

This journal is dedicated to all the Military Police convoy escort "road rats" who spent their endless days eating dust, dodging rain, bugs, small arms and RPG fire, sleeping and eating when and where they could, and at the end of their run when they looked forward to some down time, they would once again find themselves.... "On the road again!"

The journal is comprised of excerpts from letters sent home by SP/4 Charles "David" Spruell, C Company, 720th MP Battalion, 89th MP Group, 18th MP Brigade, who served in South Vietnam from March 1971 to January 1972.

Dave spent his entire tour with C Company running convoy escorts throughout II and III Corps Tactical Zones. Some reflections were added and minor editing was done, all are noted by [brackets], (parenthesis) or highlighted by use of italicized text.



1971

1 March

Oakland Army Terminal, California: Been in Oakland for five days awaiting orders. Some guys have been here for twenty days. I did finally get jungle fatigues after spending four days in my "Class A" uniform.

Twenty guys I graduated with from MP school are still here, the rest were sent to Germany.

2 March

From Oakland Army Terminal: Still about eight of us from MP school waiting here.

5 March

From Oakland Army Terminal: Have been here for ten days, classified as a veteran. The guys who graduated a week before I did from MP school were there for twelve days before they shipped out.

7 March

From airplane on way to Vietnam: We just took off from Anchorage, Alaska, where the temperature was eight degrees. The flight is seven hours to Japan, then six more to Vietnam, nineteen hours total flying time. We took off at 6 am on the 8th. Vietnam is fifteen hours ahead of Oakland. We took off from Yokota, Japan.

10 March

Long Binh Post, III Corps Tactical Zone, Vietnam: Hello from Long Bien Vietnam. Been here for two days at the 90th Replacement Battalion.

Reflection: "After I left the 90th Replacement Battalion and went to the 89th Group for my assignment orders I ran into SGT Thomas. He was one of my sergeant's at Fort Gordon, Georgia when I was in MP school. He asked me what duty I wanted. I had the choice of going to Saigon or staying at Long Binh Post. Well I had been at Long Binh for a few days and thought that was just like stateside. I told SGT Thomas that I would take Long Binh since it looked like good comfortable duty and you get to sleep in a bed. He just smiled and signed my orders.

I'll never forget this. We heard about convoy duty and no one wanted it because it was dangerous duty and everyone wanted to stay in Long Binh. A jeep pulled up and took us to the front of the C Company headquarters. We jumped out, grabbed our bags and turned around. The first thing I saw was the painting of the company logo, "Charging Charlie Convoy Escort." Needless to say a lump formed in my throat and I cursed SGT Thomas."

I was assigned to C Company, 720 MP Battalion, [89th MP Group, 18th MP Brigade]. After talking to my platoon sergeant I learned we have four days of in country training. C Company has four detachments around the area and I may be assigned to one of them.

14 March

Taking in country training and familiarization with all weapons, M-16, .45 pistol, shotgun, M-60, M-79 and 50 cal. machine gun.

16 March

Still taking in country training and fired all of the weapons. Also, got gassed with CS (tear gas) and complained about how hot and sweaty it was with the gas.

18 March

I finished in country training and PFC Daniel W. Ott and I are staying in the company area on Long Binh Post. Eight guys came into the company and some had to leave to go to the detachments. I found out they are giving 45-60 day drops on guys getting ready to go home and around twelve guys in the company qualify.

20 March

I'm learning how to drive the V-100 [Armored Commando Car] and the APC [Armored Personnel Carrier].

21 March

I went out on my first convoy run. We escorted sixty trucks to Quan Loi, and I worked as an observer on the passenger side hatch.

22 March

In Long Binh Post taking classes on how to drive a V-100.

26 March

I had motor pool guard the other night and going out on convoys. If not going out on convoy then we are fixing things or guarding something. I had a celebration with the guys I came in country with, twenty-one days down and only 344 to go. Working seven days a week and it's hard finding time to even write a letter.

28 March We are going out on convoy tomorrow to Song Be and will be gone for three days.

5 April

I spent the last three days in Long Binh. Went out to the range at Bien Hoa Air Force Base and fired the guns on the APC's and V-100's. We do this about once a month to check and make sure they work.

