

RS

U. S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION ONE
Fleet Post Office
New York 09501

MCB-1/10/jhow
5000
Ser: 47

16 JAN 1968


From: Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Annual Updated Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAV ltr ser 6567P09B9 of 7 Dec 1967
(b) OPNAVINST 5750.12 of 8 Nov 1966

Encl: (1) Command History, USNMCB ONE
(2) USNMCB ONE 1966 Cruise Book

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) and (2) are forwarded.


By J. CLINTON
By direction

- Copy to:
- CHINFO
- CINCLANTFLT
- CINCPACFLT
- COMSERVLANT
- COMSERVPAC
- COMCBLANT ←
- COMCBPAC

COMMAND HISTORY, Calendar Year 1966

I. CHRONOLOGY

1 JAN -- U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE, commanded by CDR Richard T. HARDY, CEC, USN, began 1966 in homeport at Davisville, R. I. The Battalion was hurriedly preparing for Camp Lejeune Military Training and a deployment to Vietnam as a result of a change in orders received just prior to Christmas.

27 JAN -- MCB-1 deployed to Camp Lejeune, N. C., for four weeks of highly intensified military training.

10 FEB -- The Battalion's Advance Party deployed to Vietnam, just north of the city of Danang, where it was their job to get a head start on constructing a new Seabee camp.

25 FEB -- The Battalion returned from Camp Lejeune for further preparation for the Vietnam deployment. During this brief homeport period, each man received an opportunity to take five days leave.

10 MAR -- The first of six flights departed Davisville, R. I., for Danang, Vietnam.

15 MAR -- All flights had arrived, and construction projects were begun,

MCB ONE'S CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS INCLUDED ITS OWN CAMP, FORCE LOGISTICS SUPPORT GROUP COMPLEXES, 30TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT CAMP, HILL 724, PLUS NUMEROUS SPECIAL PROJECTS.

2 JUN -- CDR Paul R. GATES, CEC, USN, relieved CDR HARDY as Commanding Officer of MCB ONE.

1 OCT -- MCB FIFTY-EIGHT's Advance Party arrived to relieve personnel returning on MCB-1's Advance Party.

27 OCT -- With projects completed well ahead of schedule, MCB ONE departed Vietnam by plane, as MCB-58 relieved the Battalion on site.

MCB ONE finished out calendar year 1966 in homeport, with half the Battalion on leave and the other half in school, already training for the next deployment.

II. NARRATIVE

In Homeport at Davisville, after a well-earned leave period, homeport training began, and preparations were started to relieve MCB SEVEN at Rota, Spain, in May. These plans were scrapped suddenly on 20 December when the Battalion was directed to prepare for deployment to Vietnam in early March. Christmas holidays were but briefly observed, as an all-hands effort was mobilized to complete the SOAP of organizational gear, to build up the Battalion's personnel strength to 500 men, and to prepare for a military training deployment at Camp Lejeune.

Enclosure (1)

MCB ONE was to build a new Seabee Camp in Vietnam at a yet undetermined site. The Commanding Officer's reconnaissance trip in January pin-pointed the location as Red Beach, seven miles North of Danang—a barren, dune-crested beach at the outer limits of the Marines' area of control. With planning details in hand, a rear echelon was formed of personnel required for procurement and embarkation, and 200 men were hand picked from those who had experience at GITMO to form the Advance Party for Vietnam. The main body left for Camp Lejeune on 28 January, and the Advance Party departed for Vietnam ten days later.

Throughout this hectic period, the work of the Battalion was supervised by a staff of about 12 officers. New Officers ordered to the Battalion to build up the increased allowance of 24 began to arrive early in February. This experience gap was successfully met only because three of the officers who had been with the Battalion in Cuba extended for the Vietnam deployment.

The month of February was a period of intensive training in Marine infantry tactics. The vigorous participation by Battalion personnel showed their purpose in preparation for the "real thing". Because of over-crowded conditions at the Infantry Training Regiment, the training was conducted by a host Battalion, the Second Battalion, Sixth Marines. Many of the Battalion officers had worked with MCB ONE at GITMO. Mutual respect and cooperation was the principal spirit during this training period. A Pass-in-Review was held on 17 February in honor of Major General O. R. SIMPSON, Commanding General, Second Marine Division. After qualification firing during the fourth week at Camp Lejeune, 63 per cent of the Battalion achieved Marksman designations. The Battalion returned to Davisville and made last minute preparations for mount-out.

8 March 1966, MCB ONE deployed for Danang - The first MCB to be airlifted from the East Coast to Vietnam. Six C-119 Starlifters departed from Quonset Point, stopping only briefly at Elmendorf, Alaska; Yokota, Japan; and Clark Field in the Philippines.

