The soldiers would slowly make their way down the line and you would hear a little shriek, as each man found his wife. I made my way down that line. I was looking everywhere for Linda as I was almost at the end of the line. I was afraid she hadn't come. I had counseled several soldiers who had that happen to them. Linda is always late and I was beginning to think she had missed her flight or didn't show up. I was about ready to cry when, there she was standing before me so beautiful. Since we didn't have a big budget we reserved a room at Fort DeRussey. As far as I was concerned it was a mansion! It only cost \$40.00 for the week. We had dinner at the Halekalani. The meal was very good! Purchased a Hawaiian shirt. Very loud! Ah, what sweet love that first night!



Today we went to the Waikiki Baptist Church. It had been written up in the Home Missions Magazine. We really received our money's worth that Sunday. They had a worship service, and then a wedding. After church a couple took us to see the new church they were building. The parking garage was under the church and they used a lot of native stone in the church itself. Visited the International Market Place. Linda purchased her Muumuu - very pretty.



The 14th Linda and I took a tour around the island of Oahu in our rented car. We visited Pearl Harbor, a pineapple farm and sugar cane fields. At the pineapple farm we ate some of the best pineapple I have ever eaten. It was delicious! Later we walked on some beautiful beaches, saw some "blow-holes" and nice green mountains. We plan on doing more sightseeing tomorrow. For dinner we went to the "Queens Surf."

Linda wore a Muumuu and I think fell in love. She continues to remember how good that fish dinner was. After dinner we walked through a wax museum.

On the 15th I took a phone call that said Whicky, Linda's grandmother, had died. I returned to our room to give her the bad news. She took it very well. I know it hurt her very deeply. I fully expected her to pack her bags and return to Florida. She didn't! She said Whicky and her had talked of



A BEAUTIFUL HAWAIIAN COAST LINE
this possibility before she left and Whicky said she wanted Linda to stay with me. I was torn with two emotions. I was saddened that Whicky had died, but so elated that Linda was going to finish the week with me. When I returned to Viet Nam I knew I had the assurance of her love, because of what she had given. She missed her Grandmother's funeral so she would be with me for a few more days. That is a spiritual lesson too. If you wonder about God's love for you, just think of what He has given, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16).

That night we dined at The Fisherman's Wharf.

On the 16th we toured the rest of the island - including the "Punchbowl." From there we had a great view of Honolulu and Sugar Loaf Mountain. We had dinner at the Colonial Cafeteria. It rained a misty rain today. Turned in the car and took a taxi to the International Market Place.

On the 18th I said goodbye to Linda in our room. The bus picked me up at Fort DeRussi about 0600 Hours. The plane left Honolulu at 0812. We flew to Guam. I slept most of the way. It was hard to leave Linda. The only thing that made it easier was the knowledge that in about 80 days I would be flying home to a new assignment. She stuck her head out the door as I was walking down the sidewalk. I wish I had gone back and kissed her one more time.

On the 19th I arrived in Saigon at 1530 Hours. It was hot. A jeep picked me up and carried me to Bein Hoa. I fell asleep watching TV. I slept for 10 hours.

On the 20th I attended two services in Bein Hoa and then caught a plane to Phan Thiet, arriving at 1700 Hours. It was good to be back. The men are teasing me about R&R. That's alright - most of the teasing is true - besides it brings back good memories. I started visiting all the

companies to see some of the new men. Talked with LTC Alves about going to the field. I suggested since the Artillery now had a chaplain I would let him cover them, and I could go to the field with the men. He was for it, but wanted me only to stay overnight.

On the 21st I went to the 1st Platoon of "D" Company. I have never received a finer welcome anywhere. They asked me to have two services so all the men would have a chance to attend. I did and 23 out of the 36 men attended. I should have thought of this sooner. When the chaplain goes to the field for services he should have two - this would allow the men to accomplish their resupply work and attend services.