I'll be leaving tomorrow for three days, going to a fire support base by the name of "Buddha." A lot of the places we go are not listed on a map since they have American names.

Received my Army operator's license for the 1/4-ton, 3/4-ton, 2-1/2-ton trucks, APC and V-100. I'm still working as a tail gunner and wanting to work my way up to driver of the V-100.

9 April

I just got back from Bu Dop after being gone for two days. We arrived back around 8 pm last night. The platoon sergeant advised me he assigned me to a gun jeep as a driver. It was at the motor pool and was a regular jeep. I started work on it tearing everything off that was not going to be used. I will be the driver for the sergeant that will be the NCOIC [Noncommissioned Officer In Charge] of the convoy.

Today is Good Friday and no one knew it until we heard it on the radio. Everyone is always asking each other what day is it. No one remembers but time is going by fast as long as I am working convoys. I enjoy it and would rather be doing that than anything else.

On the convoy from Bu Dop we pulled out 175mm artillery pieces. The 1st Cavalry [Division] is pulling out of Phouc Vinh and Lai Khe is becoming occupied by ARVN's [Army Of The Republic Of South Vietnam].

12 April

I drove a gun jeep to [Fire Support Base] Mace in a convoy. A one day trip up and back. Mace is mainly a 1st Cavalry Division base with Cobra gun ships.

13 April

We went up to Xuan Loc to get a gun mount for the jeep I am working on.

15 April

Had motor pool guard the other night and the next day off. I'm still working on the gun jeep getting it ready. Tomorrow I have post police detail and the jeep is almost done.

20 April

I just got back from a two day run from Bao Loc. This makes my third trip up there.

Looks like A Company is going to quit convoys. We are supposed to get their four V-100's. They handle the small runs and this will give us up to fourteen V-100's, but there is always two to three that are broken down.

24 April

I went to Bao Loc at the first of the week as an extra man and got to drive a V-100 back some of the way. SP/4 Terry Davenport is suppose to get his V-100 back and asked me to be the driver and he will be the IC [In Charge]. I'm going to hit the platoon sergeant up for this assignment.

Only 317 more days to go. We all are going to celebrate at 300. I spend so little time in Long Binh anymore that it's hard to find the time to go to the EM [enlisted men's] club.

27 April

I just got back from a run to Phan Thiet. My watch and camera were stolen by Vietnamese kids on the beach at Phan Thiet. I'll have to save up money for another one.

The monsoon is starting and on a run to MACE the other day we came across three civilian vehicle wrecks. Most of the wrecks we see are head-on collisions.

Next week we have five guys leaving, and most are sergeants who are IC's on V-100's so positions will be opening up. Plus, A Company is quitting convoys and we are getting them. The V-100 SP/4 Davenport and I are getting should be back from the shop in two weeks.

2 May

We are going to Phan Thiet tomorrow for two or three days. Two if everything goes right, three if everything goes wrong. The last ten days have flown by because we have been on the road all of that time.

I had to take one of the career guys to Bien Hoa Air Force Base the other day to catch a plane home. I know my way around real good now, but it seemed so strange when I got there.

5 May

I'm back from Phan Thiet and have the day off.

7 May

I had POW [enemy prisoner of war] guard from 7 am to 7 pm guarding a VC [Viet Cong] General with a leg wound. It was a bad day for the V-100's since four of them broke down with one of them catching on fire. No more V-100 for us until they get them fixed. That makes eight of them in the shop counting ours.

Tomorrow I go on a convoy to Mace with just two gun jeeps. They are taking two of the APC's to Phan Thiet since we have to run them now. They sure make a lot of noise. You can hear them coming a mile away.

8 May Tomorrow I am going to Bao Loc for two days.

11 May

I got back from Bao Loc and had lots of mail waiting for me. We were one hour late in leaving Bao Loc today because the VC were over running part of the road about fifteen miles from there.

Then when we got about twenty-five miles outside of Long Binh we were stopped again because an ARVN compound was over run five miles ahead.

