

AUGUST 1970

# Seabeacon

U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SIXTY-TWO



# View from the bridge



**CDR FRANK NEWCOMB**

Shortly after I assumed command of SIXTY-TWO I overheard one Seabee say to another: "Man, you think Captain Jones was tough -- you should see this new guy." I'm sure all of you are wondering about me and what makes me tick. Some of the old timers know me from my previous tours in the Seabees with MCB 10 and COMCBPAC. I'm sure you've heard stories of me. Even though no two men are the same, I really don't believe there are many differences between CDR Jones' goals and mine.

For the past two years in this column he stressed safety, quality and quantity of workmanship, professionalism in all facets of the batta-

lion's endeavors, and pride -- pride in the battalion and pride in ourselves. In the next two years you will hear me stressing exactly the same points.

Safety, first and foremost, is of paramount importance to me, on the job, off the job, and on the roads -- here and at home. In construction operations and combat there are bound to be injuries and, God forbid, deaths. But to me there is no greater tragedy or failure of leadership than to incur injuries or deaths because of violations of safety practices -- failure to follow standard safety precautions, failure to utilize safety equipment, and simple negligence or inattention. You will find in the coming months that I am obsessed with safety and can be intolerant in dealing with safety violators.

Pride, professionalism and quality of workmanship are all wrapped up together and interdependent to me. Every man must be proud of himself, his unit, the Navy, his country and the job he does. If he is not he is wasting his own precious time on Earth. If each of us strives to accomplish every task, every day, to the utmost of our capabilities and insure that at taps every night we can look back on the day and say to ourselves, "Today I did my best and I'm proud of what I have done," no one can beat us. That is the American way and the SIXTY-TWO way.

The accolades this batta-

lion has received during the past two years are the results of this spirit and dedication. The two successive Best of Type awards, the Pel-tier Award and the Army Meritorious Unit Commendation are the results of the performance of every man in SIXTY-TWO. Each and every one of you are justified in being proud of our accomplishments. However, we cannot afford to become complacent or to slacken the pace. As I said at the change of command ceremony, my immediate goal is to win that Battle Efficiency "E" for the third consecutive year and maintain SIXTY-TWO as the "Best of the Best."

On the evening of August 12 I learned from the senior member of the COMCBPAC Inspection Team conducting our annual supply inspection that he was assigning a numerical grade of 95 and an adjective grade of outstanding to SIXTY-TWO's supply department. To each and every member of the supply department I extend my personal appreciation and admiration for a job extremely well done.

Let us all make it our goal to establish that grade as the minimum acceptable for each department in the battalion. Take time to think thoroughly about what you're going to do, carefully plan how you're going to do it, and then proceed smartly with the execution of the job. In other words, "get a l l your stuff in one bag" and do the very best you can.

SIXTY-TWO can do -- together we will do.

*Frank M. Newcomb*

FRANK M. NEWCOMB  
CDR, CEC, USN  
COMMANDING OFFICER



## In this issue

View from the bridge.....	2
From the XO's desk.....	4
MCPO's pen.....	4
Fate or Father?.....	5
Red-letter day for MCB 62.....	6
Birthday party to beat all.....	8-9
Chau Doc and Detail Albany.....	10-11

## On the cover

MEAT BALL -- The Battle Efficiency "E" pennant waves briskly along side MCB 62's battalion colors. The scarlet pennant with black "meatball" is presented annually to the Best of Type battalion in the Atlantic Fleet. MCB 62 won the award for the second year in a row July 14. (Photo by JO2 Don Mynar)

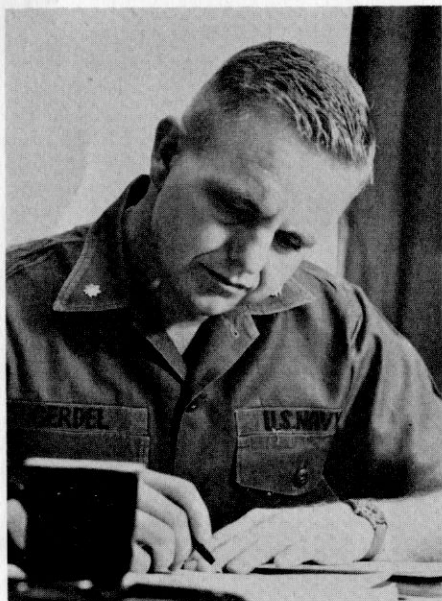
◀ RIVER LIFE--Chances are these Vietnamese youngsters will grow up to be fishermen as their parents are. Fishing is a major industry for Vietnamese living along the rivers of the Mekong Delta region. (Photo by EA2 Harry Goforth)

## Seabeacon

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# From the XO's desk



**LCDR D.H. GERDEL**

**A**s this edition of the Seabeacon goes to press, the battalion has completed moving its main camp from Camp Hoover to Camp Haskins. By the time this issue reaches you, we should be firmly entrenched at Camp Haskins South.

