



SIXTY-TWO SEABEACON

Vol. III, No. 1

MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SIXTY-TWO

Thursday, December 28, 1967

Advance Party Leaves Here For Vietnam

The Battalion's advance party to the Republic of Vietnam leaves any day now to begin setting up facilities for MCB 62 in country.

The 125 men of the party, led by Lieutenant Commander W. L. Wood, the Battalion Operations Officer, are flying to Vietnam aboard Air Force C-141 Star-lifter jets. The trip should take only about 24 hours.

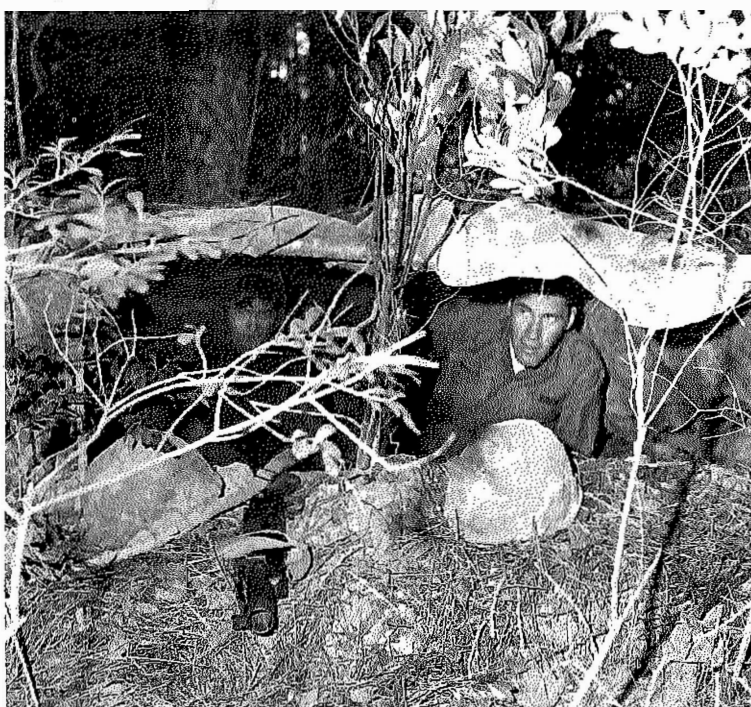
These men deploy about a month ahead of the main body of the Battalion to make it possible for MCB 62 to relieve another SEABEE unit smoothly and efficiently with little interruption of the construction effort or camp operation.

Essentially, the advance party has four missions to carry out in the 30-day period before the arrival of the rest of the Battalion.

First, they must determine the condition of all rolling stock and equipment and make any necessary repairs. Then they inventory all tools and spare parts and order replacements.

The third task is to check out all camp maintenance, operation and administrative functions.

Finally, the men of the advance party must familiarize themselves with all construction projects including plans, specifications, material lists, inventories and progress.



HELLO WORLD — Richard L. McClenaghan, BUR3, (left) and Richard L. Wendt, BUR3, both of Delta Company, peer from their fighting hole during the field exercise climaxing three weeks of training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. For more pictures of training, see page three.

Battalion Completes Training At Marines' Camp Lejeune

With weeks of instruction crammed into a few days, the SEABEES of Mobile Construction Battalion 62 finished their military training with the Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in early December.

About 530 men from the Battalion went through the three-week program, which included intensive training in communications, field medicine, infantry

weapons, field messing, leadership, mine warfare, bridge building, counter guerrilla warfare and individual combat techniques.

Some of the time was spent in the classroom, but mostly, the Marines employed their favorite "learn-it-by-doing-it-yourself" technique to polish up the fighting skills of the SEABEES.

For many of the Navy builders this meant crawling over a good portion of Camp Lejeune's 110,000 acres on patrols, fighting their way out of simulated ambushes or blowing up earth, trees and chunks of metal with a wide variety of weapons.

The training began for MCB 62 on the Monday before Thanksgiving with the men dividing into groups to attend various specialized classes according to their skills and their assignments in the military organization of the Battalion.

The four-day Thanksgiving weekend provided a welcome break from the work in the field, but when classes resumed the following Monday, training was unusually intensive to make up for lost time.

The third week of training brought the Battalion back together for a final test, a field exercise in which MCB 62 set up an encampment in one of Camp Lejeune's wooded areas and defended their position from simulated attack.

For three days the SEABEES ate canned field rations and slept in sleeping bags under shelter halves between vigils in the fox holes. During this period they

Admin Inspection Grades 62 High

Mobile Construction Battalion 62 has received an overall grade of excellent in a two-day administrative inspection conducted by the Commander, Construction Battalion, Atlantic, December 13 and 14.

An 11-man team headed by Commodore A. C. Perkins came to the Gulfport CB Center from COMBLANT headquarters in Davisville, Rhode Island to inspect the Battalion.

The purpose of the inspection was to determine the Battalion's readiness for its deployment to Vietnam scheduled for late January. All Atlantic SEABEE units undergo a similar examination each year before going overseas.

