

Seabeacon

NOVEMBER 1970

U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SIXTYTWO



View from the bridge



CDR F.M. NEWCOMB

As this issue of the Seabeacon goes to press the battalion is embarking upon one of the most difficult and trying periods in the life of a Seabee--homeport employment. In the next five months we will go through many evaluations which are a necessary part of Navy life and Seabee life:

- (1) We will separate or transfer about two-thirds of the crew.
- (2) We will receive on board in excess of three hundred new men.
- (3) We will undergo three weeks of military training.
- (4) We will undergo technical training and operational training.
- (5) We will undergo a thorough annual administrative inspection.
- (6) And last but certainly not least we will all take a well deserved leave from our duties.

To those now leaving the Navy for civilian life may I

extend the thanks and appreciation of the Navy as well as mine, for your efforts during your time in the Service. You have served well and contributed significantly to the U.S. government's support of the Republic of Vietnam's fight against the V.C. and NVA aggressors. May your endeavors in the future be as successful and may you have health, happiness and a pleasant life.

To those men transferring to other duty stations in the Navy may I extend the same thanks and appreciation for a job superbly well done. May you forever have "fare winds and following seas." It would be my privilege to serve with you once again in the future.

And now for the new men aboard, may I extend to you and your families a warm welcome to the SIXTY-TWO family. We are very proud of our battalion and its accomplishments. The honors have been the result of long hard hours of work by every man in the battalion working towards common goals.

During these next five months there will be many more long hard hours of work preparing yourselves and the battalion for its next deployment. Our next deployment will not be to a war zone. However we must be capable of redeploying within six to ten days to any place in the world in response to a contingency situation to perform our mission:

"a. To maintain a state of operational readiness to provide rapid and effective construction support to Naval, Marine Corps and other forces as necessary.

b. To be prepared to conduct ground defense operations when required by the circumstances of the deployed situ-

ation.

c. To be prepared to conduct disaster control operations, including public works functions as directed."

Know the mission of the battalion and learn all you can about what it entails. Remember the watch words of the Naval mobile construction battalions---Construction-Defense-Disaster Control. You will be trained in each of these areas to greater or lesser extent during our time in homeport. Regardless of whether you are a career Navy man or not, learn as much as you possibly can about all these subjects. It will serve you in good stead in and out of the Navy. And I can promise you that you will be challenged to utilize every bit of knowledge you have gained during your tour of duty in the battalion.

Duty in a Naval mobile construction battalion can be quite rewarding in spite of the separation from families and long hard hours. The satisfaction of a job well done is something which can be abundant in a battalion where it is not in some other organizations and units in the Navy--because we build. And while we build SIXTY-TWO stresses safety, quality of workmanship and pride--pride in the Navy, the battalion, our shipmates and ourselves.

Again welcome aboard. In the next few months I hope to get to know each of you. In the meantime if you have problems or need assistance utilize the chain of command for help but always remember I stand ready to assist in any way I can day or night. I encourage request mast and feel it is one of the true benefits of Navy life which sets us apart from some of our counterparts in civilian life.

Frank M. Newcomb

FRANK M. NEWCOMB
CDR, CEC, USN
COMMANDING OFFICER

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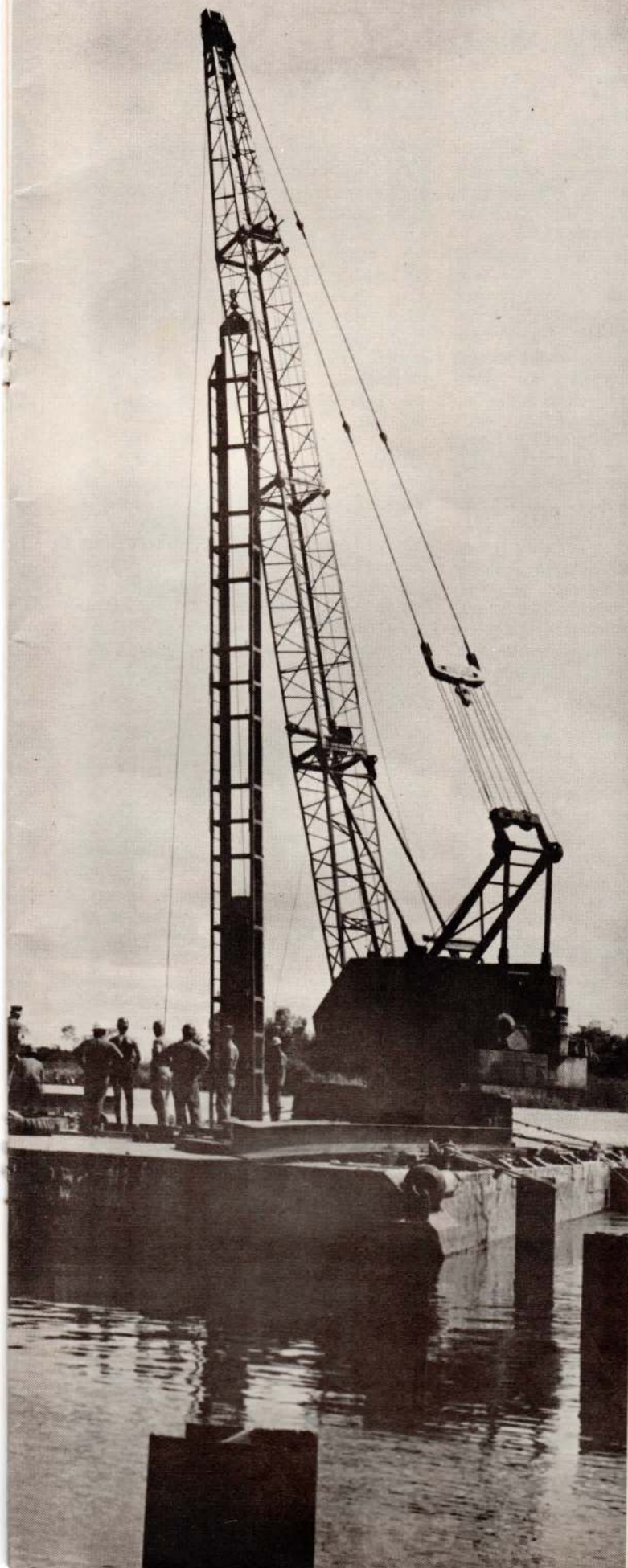
CARBON...WHERE? -- With each troop movement a battalion makes either to or from a deployment site, all weapons are checked and boxed up to be shipped separately. Here, Gunner's Mate Second Class Raymond Truesdale makes a cleanliness inspection prior to final acceptance by MCB 62's armory. (Goforth-photo)