This move is significant in several aspects. It was at Camp Haskins South in July 1968 that CDR Jones assumed command of NMCB 62 and declared his intent to make this battalion the best in the Navy, a pledge he fulfilled and which was culminated with the recent presentation of the Peltier Award. The move also indicates a continuing trend and significant changes in the deployment of Seabee assets in Vietnam and particularly the Northern I Corps. It also represents a significant increase in the recreational facilities available to all members of NMCB 62. It was also at Camp Haskins South on August 23, 1968 that the battalion suffered its worst combat losses since recommissioning when an enemy rocket destroyed one of the living hootches.

Camp Haskins is a large cantonment on the Danang Bay approximately 10 miles north-

west by road from the center of the city. It has been the Seabee command camp for several years, housing the 30th Naval Construction Regiment, the 3rd Naval Construction Brigade and now the 32nd Naval Construction Regiment, the operational commander for all Seabees in the I Corps. The camp also has two battalions always assigned; presently Haskins is occupied by a contingent of NMCB 5. An additional tenant of Camp Haskins, and a very important one is Lieutenant General McKutcheon, Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, and his staff. This is the overall commander for Marines in Vietnam.

The shift of NMCB 62 from Camp Hoover to replace NMCB 121 at Haskins represents a reduction and consolidation of Seabees in the Northern I Corps. A year ago, 10 battalions were operating in the I Corps at all times, now that figure is reduced to two plus a part of NMCB 5. This reduction has been effected as a result of the Presidential cutbacks, a reduction of Marine Forces to whom we provide support and the accomplishment of our number one project, the upgrading of the Vietnamese National Highway System. This reduction is not to be inferred as a total elimination of Seabees from Vietnam. Under the program of Accelerated Turnover to the Vietnamese, instituted under Admiral Zumwalt, former Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam and now Chief of Naval Operations, contingents of NMCB's 5, 62 and 133 are very active in the Mekong Delta area constructing riverine bases for the Vietnamese Navy. This represents a significant efforts to make the Vietnamese self-sustaining and reduce our direct efforts in that area as quickly as possible. The work done by our 165 men on the ACTOV program has been outstanding and will be the subject of a future feature article.

The move to Haskins has

been a morale booster as the camp is located on the white sands of the beautiful Danang Harbor. Cool evening breezes and the reduction of insects make sleeping a pleasure compared to the Hoover Camp. The accessibility to the beach and the various sailboats, motor boats, skiing, fishing and related water sports available during off duty hours have enhanced the remainder of the deployment for all hands. Spacious clubs and added facilities for a ceramics shop and photo lab also add to the individual man's pleasure.



**EQCM J.W. ENRIGHT**

## MCPO's pen

**I**n one of my earlier articles, I mentioned the forming of new shore duty billets for Seabees in the form of Construction Battalion Units (CBU's). While many questions about the nature of this duty are still unanswered, the August SEABEE NEWSLETTER clarifies many. CBU 401 is formed and will be at Great Lakes. CBU 402 is approved and will be located at Pensacola, Florida. The CBU's should prove to be fine shore duty for the Seabees



# Fate or Father?

and also provide the added benefit of training by working in your rate.

Several young men have come in recently to discuss the possibilities of making the Navy a career. Unfortunately, some of them have been misinformed about reenlistment transfer procedures. The only reenlistment incentive that can be guaranteed a first-term reenlistee in terms of choice of duty stations is overseas assignments if he isn't eligible for duty in the States. Another mistaken idea is that everyone in the battalion who has two tours in RVN with MCB 62 will automatically receive orders when we return to Gulfport. This depends entirely on the battalion's next deployment site. For instance, if we deploy to an Atlantic site next year, then a man who is not eligible for stateside or overseas shore duty will have a good chance of remaining with the battalion.

