Finding Aid for the Bruce M. Pilch Vietnam War Correspondence Collection 2017.252.w.r

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Center for American War Letters Archives  
08/08/2017  
Leatherby Libraries  
Chapman University  
Orange, CA 92866  
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URL: http://www1.chapman.edu/library/archives/
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Center for American War Letters Archives
Title: Bruce M. Pilch Vietnam War correspondence
Creator: Pilch, Bruce M.
Identifier/Call Number: 2017.252.w.r
Physical Description: 1 Linear feet (14 folders)
Date (inclusive): 1966-1968
Abstract: This collection contains correspondence written by Marine Corporal Bruce M. Pilch to his family during the Vietnam War. Pilch was with the 81mm Mortar Platoon in Khe Sanh during the Battle of Khe Sanh.

Leatherby Libraries, Special Collections, CAWL Archives

Storage Unit: Pilch 1
Storage Unit: 1-11
Storage Unit: Oversize 1

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Bruce M. Pilch

Arrangement
This collection is arranged by material type, author, and date. Series 1: Correspondence from Bruce M. Pilch, Pre-Vietnam – Series 2: Correspondence from Bruce M. Pilch, Vietnam – Series 3: Ephemera

Biographical / Historical
Bruce M. Pilch served with the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 81mm Mortar Platoon in Vietnam. According to the letters, Pilch was a Marine corporal but the donor letter and an article in the June 12, 1969 edition of Van Nuys News about Pilch's return home refer to Pilch as a sergeant. The Van Nuys News article also says Pilch was a graduate of Birmingham High School in Los Angeles and that he also attended Pierce College.

Preferred Citation
[Item title, Box number, Folder number], Bruce M. Pilch correspondence (2017.252.w.r), Center for American War Letters Archives, Chapman University, CA.

Content Description
This collection contains 202 pieces of correspondence written by Corporal Bruce M. Pilch to his family during the Vietnam War. Pilch was assigned to the 81mm Mortar Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines. He was in Khe Sanh during the Battle of Khe Sanh. He also was stationed in Phu Bai and Con Thien. The letters discuss events in Vietnam and also refer to news, entertainment, and sports stories in the United States.

Pilch is the donor and the author of the collection.

Conditions Governing Use
There are no restrictions on the use of this material except where previously copyrighted material is concerned. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain all permissions. For further copyright information, please contact the archivist.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Khe Sanh, Battle of, Vietnam, 1968
Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975
Camp Pendleton -- Southern California
Camp Lejeune -- North Carolina
Marine Corps Supply Center -- Barstow, CA
### Series 1. Correspondence from Bruce M. Pilch, Pre-Vietnam 1966-07-1967-09

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<th>Physical Description:</th>
<th>0.32 Linear Feet (4 folders)</th>
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<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>This series contains correspondence that Marine Bruce M. Pilch wrote to his family in Van Nuys, California while in basic training and Infantry Training Regiment (ITR). Pilch ended training with the rank of Lance corporal. Pilch wrote the pre-Vietnam letters from Camp Pendleton in Southern California, Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, and from the Marine Corps base in Barstow, California. There is also one picture included with a card on November 20, 1966. Pilch writes about life at the various bases. He also discusses entertainers and musicians, including Frank Sinatra and Bill Cosby. Pilch also writes about the Los Angeles Dodgers in several letters. Letters of interest include one from December 19th, 1966 in which he writes about a Marine being taken away in a straightjacket and another Marine who was threatening to kill a Corporal. In a letter on November 11, 1966, Pilch mentions the election of Ronald Reagan as California governor.</td>
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### Series 2. Correspondence from Bruch M. Pilch, Vietnam 1967-11-1968-11

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<th>Physical Description:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>This series contains correspondence that Marine Corporal Bruce M. Pilch wrote to his family in Van Nuys, California while serving in Vietnam. Pilch was with the 81mm Mortar Platoon in Khe Sanh during the Battle of Khe Sanh. Pilch also writes letters from Phu Bai, Con Thien, and the USS Princeton. The letters discuss activities in Vietnam, military operations, and R &amp; R procedures and locations, including China Beach. Pilch also writes frequently about events at home, including news events and entertainment events. He also writes often about the Los Angeles Dodgers. Letters of interest include a letter from November 17, 1967 in which Pilch writes about Major General Bruno Hocmuth being killed. A December 25, 1967 letter discusses President Johnson's trip to Saigon. In a letter on February 17th, 1968, Pilch reveals he is in Khe Sanh and discusses &quot;Operation Scotland.&quot; A February 9, 1968 letter also refers to &quot;Operation Scotland.&quot; In an April 1st, 1968 letter, Pilch writes about President Lyndon Johnson's decision to not run for reelection and also writes about &quot;Operation Pegasus.&quot; In a May 24, 1968 letter, Pilch writes about the 26th Marines receiving a President Unit Citation for Khe Sanh. A few letters in June 1968 refer to Bobby Kennedy's assassination. An October 22, 1968 letter mentions memorial services for Marines who got killed at LZ Mango and the DMZ. A few letters also mention the book &quot;I Protest!&quot; by David Douglas Duncan about Khe Sanh.</td>
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### Series 3. Ephemera 1966-1968-02

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<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>Items in this series include a letter to Pilch's parents announcing his arrival at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, a Marine Corps recruiting service business card, and a birthday message that Pilch wrote to his father on a large piece of cardboard. The card is dated February 28, 1968 and reads &quot;Happy Birthday-Dad from Khe Sanh-Vietnam&quot;. The donor says he made the message using cardboard from the &quot;outer sleeve of a case of C-Rations.&quot; He also writes &quot;My Dad told me that he was shocked when the mailman knocked on his door to deliver it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>