◀ DRIVING IN PROGRESS -- At Detail Albany's site a barge crane with pile driver sinks steel shafts into the river bottom to secure the concrete pontoons forming the new bases pier. The pier now services the river patrol boats operated by Vietnamese patrol units. (PH1 Tilley-photo)

Seabeacon

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From the XO's desk



LCDR D.H. GERDEL

As we closed out this last deployment (my second) and prepared to return home to commence another homeport training cycle, I pondered long on what would be an appropriate subject for this month's column. I could have dwelt on the magnificent achievements of another excellent deployment but it would have been a mere rehash of articles previously printed in the Seabeacon or released to the press. Rather, I decided I would like to reflect on the young Americans that I have observed serving with this battalion and who have been responsible for our achievements and outstanding reputation.

One hears and sees so much nowadays about the irresponsibilities and attitudes of our younger generation, that it tends to become easy and natural for those of us no longer a part of that generation to criticize their actions and ideas. It is an age-old fact that the solid, dedicated citizen doesn't make any news that sells papers or provides the interest that radio or television broadcasters are looking for in their daily newscasts. As a result we tend to get blanketed with the things that make news: Riots, radi-

cal groups, racism, drugs, dissatisfaction and student revolt, with the disident youth most often pictured as the responsible culprit.

The strength and future of our country rests with its youth. From observing the young men serving with this battalion during the past two years, I am firmly convinced that as they return to the mainstream of Everytown, U.S.A., their dedication, energy and enthusiasm will continue to sustain them and further strengthen the miracle of the American democracy.

The examples I have observed are countless and many have gone unnoticed. At the expense of the majority and to the embarrassment of a few, I would like to relate various incidents which I feel exemplify the character, fibre, sensitivity and devotion of these young men. No one who was ever associated with Detail Buford-tasked with the difficult construction of building LTL-4-will ever forget the single-minded dedication and courage displayed by this group. Shipmates were lost and maimed and everyone worked with the ever present threat of death. But, from this difficult situation evolved men: a young hospital corpsman who individually treated over 30 casualties and provided unflagging moral support by his continued presence and professionalism; equipment operators who hit mine after mine, were medivaced and given the opportunity for other duties, but steadfastly demanded they be allowed to return and share the dangers and do their job; and the builders who often worked into the night making bridge repairs in highly dangerous areas, because they knew it had to be done.

The opportunity for shouldering responsibility and proving themselves capable of being productive members of our unit were afforded to many young men on this deployment. And prove themsel-

MCPO's pen

Now that the Danang deployment is history, and the battalion is once again located on the Golden Gulf Coast, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new men to the "Best of the Best." Looking through the list of new men reporting aboard, I see many old friends and good Seabees, so I know our battalion will continue to stay on top.

I would also like to use this column to pass on to all you new men just what my job as battalion master chief is. First of all my primary job is being the senior enlisted advisor to the commanding officer. As such I am the direct link between the command and enlisted men of the battalion. It is my duty and responsibility to keep the commanding officer informed of any problems which would affect the efficiency of the battalion or the welfare and morale of the men.

The battalion master chief concept is fairly new, but I can truthfully say that this has been one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs I've ever had. My job is not to circumvent the chain

ves they did. Identification with the unit was afforded by the small isolated detachments fielded where everyman had to carry his own load. Those who participated in the construction of Special Forces airfields at Ba To, Ha Thanh, Tra Bong and operation "Elk Canyon" at Kahm Duc, particularly distinguished themselves. Living in the sparsest of conditions, coming under frequent attacks and providing outstanding efforts in construction, young petty officers emerged with displays of technical ability, courage and endurance above and beyond anything expected. The two engineering aids who so valiantly tried to save the life of a young Vietnamese child during a mortar attack and the two construction mechanics who

Do you have the Snoopy Complex?

of command in the battalion, but rather to help make it work better. Every man still has the right to request mast, special requests, etc, but most of the time the easiest way to find out what you want to know is to stop by and see me. I'll have an office in our Headquarters Bldg. and my door is always open.

(Continued on page 15)



EQCM J.W. ENRIGHT

... "It won't do you any good."

In a recent "Stars and Stripes" the Peanuts cartoon pictures Lucy saying to Snoopy, "It won't do you any good! It's medically unsound! You're just fooling yourself," as Snoopy is no longer in the picture. The final frame shows Snoopy, ears hanging low, flat on his back, on top of his doghouse, thinking, "Everyone criticizes my copper bracelet."

The trouble with a goodly number of people is they have the Snoopy Complex, they cannot stand to be criticized in anyway, even when they venture out into something new or attempt a new fad. What's your hangup? What makes your cookies crumble? Each one of us has a weakness or uptight attitude benders.



CHAPLAIN R.C. WOOD

Just because one person does not agree with you or possibly a number of associates are at odds with your ideas or opinions, is this proof that what you possess is faulty or unsound? The "go-along with the crowd routine" is wonderful up to a point, but you cannot permit the crowd or even one person to sway your opinion from right thinking.