When the Main Body arrived in country, the progress that had been made on the new Seabee camp was amazing. The Advance Party had completed the defensive perimeter, the temporary galley, and sufficient living quarters to house all personnel by the time the Main Body arrived. This was done despite the fact that ships carrying the Battalion's organizational gear and camp construction materials had not yet arrived in the Danang Harbor. The cooperation and generosity of the 7th Marine Engineers and other MCBs in the Danang area were instrumental in the construction of the new camp.

The new camp was substantially completed by 1 April and the major construction effort was directed towards customer work. Construction was started on the Force Logistic Support Group (FLSG) complex west of MCB ONE's camp across Route 1. The new 30th NCR Headquarters was started adjacent to and north of MCB ONE.

Civil unrest in the Danang area caused Vietnamese workers employed by RMK-BR to leave the job during a three week period in April, but construction of the III MAF Headquarters was continued by daily airlifting a company from MCB ONE across the Danang Harbor to maintain progress on this important facility. In addition, MCB ONE personnel were utilized in quarry and rock crushing operations to support

the RMK-BRJ construction of the new Danang airstrip. Logistic support in the area of fresh provisions, badly needed construction materials, and heavy equipment was seriously curtailed during the period of civil unrest. Five hundred-fifty men, using the oft-proven Seabee ingenuity, came through with amazing innovations to overcome deficiencies in material.

Civic Action was a program new to the Seabees in Vietnam, but one in which they pitched in with typical enthusiasm. It was also a program in which MCBs have an unusual capability to serve those in need. Much of the aid given was in the form of medical and dental assistance to local Vietnamese. Over 4,000 people were treated by MCB ONE's MEDCAP team for both medical and dental ailments. In addition to medical assistance, over 80 truckloads of wood scrap, generated as a by-product of the construction effort, were donated to nearby hamlets and refugee villages. Concrete and construction assistance were provided to the ARVN Ranger Camp located just south of the MCB ONE camp. Seabees volunteered to instruct the Rangers in construction skills during their very limited free time. Two collapsed bridges on the road leading to Bach Ninh hamlet were rebuilt. Material and labor were provided to assist in the construction of an orthopedic hospital for the care of Vietnamese children. Lumber and corrugated sheet metal were provided to the Refugee Village to rebuild two houses which had burned. Another house which was burned was rebuilt by Seabees on their own time. Material and manpower were provided to build a school in the hamlet of Bach Ninh. In a nearby "New Life" Refugee Village, a road was constructed connecting a new school house with the village and the main highway. Two five hundred dollar checks, from the Battalion Chapel Fund, were donated to local school districts for school construction. Perhaps the most lasting form of help was given by employing 52 Vietnamese laborers to work with Battalion personnel on construction projects. The Vietnamese were integrated into the construction crews and proved to be hard-working. Much individual effort was freely given to upgrade the construction skills of these Vietnamese employees.

In June, CDR Paul R. GATES, CEC, USN, relieved CDR Richard T. HARDY, CEC, USN, as Commanding Officer. The Change of Command ceremony included a Battalion Pass-in-Review, attended by Admiral T. R. WESCHLER, Commander, NSA Danang; Rear Admiral R. R. WOODING, Commander, 3rd Naval Construction Brigade; Brigadier General H. M. ELWOOD, Ass't. Wing Commander, 1st Marine Air Wing; and Captain N. R. ANDERSON, Commander, 30th Naval Construction Regiment.

The big push came in June to complete the first increment of the FISG complex by July 1; a deadline which was successfully met by working many extra hours. In addition, work was started on the Marine LAAM missile site on top of Hill 724, 14 miles north of Danang. LTJG Walt GARROTT was in charge of the 30 man detachment on this job. Ultimately, when the job was completed ahead of schedule despite harassment by periodic sniper fire and near impossible working conditions; one Navy Commendation Medal, three SECNAV Commendations for Achievement, and 12 MACV Certificates of Achievement were awarded to members of the Hill 724 detachment for their superior performance.

Looking back over the year there was much to be proud of, but no time for complacent satisfaction. There was concrete to be poured, roads to be built, metal buildings to be erected. Construction records set the previous month were useful only as goals to be exceeded in the coming month.

Calendar year 1966 was characterized by swift changes and unexpected reversals of plans. The extension of the Cuban deployment, the emergency call for assistance by hurricane damage to Eleuthera, the sudden diversion of the Battalion to a Vietnam deployment, the civil unrest in Danang; all these events tested and proved sound the mobility concept that is the very foundation of Mobile Construction Battalions. The successful reaction of MCB ONE to these and many other events was the pay-off of previous peacetime training deployments.