Began the 22d by going to Whiskey Relay. Back at Betty I learned that one platoon of "A: Company had come in. They were going to have a beach party and wanted me to hold a service on the beach. I did and it was great - 28 men attended. I also had another service for one platoon of "B: Company. It has been hot - 94 degrees. I sure miss Linda. One week just wasn't long enough.

On the 23d I went on a hospital run with the Battalion XO and representatives from the companies. We visited hospitals in Nha Trang and Cam Rahm Bay. I'm not feeling well. I have a slight cold and a rough throat.

On the 24th I went to a new firebase, Lance. Had 14 in the service. I was wearing a pair of "Airborne" boots and a soldier offered me \$22.00 for them. I told him they were his! He is supposed to pick them up pay day. Feel much better today.

The 25th I had a real good service with the 3d platoon of "D" Company. Today I have a cold and sore throat. Feel badly.

The 26th I went to 1st Platoon of "C" Company. This platoon has bad morale and bad language. Went to "E" Company for a Bar-B-Que. They also had a big pot of kidney beans - this made me think of home.

The 27th I had a memorial service for Spec 4 Larry Leopoldina of Hawaii. He was with the Recon Team. Flew with Chaplain Van Dyke to Nha Trang in a U21. That was very nice.

The purpose of the flight was to attend a Chaplain's conference at the Special Forces Chapel on the 28th. During the morning they discussed a book by Froome. I don't care for this kind of stuff. The afternoon we discussed Army policy and regulations. That was much better.

Returned to Phan Thiet the next day. Was paid \$144, which included my raise for going over two years in the Army. Ordered a set of dishes

(Blue Dawn) and a set of stainless steel dinner ware (Eros) from PACEX. Had a memorial service for CPL Richard Burns.

On the 30th I had a memorial service in the chapel for SP4 Carl Morrison. This is the first memorial service in the chapel. Had the sad duty of telling a soldier his dad died. He was in his 11th month in Viet Nam. Tonight we had our first Bible Study in the chapel. We studied "the Sermon On The Mount." Six attended! This is a good beginning.

May the first was a great day! Went to one platoon of "C" Company. They were very friendly - nice to me and one another. Morale very high. They used nice language - not vulgar or profane. For the service 26 out of the 34 men in the platoon attended the service. I thoroughly enjoyed being with them. Spent the afternoon writing monthly reports. Tonight spent time at Officers Lounge talking with CPT Knowlton. He goes home in a week. We talked about our wives and children.

On the 2d I went to Thien Giou to see our method of working the pacification program and get an idea on how I will work. It looks good. Under this program the men seem to have more time to talk. I am looking forward to being with them more.

The 3d I had a good service with 3d platoon of "C" company. That night I attended a number of parties - "C" Company, "D: platoon and Commo platoon. I was talking with some men in "D: company and telling them I wanted to come out and spend a few days and nights with them. They said, "Oh Chaplain, don't do that. You are too valuable to us. Something might happen to you. Beside you're too short." Then they went on to tell me how much it meant to them for me to come out on the resupply. They said I was a big morale boost. They will never know how much their words meant to me and my morale.

Sunday, May 4th we had the best attendance we have had in chapel - 133. Three companies were in and they really came to chapel. Every chair was taken and people were lined around the walls. It was marvelous!

Today, the 6th, drapes were installed in the chapel. We also had a sign put up in front - "CURRAHEE CHAPEL."

The 7th I was able to visit three sites of "A: Company. They are working on the pacification program of Thien Giou. Each time I finished a service there would be a chopper to take me to the next site.

The next days I had services for "B: and "C" Companies. At "B" Company LTC Alves was there. I pointed out a couple of small palm trees that would look nice in front of the chapel. He said, "I think this farmer

would like to donate those trees." Then he ordered the men to dig them up. They were brought back on the chopper and planted right away.