Paul, the apostle, discovered after he had prayed to God three times about his physical ailment, which he described as "Satan's messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud," that it was not to be removed. God's

(Continued on page 15)

proved so adept at keeping their equipment running were particularly noteworthy.

Some of the most gratifying observations I made were of the efforts by some of our young Seabees to win the hearts of the Vietnamese: a task so essential to our country's commitment in Vietnam. The gratification and pleasure in the eyes of one of our Seabee team steelworkers as his young Vietnamese trainee grasped the knowledge of fundamental steelwork and proceeded on his own initiative; the smiling faces and true spirit of friendliness exhibited by the villagers near our ACTOV base at Chau Duc; the efforts of a hospital corpsman who was genuinely interested in these people, had learned their language and was teach-

ing his shipmates so they would be able to better understand them too; the equipment operator at Dong Ha, while working on bridge abutments with a crew of 40 Vietnamese laborers, treated them with respect, firmness and dignity and in return gained their loyalty and devotion: all are examples of sensitive, understanding young Americans providing an extra effort in the service of their country.

There are innumerable other examples: two young petty officers who suggested and volunteered their off duty time to develop and present a revolutionary concept in a drug education program, three water plant operators who so devotedly and professionally improved the camp water supply on their own knowledge

and initiative; the young CECN on detachment who worked untiringly day and night to provide his shipmates with added conveniences, an engineering aid whose professional and military conduct was a continual inspiring example to his juniors and seniors alike, and on and on.

To have observed and been associated with these young men, and many others not mentioned, has been a pleasure and a source of pride. The great majority of them will return to civilian life in November and December. I have no doubt the same spirit, patriotism and enthusiasm that has served this battalion so well will be carried over in their future endeavors. To them, I wish "Godspeed, fair winds and a following sea."

Don Mynar

Looking back, we see...

The Fleet's number one Seabee battalion is home. MCB 62 has finally wrapped up its fourth consecutive deployment to the Republic of Vietnam.

We arrived in Vietnam in late April from our homeport at Gulfport and immediately found ourselves tasked with a variety of project assignments.

With the Vietnamization of the war becoming a reality, more and more of the Seabee skills were being directed toward this turn over. Projects aiding in the pacification and resettlement of previously controlled Viet-Cong territory also were finding priority on the list of jobs assigned to construc-

tion battalions. And of course there were countless projects necessary in the support of our Allied Forces.

With our headquarters based at Camp Hoover, and then Camp Haskins, Danang, we soon found ourselves spreading in every direction. Numerous detachments were assigned to jobs in the Military Region I around Danang, and several found themselves in Military Region IV of the Mekong Delta.

ACTOV BASES

Perhaps the most interesting projects we undertook during the tour was the construction of two completely self-supporting Vietnamese naval bases. Dubbed ACTOV (accelerated turn over to the

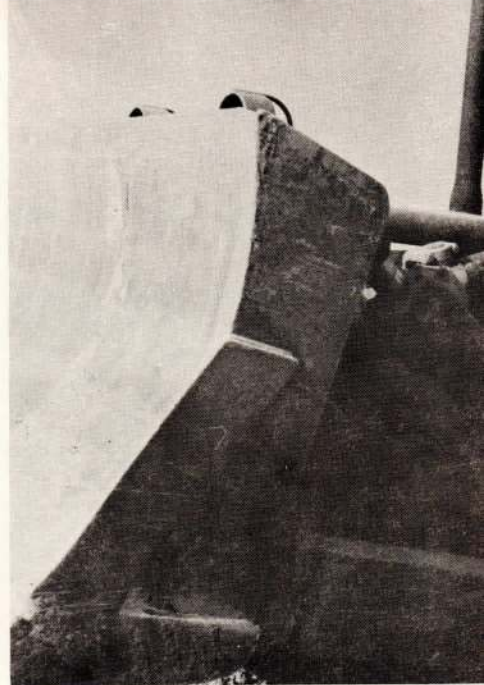
Vietnamese), the bases support units of the "brown water" riverine forces of the Mekong Delta.

ROUTE LTL-4

Closer to Danang, Alfa Company equipment Operators and Charlie Company culvert builders found themselves taking on the most dangerous and challenging project of the deployment.

They were committed to the upgrading and paving of an old French-built thoroughfare

WITH ALBANY AND BUFORD--At Chau Doc (Left and below) men use forklifts to move seahuts and steelworkers fabricate Pasco frames. (Above) EA3 Ross Harris drives TD-20 dozer on Route LTL-4.





which lead from National Route QL-1 westward into the rich farming valleys of Quang Nam Province.

ROUTE QL-1

Another road project was the upgrading and repaving of a section of National Route QL-1 some 25 miles south of Danang. Work was in progress when MCB 62 arrived by MCB's 7 and 121. Once they deployed back to the States the work was continued by Detail Jun-

HOLLYWOOD IN FINAL STAGES --- (Below) Builders install upper wall siding on dependent housing units at Tan Chau. (Right) New base shown, with Seabee camp in foreground.



our share completed

eau. Basically the project involved the construction of several culverts by Charlie Company personnel and the laying of crushed base rock by Alfa Company, then a 24-foot wide swath of asphalt was laid four inches thick on top of the existing paved road bed. Shoulders were graded and rocked to four feet out from the pavement. Rock and asphalt hauling chores were provided by the 7th Marine Engineers from a point 30 miles from the site. It was not uncommon for 1300 to 1600 tons of crushed rock to be hauled daily.