Some personnel are also under the impression that they are allowed to turn down up to three sets of orders. This is not so. If you put in for orders and receive them, you may not turn them down.

Another item that a few are misinformed on is the Navy's (particularly the Seabees') policy on reenlistment. Up until a short while ago, commands were judged on the number of first-term enlistees, career reenlistees, etc. With the present and future force reductions, we would rather have one good, career-minded Seabee ship over than five average to below average first-term reenlistees. The standards are now quality instead of quantity, and in line with my policy of telling it "like it is", I am afraid that some applicants for reenlistment are going to be disappointed when their request is turned down.

In addition to these thoughts for the month, remember to work and drive safely and do your part in reducing the paperwork.

In the New Testament we find Pilate threatening Christ with death and Christ answering, "You have no power at all except it be given you from above." (John 19:11) The early church echoed this teaching when they found themselves threatened by the authorities and said, "Rulers were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand (Lord) and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:26-28)

The psalmist had earlier stated, "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, not from the south but God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth another up." (Psalm 75:6-7) The believers accepted this literally and looked to God as God over their lives. They became fearless and faced dangers unimaginable with courage and hope that God would work things out for them. If they perished they had Heaven as a place prepared for them. Their time to go was ordered by God and they calmly died committing their souls into the hands of their Creator.

The alternative to our forefathers' notion was fate. Fate was fickle. Unlike the heathen dieties fate could not be appeased, conned nor bought off. We of the scientific mind threw off the foolishness of pagan gods that could be tricked. We were left with fate. Fate was sometimes, often, cruel. Our movies and novels changed from the happy ending to the sad one. "That's the way life is", our writers say. Hopelessness and despair have swept our world. The theater of the absurd is going strong for life is really absurd, really kind of ridiculous. Why strive for anything? All striving is useless for fate will wipe out your efforts, you fool.

"If the Lord God wills we will go--or stay, or do this, or that," our forefathers would say. They had a quaint notion that everything that happened was under the ultimate control of God. Brushing such foolish notions aside we have reached the conclusion that God has little to do with, and can do little about what happens to us. We have thus placed much of destiny in the "fickle finger of fate", and we're frightened to death. Maybe our forefathers weren't so dumb after all. They had a better outlook than we have got. We joke about "fate" but every once in a while a cold shudder sweeps over us as we think about what "might" happen to us--or our loved ones.

Where did our forefathers get their "quaint notion"? In the book of Daniel in the Bible Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, was made "nutty as a fruit cake" until he learned that "the most High ruleth in the affairs of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will". (Daniel 4:17) Later his grandson, Belshazzar, saw the "handwriting on the wall" when he had forgotten this lesson. He had forgotten that God ruleth in the affairs of men and worshipped materialism. God took his kingdom from him as well as his life that night.

Our forefathers had a strong hope. God had said that he ruled in the affairs of men. He wanted us to leave the wisdom of his decisions up to his discretion. He said that he loved us and worked all things for the good of those who love him. (Romans 8:28) Which would you want to rule over your life, fate or the Father which is in Heaven?

Chaplain R. R. Crowe

# July 15 red-letter day for MCB-62

**J**uly 14 was truly a red-letter day for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 62. The battalion was announced winner of the Battle Efficiency "E" Award as the most outstanding Seabee battalion in the Atlantic Fleet for fiscal year 1970, and a few short hours later Brigadier General W.D. Shedd, Chief of Staff, XXIV Corps, pinned the Army Meritorious Unit Commendation streamer to the battalion's colors.

The announcement of the "E" and the presentation of the Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, came appropriately, as Commander John Paul Jones, Jr., commanding officer of MCB 62, was being re-

lieved by CDR Frank M. Newcomb.

Upon reading his orders, CDR Newcomb remarked that he has been following the progress of the battalion since its recommissioning in 1966. He said it is indeed an outstanding battalion, and together he and the battalion will strive forward toward that third consecutive "E".

CDR Newcomb comes to MCB 62 from the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va. A 14-year Naval Civil Engineer veteran, he graduated from Yale University in 1956 with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree. Upon graduation he entered the Navy, receiving his commission

through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He then attended the Civil Engineer Corps Officer's School to launch his career as a Civil Engineering Officer.