The 9th we were able to get an American Flag and a Christian flag for the chapel. They look nice one on each side of the altar. Tonight I attended a party for Captain Knowlton and Captain Myerson. They both leave for home tomorrow. I will miss them both.

The 10th I went to "C" company and moved through the field with one squad. We found about three bunkers with clothing and rice in them. We moved about 6 klicks. I am a little tired, but I really enjoyed it.

The 11th I baptized Richard Simpson and Robert Sankrof in the South China Sea.

The 12th we were mortared around 0200 hours. 10-12 mortars and one rocket that hit the airfield. No one was hurt. I visited two platoons of "B" Company.

The 13th we were mortared again at 0200 Hours. I counted 16 straight mortars at one time. No one hurt! Chaplain van Dyke is down. He is getting to be a pill. Here it is only Tuesday and he wants to have Mass for Men who attended chapel Sunday. He wanted a mosquito net on his bed so the flies wouldn't bother him when he sleeps. He didn't like where we put the fan. He doesn't like the men hanging around the chapel who don't work here. It getting so I can't stand him! Those were just feelings of the moment. God knows he is really a good man. This afternoon we had a USO Show. They were pretty good - the best we've had so far.

The 14th we were mortared for the third straight night - 15 to 20 rounds.

The 15th - again more mortars! This time one hit a bunker killing two of our men and amputation of both feet of another. Asked LTC Alves to let me Combat Assault with "B" Company tomorrow. He said, "Ok."

The 16th I had my first combat assault with "B" platoon in the morning. Went from "B:" to "C:" for a service. Spent the night with "B:" in the field. Enjoyed it and I think the men liked it. Some of them think of the chaplain as a good luck charm and they believe that if the chaplain is with them, nothing bad is going to happen.

The 17th I had a memorial service for WO Walter Stacy, 192 Aviation. We were mortared again at 1900 hours. There was contact in the field and 4 men were slightly wounded.

Sunday, May 18th, we had a good crowd in chapel this a.m. I was surprised as some of our men had to go out to the field. Baptized Kelvin King in South China Sea. He wants to become a member of First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Texas. I will write them. I know they will be happy to have him as a member. Had our first Sunday night service in the chapel. Special James Galloway preached the sermon. I have personally been wrestling with my decision to remain in the Army or to get out. During the service I felt strongly impressed to stay in. I will make no decision until I return home and talk with Linda.

The 19th LTC Alves bragged on our work today. He said, "The chapel program is outstanding and I attribute it to you and your assistants efforts." I have been lucky with assistants. Mike Smith and Terry Spaulding are both outstanding assistants.

The 20th I had a communion service for "D" Company before they went to the field. It was held on the C-130 pad and it started pouring rain. We all got soaked. The bread stuck together and the wine was half water. Yet 33 men stayed for the service.

The 21st I visited hospitals in Nha Trang and Vung Tau.

Purchased two fans for the chapel. Spent day visiting troops.

Had services for "C: Company and one platoon of "D: Company. I was very impressed with "D: Company platoon. There were 34 of their 42 men who attended the service.

Specialist Richard Simpson spoke at the evening service. He had been a Christian only a couple of months. I recently baptized him. God is certainly working in this young man's life. LT Belzter returned from Thailand. He got the three sets of bronze ware for me to ship home to Linda, her Mom, and an Aunt.

The 26th 5 men were brought in wounded from Firebase Sherry. One man died. Another had a broken arm. The other three were ok. I asked LTC Alves to write me a letter of reference so I can go indefinite.

The 27th I received verbal orders tonight. I am going to the Atlanta Army Depot. Sounds like a good job, but I am disappointed. I wanted to go to an airborne or basic training center. Chaplain (COL) Richard Bell told me this is a good assignment for my career. He said at the depot I will be doing the same work as a Post Chaplain, only on a small scale.

The 29th I found out SGT Martin, a cook, was stationed at the Army Depot for two years. He says it is a beautiful post. I hope so. I'm now getting excited about going there.