MACKINAC BRIDGE

Two large civic-action projects were undertaken by Charlie Company. A 459-foot, steel bridge was built across

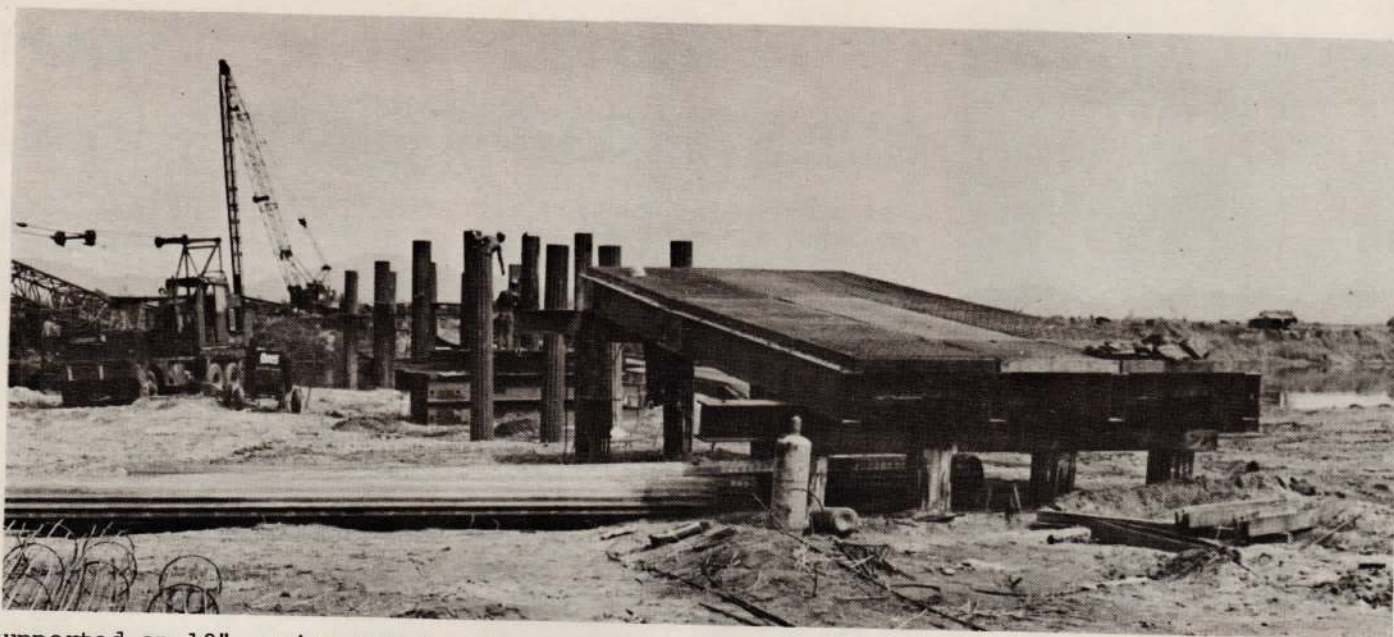
the Song-Chiem-Son River to connect an inland "island" isolated from the mainland by the formation of the river into two channels.

Go Noi Island is a three mile by six mile strip of fertile farming land, practically uninhabited since Viet-Cong occupied the area prior to Allied clean up sweeps.

Now somewhat pacified, the Vietnam government wanted to further secure the island by resettling it with the farmers and villagers who earlier had fled their homes in the path of the V.C.

Detail Mackinac moved in with heavy equipment, pioneered a road from QL-1 to the site and began construction on a steel grating bridge





supported on 18" union metal monotube pilings and wide flange steel beams. The one lane structure is 13 feet six inches wide, rises 14 feet above mean high water and is constructed so as to provide future expansion with limited problems.

It now handles a steady flow of traffic as farmers

and resettled residents of Go-Noi traipse back and forth from the island to the "mainland" of Vietnam.

BAU-NIT DAM

Another civic action job was the Bau-Nit Dam. It's a steel sheet pile and timber crib dam designed to permit temporary blockage to a tributary of the Bau-Nit River

while Vietnamese builders construct a permanent dam 300 meters down stream.

Seabees of MCB 74 started the project as earlier attempts at damming the stream failed under raging monsoon waters, MCB 62 took over the job at about 60 percent completion when MCB 74 returned to the United States. At the peak of the dry season, the dam raises the level of the main stream about 6 feet, providing moisture to hundreds of acres of farm land which were previously too dry for cultivation.

ROK MSR

Also in the Danang area was another horizontal construction project: the building of a main supply route for the Republic of Korea 2nd Marine Brigade stationed at Hoi-An.

The service road greatly improved access to the camp which had previously been serviced only by a dirt road.

In its completed form, the road is six miles long. It has 24-foot-wide, smooth, all weather surfacing of crushed rock topped with a liquid asphalt treatment to aid permanency.

FORCE SUPPORT INCREASE UNITS

Several force support increase units were assigned to Charlie Company in the cen-

JUNEAU AND MACKINAC -- (Left) On National Route QL-1 below Danang, builders place concrete in formwork for one of Juneau's culverts. (Above) Charlie Company's Mackinac Bridge takes shape.



"Hardships imposed by climate enemy harassment, and geographical separation... tasked all elements of the battalion."

AND PRESTO, A HOLE -- (Right) CE2 Michael Eckhout assists an auger in drilling a hole for a power pole at the Force Support Increase Camp on Hill 37.

tral I Corps area.

Basically compounds for company size Vietnamese Self Defense Forces they consist chiefly of three or four pre-engineered steel buildings for living, berthing and administrative facilities. They also have a Vietnamese kitchen, latrine, septic tank, well and tank for water storage.

OTHER PROJECTS

A variety of numerous other projects kept MCB 62 busy during its seven months in Vietnam. Anything and everything that can be deemed necessary for support to the Allied forces.

Again in the Delta, at Binh-Thuy, a detachment of Seabees spent several weeks providing construction support to the Naval Support Activity detachment there.

They built two 50x50 foot wooden trusses, concrete decked hangers for OV-10 aircraft, laid 14,000 square feet of M8A1 steel aircraft matting, and 1700 linear feet of 12-foot-high steel revetment for aircraft parking spaces and ammunition storage. Other work there included the construction of concrete pedestal SEA huts, bunkers, a maintenance office and rest room and shower facilities.