In 1963 CDR Newcomb returned to school, earning his Masters Degree in Civil Engineering from Stanford University.

His principal duty assignments have been as Assistant Branch Manager, CEC Plans and Policy Branch, Washington, D. C.; Aide and Special Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Washington, D.C.; Operations Officer MCB 10, Port Hueneme, Calif.; Assistant Operations Officer, COMCBPAC; and Public Works Officer, Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va.

Among the ribbons authorized to wear, CDR Newcomb has been decorated with the Bronze Star Medal with valor and the Navy Commendation Medal.

He is a member of the Society of American Military Engineers and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The Army citation was made in recognition of MCB 62's performance and service in Vietnam from April through November 1969--for rendering of "superb combat engineer support for Allied forces throughout the Northern I Corps Tactical Zone" and for the efficient utilization of available resources and capabilities with which they provided significantly increased tactical and logistical mobility into forward combat areas such as Elliot and Vandegrift Combat Bases and virtually eliminated the high rate of mining incidents on the main East-West convoy route, National Route QL-9."

Winning the "E" meant the second consecutive year MCB 62 has been selected "best of type" in the Atlantic Fleet.

CDR Jones now moves on as Acquisition Officer for the Southern Division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command at Charleston, S.C.





# A "Godspeed" from JPI

The "View from the bridge" this month belongs to your new commanding officer, but the PAO staff was kind enough to make room for a few final remarks from your proud ex-C.O.

These past two years have been for me the most challenging, and at the same time the most rewarding, of my life. I have seen on three deployments in the Republic of Vietnam and in homeport just how amazing the Seabees really are, individually and collectively. We have had our successes, QL-9 upgrade, the Dong Ha bridge, the Cam Lo bridge and two highly successful homeport deployments. And there will be more successes too, Chau Doc and Tan Chow ACTOV bases, LTL-4 upgrade and the Mackinac bridge to name just a few. These accomplishments were, and will be possible only because you, the individual and collective Seabees of NMCB 62, have consistently performed in such a magnificent manner. Even when the going has been exceptionally rough you have responded without faltering. Your loyalty and devotion to duty, your pure professionalism are unmatched in my experience. To all of you, officers and men, I extend the traditional Navy "Well Done." It has been a privilege and a distinct honor to have served with you.

It is tragic, and my only regret, that these successes were not made without sacrifice. I grieve, as I know you all do, for our fallen and wounded comrades and their bereaved families. These dedicated American men who have given their life or have suffered painful wounds in the service of their country deserve our utmost respect and appreciation.

I know that I leave NMCB 62 in good hands. Commander Newcomb is an old and valued friend, and he will lead you well. Follow him, and support him as you have supported me. With his leadership and that support, I have every confidence that this outstanding

organization will remain "the best."

Finally, farewell and God speed to all of you. I will pray for your safety as you complete this arduous deployment, and hope that your reunion with your loved ones will be joyous.

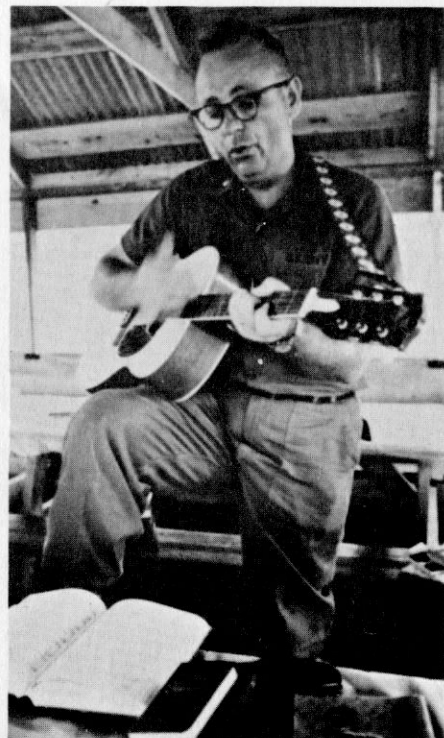
## New officers check aboard

Four new officers have joined the ranks of MCB 62 since July 1.