The 30th - I received written orders to the Atlanta Army Depot.

Saturday, May 31st, tonight in the Battalion briefing LTC Alves said I "was the best troop chaplain he had ever seen. Forgive me for recording all these different words of praise. I cannot believe it either! The truth is - I was a young chaplain, new to the Army, and I needed that encouragement to guide me in my growth.

1 June I went to Tuy Phong for my last time. All year, every time I've been, no one has wanted a service. No one did today. Tonight Bob Carver played his guitar in the chapel. He played for the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee before coming to Viet Nam.

2 June I had the dentist check my teeth. He found one cavity and filled it. He also cleaned and fluorided them. He recommended using Crest toothpaste. Had lunch at the Catholic Church. It was a meal to encourage us to use the orphanage laundry. They served a 5 course lunch in the following order: soup, hogshead cheese, something on a stick, crab, chicken and for desert, mangos.

On the 3d I went to Song Mau. Chaplain (MAJ) Garrot was there. He told me Atlanta Army Depot was a choice assignment. Today I was sick: vomiting and diarrhea. Must have been the meal I had yesterday.

On the 4th Chaplain Davis, 4/2/1st Cav unit, came by. He is spending the night. Purchased Red, Linda's stepfather, a nice Seiko watch.

The 5th I had a service for "D" Company and played horseshoe with Terry Spaulding in the afternoon. I lost both games.

On the 6th there was action in our AO this a.m. (0230 Hours). One man was wounded and 1 was killed. There were 18 different places hit in our AO today. Early this morning I went to the dining facility just as they were frying the scrambled eggs. As the eggs reached the done stage, but still were a little on the juicy side, I asked the cook to serve me several of them. He did! As I found a table and was sitting down, suddenly the air was filled with a loud BOOM, and the building shook. I knew we had been hit by a rocket. The mortars are troublesome, but the rockets will make a believer out of you. I never did get to eat my eggs. There was too much going on and things for me to do. The VC destroyed one of our planes, wounded 1 and killed 3 on LZ Betty. Later in the day I flew out with the chopper to "C: to pick up the body of Terry Miller. I stayed with the unit and had two services. "C" Company had killed 3 VC. The ARVNS cut the ears off one of them.



The 7th I had two Memorial Services for Nevins and Borrego. They were killed several weeks ago when a mortar hit their bunker. I'm beginning to feel "short." I will be glad when it is time for me to go home. We were mortared again tonight at 2030 Hours.

The 8th I went to Hai Long (MACV) for a service. The men were glad to see a chaplain. Half the men who attended were Catholic.

VIETNAMESE WATCHING ACTION IN FIELD

Early in the morning of the 9th (0330 hours) I was awakened by a noise in the chapel. I had no idea who was in there - whether they were friend of foe. Very cautiously I checked the chapel and found one of our soldiers crying. I talked with him and this was his story: He said, "When you were building this chapel I use to slip down here at night and steal some of the lumber so I could build me a safe place to sleep." At 0330 in the morning I assured him that I forgave him and so did God.

Heard from Linda. She has received the bronze ware and is happy about our new assignment.

The 10th I went to the field to be with "A" Company. I had services for every platoon. I wish I had thought of having more than one service with a unit when I visited them in the field. That way they could do the work required during a resupply, man the perimeter, and attend one of the services.

Started building a bunker at the chapel. It will be a place where Terry Spaulding, the Chaplain's Assistant, can seek refuge if it ever becomes necessary. Of course, I say, "I started building a bunker," when in actuality Terry did most of the work. "E" Company sent men to fill ammo cans with sand and place around the chapel for safety. This would provide protection from nearby mortars or small arms fire.

The 13th I had a Memorial Service for SFC Carl Motes who was a medic with MACV. He was killed during an ambush. He had been in the Army 26 years. One of our medics was killed tonight. They were moving and walked into a "friendly" ambush. Someone didn't know where they were. There will be an investigation into this.