Editors Note: *Two companies of North Vietnamese Army regulars attacked Regional Forces/Popular Forces (RF/PF) units conducting road clearing operations and captured and occupied Hung Loc Village, eight miles west of Xuan Loc for approximately 45 minutes. The adjacent highways including Highway QL-1, a major supply route for III Corps Tactical Zone, were declared "red."*

The NVA forces were ultimately driven off by two RF/PF companies, supported by nine V100 Commando Cars and air support. Elements of the 720th MP Battalion, in conjunction with the Vietnamese National Police, established traffic control points on Highway QL-1 to prevent U.S. and local traffic from entering the contact area.

No need to worry because we are usually warned of something like this ahead of time. While we were stopped we got to see Cobra gun ships make runs on the enemy positions.

Starting the 20th of this month we take over the A Company convoy runs and V-100's. It will result in more work so time so will go by faster and that is what I am looking for.

Only 300 days to go now. I do not know where the month of April and the first eleven days of May have gone. Tomorrow I go to Mace but I really need to pull some maintenance on the jeep.

12 May

I just thought I would drop a few lines since I'll be gone a couple of days to Bao Loc.

16 May 0300 hours

On POW guard with three prisoners. The guy I am guarding is pretty well messed up and they are not worried about him going anywhere, but someone trying to do something to him.

This guy was involved in an ambush of some ARVN troops and was captured.

Around 295 days left. It's slowing down. There are six guys with seventy-five days left, super short.

19 May

I had guard duty from 7 pm to 7 am for two NVA [North Vietnamese Army] prisoners captured on 12 May, and then had the next day off. Monday and Tuesday (17-18 May) I went to Song Be and had today (19 May) off.

I worked on the jeep doing maintenance and tomorrow I go to Vung Tau. It will be my first time going there.

The reason is we now have all of the convoys and A Company took over all of the detachments. We got five more V-100's in the process and twenty-one of their MP's. Things did not go over too well since they were complaining about having to double bunk and there are no windshields on the jeeps.

We now have around fifteen V-100's, six are running plus eight APC's, so now we are in good shape on security. We get our V-100 shortly, just as soon as it gets done at the shop. Two 292 days to go, down hill slow but sure.

24 May

Well, I am now the driver of V-100, C-58. The best V in Charlie Company! If you don't believe me ask SP/4 Terry Davenport. We got it Saturday (22 May) and since then we have been working hard to get it ready. It will be two more days before we will be ready for convoys. So far it has two new rear ends, new transmission, and clutch. Today we put on a new carburetor and tomorrow we are putting in a new water pump.

28 May

Well I have been out four straight days with the V. We broke down yesterday coming back from Tay Ninh. We broke an accelerator cable and had to be towed all the way back. Got it fixed at 1130 last night and went to Vung Tau today. Tomorrow we are going to Bao Loc for two days.

The V-100's are not 100% safe. Yesterday (27 May) the guy who sleeps next to me turned one over. It was really a freak accident. The accelerator stuck and the brakes went out at the same time. He had two choices. Run into the Long Binh Jail [USARV Stockade] or turn. He turned and it flipped over on its side. The IC ended up with a broken ankle, the driver with broken ribs and the two guys who jumped off twisted their ankles. Really hated to hear it. We didn't get back till 8 last night, and by the time we got the car fixed it was 1130.

Right now I'm dead tired. Its been three days since I had a full nights sleep.

2 June

We were on the road for eight straight days before they gave us a down day. Now we have three or four. My IC had POW guard last night and I have it tonight so that makes tomorrow a day off.

We worked on the V and got it back into shape. It really runs fine and I enjoy driving it. We've been making a lot of runs to Quan Loi. This is where they are flying their fire support missions out of for the town of Snoul [Cambodia] that was over run by NVA [North Vietnamese Army] not too long ago. They are really catching hell over there.

Last night [1June] a guy from our unit was killed in a traffic accident. I was said the guy had six days left in country.

Editors Note: *Research was conducted on identifying this casualty as Private E2 Augustus Adams from C Company, their Unit Supply Specialist/Armorer, who died in a vehicle crash on Highway 1A returning to Long Binh Post from Bien Hoa.*

4 June

Thought I had better write while I had the chance. All we have been doing is running. All of our convoys are getting larger plus going out more often. With more vehicles we have to stay out longer and I hardly make it in before 8 pm any more.

