

Letter #1 - Background: My name is Stanley Homiski; and I served with B Troop, 3/4 Cav, 25th Inf Div starting as an RTO and ending my tour as the Commo Sgt. I was married shortly before shipping out and have stayed married to the same woman for 30 years. I have two children--a daughter, Christin, 28 years, who is a doctor in Chattanooga, TN, and a son, Scott, 24 years, who works for the telephone company. This is a letter I wrote to my wife on May 25, 1968.

25 May, 1968

Dear Roberta,

Today is probably the worst day I have ever lived in my entire, short life. Once again we were in contact with Charlie, and once again we suffered losses. The losses we had today hit home, as my best friend in this crap hole was killed. He was only 22 years old and was going on R&R on the first of June to meet his wife in Hawaii. I feel that if I was only a half second sooner in pulling the trigger, he would still be alive.

Strange how short a time a half of a second is--the difference between life and death. This morning we were talking about how we were only two years different in age and how we both had gotten married before coming to this place. You know, I can still feel his presence as I write this letter and hope that I am able to survive and leave this far behind me.

If there is a place called Hell this surely must be it, and we must be the Devil's disciples doing all his dirty work. I keep asking myself if there is a God, then how the hell come young men with so much to live for have to die. I just hope that his death is not in vain.

I look forward to the day when I will take my R&R. If I play my cards right, I should be able to get it for Hawaii so our anniversary will be in that time frame. The reason I say this is by Sept., I will have more than enough time in country to get my pick of places and dates. I promise I will do everything necessary to insure that I make that date, and I hope that tomorrow is quiet.

We will be going into base camp soon for our three-day stand down. I will try to write you a longer letter at that time. Please don't worry too much about me, as if you won't, for I will take care of myself and look forward to the day I am able to be with you again.

Love,
Stan

Letter #2 -
March 4, 1968
Well Mom,

There really is a war going on over here. We made contact in daylight yesterday for the first time since I've been here. You know how they say war is not like the movies show it. Well, they're wrong. It's exactly like the movies.

We were on a Company-size patrol when they hit us. 1st plt was in the front, we were next, and 2nd plt was in the rear. Wayne was working with the 2nd plt on the machine guns.

They hit the first plt, and everyone got down. Then first moved up 50 meters, and we moved out to the left. As soon as we moved behind a hedgeline, an automatic weapon opened on us. We just kept moving.

We finally got out of range about 100 meters down the trail. Then we got on line and assaulted a hedgeline 50 meters in front of us. We didn't meet any resistance; so, after we got on the other side, we got down and waited. Then we got the word the 1st plt was in bad shape and needed us. So, we were going to move out on line about 50 meters and then swing to our right and get the gooks in the middle of us and 1st.

We started out on line, keeping low and moving slow. It was a clear, open field we were going across. We were halfway across when fire opened up from our right. Everyone got down, and the St/Sgt started yelling at us to keep moving; so, we being young, brave Marines got back on line and kept moving.

But then the bullets started zipping around our legs and raising dust. We knew for sure they were shooting at us then. We weren't about to stay on line after that. We bolted to the right, ran about 25 meters, and took cover behind dirt piled up all along this road.

We waited there, just the 1st squad (2nd and 3rd squad were behind us), for about five minutes. They weren't shooting anymore; so, we start sticking our fool necks up to see what was happening. And they started shooting again. Now we knew where they were, tho. They were dug in right behind a thick bamboo patch, about 2 squads. At least now we could shoot back. We were doing pretty good--holding our own. Four of them started to run, and we cut them down.

THEN! we started receiving fire from our rear. I started getting scared, then, because we had no protection to the rear. They had us pinned down for 1/2 hour. We couldn't even raise our heads to see where they were. Finally the 2nd and 3rd squads moved up and cleared up our rear. We continued the fire fight to our front.

By this time, we had taken a few casualties, including our ST/Sgt--shot through the neck close to the collarbone. A medevac chopper landed right behind us as we set up a hard base of fire, turning our M-16s on automatic. Our St/Sgt wouldn't leave tho; and he kept running around yelling orders, his neck all patched up. (He thinks he's John Wayne.)

After awhile, we thought we had wiped them out because they kept running and we kept cutting them down. After awhile, the fire stopped; and the S/Sgt wanted a frontal assault on the positions. We didn't like that idea because, if there was one automatic weapon left, it could tear our whole squad to pieces.

We finally made him see the light. We threw a few grenades; and, sure enough, they started shooting again. We just exchanged fire for another hour, and then the TANKS!!! came. Three tanks with the 2nd plt swept through the position from our right. I saw Wayne with the M-60. There were 3 gooks left. The tanks opened fire when they saw them. Killed two and took one prisoner.

All that took a little over five hours. One of our Corpsmen was put up for a medal.

Wayne told me later that he was feeding the machine gun, and the A gunner was shooting, when a chicom landed right next to the A gunner. He toppled over Wayne, and Wayne had to take charge of the gun. That plt had one killed.

Mike sent me a letter and told me not to tell you he is coming to Nam. I'll write him and tell him how lousy everything is around here. We got mail three times last week, and I got a whole mess of letters from you. I got a letter from Sonny, and he says Dan will be OK. I hope so.

Where do you think I should go for R&R (in 5 months)? Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Taipei, Australia, Hawaii, P.I. or Oki?

I'll write soon....Tim

Letter #3 - Background: In February 1968, at the age of 17, I enlisted in the Marines . I was trained as a rifleman (0311--grunt) and arrived in Vietnam in October 1968, four months after turning 18 years old. I was assigned to M 3/5 which operated from the An Hoa combat base. I participated in Operation Taylor Common, Muskogee Meadows, Pipestone Canyon, Durham Peak and in many other operations that never seemed to earn a name.

I was wounded on March 3, 1969, (minor/flesh) and awarded the Purple Heart. I received a Combat Meritorious Promotion to the rank of Corporal in July 1969. (I gave back that rank in the States--just wasn't able to hack being a "stateside Marine.")

Sharon was a girlfriend.

18 OCT 68

Hi everybody,

Well I've been in the Nam for over 24 hours, and it's been raining the whole time. I'm still in Da Nang so I don't have an address which you can write me at. I've been assigned to the 5th Marines, 1st MarDiv. But because of the rain the helicopters cannot get us into the area. It could be one day or one week before I get to my unit. There's no hurry anyway cause right now 1/5 is being hit very hard by NVA. We seen a chopper come in from 1/5 with medevacs.

Right now I'm sleeping on a cot with a roof over my head and a wooden floor, so I'm doing all right. The air field is right beside my hut and those phantoms and skyhawks fly out of here 24 hours a day. About 80 go out an hour.

On my flight out to Okinawa, we stopped in Hawaii for 45 minutes. What I saw of Hawaii was little, but it was awful hot. I can say I've been at least. Okinawa was real nice and the weather was a cool 90. The towns were worse than Mexico, so you know I had a real good time. I like places like that. You really learn a lot.

About 5:00 am today the lights went out on the Air base and Marine base. Then about three rocket rounds fell about 3 miles away. That's about the only thing I've seen so far.

I'll write tomorrow. I don't want ya to worry cause I'm all right and can handle myself. Call Sharon and tell her I'm okay.

Love, Paul