The 14th I had two memorial services for SP 4 Clarence Stoner, HHC 3/506th, a medic and PFC Terry Miller, C/3/506. Received a very nice "welcome letter" from Colonel Leyegrag, Commander of the Army depot. He

said he had directed a ranch type house be reserved for Linda and me. That sounds really good to me. My OER from Major Johnson, XO came in today. He recommended accelerated promotion and gave me 100% in the rating.

The 16th I was given a going away gift by four men who have spent a lot of time at the chapel: Terry Spalding, Richard Simpson, John Bunter and Robert Sarnoff. All purchased me a ten volume set of Barclay's Commentary. This was a big surprise. Richard had asked me what Commentary I liked. I thought he wanted one for his personal Bible study. I had no idea they were buying me a set. This will certainly be valuable in my future preparation of sermons. I had baptized two of these men.

The 17th I flew to Beinh Hoa to check on my finance records. They were ok. Then went to Phu Bai to check out with the Division Chaplain. There I had Dinner in the General's Mess. You know, General's don't have it too bad in times of war? At the Division Chaplain's office I met my replacement - Chaplain (CPT) Sepantzi. He seems like a fine chaplain.

Back in Beinh Hoa my plane was cancelled for Phan Thiet, so I had to stay an extra day. I was watching TV, and was about half asleep, when a siren went off on the TV. Before I could think about I hit the floor. Then I realized it was the TV. I guess I am getting short!

Arrived back in Phan Thiet on the 20th. It is good to be back home.

On the 22d I received a letter from Linda with a floor plan of our new home at the Atlanta Army Depot. CPT Kindle, the Depot Provost Marshal, had sent it to her. It is nothing special, but Linda will certainly make it a home!

The 23d there were about 15 of us from LZ Betty that went to the MACV Sector Headquarters to be awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star. At LZ Betty one man was brought to the Aid Station wounded in the right side.

The 24th I went to one platoon of "A: Company. They were set up under a large shade tree and some of the men were swimming in a nearby creek. It was nice and peaceful - nothing like a war. Received my clearance papers today.

The 25th CSM Buttram and 1st SGT Bowers came to the chapel tonight and we played a game of horseshoes. On a hillside behind one of the companies I sat with the men, feeling the gentle breeze from the South China Sea, watching the movie, "The Dirty Dozen." It was very enjoyable.

Now I'm starting to kid the men about "being short and going home." That is what they did to me when I first arrived in country. They are envious. Some have been very nice to say, "I hate to see you go. I really do."

Visited the local civilian Catholic Priest. He has helped me, and, my men by providing Mass on Sunday. While we were talking we told me he would like to give me a going home present. He asked what I might like? On his book shelf I noticed what looked like a bamboo pipe. I told him I would like one of them. Very seriously he looked at me and asked, "You smoke pot?" I assured him I did not, and he did give me one. I still have it in my home.

Received a letter from Linda that said Shawn and Meghan, my son and daughter, had made a profession of faith in the Bethany Baptist church. The pastor has said I could baptize them when I come home.



BAPTISING OF SHAWN



BAPTISING OF MEGHAN

The 28th two new chaplains arrived - Chaplain Lesko, a Catholic, and Chaplain Sepantzi, my replacement. LTC Alves says he, our S-1, Lieutenant Belzter, and I will all go home on the same plane. He says we will go home on the 4th of July and that will be our "Independence Day."

The 29th I had a very nice talk with 1st SGT Wyndam, "B" Company. He retires in a few more months. He said I was the best chaplain he had ever seen in the Army. He said the men in "B" Company thought I was tops and he wants me to write the company when I get home. I saw LTC Alves part of my OER and he gave me 100% and recommended promotion ahead of contemporaries.

The 30th I took Chaplain Lesko and Chaplain Sipantzi to "B: Company for services. I am taking them around to different units and introducing them to the men.

The 1st of July received a letter from Linda, in which, she had written to Terry Spaulding thanking him for taking good care of me over here.