LCDR Roy C. Wood, Chaplain Corps, arrived early in the month as relief to Chaplain Crowe who has received orders to the Marine Recruit Center at Paris Island, S.C. Chaplain Wood is a native of Virginia and was graduated from the University of Richmond, Va. with a bachelors degree in Bible, and Union Seminary in Richmond where he received a bachelor of divinity degree in Bible. He has been in the Chaplain Corps since 1961 and his previous duties have been chiefly with the Marines. Prior to entering the Navy, he was pastor of the Blackstone Baptist Church, Blackstone, Va.

Another Southerner is LT Larry D. Brock, Medical Corps. LT Brock hails from Chicksaw, Ala. He is a 1964 graduate of the University of Alabama where he graduated with his medical degree in three years. He did intern and residency work at Mobile General Hospital in Mobile, Ala. A newcomer to the Seabees, Doc Brock joined the Navy on July 3, 1970, did three quick weeks of military training at Gulfport and reported to MCB 62 on August 7. Prior to coming on active duty he was a member of the Naval Reserve since 1964.

Joining the throng of Texans in this battalion is Ensign Bruce W. Murff. ENS Murff joined MCB 62 on August 3 and is presently assigned

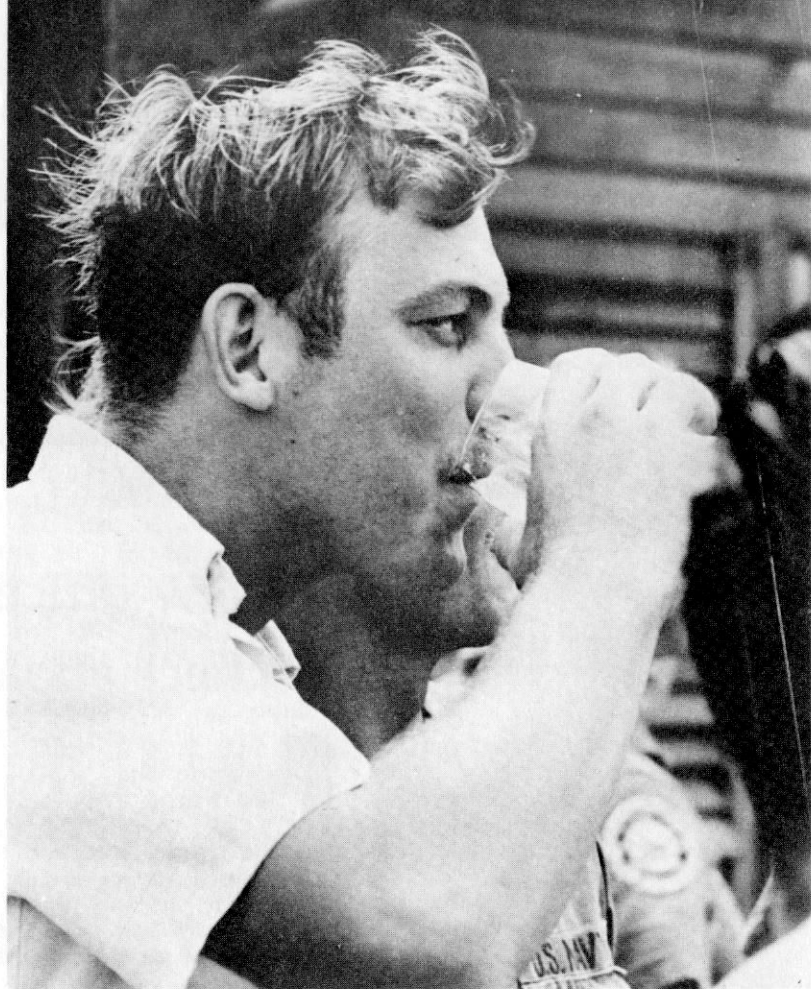


SINGING CHAPLAIN -- Chaplain Wood, MCB 62's bearer of the Word, carries with him his portable music maker when he visits the battalion's many detachments. Hymns help make services a little bit more like those back home.