Yesterday we made three runs. One to Quan Loi, one to Nui Dat (that's half way to Vung Tau), and one to Bearcat. We got in around 9 pm. Quon Loi is the place they are flying their fire missions out of for Snoul. Snoul is about thirty-five miles [west] from Quon Loi. We are going up there every day taking ammo. Mainly rockets for the gun ships.

Tomorrow (5 June), I will going to Song Be for three days so I thought I had better write before I left. We are moving some artillery around up there. Mainly stuff on the Cambodian border. My IC on the V-100 (Davenport) is on R&R in Vung Tau.

Well folks I have got to go and take a shower. We just got in a short time ago from Tay Ninh.

6 June

Exactly six months to go. Just thought I would write you a few lines. I'm at Song Be right now. Were spending three days up here at the MACV [Military Assistance Command Vietnam] compound. It is just like stateside up here. Hot and cold running water, flushing toilets, the works.

We escorted some 175 mm barrels up for the artillery and they are changing them. We leave tomorrow for Long Binh. This place is air-conditioned and out in the middle of nowhere, but they sure know how to live.

SP/4 Davenport was in Vung Tau for three days and I have been up here for three days so he has not IC'ed the car in a week. It will be good to have him back.

13 June

Well I just returned from a four-day convoy to Bu Dop. We moved the entire base out. It was all artillery. Bu Dop is on the Cambodian border and there were reports that the NVA were coming so they had to move. Tomorrow we have a down day and we will do maintenance on the car. It runs beautifully and I hope it keeps running. When it breaks down I'm out of a job till it gets fixed.

Goodyear has made some test tires for the V-100 and we have them on our car. They are "run flat" tires and don't have any air in them. They are filled with foam rubber, weigh 670 pounds each, and are hell to put on the car. I haven't had any sleep in three days and I am tired.

16 June

Went to Tay Ninh today. Easy run up and back and that is the way we like them. All we have now is three cars running. Rich Nason's, Dan Ott's, and mine. We all came into the company at the same time. We all made the last Bu Dop run together.

I imagine we will be going to Bao Loc in a couple of days. We're running either three V-100's or three APC's together. No running V's or APC's together.

21 June

I've been at Bao Loc for two days. Today we pulled maintenance on the car, removed road tar and washed it. Tomorrow I will be going to Vung Tau.

I have been in Long Binh all day today and that is enough. I would just as soon stay on the road.

They are pulling out of Phan Thiet but we're picking up more runs. One is thirty miles above Bao Loc, the other by Tay Ninh.

23 June

All of the guys I came in country with and I, were promoted to SP/4 today so we're all happy.

Went to Quan Loi today and I've got a down day tomorrow. Going to help one of my buddies paint his V.

I'm afraid before too long they are going to make me an IC. I don't want it. I would just as soon stay driver for my remaining eight months. I'm happy where I am for right now.

27 June

We were coming back from a convoy on June 25th and the motor blew in C-58. Blew the #1 piston. We thought we would be sitting around doing nothing but 1SG Goodwin got us another car, C-63. So the last two days we have been working from 7 am to 9 pm on it. It will be same for the next three days until we get it up. The car runs real good but we had to make a brake line for it plus other odds and ends.

30 June

C-63 is up now and I would have gone out today but my IC did not make it back from Vung Tau.

We're getting six more V-100's in the company. That would give us twenty-one. Right now we have fifteen and only eight are up. That is the most we have had in months. The convoys are the same. We picked up two more runs so if we get more V's maybe I'll get some rest now and then. I would just as soon keep going. Time goes by much faster.

Well I broke 250 the other day. When I break 200 days left it will be time to celebrate again.

3 July

I have been a little busy the last few days since we got C-63 running. The first day we went to Tay Ninh.

We have a new member of the company now. His name is Lam [pronounced Lom]. He is a Vietnamese boy seven years old from Vung Tau. We've bought him a uniform, got him name tags, patches, and he really looks like a straight soldier. We've also got sergeant's stripes on him.

We took him over and got permission from the battalion commander. He said it was ok as long as we were looking for a home for him. He speaks real good English for his age and is really smart. There are five of us taking care of him right now. We take him to the mess hall or the club to get him to eat. He was found sleeping on the streets. Boy was he a mess. We got him cleaned up and a haircut.