On the second I was making my rounds to any unit that I could go and say goodbye. It was late in the afternoon and I was visiting a unit when it suddenly started to rain. It was raining so hard and the sky was so dark that the choppers quit flying. It looked like I was going to spend my last night in the field. I really didn't want that. I remembered LTC Alves had told me, "If you ever need help, just ask me." I had the Company Commander call him over the radio. It wasn't long before LTC Alves personal helicopter came to pick me up. I was so relieved.

The next day, LTC Alves, LT Beltzer, and I boarded the same helicopter which would take us to Bein Hoa where we would process out and catch a plane for the United States. In Bein Hoa everywhere we went LTC would tell them, "We want to fly out of here tomorrow morning." Everyone would laugh and tell him it was impossible, that it usually takes several days to process out. They didn't know LTC Alves. Once he made up his mind about something, whatever he wanted, he usually received. I just grabbed his shirttail and told everyone, "I'm with him." The next morning at 0300 hours we were in the holding area waiting to catch our plane. LTC Alves was the planeload commander. The Air Force personnel started a "bumping action" where they would take your seat to give to someone who had an emergency in the States. They asked everyone who had a DEROS later than 4 July to pass in their ticket. My DEROS was 8 July so I started my ticket down the row. When LTC Alves saw it he took it out and passed it back to me. At 0400 hours we were seated on the plane, buckled in, and starting to relax. We were actually going home! Because LTC Alves was the planeload Commander we had the choice seats on the plane. He and LT Beltzer played Trivia Pursuit all night long. I slept like a baby, dreaming of the reunion I was planning with Linda and the children. There is no feeling like leaving a war zone to come home to your family.

In Hawaii, when you processed into the States you could get a gallon of liquor, duty free. LTC Ales had taken a vow that he would not drink any alcohol during his tour in Viet Nam. LT Beltzer and I both purchased our gallon of liquor and gave it to him.

At Travis Air Force Base in California I quickly received my ticket that would take me to Orlando, Florida. This ticket required me to fly to Chicago and then to Orlando. I would be arriving early in the evening. I wanted to arrive sooner! Upon arriving at the San Francisco Airport I asked the porter if there were any earlier flights. He said there was one getting ready to leave for Miami and if I hurried I could make it. I ran to the counter and they changed my ticket. Soon I was on the plane for Miami - but not before I checked out all the passengers. At

that time there were a number of planes that had been high jacked for Cuba. I wanted to make sure there wasn't anyone on that plane that looked like a hijacker - whatever a hijacker looked like.

I arrived in Miami in time to get a shave and catch a small "puddle jumper" for the Old Orlando Airport. I would arrive around 1600 Hours. I called Linda and she said the whole family would be there. It was a welcome sight, walking across the tarmac of the airfield, and seeing Linda, my three children, Mom and Dad, and Linda's parents waiting to greet me. There is such a warm feeling as I recall that reunion. I was home. My year in Viet Nam was over.

STATISTICS OF MY YEAR IN VIET NAM

<u>TASKS</u>	<u>JULY-DECEMBER</u>	<u>JANUARY-JUNE</u>	<u>YEAR'S TOTAL</u>
SERVICES	187	220	407
ATTENDANCE	3,139	3,414	6,553
PROFESSIONS OF FAITH	685	398	1,087
WOUNDED	88	88	176
KILLED IN ACTION	16	19	35
MEMORIAL SERVICE	8	19	27
HOSPITAL VISITS	23	45	68
<u>*THE WIA AND KIA ARE NOT OFFICIAL RECORDS BUT COME FROM MY PERSONAL DIARY.</u>			

**THIS WAS MY FAREWELL RECORDED IN THE CURRAHEE CHAPEL
BULLETIN ON 29 JUNE**

Dear Currahees:

I remember, when I first came to the 3/506, I could help everyone's morale by just telling how many days I had to go - 359. Now it's my turn to say "Short!" The time has come for me to go home.