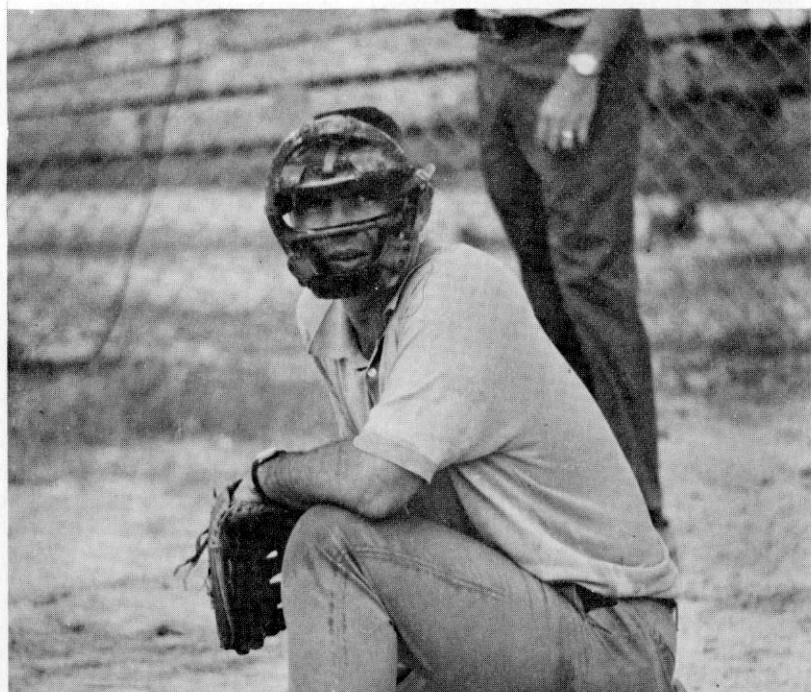
as the assistant supply officer, disbursing officer, food services officer and assistant H-company commander. Big job -- but then he's no small man. ENS Murff claims Dallas as his home. He graduated from East Texas State University and earned his bachelor of science degree in physics.

Arriving at Camp Hoover in early July, Warrant Officer William C. Woolnough, Jr. stepped into a lot of responsibility. He was assigned as special services officer, personnel officer and recently H-company first platoon commander. WO1 Woolnough is a former Yeoman First Class Petty Officer with nine years of Naval service to qualify him for the gold collar device. Mr. Woolnough hails from Southgate, Michigan and is a 1961 graduate of Schafer High School in Southgate.

# A Birthday Party



On Sunday, August 2, it was: "Stop everything! We're going to have a party!" And so we did. Total abandonment was the sensation most in vogue. To celebrate MCB 62's fourth anniversary, this took the form of swimming and boating in the ocean, officer-enlisted rivalry on the softball field and volleyball court and just oldfashioned comradeship with a





to beat all other birthday parties...

