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of **53**



Captain's Corner

We have passed the midpoint of our current deployment in Vietnam. We have had a party to celebrate that landmark and also to celebrate the second anniversary of our recommissioning. At this time of the deployment we should pause to reflect on our accomplishments, and consider what the future may hold for us.



CDR ROBERT K. MILLER

We have accomplished things which I did not think we were capable of, in time frames that even the most optimistic scheduler would not believe. Our deployment has months to go, and we will continue to be called on to perform Seabee type miracles. We are an outstanding Battalion and each of us has reason to be proud of belonging to MCB-53.

During the last month I visited CB Team 5301 in their camp at Soc Trang in Ba Xuyen Province. Soc Trang is about 100 miles SSW of Saigon and our team represents the only Seabee presence in the Province. I spoke to Army, Navy and Marine Corps Officers, and also to U.S. Civilians and each of them spoke highly of the Seabees. But the important thing is the reputation the Team has with the Vietnamese. They too, are loud in their praise of CB Team 5301. When the team leaves Soc Trang they will leave behind many friends, a wealth of good will, and many examples of their skill, and their hard work. The rest of us in the Battalion can be proud of our team. Not every man in the battalion can qualify for this type of duty, and the choices we made last Fall are obviously good ones.

I've also been a frequent visitor at the Vinh Dai site, where we operate two 200 ton per hour rock crushers, an asphalt plant, and asphalt pavers. The Vinh Dai detail is also composed of selected individuals, 190 strong. The chow at Vinh Dai is so good that the Seabee galley feeds many of the Marine troops in the area. Good chow is not the only reason for Vinh Dai however; the men of Foxtrot Company have a different type of job than most of us at DaNang, and the living conditions at the site are not as good as they are in DaNang. In spite of that the men of MCB-53 continue the outstanding performance for which they are noted.

We have already begun planning for the Cruise Book. I was not pleased with last years Cruise Book and from the way the Battalion stayed away from buying them, neither were you. Your Special Services money had to pay for the books. All the books. We have over a hundred of them left and I do not want a repeat performance this year. Therefore, I have instructed the Cruise Book Editor, ENS MCVICAR, to proceed with a Cruise Book only if the Battalion really wants one. A certain percentage of Special Services money always goes into the Cruise Book, the remainder comes from those who order the book. This year we will "pre sell" the Cruise Book, and if the demand is not sufficient we will refund the money and not have a Cruise Book. It's up to you.

COMINGS AND GOINGS AMONG THE OFFICERS

New faces have appeared among the officer ranks as of late with the arrival of LCdr L.M. Larsen, Operations Officer; LTJg Ira Cartee, Battalion Chaplain; Ens J. C. McVicar, Assistant Operations Officer; Ens John Heinstadt, Assistant Plans and Training Officer; and Ens Richard Mauch, Assistant Foxtrot Company Commander. Ens Mauch is presently on detachment with Foxtrot Company at the battalion's rock crusher site at Vinh Dai.

Transferred to new duty stations after completing their tours of duty with MCB-53 are LT Peter Madden, now the Okinawa representative to the Officer in Charge of Construction, Far East; Chaplain J.R. Fiol, now with the 3rd Marine Division at Dong Ha, Vietnam; and LT William Johnson, now Assistant Public Works Officer at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Crane, Indiana. LT Joseph Marold, the Battalion Dentist, was transferred to the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. He was on his first deployment with the battalion when he returned to Conus on emergency leave and was then transferred to a shore station.

COVER SHOT

EA2 Charles Guenzel signals "Good Line!" While laying out a site for the Camp Monahan chapel.

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COVER SHOT

EA2 Charles Guenzel signals "Good Line!" While laying out a site for the Camp Monahan chapel.

LCDR D.L. Forney takes over as XO

XO's Column



LCdr D.L. Forney

LCdr W.A. Simmons was recently relieved as Executive Officer of MCB-53 by LCdr D. L. Forney. LCdr Simmons is currently under instruction at Stanford University, California.

Born in Mount Holly Springs, Pennsylvania, LCdr Forney received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from Pennsylvania State University in 1960 and a Master of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Michigan in 1966. He entered the U.S. Navy through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps and was commissioned an Ensign in the Civil Engineer Corps upon graduation from Pennsylvania State University.

LCdr Forney's previous assignments include duty at NAS Cecil Field, Florida as Transportation Officer; at NAS Adak, Alaska as Assistant Resident Officer-in-Charge of Construction; at NOP Louisville, Kentucky as Public Works Officer; at the University of Michigan for duty under instruction; at PWC Yokosuka, Japan as Maintenance Control Officer and Operations Officer; and at OICC, Far East as Deputy. He reported to MCB-53 in June, 1968, as Operations Officer, becoming Executive Officer of the battalion in May, 1969.