On the extreme tip of South Vietnam, a thirteen man detachment moved into the lowland coastal area of Song-Ong-Doc to construct a helo pad on stilts for a U.S. Navy unit there. Also on the elevated platform of the pad, they built two SEA huts,

bunkers and a fuel storage tank. They spent three weeks in the sweltering, humid heat among swarming mosquitos.

About 25 miles off the coast from Chu Lai lies the small tropical island of Cu-Lao-Re. Alfa Company and Charlie Company personnel moved on to the island to construct a 60-foot timber and steel pier for the off loading of diesel fuel used in the operation of generators at a radar site atop an inactive volcano on the island. Then they cut a winding road into the volcanic rock of the mountain side to the radar site. Previous to this, all fuel had to be airlifted by helicopter.

Still other jobs included such work as improvement of runways for special forces camps at Ha-Thanh, Tra-Bong and Ba-To, an amphibious tactical support base at Hoi-An, extension to a Vietnamese river patrol camp at Phuoc-Trach, shower facilities at Marine Air Group 11, well drilling, water storage systems, fuel tank towers, and perimeter lighting. The list goes on and on.

It was a long and busy deployment for MCB 62. The volume of work was monumental. Hardships imposed by climate, enemy harassment, and geographical separation of the battalion's forces tasked all elements of the battalion. But the Seabees of MCB 62 responded with that ever prevailing "can do" spirit, completing all jobs assigned to the battalion and beating deadlines more often than not.

The quality of workmanship exhibited by 62's Seabees was unsurpassed. It will leave its mark for many years in the future of Vietnam. The construction of LTL-4 and QL-1, the Go-Noi Island bridge, the Force Structure Increase and the ACTOV bases were all projects which will materially assist the Vietnamese in their struggle for self determination and economic development.

And it is with a genuine feeling of accomplishment that MCB 62 moves on to a new chapter in its history, leaving behind new goals and standards for those who follow.



Harry Goforth

Albany and Hollywood...

In South Vietnam's Chau Doc Province near the Cambodian border there are two newly completed river patrol boat bases. They were built recently for the Vietnamese Navy on riverbank sites of reclaimed land by MCB 62's Details Albany and Hollywood. The story behind the building of these bases might now be called a saga.

The planning stages for the construction of the new bases began in April over 500 miles from their locations: at the battalion's main base camp in Danang. The assignment of skilled manpower from Delta Company and the provision of needed materials was coordinated to insure simultaneous arrival. By the middle of May RMK-BRJ, the American civilian contractors responsible for site preparation, had completed the first half of their job and Detail Albany's embarkation began. Detail Hollywood's site, located 20 miles to the north, would be ready a month later.

Flown in by helicopter from Binh Thuy, Albany's crews quickly set up a tent camp on their 100 by 400 yard site and began unloading building materials and personal gear from the river barge that had already arrived. A week later they had completed the wood-frame structures they were to live in for the next six months and had poured the concrete foundation for the first permanent pre-engineered steel Pasco building on the list.

At Detail Hollywood's site the same initial routine began around the middle of June. However, different problems arose and effective solutions had to be devised quickly. Being located on the mouth of a canal connecting with the Mekong's south banks, the site was affected by the river's current which quickly developed erosion problems. Massive failures in the sandy banks occurred and drastic modifications in the site plan had to be made. In addition, as with Detail Albany, their project deadline

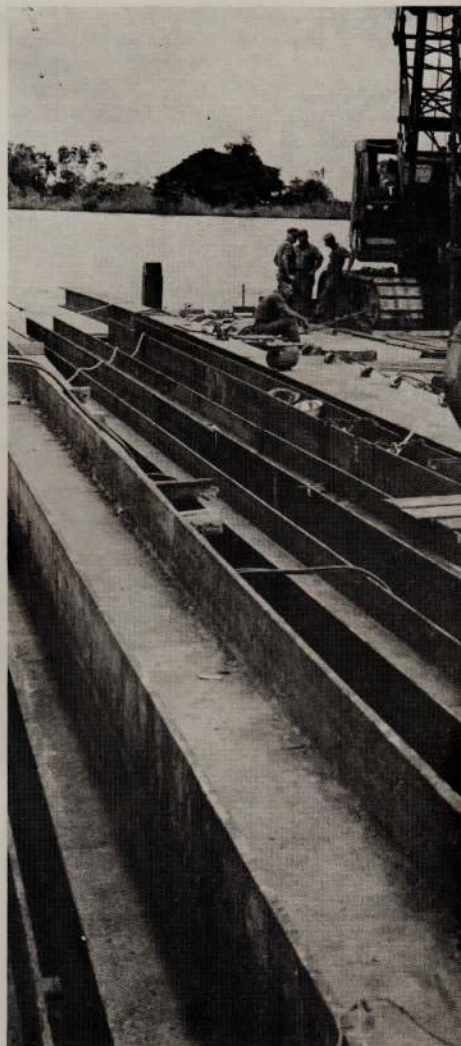
had been moved back and they were given less time to complete their work.

The days went by rapidly at both sites as builder crews formed and poured successive foundations and steelworker crews erected the rigid frame structures above them. Floors were poured later to avoid the interference of rain. Steelworkers also erected chain link fences to keep out intruders, and later guard towers to provide security surveillance over the entire camp. Builders constructed concrete guard houses at assigned locations in the plan.

Electrical power was needed to illuminate living and working spaces and to drive the machinery the Vietnamese would use in making their own camp repairs. So, the electricians set to work to install generators and to string distribution lines where they were needed. Plumbing facilities would insure that standards of sanitation within the base were met. Therefore, utilitiesmen installed water purification systems, connecting storage tanks, distribution lines and sewerage systems complete with septic tanks.