One of the guys is writing to his wife about him and hopes to adopt him. [He was eventually adopted and taken back to the states].

Going to Quon Loi tomorrow (4 July). It's a one-day convoy. The Americans pulled out so we are running supplies and ammo to the ARVN's now.

Guys going home with eighteen months left are getting sent to Germany, and I'm afraid I will fall into this.

5 July

We were suppose to go to Bao Loc today but ended up with a clutch out of adjustment. Finally got it fixed but not in time to make the convoy. So we'll be back on our one-day convoys. Quon Loi tomorrow. Really don't matter to me just as long as I'm away from Long Binh.

8 July

Still running one-day convoys and getting back late each night. There is a lot of artillery units standing down to go home right now. Also, we finally got some "Newbies" in. All of them went to the stockade though. They will be tower guards.

Since they started the urine test that tells if a person has used heroin, the last five months LBJ [USARV Stockade] has been filling up. We had to send ten guys over there for temporary duty.

Come to find out C-58's engine wasn't blown up but had a stuck valve. Each vehicle now has around 100,000 miles on them so you can imagine what it takes to keep them running.

15 July

I have been gone for seven straight days. Got back from Bao Loc two days ago and went to Tay Ninh today. Tomorrow I will be going to [Fire Support Base] Mace. We finally got the car painted with the patches on each side. Were naming it "Feelin Groovy".

We've got around three guys leaving in two days, four guys in ten days, and seven guys in twenty to thirty days and no sign of replacements. As long as C-63 keeps running I'll be out every day.

19 July

The car went on dead line [classified as disabled] last night because of a brake line. Thought I would have a day off but I was put on POW guard. We have two POW's right now. We had nine straight days on the road and thought we would get some rest but it doesn't look like it. We'll be back on the road tomorrow.

22 July

I just got back from Song Be and what a trip. Three days up there. One of the tankers was off loading and got hit. It ignited along with another tanker, then a 20,000-gallon tank. All of it was JP-4 used in aviation fuel. We had to stay an extra day up there because of it.

Things have changed big time in the company. There is a new rule that all IC's have to be at least an E-5 [sergeant]. We don't have enough slots to go around.

26 July

Yesterday I had POW guard and today we did maintenance and cleaning on the car. Only one convoy went out today so I imagine tomorrow there will be all kinds.

29 July

All kinds of problems are starting. A new rule came down from battalion that all IC's must be an E-5 or above. So I lost my IC (Terry Davenport) and since have had anybody and everybody. I'm now responsible for everything all by myself on the car.

One of the company personnel broke a prostitutes arm on one of our stops, a Sergeant First Class [E-7] just stood by and watched and no one else did anything. So, the colonel figures with all E-5's it will be better. Well, it isn't. Half of the E-5's do not know a thing about the road. They have never worked it.

Reflection: *"This was really bad. Morale went down the tubes and this was about the worse as far as working conditions. Our unit's morale at this time was as bad as it got. We had race and drug problems plus a shortage of personnel.*

Thank God for 1SG Dudley L. Goodwin. He came in and cleaned out most of the problems. I always thought a lot of him. He helped me get the instructor job at Gordon and was my First Sergeant back there. We ended up being real good friends."

They are sending a lot of the guys to work in the stockade and to the 716th MP Battalion to work in Saigon. We are so short on people and all of this does not make things good at all.

Tomorrow I have to pull maintenance on the V all by myself. The U-bolt's are loose on the axles. You would not believe some of the terrain we go through.

July 26-28

Had a run to Phan Thiet.

31 July

I had POW guard duty earlier today so I have the evening to myself.

Reflection: *"I usually didn't tell my family about anything that would cause them concern. Sometime it didn't work and they would send me the articles from the newspaper and then want to know what happened. I got a letter about Tay Ninh getting hit 23 July. I am pretty sure I went up there the morning after it happened because I remember all of the damage and a dead VC laying inside of the compound."*

Well about Tay Ninh. Yeah, they got hit all right. My part in it was running up there for four straight days of special convoys taking VIP's and material they needed. I say that one MP got hit with shrapnel in his leg and the others had blasted eardrums.