To say I hate to go or even that I would like to stay, wouldn't be the truth. I have a wife and three children waiting for me and I'm anxious to get home.

Yet this has been a most memorable year. It has made me a better man, and I trust, a better chaplain. During this year I have done my best to "bring God to you and you to God." I hope I have succeeded.

My next assignment will be the Atlanta Army Depot. I will be the Depot Chaplain. If you are even in the area please stop by and see us. You will always be welcome.

You have given me many memories. For this I thank you.

In parting I would like to leave you with this prayer from the Old Testament, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." (Genesis 31:49).

In His Name,

WILLIAM P. WEBB

**PHAN THIET DID MAKE NEWS IN THE "PACIFIC STARS &
STIPES**

GI's Hurl Reds Back At Camps

SAIGON - Communists tried but failed to overrun an American landing zone near the South China Sea early Saturday. The attack came a few hours before Allied military commanders watched an oft-broken Communist "truce" expire and waited for the Reds' next move. U.S. spokesmen said the unknown-sized band of Reds laid down a 30-round mortar barrage, then charged the landing zone near Phan Thiet, 95 miles east of Saigon. With five hours remaining in their weeklong unilateral "truce," the reds opened up on the camp at 2 a.m. GI's of the 101st Airborne Div called for

spooky and helicopter gunships and fought back. The Americans stationed more than 200 miles south of the bulk of their division, hurled back the reds but not before a handful used Bangalore torpedoes to break briefly through their lines. They were repelled. Two Americans were killed and 29 wounded in the night battle. The Communists left 12 bodies behind, as well as eight weapons and 11 grenades. It was one of two attacks along the coast. The U.S. air base at Phan rang, 75 miles to the northeast, was mortared almost simultaneously.

Pacific Stars & Stripes
Monday, Feb. 24, 1969

MY TRIBUTE TO THE CURRAHEE FIGHTING SOLDIERS

Using two resources I saved during my tour in Viet Nam, I would like to write my personal tribute to the men of the 3/506th with whom I served. One article was written by Chaplain Jerry Autrey. I do not remember the magazine in which his article appeared. The other was written by CPL Dale E. Chelf, USMC to his mother in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She had the article published in the Tulsa Tribune. Here is a combination of what they wrote and what I thought:

It was the infantry soldier in Viet Nam who really fought that war. Everyday he put his life on the line. His job was one which didn't have regular hours. His week didn't have Saturdays and Sundays, just days. He eats, he drinks, he sweats, he lives war. He knows none of the pleasures of his counterpart in the United States. He gets one hot meal every three or four days. He drinks one cup of cold Kool Aid when he can get the ice. He has seen the enemy die and yet even more vivid to him is the memory of his buddy who also died. Usually, his one moment of real joy is when he receives that cherished letter from his wife, girl friend or family. He will read that same letter several times until he receives the next. He lives in the now because he knows that he has no promise of tomorrow.

He is duty minded, courageous, and God fearing. His language is not always the best, and he is no super hero; but when there's a job to do, he does it.

I see a soldier; I see a real man. His average age is about 19, but what a man he is! He is a pink-cheeked, tousled-haired, tight-muscled fellow who, under normal circumstances, would be considered by society

half-man, half-boy, not yet dry behind the ears. In many ways, he hasn't formed his basic concepts and ideals about life; and yet, he's willing to pay the supreme price for the ideals of his country although he doesn't fully understand them. But in Viet Nam he is the beardless hope of all free men. He is for the most part, unmarried and without material possessions, except for an old car at home and a transistor radio here. He listens to rock and roll and the rat-a-tat sound of a M16 rifle.