With the steelworkers' completion of the large Pasco and smaller Butler shells, the builders followed behind to install interior wood-frame partitions creating useable office, shop, lounging, dining and berthing spaces within them. The steelworkers then worked with the utilitiesmen in erecting the two 126,000 gallon cylindrical steel tanks in which would be stored the diesel fuel required to power the patrol boats.

Here, a truck or jeep engine needed preventive maintenance and a Seabee mechanic was nearby. There, a crane or transit mixer required a practiced grip to do its job and an equipment operator was on hand. River barges arrived periodically to resupply the crews with needed construction materials and trips were



CLUE-IN -- (Top) To keep everyone abreast of construction progress, Hollywood OIC LTjg Don Keith, BUC Arthur Hotopp and BUC Homer Brown hold briefings with crew leaders twice a day.

produce VN Navy bases

made to nearby American Forces supply barges daily to pick up food, mail and medical supplies. With help from a few constructionmen, the assigned commissaryman kept busy with food preparation and the electronics technician with radio traffic.

The Seabees' contact with the Vietnamese people living nearby was minimal, but it existed. At Detail Albany a former Seabee team hospital corpsman served as an interpreter when language problems arose. At Detail Hollywood, a civic action program was instituted and quality Vietnamese woodworking was obtained with scrap lumber used as compensation.

As project phases merged with monsoon rains, the rivers' water levels rose higher. Detail Hollywood's site was soon completely surrounded by water and continuous measures to check bank erosion were instituted. Detail Albany kept its eyes on the lapping waves also, but their concern was not as well founded. At the rivers' cresting there were still several major components yet to be installed.

Work in progress at Detail Hollywood's site now included the construction of 40 family units of dependent housing. First pouring floor slabs, the builders then lay the masonry walls forming each unit. When the metal roofing was completed, they then surfaced the walls with stucco to provide a durable waterproof finish. Albany's dependent housing, to be adjacent but detached from the main camp, was to be built later by NMCB 3.

Finally, with the arrival of the components for the 650-meter-long, T-shaped pontoon piers, the work at both sites entered its last stage. Steel piles were driven into the river bottom marl to hold the concrete pontoon units in place, and connections to power and fuel lines were made. This last item on the list of large jobs to tackle would be the most important operation-

al facility in the complex. At Detail Hollywood, its completion would require the formation of a delay party of 25 men to stay behind for approximately two weeks.

As the vertical construction neared completion, equipment operators moved sand to shape drainage ditches, vehicle access routes and parking spaces. The traffic routes would be surfaced with two layers of crushed rock and asphalt to carry the weight of heavy vehicles and equipment.

Even before the Seabees' project close outs, the Vietnamese sailors began moving in to take over those parts of the camps that were useable. The satisfactory function of all systems would not occur however, until punch-list material arrived and was subsequently installed. This work would also be handled by NMCB 3.

The creation of river patrol facilities such as the ones Albany and Hollywood

(Continued on page 15)



STEEL TO GO DOWN -- (Bottom) Steelworkers at Albany's site are busy with construction of the pontoon pier. The steel wide-flange sections are used as piles to which are secured the pier.



A SUNDAY NAP -- For most of Hollywood's crews, Sunday afternoon was a time to look forward to. It was a chance to rest up before Monday.

Harry Goforth

Our Seabee teams...

During the early part of 1970 in South Vietnam's Dinh Tuong Province below Saigon, conditions in the province hospital at My Tho were typical of most other hospitals in the area: crowded. The hospital was so overloaded with patients that some were sleeping two and three to a bed. Toward the middle of the year, help finally came. Navy Seabee Builder Third Class Doug Shindler and Hospital Corpsman Third Class David Taylor assisted local builder trainees in constructing a new 16-bed recovery ward designed to absorb the overflow. Patients were then more comfortable.

Farther north at the same time, in the city of Thu Duc in Gia Dinh Province, young mechanic trainees lived with their families in small dilapidated shanties away from their training facilities. They too needed housing. So, after the work of local apprentice masons and carpenters trained by Navy Seabee BU2 Lonnie Blackwell, ten new units were opened up at the school.

Two months ago in an area also concerning Seabees, Binh Duong Province south of Gia Dinh, the rudimentary medical facilities in the rural village of Chanh Luu were nearly ready to collapse. Health conditions among the families living there were deteriorating rapidly. Then, due to the efforts of Vietnamese construction apprentices trained by BU1 Arthur Smith and Engineering Aid Charlie Thibodeaux, the village nurse soon had a new six room dispensary and treatments were resumed on a regular basis.

These three examples of American civic action involvement in Vietnam are indicative of the work that has been carried on there by three Seabee teams belonging with MCB 62. They represent respectively, Seabee Team 6203 at My Tho, 6204 at Thu Duc, and 6205 at Lai Thieu.

The projects are exemplary because they all involve the efforts of both team members

and Vietnamese construction trainees. However, the 13 men on each of the teams are not all rated as builders and engineering aids and all projects cannot include trainees. There is classically assigned with each team at least one of each rate in the Navy's Group Eight construction category, plus a hospital corpsman.