MCB FIFTY-THREE was originally commissioned on 22 December 1942 at Camp Allen in Norfolk, Virginia. The Battalion compiled a proud and enviable record in such locations as Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Villa Lavella and Guam before being inactivated at Bikini Atoll in August 1946.

With the conflict in Southeast Asia and the resulting need for additional construction battalions, MCB FIFTY-THREE was recommissioned on 30 June 1967 at CBC Davisville, Rhode Island. This month marks the second anniversary of the recommissioning.

Our accomplishments of the past two years have added to the proud record started by our predecessors of World War II. Those of you who were with the battalion last year in Camp Adenir recall the construction of the first two Ammi bridges in RVN, the III MAF Combat Operations Center, the many new facilities at the NSA Hospital, the large covered storage complex at the NSA Covered Storage Compound, the EM Club at Camp Tien'Sha and the many other combat support construction projects for the III Marine

Amphibious Force. You will also remember the little rock crusher at CaLu that, to everyone's surprise except ours, kept putting out crushed rock while other larger and more sophisticated operations had their problems.

Many of the officers and men of this year's Advance Party must have tired of my reminder that a battalion must start the deployment in high gear or never reach its promise. Little did any of us know at the time that the THIRTIETH NCR was about to lock us in high gear by assigning to the battalion the Automatic Data Processing Building and the FIRST FSR Complex at FLC, DaNang, the finishing stages of the Liberty Bridge, the MACG 18 Headquarters, the emergency reconstruction of Camp Monahan, Freedom Hill Bowling Alley and Red Cross Building, the new Army Amtracks Cantonment and the Lang Co Bridge--all high priority projects. We have also been assigned projects for the Army 58th TC, the Marines' Northern Artillery Cantonment and other smaller projects in the DaNang area. In addition, twenty-five percent of the battalion personnel are attached to the rock crusher and asphalt Detail at Vinh Dai.

Completion of these high priority jobs has demanded long and hard hours, and each one of you can be proud of a job well done. When the long hard hours are behind and the results are more clearly seen, you will be even prouder. The Seabees have a proud and respected name, and it is because of

the ESPRIT of 53

- Commanding Officer.....CDR R.K. MILLER, USN
- Executive Officer.....LCDR D.L. FORNEY, USN
- Public Affairs Officer.....ENS J.C. MCVICAR, USNR
- Editor.....JO3 F.F. HUTCHINS, USN
- Assistant Editor.....BUCN R.J. ALBERS, USN
- Photographers.....PH1 P.J. MCINERNEY, USN
- EO3 P.A. WATSON, USN

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Down in the Delta...

with Seabee Team 5301

The Seabee team, perhaps best described as 13 Seabees functioning as a one man gang, has shown itself to be a useful tool for engendering good will and raising the standard of living in foreign countries. Though not specifically created for the Vietnam conflict, it has proved its worth time and time again in winning the allegiance of the Vietnamese common man.

Since its arrival in the Mekong Delta in March, Seabee Team 5301--the first such team to be organized by MCB-53--has already done much to enhance the Seabee

reputation. Operating out of Soc Trang in Ba Xuyen Province, the 13 man team has been hard at work on nearly a dozen construction projects using local labor. And that is the key to the whole program--working with the people and teaching them the skills that create a more progressive attitude toward education, sanitation, nutrition and housing.

MCB-53's team has been especially involved with training the "Hoi Chanh," Viet Cong who have switched their allegiance to the South Vietnamese government. The Hoi Chanh are

sent to the team from a special reception center near the city of Bai Xau and are trained on the job by team members. In addition to the Hoi Chanh, the team trains many South Vietnamese war refugees.

Some of the projects include:

- *Construction of a high school at Bai Xau. So far the team has filled and leveled the site, raising it a total of 2.5 feet.

- *Addition of a 10' X 20' classroom to the school at Long Phu. Local laborers have been laying block under team member supervision.

- *Construction of a warehouse for the province hospital. The site for the Butler building warehouse has already been cleared and prepared.

- *Erection of a headquarters building for the village of Phe Me. Now completed, this handsome 20' X 35' masonry building consists of four rooms.

One of the future projects is the repair of the Dai Hai village office. Shellfire damaged the roof and one wall of the original 20' X 18' structure.

Seabee Team 5301 spent about 20 weeks preparing for their deployment. Training included a one week escape and survival course, a two week project training course at Gulfport, Mississippi, and a three week language course at Port Hueneme, California.



BU2 Danny G. Smith (behind column) from Brookhaven, Mississippi, shows trainees how to set up the form for a concrete column. Made up of war refugees and former Viet Cong, the trainees are learning the skills that will help them rebuild South Vietnam.