He just got out of high school, received so-so grades, played a little football and had a girl who promised to wait for him. He has learned to drink beer because it is cold and "it is the thing to do." He is a private first class, a one-year military veteran with one or possible three years to go. He still has trouble spelling and writing letters home is a painful process. But he can break down his rifle in 30 seconds and put it back together in 29. He can dig a foxhole, apply first-aid to a wounded companion, march until told to stop, or stop until told to march. He has seen more suffering than he should have in his short life. He has stood among rows of bodies, and he has helped to build those rows. He has wept in private and in public and has not been ashamed at doing either, because his pals have fallen in battle and he has come close to joining them.

He sometimes forgets to brush his teeth, but not his rifle. He keeps his socks dry and his canteen full. He can cook his own meal, fix his own hurts, and mend his own rips - material or mental. He will share his water with you if you thirst, break his rations in half if you hunger and split his ammo if you are fighting for your life.

He can do the work of two civilians, draw half as much pay as one of them and see the ironic humor in it all. He has learned to use his hands as weapons and his weapons as his hands. He can save a life or most assuredly take one.

When the call goes out that the chaplain is going to have services he comes. He's Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Pentecostal and many times, Catholic. He usually wears a cross around his neck, and he always carries his New Testament. It is his basic equipment.

He is now 19, a veteran, who is hoping and praying he lives to be 20.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

I LOVE YOU!

HONOR ROLL OF CURRAHEE SOLDIERS*

HENNING, DOUGLAS ALLEN	PVT E2	7-17-1968
KING, GUY RICHARD	SP4 E4	7-17-1968
SMITH, DONALD JAMES	SP4 E4	7-17-1968
DECKER, WILLIAM B.		8-5-1968
SCHAFFER, BLAINE CLARENCE	SGT E5	8-5-1968
ROWELL, KEITH WILLIAM	SGT E5	8-25-1968
RIOS-ROSARIO, TEODORITO	SGT E5	8-25-1968
FLINT, WILLIAM RONALD	CPL E3	9-1-1968
SHAUGHNESSY, JAMES J., JR.	PVT E2	9-1-1968
HEATH, NED ARTHUR	SP4 E4	9-6-1968
MILLER, JERRY LAVON	CPL E3	9-9-1968
JOHNSON, WAYNE DAVID	PFC E3	10-4-1968
JACKSON, FREDERICK G.	SSG E6	10-22-1968
PAGAN, GARY DON	SGT E5	11-20-1968
NEISWENDER, DANIEL LYNN	1LT 02	11-23-1968
SHAW, WADE THOMAS	PVT E2	12-19-1968
MEASELL, KENNETH WILLIAM	SGT E5	1-17-1969
KEISTER, LAWRENCE LEE	SP4 E4	1-26-1969
HARPER, BILLY FRANK	CPL E3	2-12-1969
HOOK, ROBERT W.	SGT E5	2-12-1969
RIOS, SALVADOR DELOSS	SGT E5	2-12-1969
ALLEN, WILLIAM	SGT E5	2-22-1969
TWEEDLE, KEVIN EDWARD	PFC E3	2-22-1969

WRAZEN, GERALD	CPT 03	2-22-1969
DICKSON, JIM LEE	PFC E3	2-26-1969
BURNS, RICHARD ALLEN	CPL E3	2-28-1969
DONLON, RICHARD MICHAEL	SGT E5	2-28-1969
MOON, DEAN LEROY	SP4 E4	3-19-1969
MAY, RICHARD GEORGE	SGT E5	4-7-1969
MORRISON, CARL PHILLIP	SP4 E4	4-19-1969
LEOPOLDINO, LARRY GENE	SP4 E4	4-25-1969
BORREGO LUIS CARLOS, JR	CPL E3	5-15-1969
NEVINS, FLOYD CHARLES	SGT E4	5-15-1969
MILLER, TERRY	PFC E2	6-6-1969
STONER, CLARENCE MOODY JR.	SGT E5	6-13-1969

*This Honor Roll is not official. The names listed were recorded in my diary.

*This Honor Roll is not complete. I'm certain there were others whose names I never received, or was notified.