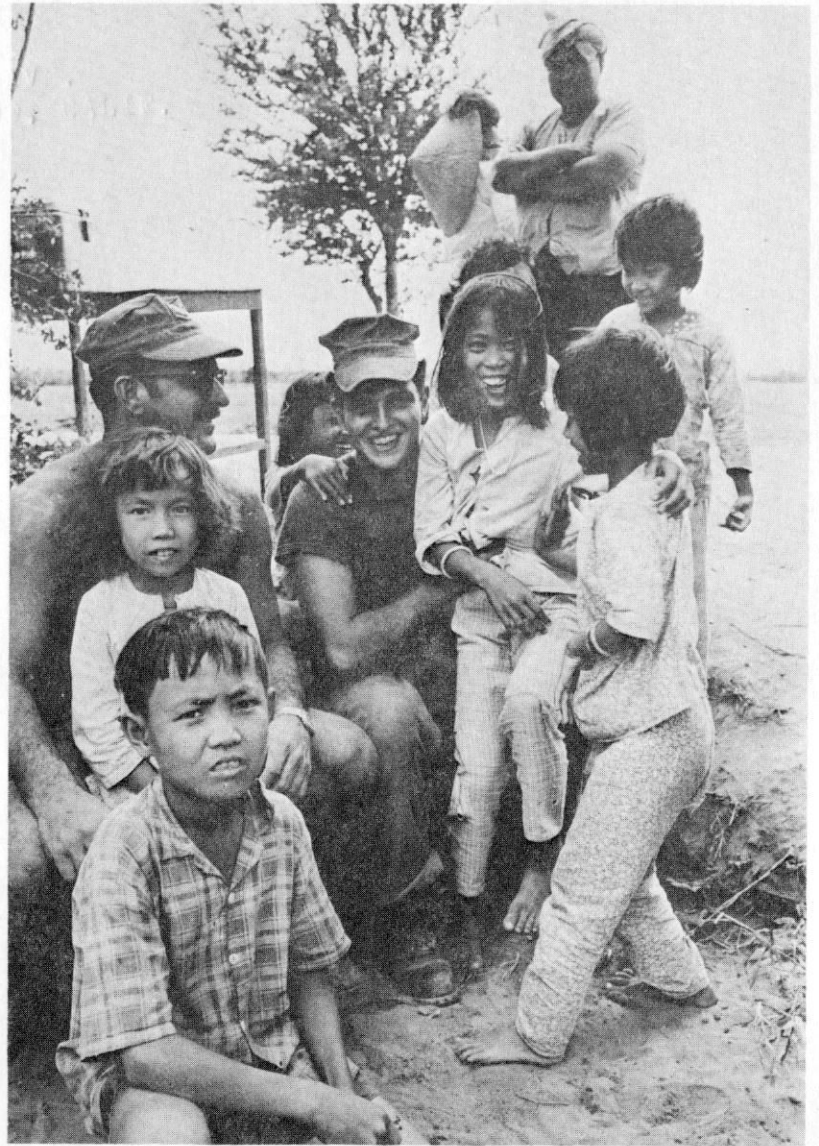
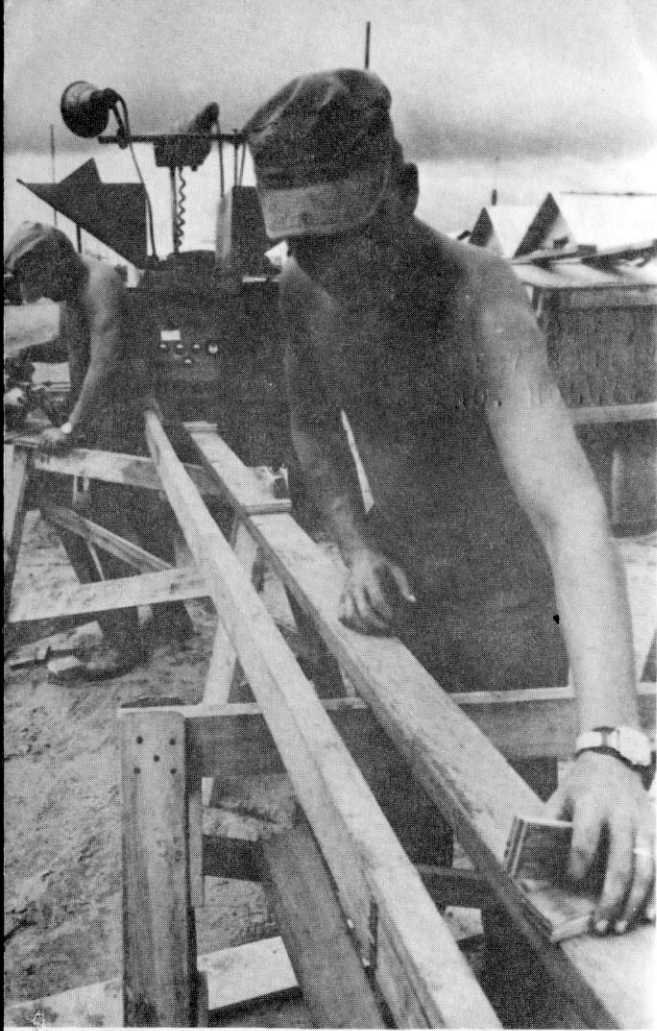


drink in one's hand at the club. As an extra added attraction special services provided a bump'n grind floor show and the commissaryman's union threw a fried chicken and grilled steak picnic topped off with a 50 pound birthday cake. Small talk was mostly of home however, for those we love were not forgotten.

(Photos by Harry Goforth)