Builder trainees of Seabee Team 5301 pour columns at Phe Me village in the province of Ba Xuyen. The columns are part of the now completed village headquarters building.

Supervised by LTjg L.M. Smith, CEC, USN, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the team members are: UTC S.S. Williams from Baltimore, Maryland, CM2 E. Brown from Charleston, South Carolina, UT2 W.S. Sparkman from Tucson, Arizona, HM1 J.P. Davison from Arvin, California, EO2 W.P. Kalbach from Haddon Heights, New Jersey, EO1 J.H. Vaness from Waldo, Wisconsin, SW1 C.D. Belcher from Mount Olive, Alabama, BU2 D.G. Smith from Brookhaven, Mississippi, BU2 F.W. McCoy from Grand Junction, Colorado, CM2 E.S. Kalmbacher from North Babylon, New York, EA2 E.M. Charles from Germantown, Maryland, and CE2 C.J. Moxley from Brooklet, Georgia.



Members of Seabee Team 5301 at Soc Trang leave their camp for another day of teaching South Vietnamese trainees.



Boats dock along the banks of one of the many canals that interlace the cities and villages in Ba Xuyen province where Seabee Team 5301 is working. The canals are the principal means of transportation, especially during the monsoon season.

COOKING UP A STORM

One of the biggest morale boosters throughout a deployment is the quality of meals served each day in a unit's mess hall. And although you will almost always hear complaints on anything that is affiliated with serving the public, MCB-53's cooks have heard relatively few for the position they're in.

Working from 1300 one day to 1300 the following day, these cooks have their work cut out for them. As it is now set up, the cooks work on a two watch basis with three men to each watch.

When the battalion took over Camp Haskins North, the galley was in need of considerable improvement. Under the direction of CS1 John Oaks, Petty Officer in charge of the galley, work was begun to improve the condition of the galley and add new equipment.

First they held a com-



The men who put together that good Navy chow are (back row, left to right) CS3 G.H. Nicklien, CS3 Earl Ross, CS2 John Green, CS1 Rober Nichols, (front row, left to right) CS2 Bruce Maiand, CS1 Lonnie Stanford, TN D.S. Picache, and CS1 John Oaks.

plete field day for sanitation purposes. Then they gave the galley a new paint job, and installed new siding in the food preparation area to improve appearance and enhance sanitation. Finally, they had an overall maintenance check on the equipment.

Our menus and raw food products are received from the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) via the Force Logistics Command (FLC) on a 28 day cycle basis. The Command has received the menus for this cycle through 1970.

Called upon to aid MCB-5 when explosions of an ignited ammo dump wrecked their galley, our cooks put together servings for an additional 500 men, as well as the 550 in our camp. They were involved in these double-duties for 3 days.

There are also 20 messmen to assist the commissarymen. They work in the scullery, deep sinks, Chief's Mess, First Class Mess, the mess deck and the serving line.

The night baker prepares pastries for the following

morning. He also puts together the midnight rations for the security force, and the box lunches to be taken to the job sites the next day.



Disproving the old saying that too many cooks spoil the stew are (left to right) TN Picache, CS2 Maiand, CS3 Ross, and CS1 Stanford.



CS1 Roger Nichols takes inventory on supplies in the galley's storage area. Commissaryman Nichols is the petty officer in charge of keeping the galley well stocked.

BRAVO COMPANY SHOPS

"EVERY DAY IS A CRISIS" so reads the sign over the door to the shop area. Those in the shop are in charge of the Battalion's camp maintenance and project support. They are well known for their ability to do a great deal with very little.

Under the supervision of UTC James W. Morris, the 16-man shop crew handles any problem that arises in the camp. Their rates consist of construction electricians, utilitiesmen, builders, and steelworkers. Keeping the battalion supplied with power is the main function of the construction electricians. Their skills are forever being called upon to repair or replace faulty electrical gear.



CE2 James Scruggs (left) from Wadley, Georgia, and CECN Kenneth Hubbs from Phoenix, Arizona, bend two inch conduit for the electrical system of the new automatic concrete batch plant operated by Alfa Company.

The utilitiesmen keep the water flowing and are responsible for the maintenance of the battalion's boilers. Like the CEs, the UTs are kept on the go at all hours to repair breakdowns.

The shop also has builders and steelworkers from Charlie Company who construct and repair to meet the camp's needs. Their workdays, though more regular in hours than those of the CEs and UTs, are just as hectic when the Camp Maintenance call goes out.



SW3 Bert Noles from Sarasota, Florida, bends sheet metal on the break.



SW2 Leon Kowalski from Detroit, Michigan, fabricates a flexible connection at Bravo Company shops.



CE2 Gary Welles (right) from Wildesbarre, Pennsylvania, and CE3 Bruce Reese from McKeesport, Pennsylvania, install emergency switches to the Administrative area.