The inspection team spent the first day of their visit touring the Battalion's office spaces, going over books, examining records and files and questioning the men.

The second day was devoted primarily to checking Battalion personnel, barracks and combat gear. Individual weapons were inspected to insure that they were clean and in working order, and the men's personal lockers were examined for neatness and cleanliness.

A separate grade was assigned for each function within the Battalion, and by a system of weighted averages, the overall grade of excellent was established.

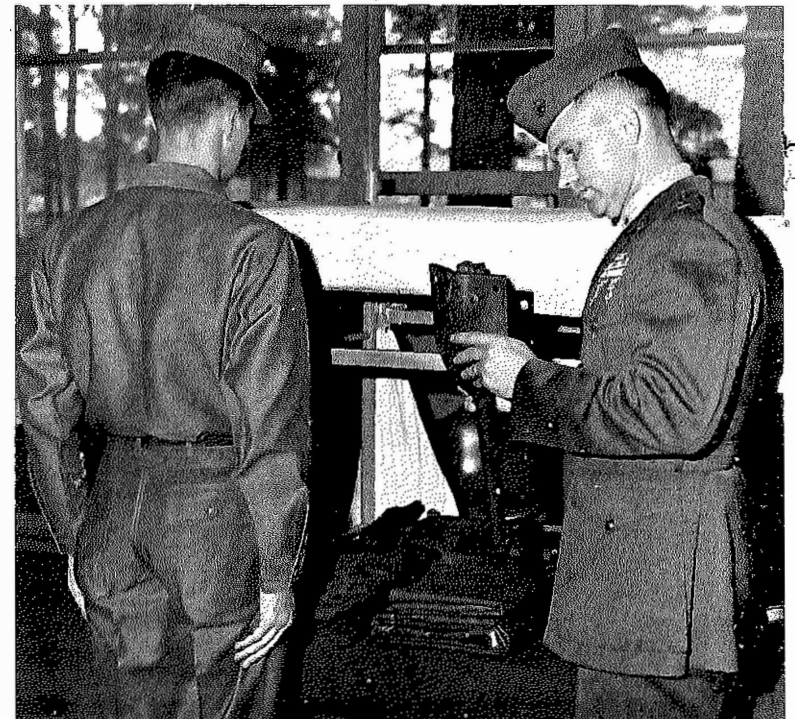
Commander W. J. Richeson, Commanding Officer of MCB 62, commenting on the inspection said, "We must not be satisfied with this level of readiness. All hands must work together to earn a grade of outstanding in the administrative evaluation next year."

Outstanding, the next mark above excellent, is the highest grade possible in the Administrative Inspection.

In general though, CDR Richeson indicated that the Battalion is ready for the up-coming deployment. "I'm convinced we're in good shape to meet any assigned task in Vietnam," he said.



SEABEE OF THE MONTH — Steven H. Huber, a UTPCN with Bravo Company, receives the first SEABEE of the Month award from Joe Lumpkin, Senior Vice Commander of Gulfport's Alfred Alleman VFW Post. Huber was selected for his esprit de corps, family life and contribution to his community. His wife Pamela and Al Woodard, Chairman of the Post's Selection Committee were on hand for the ceremony.



COULD THAT BE DIRT? — Marine Major B. F. Cole, Training Officer for the 20th Naval Construction Regiment, inspects an entrenching tool belonging to Jack L. Moore, Headquarters Company SKSN, during the Battalion's annual Administrative Inspection. MCB 62 received an overall grade of excellent on the inspection December 13 and 14.

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MCB SIXTY-TWO

FAMILYGRAM

Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
December 6, 1967

Dear SEABEE Family,

This is the fourteenth Familygram from MCB SIXTY-TWO since our recommissioning nearly a year and a half ago. I know your SEABEE writes home frequently, but many times he fails to tell you very much about what he is doing. These Familygrams try to fill in the information gaps between you families and our SEABEES.

We have been at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina for two weeks. On Wednesday, November 15, 1967, the first of seven flights left Gulfport Municipal Airport. The last plane took off from Gulfport on Saturday, November 18. We traveled in Navy and Marine Corps C-130 Hercules and C-118 (DC-6B) aircraft, and the flying time was about two and a half hours from Gulfport to the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, North Carolina. This is about a 40 minute bus ride from the Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune. Both activities are on the North Carolina coast northeast of Wilmington.

Our Advance Party to Camp Lejeune had completed their military training with MCB FIFTY-THREE during the previous three weeks and they were able to have the barracks ready to receive each flight of the Main Body as it arrived. We are quartered in the 6th Marine Regiment Area and mess with the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment (3/6). As our host Battalion, 3/6 has also provided instructors and worked closely with us in setting up our training program and schedules.

As I mentioned in the previous Familygram, the first two weeks have consisted primarily of individual combat training for the majority of our SEABEES. Weapons platoon personnel have received training in the M-60 Machine Gun or 3.5 inch Rocket Launcher. Commissarymen have completed a course in field messing, Hospital Corpsmen in field medicine, communicators in field communications, both radio and wire, and so on. It has been a busy two weeks.

