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From: Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
FIFTY-THREE
To: Commander, Naval Construction Battalions, U. S. Atlantic Fleet
Subj: Completion Report, Field Training, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina;
submission of
Ref: (a) COMCBLANTINST 3121.3C
Encl: (1) Completion Report of MCB-53 Camp LeJeune Deployment - 27 JAN
1969-10 FEB 1969

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted:

a. USNMCB-53 has just completed three (3) weeks military training at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. The Battalion was hosted and training was conducted by the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines during the period 27 January to 10 February 1969.

b. The training received was exceptional. In addition to advanced infantry training for the entire Battalion, selected personnel received instruction on the care, maintenance, operation, and deployment of M-60 machine guns, 3.5 inch rocket launcher, 81 MM mortars, .50 calibre machine gun, and the 106 MM recoilless rifle. Other selected personnel also received instruction and training at the 2nd Marine Division NCO Leadership School, FMFLANT Communication School, and the Food Service School. And as a result of this training, this Battalion is in a high state of readiness.

R. K. MILLER

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COM2LNCR

COMPLETION REPORT OF MCB-53, CAMP LEJEUNE DEPLOYMENT - 27 JAN69-10FEB69

I. General. MCB-53 deployed 437 men and 13 officers to Marine Corps Base, Camp LeJeune, North Carolina for Military Training from 27 January through 10 February 1969.

- A. Compressed Schedule. Training was completed within a two week period plus a week-end instead of the normal three week period. This necessitated full working days on Saturdays and on one Sunday. This rigorous scheduling, back to back with similar schedules, at Camp Fogarty, permitted limited free time for personal affairs and relaxation. Only minor influence on morale was detected but it is felt that this type of pressured training just prior to deployment could have effected morale.
- B. Weather. Weather during the deployment was outstanding with the exception of inclement weather during the last two days which precluded completion of the Battalion FEK. Time limitations precluded rescheduling.

In view of the limitations placed on training during the winter months at Camp Fogarty, the generally favorable weather at Camp LeJeune, and some repetitive training, it is recommended that all military training during the winter months be conducted at Camp LeJeune.

C. Other Battalion Functions. While deployed to Camp LeJeune the following additional functions were being conducted:

1. Preparation and Deployment of Advance Party.
2. Administrative Inspection (Partial).
3. Preparation for Administrative Inspection.
4. Schools other than Military Training.

It is realized that the reduced homeport period dictated the compressed military training period, but it is nevertheless recommended that when possible conflicts of this nature be avoided. An incrementally conducted ADMIN and the absence of Advance Party personnel during portions of the ADMIN is highly unsatisfactory. A 3 to 3½ week deployment to Camp LeJeune without any Camp Fogarty training would have precluded lost training due to weather and would have lessened the impact of ADMIN/Advance Party conflict.

II. Transportation.

- A. Convoy. The convoy experienced several breakdowns on the trip to Camp LeJeune. Adequate preparations and procedures were followed and difficulties were unavoidable and indicated no trend. No recommendations are made.

- B. Personnel Airlift. The airlift to Camp LeJeune took place over a three day period. Flights were scheduled very sporadically and changed in several instances on very short notice. Notification of all flights was less than 48 hours and in one instance only 14 hour notification was made.

Two flights were initially scheduled for a Monday, one week prior to commencement of training and were subsequently cancelled. No apparent effort was made to coordinate movement of MCB-58 from Camp LeJeune to Davisville with MCB-53 movement to Camp LeJeune. It is highly recommended that CBLANT coordinate movement of battalions to and from Camp LeJeune when this is indicated.

It is recommended that movement be limited to a two day period when possible preferably on the Friday and Saturday preceding the commencement of training. Earlier and more reliable notification of flights would also be helpful in that better utilization could be made of the days immediately preceding the airlift.

Return flights were delayed for one day because of weather. There were indications, however, that the storm of 9 and 10 February could have resulted in increased delays and that a capability for a responsive change to alternate modes of transportation did not exist.

- C. Support Transportation. 21 NCR vehicles provided at Camp LeJeune were highly adequate and provided excellent support.

III. Berthing and Messing. Berthing and messing were outstanding in all respects.

IV. Training. Training was provided by the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine as host battalion and was exceptional. This can be attributed to conscientious and competent command interest and obvious preparation by designated instructors. Marine instructors were detached from their assigned companies and assigned to a small training group directly under the S-3. This arrangement generated visible spirit among the instructors and provided for effective control. The limited number of personnel deployed to Camp LeJeune also created a good training atmosphere in that classes were smaller, permitting more controlled lectures, more individual attention, and more opportunity to actually perform training skills. The value and adequacy of the training was considered outstanding. Readiness posture was greatly improved as a result of the training and is now considered high.

V. Contingency Capability. Capability existed throughout the deployment to support contingency plans, doctrine and policy set forth in CCBLINST 3121.3C. With approximately 65% of the battalion personnel located in Camp LeJeune and 30% located Davisville,

execution and coordination of contingency commitments would have been more challenging than normal. DELTA contingency has been assigned to MCB-53 until deployment to Vietnam. It would seem more reasonable to terminate this specific commitment 2-4 weeks prior to deployment or at least upon departure of the Advance Party if another battalion is available. With the Advance Party already committed to one mission and immediately pending commitment of the entire battalion, it is felt that assignment to another homeported battalion at an earlier date would be more prudent.