Wreckage flies through the air as salvage crews load dump trucks at Camp Monahan. Studs for the chow hall are seen in the background.

23 days in May

REBUILDING CAMP MONAHAN

Sooner or later nearly every Seabee on deployment in Vietnam learns to expect the unexpected. So when a brush fire set off an ammo dump explosion at ASP 1 near DaNang on Sunday, April 27, no one was really surprised to see a cleanup crew from MCB-53 move into one of the leveled Marine camps--Camp Monahan--a few days later and begin clearing the tangled wreckage.

In fact, no one was really surprised when CDR R.K. Miller, Commanding Officer of MCB-53, gave the job top priority and assigned every available man--from builder to barber--to the job site to begin cleaning up and rebuilding the camp.

"Everyone did a little of everything," said LTjg Max A. Werner, one of the supervising officers. "The men worked in their rates, outside their rates and around their rates. One of the men even went around calling himself an 'EO-BUCE.'"

The original completion date was set at May 30, but after watching the men "turn to" for a few days, the officers in charge moved the date up to May 23. And "turn to" is exactly what the men did. Within

three weeks they put up 100 buildings which included 79 Southeast Asia huts, a 500 man galley, two 40' X 100' Butler buildings, an enlisted mens club, a non-commissioned officer's club, a chapel, two office buildings, five showers and a generator shed. During this time the men used 125,000 board feet of 2" X 4"s and 5,000 pounds of nails. The galley alone used 12,000 board feet of 2" X 4"s.

Most of the credit for the actual building goes to

the builders and steelworkers of Charlie Company, the main contractors for the job. With their dedicated hammers and welding torches they did more than any other single company in bringing the job to an early completion.

But, the H Company crews also "did an exceptional job in keeping ahead of the builders," said LTjg Werner. They were assigned the job of tearing down the buildings, stacking the reusable lumber and tin, and



With concrete up to their knees two builders lay the slab for a butler building while a TM driver guides the flow from his truck.



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Seabees on a hot tin roof nail down sections of sheet metal on a portion of the chow hall.

polishing up the rest of the rubble.

Cooperating with the salvage crews, the Alfa Company EOs did an efficient job of hauling away the refuse and removing the pallets of reusable plywood, 2" X 4"s, and tin. They also regraded parts of the camp so that the EAs could move in with their transits to lay out the building foundations.

Bravo Company UTs and CEs also had their work cut out for them. Two generators and a complete primary and secondary wiring system had to be reinstalled, as well as all the plumbing for the showers and chow hall. The UTs even had to use a little Seabee ingenuity when they discovered that they didn't have all the right pipe fittings. But a little homework in the Bravo Company shop quickly fixed that situation.

Working around the clock, the Prefab Shop also added greatly to the speed of the job. Floor joists and rafters for the berthing huts were precut in the shop, and the entire hut side-walls, complete with screening, were out, nailed

and stacked by shop crews.

So when the Marines finally moved back into their camp, they were more than satisfied. But that's why the Seabees are here in the first place--to support the Marine and Army units in the Republic of Vietnam.



A builder hammers down the final section of roofing on a hut while two CEs rig up the wiring.



A row of newly completed hootches gleam in the sunshine.

CIVIC ACTION

WHEN THE PLAGUE STRIKES...

The Vietnamese call it "dich-hach," though Americans know it more simply as the black plague. But whatever the name, it strikes terror into the hearts of those who have been exposed to it. So when the hamlet of Chon Tam, near DaNang, suddenly came down with several cases of the plague in late spring, wheels were set in motion at MCB-53 that finally resulted in the inoculation of 2,200 Vietnamese villagers.

It started on a hot Thursday morning when LT John R. Fiol, MCB-53's former Chaplain, received a call from the Force Logistics Command saying the hamlet chief had reported two deaths from the plague. Since the hamlet was in MCB-53's Civic Action a-

rea, Chaplain Fiol quickly agreed to help. He called a hasty conference with LT Herbert C. Jurgeleit, head of MCB-53's Medical Department, and the two went off to see the hamlet chief.

LT Jurgeleit told the chief that he could get enough vaccine to inoculate 3,000 to 4,000 people, but it would take about two days to get the Vaccine ready. The chief agreed to the mass inoculation and mentioned that 20 of his people were now in the hospital.

Early Monday morning LT Jurgeleit and seven of his hospitalmen loaded a cooler full of vaccine and syringes into one of their ambulances and headed toward the hamlet schoolhouse where the inoc-

ulations were to be held. They unloaded their equipment into an empty room of the schoolhouse and within minutes a crowd of a hundred children and several dozen adults had gathered around the classroom door.

Immediately the team went to work. Some of the children came willingly and with smiles, some had to be coaxed and still others had to be held by the corpsmen. But eventually nearly all were inoculated.