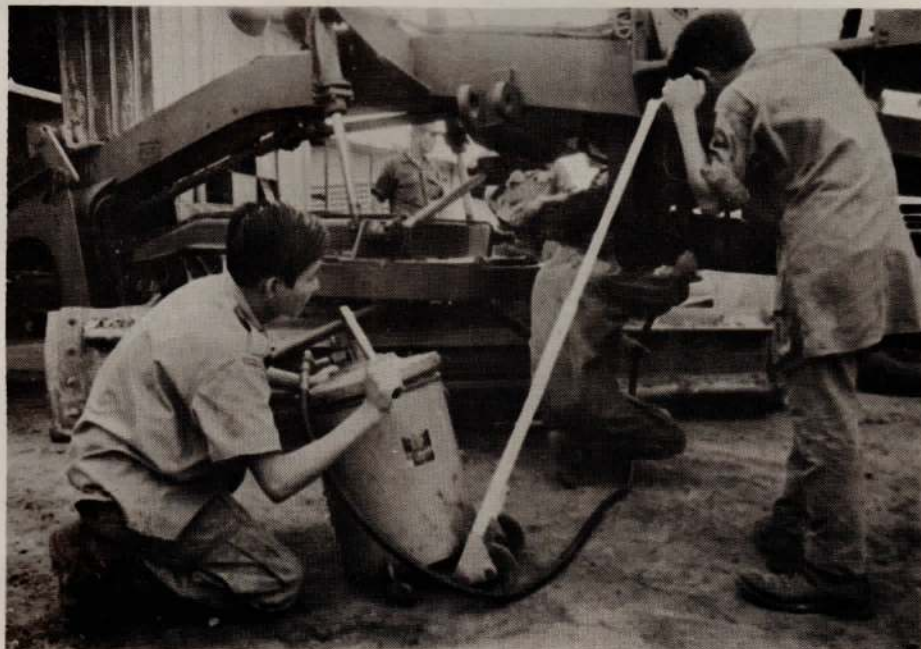
The function of a Seabee team, as laid out by its originators, is to support rural development through construction, training, medical, dental and civic action activities. Implementing this function is however, left up to each team's officer-in-charge.

Working within the established American advisory and South Vietnamese Government political framework, the teams draw their financial support from agencies at both these levels. However, many of the projects are paid for by the members of the communities themselves. Some of the larger projects, such as the 16-bed recovery ward at My Tho, are financed partially by the United States Agency for International Development.

Besides a recovery ward, a dispensary and housing for



BRICK, MORTAR AND A NEW SKILL (Above) BU3 Doug Shindler and HM3 David Taylor lend a hand to mason trainees in constructing the 16-bed recovery ward at My Tho. (Right) BU1 Arthur Smith and EA3 Charlie Thibodeaux discuss progress on the Chanh Luu Dispensary with team chief SWC Donald LaFlamme. (Below) At 6204's camp mechanic trainees lubricate grader used by the team.



emphasized construction and training

mechanic trainees, the teams completed numerous other projects too. Seabee Team 6203, under the leadership of Lieutenant Richard Johnson and Chief Builder Keith Nelson, had the most support locally. One of their larger projects was handled by BU2 Charles Davis and Construction Electrician Second Class Roy Berlin. They were detached from the main body of the team and assisted trainees in building a two-room addition to a high school in Giao Duc District.

Farther south, on a road habitually mined by the VC, Equipment Operator Second Class Calvin Matthews and Third Class Fred Slaw worked to spread over two and a half miles of new rock surfacing. Matthews and Slaw also helped

for several warehouses and schools, a waiting room for a hospital, additional road upgrade projects and a 63-cubic-meter water reservoir.

Seabee Team 6204, under the leadership of Lieutenant junior grade Louis Campbell and Chief Construction Electrician Robert Ward, was located in Gia Dinh Province. In one of their projects trainees instructed by BU3 Francis Ryncarz and EA3 Bill Skoglund built an all-purpose athletic court at the Thu Duc German Reeducation Center. They also built a ten-unit apartment complex for the province Chieu Hoi Center and a kitchen for the Go Vap II Orphanage near Thu Duc.

Utilitiesman Second Class John Misenheimer, also work-

with 6204, instructed trainees in his team's steelworker shop and built playground equipment for the An Ahnon Orphanage. Construction Mechanic Second Class Robert Crosby and Third Class Gary Green continuously trained students in the maintenance of automotive and construction equipment assigned to the team.

Seabee Team 6205, under the leadership of LTJG Gregg Hagedorn and Chief Steelworker Donald LaFlamme, was located in Binh Duong Province. Significant projects they completed include the Lai Thieu Primary School, built by trainees under the guidance of BU3 Ted Owens, and the Binh Hoa refugee village water system renovated by a trainee under the guidance of UT3 John Gilbert.

Four miles of road upgrading on Provincial Route 9 was undertaken by EO2 Jack Bounds, EO2 Robert Turner, and a driver trainee. Work also done by Bounds and Turner included an asphalt resurfacing of the marketplace in Lai Thieu.

Although they enjoy building for the people, much of their satisfaction, members of the teams say, comes in working with the trainees. Having one of the more impressive training records of the three teams, 6204 just after mid-deployment, had already graduated seven trainees from their programs and had 24 more working toward completion. To further help them in their trades, the teams assist graduates in finding jobs with civilian contractors in the area.

Probably the most important of a team's underlying functions, says LTJG Hagedorn, "...is emphasizing the political channels available to the people for requesting improvements." Improvement projects originating with such requests hold the people's interest, and in turn, are a joy for each team member to be involved with. It is this interdependence that makes the system work best and insures its continuation.



construct a canal, road and building site for the Dinh Tuong Agricultural High School. On this same project, Steelworker First Class James Cook, Utilitiesman Second Class Forest Churchill and EA3 Jim Evans completed two temporary classrooms and a latrine, while a civilian contractor constructed the permanent buildings for the school.

Other work completed by 6203 includes concrete decks

ing near Thu Duc, used his specialized skills to provide the Chi-Y-Tay hamlet dispensary with a new plumbing system and connecting storage tank. EO2 Doug Fuller and EO3 Ed Mainguy both provided grading for two athletic fields near Duc Lo. Following that, they built a culvert and road at Tam Hai connecting the village with the Thu Duc market.

During most of the deployment SW2 Anthony Blua, also

Tampa's task: a new approach Bill Jones

Recently 16 men from MCB 62 spent 16 days building a pier and road for the South Vietnamese Navy on a small tropical island 27 miles southeast of Chu Lai, RVN.