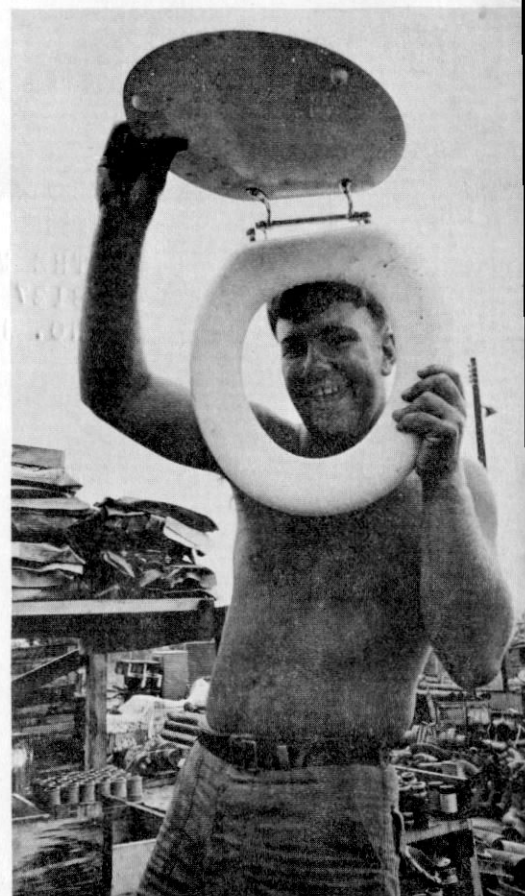
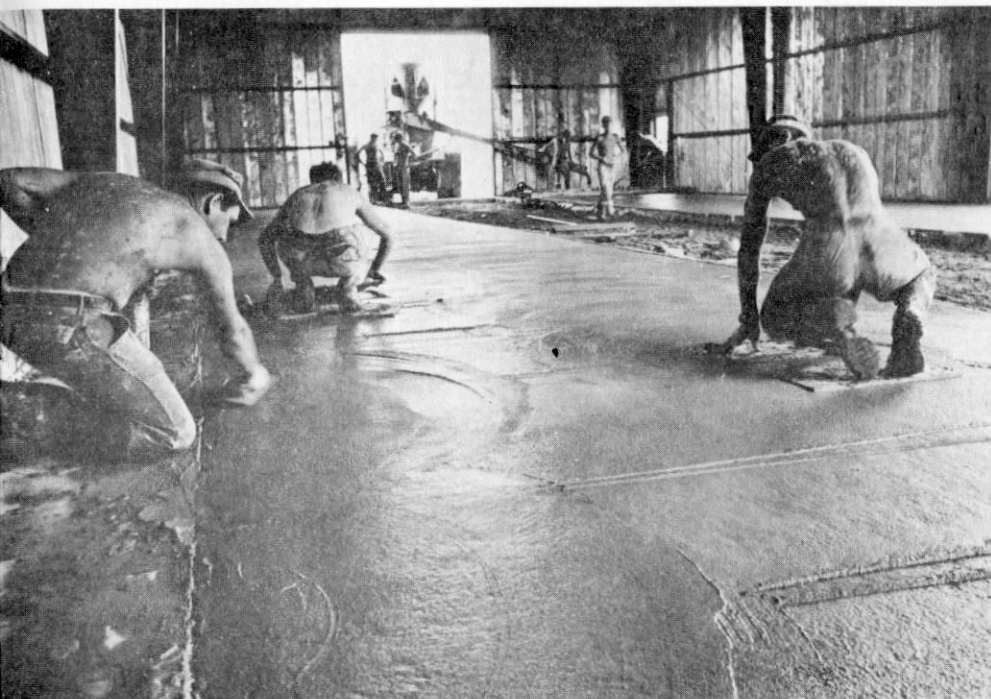


# At Chau Doc with Detail Albany..





there's plenty of work, a little recreation...  
and occasional laughs to contain sanity.



At Chau Doc the work of the men of Delta Company's Detail Albany continues. Bunkers go up; structures for living, office and shop spaces are prepared for occupancy; fuel tanks are fabricated and the men are brought closer to the completion of their task. A sense of humor passes the hours. Meals at "Pappy Wilson's" chow shack three times a day and cold drinks after hours are welcome events. Also, during the remaining daylight hours after work, there is time for a little tenderness and warmth for small friends who come to the edge of the fence. (Photos by Harry Goforth)



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GLORY IS HERE -- Four MCB 62 "men of music" have taken it upon themselves to bring music into the lives of battalion personnel here at Camp Haskins. Utilizing sound equipment furnished by the Special Services department, they have formed into the sound producing machine "Glory." The pulsating foursome performs weekly on Friday evenings at the Enlisted Mens' Club. From left are: CMCN Bill Montoya, lead guitar and vocalist; SFM3 Harold Cason, base; DE3 Don Kernechel, drums and CE3 Tom Sarpolus, rhythm guitar.