The team worked in the hot, dusty room from 9 in the morning to 4:30 in the afternoon, and by the time they were through they had inoculated about 1,500 children under 16 and about 700 adults.

Some of the children enjoyed the attention so much that they tried for a second shot. It took alert eyes to spot the little red mark that showed they had already been inoculated.

But the real cure for the problem, said LT Jurgeleit later, is not inoculation. For one thing, "the vaccine only lasts for six months," he said, "and it will not prevent the disease, only make it less severe."

Actually, rat control is the only lasting solution for the plague, he said. The plague is spread by the fleas that infest the rats, "and the rat population increases greatly in the mass breakdown of sanitation caused by war," said LT Jurgeleit.

Right now the DaNang area is so "overcrowded with refugees and there are so many garbage dumps that even spraying is impractical." He added, however, that he and the MCB-53 Civic Action Team were looking hard for a workable solution.



Those that participated in the inoculation of the Chon Tam hamlet, near DaNang, are (front row, left to right) HM3 Fred Allen from Eugene, Oregon; HM3 Ron Dickenson from St. Paul, Virginia; HM3 Mike Sandborn from East Lansing, Michigan; (back row) LT Herbert Jurgeleit from Townshend, Vermont. Absent when the photo was taken were HM3 Jeff Cater from Rock Falls, Illinois and HM3 Richard Laux from Syracuse, New York.

Chaplain's Corner

We are living in a day when men are reaching for the stars. It is a time when men are seeking to conquer outer space. For our country it began in February of 1962 when John Glenn entered Friendship 7, the first of the Project Mercury series, and blasted off the launching pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida. He became America's entry in the race to conquer outer space. Time vanished for him as he hurtled into four sunsets and three dawns, through four Tuesdays and three Wednesdays in only five hours.

Think of it, the immensity of space. We are told that light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second --equivalent to about seven times around the earth every second. If we could start the light's ray out straight and let it continue for a year's time that distance would be a light year, approximately six trillion miles. The science of astronomy tells us that our galaxy, the Milky Way, is some 100,000 light years in diameter, and that it circles in an orbit all its own every 200 million years as the galaxy rotates. Walking outside at night and looking at the stars, we can see into space to a distance of 1,000 million light years. In this limited distance there are millions of Milky Ways and in them billions of suns with trillions of planets. When we realize that there is no proof that beyond this immense space there are no further spaces, then we are left in amazement and awe before this "gigantic, regulating, planning, creating" power that directs the movements of the tiniest as well as the greatest worlds.

The universe is vast in its dimensions, but consider also what we know of atomic structure, the smallest particles known. The atom has a great similarity to our solar system and to our universe in that it has electrons rotation about a nucleus in regular patterns.

There is an orderliness of the whole universe about us from the smallest atomic structure to the most enormous thing we can imagine--galaxies millions of light-years across to atomic structures, all travelling in prescribed orbits in relation to one another.

Such a thing as the universe could not "just-happen." It is the result of a definite Plan. Some Power put all of this into orbit and keeps it there. Such a Plan and such a Power is God. Such a God cannot be measured in terms of what can be seen, felt, smelled, or touched as a Power; yet, He exists and can be known in human experience.

A few years ago a newspaper carried an unusual cartoon. The scene was that of a spacious library with stacks of books piled on shelves and lying scattered in confusion on the floor. In the center of the picture was a mirror and sitting in front of the mirror was a man. By the number of books in the library the cartoonist plainly indicated that man is an ingenious creature. His restless mind had entered into countless avenues of life to gather knowledge and put it into books. He had learned many things, and yet as he sits there looking into the mirror he sees what still remains the most intricate and persistent puzzle to man--himself.

Two days after Russia put the first satellite into orbit the New York Times came out with these words in an editorial: "The creature who descended from a tree or crawled out of a cave is now on the eve of incredible journeys. Yet, it is not these journeys which chiefly matter. Will he be any happier for seeing the other side of the moon or strolling in the meadows of Mars? The greatest adventure of all is not to go to the moon or to explore the rings of Saturn. It is rather to understand the heart and soul of man, and to turn away



LTjg Ira O.
Cartee

from wrath and destruction towards creativeness and brotherly love."

The editor of the New York Times, whether he knew it or not, was echoing in effect what David wrote in the Eighth Psalm long ago: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

The conquest of outer space may have far-reaching consequences for the life of man. But, as we reach toward the heavens, we should not forget the explorations of inner space, realizing who and what we are in the light of Who and What God is.

LTjg Cartee new Chaplain

Chaplain John R. Fiol was recently relieved by LTjg Ira O. Cartee, CHC, as Chaplain of MCB-53. Chaplain Fiol had been with the battalion for almost 2 years and is now serving with the 3rd Marine Division at Dong Ha, Vietnam, for a six month stay.

