

Beruit, Lebanon
June 8, 1967

Dear Family:

Well you know, right after I wrote you that the Syrian/Lebanese border was closed, I heard a hawker yelling for a taxi going to Beruit. I had to pay three times the normal price, but decided to gamble on being able to get through. Even the Police had told me the borders were closed. I was so relieved when Lebanon admitted me. They gave me a two week transit visa - which is only academic as it could be difficult to leave.

It's not impossible. The American and British Embassies I think have arranged for some special flights. The airport is closed, but there are one or two flights available for foreigners to Rome, Athens or London - all of which are unsuitable and expensive for me. I don't know what to do except wait and see if they open the Suez Canal and see if its possible to get a ship, but I don't think ships are stopping here in the war zone.

There's blackout and an 8 p.m. curfew here, strictly enforced - all businesses close before 8 pm and everyone is home behind blue-papered windows.

Apart from the war, Beruit is lovely. As you know, its on the Mediterranean and the water is clear and very green. Right now, I am ten miles from Beruit in a waterside restaurant drinking arrack the national drink, and looking out at green mountains dotted with villas, a sandy beach, and green beautiful water and blue sky. I am waiting for a friend of a friend who went to get his car - a friend of a friend I met in Kuwait. He left his car at home yesterday because he was afraid to bring it in town. There was an explosion in the city last night in the blackout.

Two or three days ago the American Embassy was attacked; I saw one of the cars that was set afire and now both the British and American Embassies are heavily guarded by Lebanese troops. I went to the British Embassy this morning to renew my passport, and the security is very heavy. My purse was searched before entering. I had to get a time-stamped pass from the army officer in charge of security to go upstairs to the passport section which had to be signed by that section and returned to the officer on leaving the building. I had to register my name and address (in case of evacuation I guess) although the British Embassy is not counselling leaving the country yet. As of right now, the news is promising, with a ceasefire in Jordan. My beloved Jerusalem - I hope its not too badly damaged!

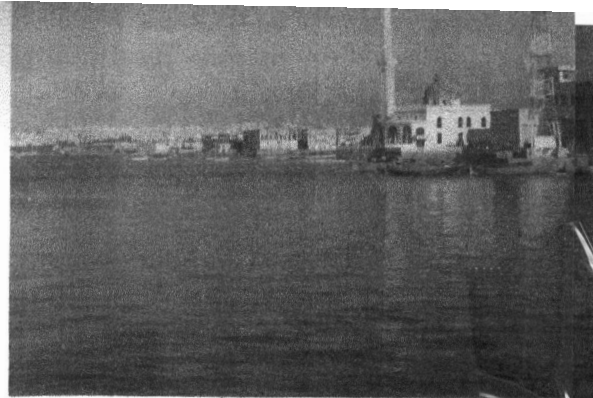
I bet this Beruit is fabulous in time of peace. It's so beautiful with the Mediterranean, and the green mountains coming down to the sea and the white modern skyscrapers! It's the playground of the Middle East - so many hotels, restaurants, nightclubs and bars - which are closed because of the 8 pm curfew - and no tourists. People dependent on the tourists are out of work, laid off; there's going to be a lot of hardship. Of course its worse in a country where there's fighting, like Jordan - Lebanon doesn't want to be in this war, it wants to be neutral.

You know, Lebanon is 50% Christian, with a Christian President and the government ministers are allotted by religion - so many Moslems, so many Catholics, so many Greek Orthodox, etc. In other countries I've been, like Syria and Jordan, the people there are Moslems and very pro-Nassar and anti-Israel. Here, the Christians especially don't like Nassar. Lebanon just wants to be left alone and neutral. Jordan and Syria especially are very militantly anti-Israel and pro-Nassar.

(A)



(B)



(A)

Beirut, Lebanon, is on the Mediterranean. This is one of the best hotels in Beirut, St. George's Hotel on the waterfront. In the city itself there is no sandy beach, just rocks, so the best hotels, like this one, have swimming pools. There is another large enclave of hotels several kilometers from the city and they have a sandy beach. The water here is very clear and beautifully green, with many, many nightclubs and bars, although when I was there, unfortunately, there was war with Israel, and an 3 p.m. curfew, and so no nightlife, but it is a beautiful place. Driving along the "Corniche" you have green mountains coming down to the green sea. In the winter you can ski in the morning and swim in the afternoon. This is the playground of the Middle East.

(B)

The port, Tripoli, north Lebanon. This city, 87 km north of Beirut, is the second largest city in Lebanon. I have driven along all the coastline of Lebanon and it is mostly rocky, which is very beautiful to look at but inconvenient for swimming. I spent a lovely quiet Sunday afternoon in this part of town; on Sundays every husband takes his wife and children out to stroll or drive, it is a real family day, you see them everywhere.

(C)

Part of the beautiful coastline of Beirut, Lebanon. This is part of the fashionable hotel area of Beirut. This is where you get all the sidewalk cafes and dark, dark nightclubs and "stereo" clubs; which are very dark and just an excuse to cuddle.

(D)

The famous Cedars of Lebanon. They are the national emblem on all government papers and are in the flag. (And see the stamps). There are only about 400 of these trees left in the country; the Phoenicians used them to build their boats and temples. They are in a group in the mountains on the edge of a ski resort. When I was there it was summer so I didn't see any skiers, but the mountain road is so curvy and steep I am glad there was no snow, especially as the Middle East drivers are kamikaze-prone. There was no transportation here, so I had to hitchhike.