The island, Cu-Lao-Re, is inhabited by about 15,000 friendly natives, and to the men of Detail Tampa it was more like an R&R site than a construction site. Seemingly far from the troubles of the war, the inhabitants of the island live in brick and stucco type dwellings with tile roofs and make their living as garlic farmers and fishermen.

The island is being utilized as a radar site with radar equipment on an inactive volcano 430 feet above sea level. The equipment is maintained by two U.S. Navy electronic technicians from the First Coastal Advisory Group out of NSF (Naval Support Facilities), Danang and is operated by a team of Vietnamese Navy Men.

Upon arrival, the detachment, comprised of men from Alfa, Charlie and Headquarters Companies and under the direction of LTJG George Koob, set up a small base camp of squad tents and subsisted on "C" rations for two days until their galley facilities were ready for use.

With house keeping set up, the men of Detail Tampa got down to the serious business at hand--the 60-foot pier and the cutting of a rough grade road around the side of the volcano and up to the radar site.

The pier, supported by 14-inch bearing piles driven into the sand, extends 10-feet above the water. Constructed in six days by the Alfa Company equipment operators and steelworkers from Charlie Company along with the surveying skills of the Headquarters Company engineering aids it was designed to accommodate "Swift Boats", a type of craft much similar to the River Patrol Boats.

The road, cut by the EO's



A ROAD AND A PIER -- (Above) Using a TD-20 dozer to do the job, an equipment operator carves a road up the steep volcanic slope on Cu Lao Re Island. (Below) Steelworkers on the shore fabricate the pier to be used for unloading supplies. In the background a group of islanders stand watching.



with aid from the EA's was carved through a thin layer of dirt and into the volcanic rock in seven days and stretches 1 1/2 miles.

The main reason for the Cu-Lao-Re project is to enable the Vietnamese Navy to offload diesel fuel on to the beach and then transport it to the radar station where it will be used to operate the

generators needed for electrical power. Previously fuel had to be air lifted in by helicopter.

So after 16 days of "R&R" on this tropical paradise the men of Detail Tampa headed back to the war zone knowing that they had taken still another step toward the effective turn over of the war effort to the South Vietnamese.

For leadership XO awarded Bronze Star

LCDR David Holland Gerdel, executive officer of NMCB 62, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device in a brief ceremony at Camp Haskins, October 24. The award was presented by Rear Admiral A.R. Marschall, Commander Third Naval Construction Brigade.

LCDR Gerdel was cited for his leadership as operations officer and later as executive officer while serving in Vietnam from June to November 1969 and from April to July 1970.

As operations officer he was responsible for directing the construction efforts of a 700-man battalion in the upgrading of combat essential Route 9 from Khe Gio bridge to Vandgrift Combat Base. Concurrently he directed the battalion in construction of a 540-foot structural steel highway bridge across the Dong Ha river, and in numerous other construction projects throughout Military Region One.

During his second deployment, as executive officer he again made significant contributions to the construction efforts of the battalion

by personal visits to construction sites and application of his detailed knowledge of construction methods and equipment.

During the period of time that LCDR Gerdel has been assigned to MCB 62, the battalion has twice won the Battle Efficiency "E" Award as best of type in the Atlantic Fleet, and was awarded the Peltier Award of the Society of Military Engineers as the Fleet's top construction battalion for 1969. The command also was awarded the Army Meritorious Unit Commendation for construction support during the 1969 Dong Ha Deployment.

LCDR Gerdel is a civil engineer graduate of Duke University. He has served in a variety of positions since being commissioned an officer in the Civil Engineering Corps. His first duty assignment was as Assistant Public Works Officer at the Naval Ordnance Plant in York, Pa. In 1961 he became an engineering advisor to the Military Advisory and Assistance Group in Taiwan. As a Lieutenant, he served as officer-in-charge of Byrd Station in the Antarctic in 1964. Later



he was Public Works Officer and Resident Officer-in-charge of Construction at the Naval Mine Defense Laboratory Panama City, Fla. Then in 1967 he became Head Management Department Officer for the Southeastern Division of the Facilities Engineering Command in Charleston, S.C. where he worked for RADM Marschall.

He joined MCB 62 in June 1969. The battalion is currently completing its fourth deployment to Vietnam and will be returning to its homeport at Gulfport, Miss. in early November.

LCDR Gerdel will transfer from the battalion in April to study Navy Management at the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, Calif.

MCPO (Cont. from Pg. 5)

Another function of my job is to accompany the commanding officer whenever he visits any of our many training sites or job sites, so this is why you normally see us together. Any time we're in your area and you have a problem, let me know about it and we will see what can be done to correct it.

So, until I get to meet you all personally, welcome aboard. Remember, if you work safely, you'll help cut down on paperwork.

CHAPLAIN (Cont. from Pg. 5)

reply "My grace is all you need, for my power is strongest when you are weak" (II Cor 12:9), was all Paul needed because he felt God's protective power over him. In times of gravest doubt about the selfimage, the believer in God's power is strengthened by the assurance that the Father stands with us in our weakness. "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: He is their strength in time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver

them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him."

ACTOV (Cont. from pg. 11)

just built in Chau Doc Province require untold sacrifices by the crews of Seabees involved. To list these sacrifices would appear vain-glory. However, in compensation, it will be of tremendous value for those sacrificing to realize what has been gained. And manifesting this will be left up to the Vietnamese.

Prepublication orders for the 1970 edition of MCB 62's CRUISEBOOK are now being accepted for only \$5.00 each. The CRUISEBOOK is an annual graphic record depicting the battalion's activities during the 1970 Danang deployment. Along with a check or money order payable to MCB 62 Recreation Fund, send your name and address to.....Public Affairs Office, MCB 62 FPO New York, N.Y. 09501.



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THE FUTURE OF VIETNAM TOO -- The future of the world lies in the education of its young. These Vietnamese kids are like any others you might know: eager, inquiring and lovable. The men with Detail Hollywood saw them daily. (H. Goforth--photo)