Chaplain Cartee graduated from the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina, with a Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 1966. He then became a Pastor at the Memorial Baptist Church, Aiken, South Carolina. In April, 1969, he graduated from the U.S. Navy Chaplain's School, Newport, Rhode Island. He joined MCB-53 on May 23, 1969.

Chaplain Cartee is married to the former Maxine Jackson of Augusta, Georgia, and they have three children, Ira T., Michael J., and Melissa L., ages 12, 8, and 3 respectively.



E1 Harper P. Duelly (left) takes the oath from CDR R.K. Miller.

RIGHT: Smiling as they sign their reenlistment papers are CM1 Patrick Vaughan (on the left) and E02 Albert Closs.



REENLISTMENTS

Things have been hopping in the Career Counselor's Office so far this deployment as is shown by the wave of reenlistments shown on this page. Eleven men have shipped over since the reenlistment period starting 1 January 1969, and BUCS Jack E.



BU2 L.E. Robinson (left) takes the oath from CDR R.K. Miller.

Burgess, Career Counselor, says eight to nine more men have already said they plan to reenlist before the enlistment period ends on 1 November 1969. But, says Senior Chief Burgess, there should be a few shipovers in addition to these because he still has to interview some of the 55 men whose enlistments will end before November 1.



Receiving their reenlistment bonuses are HM2 R.L. Whaley (left) and EAC F.E. Henthorn.



E1 J.D. Loughridge (left) is congratulated by CDR Miller after shipping over for six.



LEFT: EOC K.R. Wilson (left) displays his honorable discharge with LCDR W.A. Simmons, '08-53's former Executive Officer, before reenlisting.



E02 C.H. Hutton (left) receives a handshake from CDR Miller after reenlisting.

At Vinh Dai

AWARDS CEREMONY

Ten men from Foxtrot Company were presented awards and Certificates of Appreciation by CDR R. K. Miller during an Awards Ceremony held at the battalion's rock crusher site in Vinh Dai, Vietnam.

Commissaryman Second Class Charles Maitland was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation Medal for services rendered while at the United States Naval Support Activity in Saigon. Maitland was also named Petty Officer of the Month for the month of April. He is in charge of feeding the 180 men of Foxtrot Company.

A Good Conduct Medal was awarded to EO1 Michael De-Long and the Expert Rifleman Medal was received by EO3 Joseph Zimmerman for his performance on the M-16 firing range.

Graduating first in his class at the Field Radio Operators Course, Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, CM3 Ralph Coleman was awarded a Letter of Congratulation from Commander Miller. "Your performance," the letter read, "illustrates your de-

sire to excel in all your accomplishments, and marks you as an outstanding member of the Command."

Letters of Appreciation were awarded to six of MCB-53's Vinh Dai constructionmen. With the exception of CE3 J.J. Dale, who received his for work done while de-

tached to Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Maryland, the remaining five received theirs for the completion of the Quang Tri Airfield Soil Stabilization Project. They are EO2 R.C. Garrow, EO3 W. L. Matteson, EO3 W.J. Bostock, EO3 D.S. Ramirez, and CM3 L.F. Pokladnik.



Those who were presented awards by Commander Miller (standing, left) are (kneeling, left to right) EO2 R.C. Garrow, CE3 J.J. Dale, EO3 J.L. Zimmerman, EO1 Michael De-Long, CS1 Charles Maitland, (standing, left to right, excluding Cdr Miller) CM3 Ralph Coleman, CM3 L.F. Pokladnik, EO3 D.S. Ramirez, EO3 W.J. Bostock, EO3 W.L. Matteson.



EOC Gordon Matthews (center) is "assisted" through the obstacle course in the Chief's Club by UTC James Morris (left) and GY/SGT M.D. Martinez. This was one of the events that took place at the Boot Chief's initiation.

Get that 'Honorable'

"Because of an Undesirable Discharge I received I have been blocked from applying for any position I would try for. If I do get some kind of a position, the word gets around as to what kind of discharge I have, and that's it."

"To better my financial situation I began to apply for Civil Service jobs. Each time, written or oral, I would pass, but I would be disqualified because of the discharge."

"I have registered with the Draft Board here, but due to the Undesirable Discharge I received from prior service, I was given a 4F Classification. In order to have the 4F changed, I

was told by the Draft Board I would have to have my discharge changed. Under the circumstances, it is remorseful--very much so. Please, please help me!"