Tomorrow I have to go to Tay Ninh on a regular convoy. It's one of our regular runs and goes out every day.

5 August

I worked today taking a POW to Saigon. Tomorrow I am going to Bao Loc. I'm glad, I'd just as soon stay out on the road. Maybe just come in for fuel, supplies and sleep in a bed for one night and back out again. Right now "Feelin Groovy" is the only V up and running in my platoon.

First platoon has two up, same for the 3rd platoon. We had eleven up at one time but they don't stay very long. All of the cars are so old and worn out that by the time you get one thing fixed something else is broke. C-63 [V-100 Feelin Groovy] was a fairly new car when I got it. It had 20,000 miles on it and now has 26,500. (30 June to 5 August = 6,500 miles).

Two hundred and fourteen days to go. When I reach 200 I'm going to go out and tie one on. There are around six of us with the same days left so that group and around twelve more guys plan to go out and have a regular old party.

7 August

Lam, the orphan is staying with the sergeant who is going to adopt him and he is going to school now. We are fifty men under staffed and no one gets a day off. I honestly can't remember when I have had a full day off since I got here.

12 August

I had twelve hours of bunker guard last night and tomorrow I have eight hours of POW guard. Come in for some work on the car and you end up on some type of guard duty. We are still running the same convoys.

13 August

Good news, we got twenty Newbie's in the company and I got my old IC Terry Davenport back. We are going to Tay Ninh tomorrow. It will be the first time in over one month that we ran together. More men in the company means more new guys for gunners.

Also, we had seven guys make E-5 [sergeant] and seven more up for it this month.

17 August

Still working the same convoys, Mace, Tay Ninh, Quan Loi and tomorrow I go to Bao Loc.

Time is still going by pretty good and I have 202 days left. We got twenty-five Newbies in and they are pulling all of the details.

As of September 1st, all members of the 18th MP Brigade will have to take the test to see if they have used Heroin. I look forward to this, because it should get rid of the problem makers in the company.

21 August

Still running the same convoys, Mace, Tay Ninh, Quan Loi, Bao Loc and Phan Thiet. Tomorrow we will be going to Bao Loc.

We've been running straight for the last nine days, 199 days to go.

25 August

Just got back from Phan Thiet and going to Bao Loc tomorrow. That will make fourteen and fifteen straight days on the road. We got back early enough from Phan Thiet to change the oil and I guess we will keep running till the car quits. The runs are a lot more often than they use to be. Plus we've got a couple of V's on special VIP escort.

Monday and Tuesday we had a V assigned to guard Miss America [Phyllis George] and her runners up. Miss America got sick from the food at the mess hall so there is an example of how bad it is. Ha!

We've got rooms of our own now. Or I should say two men to a room. We got some plywood and everyone built their own. Somewhere around 195 days left. I gave up on counting and we did not get to celebrate two hundred.

27 August

Our convoy today was canceled so I've got the day off from the road. We worked on the car this morning and got the M-73 machine guns to fire off of the electrical system. Now all you have to do is flip a switch and push a button and two guns put out 900 rounds per minute.

28 August

Going to Tay Ninh tomorrow, 192 days to go.

2 September

Well I'm on gate guard. We are now pulling security on the gates at night with our cars. Mainly we are running convoys between Bien Hoa AFB and Long Binh [Operation SHOTGUN] for the guys going home and those coming in. We just got off of a run around thirty minutes ago and it is around 0230. We get off at 0600.

5 September

Had today off. First one in four months so I took advantage of it and went to church. Tomorrow we work on the car for some minor things to fix. For right now we are off of gate guard. Also, the convoys have almost been at a stand still. Still yet they have company details for us to do.

Tomorrow will be the 6th and that will make it official. Six months down and six months to go, it's all downhill from here.

Everyone with time left when they leave here are being sent to Germany so when I leave here I may be stationed with some of them again. I put in for the job at Fort Gordon [MP School] as an instructor. Maybe the luck will change and I will get it, 183 days to go.

8 September

Going to Mace tomorrow. Just got back from two days in Bao Loc.

9 September

We're running convoys regular like we were before and tomorrow I'm going to Mace again.

