

* * *

6 Dec. '69
1230 hr.

Dear Gail:

Hi, doll. How's my girl today? I hope you are not feeling too blue. Well, we are on the move again. We got the word to pack our stuff, and we are going to Ban Me Thuot. We are not going to the village itself, but to the airfield. I think we are going to guard the airfield for a while. From what we have heard, we can get showers there and we can even get sodas or beer. Boy, we have not had anything cold to drink in a long time. It does get us mad that we have to move again. We just got our bunkers built—it took us about 1,000 sandbags to build [them]—and now some other company is coming in and using them. That's the way it seems to be all the time. We do all the hard work and then we have to move. Well, that's the Army for you.

I remember in one of your letters you said you were surprised that I said I don't mind being here. Well in a way, that's true. Sure I want to be home with you and have all the things we dream about. But yet being here makes a man feel proud of himself—it shows him that he is a man. Do you understand? Anyone can go in the Army and sit behind a desk, but it takes a lot to do the fighting and to go through what we have to. When we go home, we can say, "Yes, I was in Vietnam. Yes, I was a line dog." To us it means you have gone to hell and have come back. This is why I don't mind being here, because we are men. . . .

Love,
Pete

Sp/4 Peter H. Roepcke, from Glendale, New York, served as a "line dog"—an infantryman—with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, from September 1969 until April 1970, operating in I Corps, when he broke his leg while jumping from a helicopter. He died of a heart attack in October 1981.