The above are excerpts from a few of hundreds of letters received by the Bureau of Naval Personnel requesting that the character of their discharge be changed. In nearly every case the petition has to be denied. For the petitioner to have his character of discharge changed he must show conclusive evidence that reasonable standards of Naval law, administration or practice were not observed in effecting his

Cont on page 15

ALFA COMPANY

by EO2 Roger Currant

It's rumored that work at the jobsites has been going on quite rhythmically lately, especially at the laterite pit. Also we have a man (EO2 Crash Hurlbut) who was caught sitting beside his five ton dump truck trying to figure how to shut it off. Of course, he was also trying to figure out what it was doing upside down in the first place.

By the way, all drivers should check their trucks thoroughly before hitting the road. I overheard CM3 Cade and CM3 Elg talking about a brake job they had just completed on a truck. Seems the brakes got put on OK, but they forgot the spline that fits inside the axle. So if your truck seems to be lacking something, don't hesitate to bring it back.

Rumors of tear gas in the area have also been passing around lately. Of course the majority of Alfa Company personnel have no problem putting on their masks, but the other day I did hear someone mention that EOCN Slayton must have been asleep at Camp LeJeune when they gave the class on the proper methods of putting on

a mask. He had his on upside down at a recent drill and couldn't seem to find his way around. If anyone should run into him walking around all befuddled and with something pulled over his head, would you please assist him to the nearest aid station?

I've also heard we have a lot of lovelorn men running around the camp. It was discovered that EO2 West has been getting a lot of correspondence from a lonely hearts club back in the States. Have you found anyone yet West? It is believed that he made his contacts through Tina Valentine--just in case anyone is interested.

It never ceases to amaze me what things people will try to make their jobs easier. I was told that UT2 Likens poured a gallon of white paint all over himself and then rolled around his cube trying to paint it. There has to be a better way!

By the way, CM3 Maier, before starting up a piece of equipment, be sure that it is intact and that you know how to shut it down in case of emergencies. It seems you

should know that by your second tour with MCB-53.

Painting your toe nails with red paint seems like a sissy thing to do, but if that's your bag then that's your bag. CM2 Currin, you silly boy!

Well I think I've said enough for this time so I'll close for now. Keep smiling and we'll see you next issue.

Bravo Company

by CE2 Rich Feminella

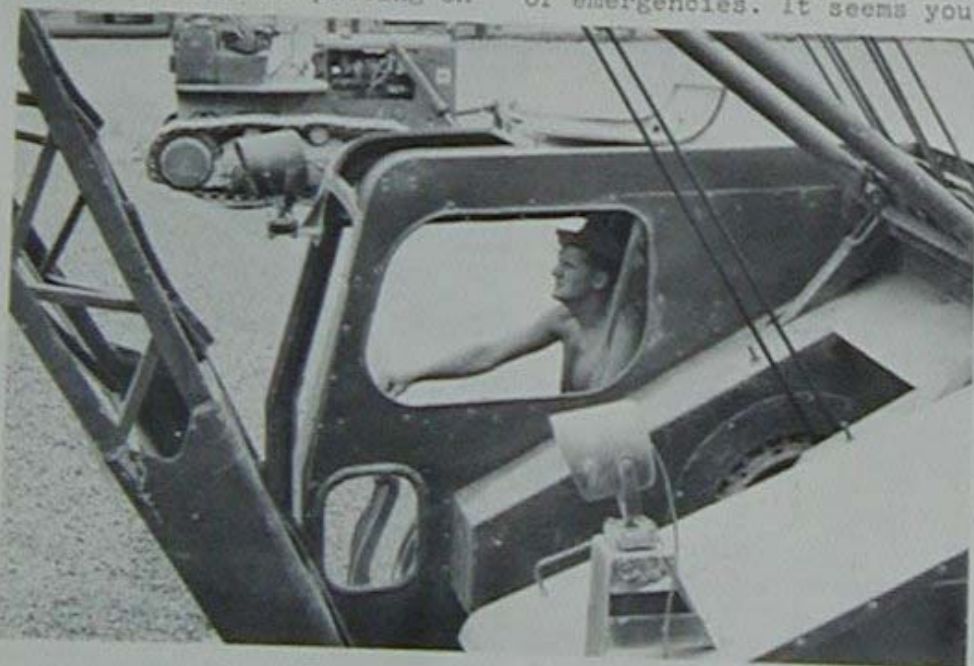
Since MCB-53's last deployment to Vietnam, Bravo Company has been called on to participate in various jobs. One of these was the erection of a Data Processing Center at the Force Logistics Command. Now the largest computer facility in Vietnam, this structure required special Bravo Company treatment on its mammoth air conditioning and refrigeration units as well as on its intricate wiring and grounding systems.

Then when Ammo Supply Point One blew, our UTs and CEs had to turn in their side-cutters and pipe wrenches for hammers and crowbars, and off they went to clear debris and rebuild Camp Monahan.

Then there were the incidentals like maintaining potable water for our own camp, restringing the power distribution system so we would be able to go on emergency power, maintaining all electrical and sanitary facilities for the camp, and rewiring our own huts (in our spare time, of course).