11 September

Just got back from Mace and had time to write a short letter. Signed my leave papers to come home on a "7 and 7" in November for Thanksgiving. You have to have at least 120 days left when you come back. Should be home around the 19th and leave to come back here around December 2.

I'll be going to Tay Ninh tomorrow.

22 September

I know it has been a while since I wrote but we have been gone everyday. We had a long run on the other side of Bao Loc and that took four days so this week has gone by pretty fast.

24 September

We went to Tay Ninh today and tomorrow we go to the range for a weapons check. It's raining as usual.

We got a new paint job on the V a couple of days ago. The last three miles to Tay Ninh is dirt, mud when it rains. Today we had the muddiest V-100 in Vietnam so says the First Sergeant and he told us to go wash it. That is a thing we very seldom have time for.

25 September

Got around twenty Newbies in the company. All of the old guys are leaving and this helps.

Still running the road and taking turns doing the IC job with Davenport. He will be leaving soon to go to the drug team.

C-63 has gate guard for the next week so says the work sheet. That's the best duty going. Go to work at 12-midnight and get off around 0600. Get the next day off and then do the same thing. No details and all. I'm looking forward to that. All you do is go down to the two gates they leave open on Long Binh post. Just set up everything and that is it. We'll have to do this up until the election [Vietnamese National Elections]. Can't be much of an election if you have only one candidate. Ha.

30 September

Two more nights of gate guard and I will be ready to go back on the road. Time is dragging by while we are doing this.

9 October

Guess it has been awhile since you got a letter. I've been working everyday and not getting in until late so I have not had the time to write like I did while on gate guard.

They have been making our runs longer. Instead of going to Bao Loc we go to a fire support base Dillard, twenty miles from Da Lat. Plus we do not go to Phan Thiet anymore we go to a fire support base thirty miles on the other side.

We have been getting some new E-5's in the company and they have been putting them in the IC position. They never ran convoys before and this is not going over too good.

We've got today down so we can pull maintenance on the car. I guess we'll be going out again tomorrow because most of the cars are down. We're no longer using the APC's for convoys. They're used for the Battalion reaction force.

12 October

Convoys are the same except we've got thirteen V-100's up now so everyone is getting a little more rest. Not much as by this time next week all the cars will be down again. They are just worn out since most of them were made in 1965.

22 October

I have been running convoy's everyday, especially the long ones. The whole company is getting ready for the Inspector General the first of next month. Everybody is running around like they have their heads chopped off. They are trying to get things done in two weeks that should have been done two months ago.

24 October

We have been down for the last two days for a new weapon on the car. It's a whole new turret and gun. We are the first ones to have it put on the cars. Our car and two others were fitted with an APC type turret and an automatic 40mm grenade launcher. It can be fired auto or manual and puts out around 250 to 300 rounds per minute. It has the same characteristics as the M-79 grenade round and can be fired accurately up to 2,200 meters with a killing radius of 45 feet. Tomorrow will be our first firing day at the range with it.

We are still running convoys to the same places.

2 November

They have added two more convoys daily. We are now escorting engineers half way to Bao Loc. One leaves at 0615 the other at 0645. So that means more work.

I still do not know where October went and now we are in November. Two-thirds of the time down, only one-third to go and fourteen days of that will be on leave.

We came back from Phan Thiet yesterday, and C-63 is still running good. We had some alternator and universal joint problems. We now have permanent gunners on the car and the guy who rooms with me is ours (Clinton Bragg?). Got him fixed up with his license to drive the V so he can fill in when I am gone on leave.

7 November

We are down for new tires so it will be a couple of days before we go out again.

The letters end here. I left on R&R on November 19 and returned December 2. I think my Mom has the rest of the letters but has just not come across them. After my Dad passed away she was cleaning out the garage and found these. It brings back a lot of memories I have forgotten and some I have tried to forget.

I stayed in C Company up until January 26. I had put in for an extension until April 2 but ended up getting a drop. I remember that because I had been on the road a couple of days and could have left earlier if I had been in Long Binh. Also, Dan Ott who I came into the company with and worked with on most of the convoys went home while I was gone. I spoke to him on the phone afterwards but never really got to say goodbye in person.