This final week all of the Battalion gets back together for a field exercise (FEX). We made a tactical march into the FEX area and set up a bivouac with a Command Post and dug fighting holes. Here for three days and nights we have lived in the field eating canned rations (C-Rats) and sleeping under shelter halves. (Fortunately we have had sleeping bags, since Carolina nights are very chilly this time of year.) The FEX wraps up tonight with Marine aggressors probing our defenses. Tomorrow we move back to the Main Base Barracks. We held a "Pass-in-Review" to honor our Host Battalion on Friday, and that afternoon the flights back to Gulfport start leaving. All of us will be back by Sunday afternoon, December 10.

Weather was a most important ingredient in both our construction effort and our spirit while we were in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). For this reason, I usually mentioned the sort of weather we had been having in each of the Familygrams sent out from RVN. Here at Camp Lejeune, the weather has been generally good for this time of year in eastern North Carolina. It gets up into the 60's during the day but drops off below freezing at night. During this FEX, with the temperatures at night down into the 20's, all of us would have been miserable without long johns and sleeping bags. As it is, hot coffee at first light is most welcome.

Years ago, and to a lesser extent today, certain Navy ships had a reputation throughout the fleet as being "good feeders." Any SEABEE will tell you that SEABEE Battalions are also "good feeders." As a whole, MCB SIXTY-TWO returned from RVN several tons heavier than it arrived there, which attests to the quality of the meals served to our SEABEES. Fortunately, most of this extra weight went into the shoulders and arms of the younger men with only a small amount settling at the waists of us older SEABEES.

At Gulfport the CB Center runs a general mess for all hands rather than each battalion setting up its own mess for the relatively short time it is in homeport. Of course, our commissarymen (CS's) are assigned to the CB Center galley and we also provide Messcooks (helpers) to assist. But the administration and operation of the galley is the CB Center's responsibility. Food has been consistently good, but of course, never up to what we can do when we operate our own galley as we do in RVN.

Marines don't seem to be as interested in food as SEABEES, but the 3/6 Marines who operate the galley and mess hall where we eat at Camp Lejeune have been doing a good job. We like to think that it is our Commissarymen (cooks) who are the spark behind this. On Thanksgiving Day they all outdid themselves. They served an outstanding turkey dinner with all the trimmings; corn bread dressing, giblet gravy, mashed and sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, green peas, assorted salad greens, and topped off with pumpkin and minced meat pies. Fortunately, Thanksgiving Day was a holiday for us with training suspended Thursday and, for many, on Friday as well. Many of those SEABEES who live on the eastern seaboard and were not on watch took advantage of this four-day week-end to visit their families.

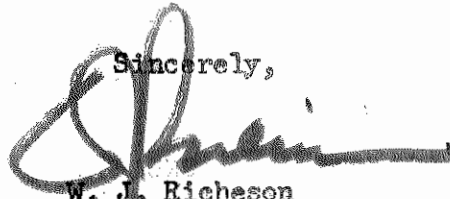
Just as soon as we get back to Gulfport we'll undergo our Annual Administrative Inspection. This is conducted by Commander, Construction Battalions, Atlantic (COMCBLANT) who has headquarters at Davisville, Rhode Island and is our administrative boss when we are in homeport. His staff will visit us on December 13 and 14 and take a detailed look at all of our administrative and personnel handling procedures. Also included is a locker and barracks inspection with the SEABEES lined up alongside their bunks where their personal infantry gear and weapons are displayed for inspection -- a so-called "junk-on-the-bunk" inspection. This Annual Administrative Inspection, conducted about a month before deployment, allows COMCBLANT to be satisfied that each battalion is fully ready to return to RVN.

The Combine Federal Campaign closed just before we left Gulfport. This annual campaign is aimed at raising funds for the organized charities and social agencies in the communities in which federal employees work and live. It covers all those agencies for which the United Fund organizations raise funds, together with certain Health and International Agencies that have widespread recognition for the work they do for our fellowman. In the spirit of personal charity, MCB SIXTY-TWO raised over \$4,000, nearly one third of the total contributions at the CB Center, Gulfport. This is an indication that SEABEES have big hearts and it will make you proud of your SEABEE knowing that he recognizes the obligation to help the less fortunate.

Now that the holiday season is fast approaching, I'm certain that many of you are curious about our Holiday leave schedule. Basically there will be two leave periods -- from December 16 to 27 and from December 27 to January 8, 1968. About 50% of the Battalion can be authorized leave over each of these periods and leave requests have already been submitted and approved for most of the SEABEES. This will give our SEABEES an opportunity for a final visit home before we leave for RVN later on in January.

Every SEABEE in MCB SIXTY-TWO joins with me in sending our very best wishes for a most Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,



W. J. Richeson
Commander, Civil Engineer Corps, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer

P.S. Look for another Familygram just after Christmas.

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