Throughout all these projects we only had one nervous man (a new father). It seems CECN David Caputo's wife had given birth to a baby boy weighing nearly 10 pounds. Since then he's been hard to live with as he has a smile from ear to ear all the time.

We've had a "Seabee of the Month," UTCN Jackson W. Crowder, and now we have a "Petty Officer of the Month," CE2 R. D. (The Whale) Tansley. Their outstanding performance is not only commendable, but an example for all non-rated men and petty officers of Bravo Company.



Alfa Company's E03 F.E. Lacasse from Colorado Springs, Colorado, operates a crane at the battalion's batch plant.

FOXTROT COMPANY

by E01 Tallman & CM2 Shark

Four months down and how many did you say to EO? Those that came over on the advance party think they are getting short! Ha! They have much to learn. But that isn't as bad as CMC Maki. All you hear from him is R&R! R&R! Some of us can't quite see why Chief Maki wants to go. He has an air conditioned, wood-paneled, fluorescent lighted, etc., etc. office. He's on R&R right here!!!

The "Gypsy Asphalt Paving Crew," under the capable leadership of E01 Loughridge, is going great guns. One of the crew members, E02 Frost, was saying something the other day about "Laos or Bust!"

BU2 Samson has built our security element into a fine tuned machine. A big "well done" to him. But we can't figure out what he's building on the hillside with all those little stakes he has driven into the ground. A unique feature of this camp is the "Bunker Motel Service" on duty nights. If you make reservations early you may get the bunker of your choice! Just ask UT3 Plauche, the day clerk, or our night clerk, BU3 Ernest. BU2 Patnoad ensures that each bunker is fully equipped - even with a "pleasant" view! This is the only camp

BRAVO COMPANY cont from p.14

UT3 K.A. O'Keefe returned from R&R in Hawaii and says hula girls tell a story with their hands. The only trouble is if you watch the hands you miss all the other important details.

We will have to say farewell to ENS Spencer in the near future. Seems he has been watching those TV commercials that say "Come on down to Florida," so he decided to go. We have been trying to convince him that he won't like it as he will have to spend his weekends loafing and fishing instead of working. With that I'll call it quits until next issue.

we know of where if one calls Security on the phone he will hear: "This is a recording - please deposit 10p."

Speaking of piasters, as soon as the Cam Lo Till Plaza is completed and the approaches paved, we will really be making money.

Due to the prodigious efforts of UT2 Jackson and UT2 Doyle, our ice making facilities are something to see. Would you believe a Seabee emblem on every cube?

Our "Busy Beaver Building Company," BU2 Waite, Prop., seems to be torn between building an ACEY-DEUCY Club, two more hootches, a roof over the new generator, or a boat to sail home in.

It seems that since EOC McLaughlin came to the Steelworker's shop with an order for a cut-back asphalt tank, SW2 Guillory and his boys have had trouble with their brain housing groups. SW3 Garrett and CN Kenezur-off seem to be competing for the honor of who can wear the most psychedelic welding cap. And some of us suspect that the flashes we see at night come from strobe lights instead of welding arcs.

XO's COLUMN cont from P.3

your skill and performance, and Seabees like you, that this is so.

It has been a pleasure to watch MCB FIFTY-THREE grow from a new, inexperienced battalion, eager to prove itself, to the experienced, smooth and sure battalion that now exists. It is true that something is lost when the need to prove yourself has passed, but the experience and sureness that takes its place makes up this loss.

I know all of you, especially those who have been aboard since recommissioning, join in wishing MCB FIFTY-THREE a happy second anniversary.

Last but not least we all want to welcome aboard our new Assistant Company Commander, Ensign Mauch. We were going to put up signs saying: "In Camp Speed: Mauch II!"

Well, until the next time, we're all hanging in there!!



A front-end loader fills a dump with rock at the Quarry site west of Vinh Dai.

DISCHARGE cont from P 13

discharge from the military service. No petition will be considered on the basis of civilian needs or predicaments.

An adverse discharge may disqualify you from receiving most of the Veteran's benefits, including education rights, apprentice Veterans Administration facilities, and service connected disability compensation. Worst of all you will receive considerable prejudice in civilian life from your former friends, relatives, and most important from your prospective employers, who don't want to take a chance on you.

You owe it to yourself, your family, your loved ones and to your country to receive nothing less than an Honorable Discharge.





Damming an area of a stream, these Vietnamese fishermen at MCB-53's Rock Quarry site, 10 miles west of Vinh Dai catch

small fish by placing a wicker basket in front of the only exit.

USN MCB-53 _____ COMPANY

FPO, NEW YORK, N.Y. 09501

PLACE 12¢
STAMP HERE

TO: