

fifty



eight

BLAZE

VOL. NO. 6 USNMCB FIFTYEIGHT DAVISVILLE, R.I. 10 OCTOBER 1958

KNOW YOUR MEN

Do not permit the eagle on your arm to close the door to confidence from the men in your division.

Never be so busy that you cannot listen to what they have to say. Encourage them to express their ideas and give the men credit for them as you pass the good ideas up the line. You'll get credit for being able to spot a good man or a good thing and you'll be doing right by your men. They will look up to you as their leader and they will naturally turn to you when they have a problem. Respect their confidence and give them full benefit of your experience. Remember that the confidence you gain is beneficial to both you and your men.

(TAKEN FROM
INFORMATION
BULLETIN)

58 COMPLETES TRAINING

Mobile Construction Battalion FIFTY-EIGHT recently completed four weeks of military training at the Marine Corps base, Camp Lejeune North Carolina. The training was conducted in three phases. The first was two weeks of classes on various aspects of military maneuvers, the use of the compass, the art of camouflaging and various other topics. The second phase was that of a three day field exercise and the third and final phase was spent at the rifle range.

Perhaps the most important fact obtained from the two weeks of classes was the actual experiences of the instructors, who had just returned from overseas. I think most of the Battalion were interested to find out or learn what to expect overseas, and the instructors had information on that subject.

Also, during the first two weeks classes were given in all aspects of communications. The men were chosen from each company to be company communicators and battalion communicators. Another school was held in counter-insurgency and the opinion of those who attended was that it was very interesting and beneficial.

Most of the third week of training was concerned with our Field Exercise. The exercise was conducted at a part of the base considered to be the most snake infested part of Camp Lejeune. Personnel of the various companies spent about as much time looking out for snakes as they did for the aggressors. To help out the situation, it came a downpour the first day we were there. Fighting holes were one-quarter filled with water and everything was wet and uncomfortable.....but we knew it wouldn't be a picnic. The local marines were the aggressors and from what I learned were quite impressed with the Battalions defensive positions and their knowledge of defensive strategy.

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

As this issue of the BLAZE goes to press, we are on the eve of our departure for the deployment to which we have pointed these many months past. Our Advance Party has departed and I know we eagerly wish to join them.

It is a good time now--as we take a "breather" before the rigorous months ahead--for us to take stock of where we've been--both as Seabees, and as members of this Great Battalion.

First--as Seabees--for we are all Seabees--Constructionman and Seaman--Yeoman and Builder--Officer and Chief.

Prior to the commitment in 1965 of large numbers of Americans in Vietnam, there were only ten Mobile Construction Battalions plus two Amphibious Construction Battalions. The ten MCBs were comprised of only about 5000 Seabees. To these ten MCBs of less than a year ago have been added five new battalions. The Great FIFTY-EIGHT is the second of the new battalions, recommissioned because of World War II fame. MCB-40 preceded us, MCBs 62 and 133 were commissioned in Gulfport, and just this week MCB-71 was commissioned here in Davisville. Within two months MCB-74 will be commissioned. All of the MCBs have been strengthened. Thus we will soon find sixteen MCBs totalling close to 13,000 Seabees compared to the 5,000 Seabees in the ten battalions of a year ago.

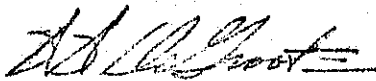
Obviously, this almost phenomenal growth has taken place because our skills are sorely needed by our Nation. What it has meant for all of us is increased responsibility, hard work, and some personal hardship. On the plus side of the ledger, the growth has provided increased promotion opportunity, to go hand in hand with our increased responsibilities.

This, almost too briefly, is what happened to "Seabees" in the year past. Let's look back now at MCB FIFTY-EIGHT.

Most of us reported to Davisville in mid-winter--many men--ordered to a battalion which, for some of us, didn't even have a number. We formed in the CBC Gymnasium on 15 March and were commissioned--and we stated our creed--"To Be: Great in Readiness to Serve--Great in Military Prowess--and Great in Technical skill." We worked at this--our goal--through our individual efforts at CTU and Sun Valley; in groups on training projects at Bldg. S-18 and elsewhere; together on Noman's Island and at Camp Lejeune. We marvelled at our good fortune in finding so many good and capable shipmates. We discovered shortcomings; we worked to overcome them. We fielded a Drill Team and we excelled at parades. We sought challenge, and we found it.

In short--we created a Construction Battalion--from a group of people. And this Battalion we created is a fine battalion--indeed, a Great Battalion.

Let us, in our coming deployment, prove this--not by our words--but by our Deeds. The Great FIFTY-EIGHT must be no less.



CDR W.W. DeGROOT III

58's TOUGH GUYS

CHARLES
Capers

During the battalion's recent deployment to Camp Lejeune, each company sent one squad of its personnel to the Marine Corps Counter-Insurgency Warfare Center. Being one of those lucky enough to attend, I will attempt to describe what went on during the two weeks we spent there.

One of the first things that we were introduced to was mines and booby-traps. There was a course set up on the school grounds that displayed some of the wide variety of these currently in use in Viet Nam, and our instructors repeatedly stressed the fact that they are very simple, yet very deadly weapons.

All of these devices had three points in common; they were hand-made, of native material, and well-camouflaged. Some were as simple as a single round set on a nail and conveniently left on a trail for an unwary foot. Others took a certain amount of fiendish thought, such as the trip wire tied around a hornet's nest. Whoever tripped the wire would have a swarm of angry wasps to contend with, as well as enemy bullets.

From booby-traps and mines, we moved on to one of the V.C.'s favorite tactics; the ambush. The enemy uses a variety of these against us. One of the simplest, and again, the most effective, is a straight-line ambush, so-called because the ambushers merely line up beside the road or trail in the thick growth, which gives them the necessary concealment and wait until someone comes down the road. However, since we are the best trained men in the history of warfare, we know what to do about this embarrassing situation; we simply start firing back and attack the ambush. This tends to upset the V.C. quite noticeably and there are a number of cases reported being broken up in this manner, and, in one case, an entire battalion of V.C. were routed by a counter-attacking squad!

The main point that was emphasized in ambush tactics was to clear the kill zone; the area that the enemy had zeroed in. According to the instructors, the longest time you have to do this is one and one-half seconds.

About a half-mile out from the main camp area is a unique little place called Tri-ke. It is a reconstruction of a Vietnamese village, complete with tunnels. It has approximately nine houses made of bamboo and straw; a Buddhist altar; a number of rice paddies that were liberally booby-trapped; a graveyard, and the village square. A number of surprises also await the search-and-clear parties that are trained there. One of these is the haystacks spread throughout the village. Some contain V.C., some are weapons caches, and some are simply hiding places for the family of the farmer-tenants.

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"C" Company, as well as the rest of the battalion returned from that wonderland of the South, Swamp Lagoon.....I mean Camp Lejeune.

I received various opinions about the quality of training that we received while undergoing training. One Petty Officer said that he was disappointed and the training was inadequate. Others said the training was worthwhile, especially the information about Viet Nam. Another said the FM and rifle range were very beneficial, but the classes were too repetitious.

We had nine men who attended communication school and found it to be very worthwhile. On the final test "C" company came out on top with an average of 89%. Jacobsen CN, our communicator, was first in the class with a score of 98.

Cupid is going wild again in "C" company. Our long time bachelor Chico John Hillhouse, BUC, tied the knot on 29 September 1966. Also, getting married was Sartin, BUI3 and Grasse, BUI3.

Well, that about wraps it up for this addition of Charles Capers. So, until the next issue v bid you farewell.

WEITZMAN, CA

"H"
THE KEYSTONE CO.

(TOUGH GUY CONT)

The Keystone Company will devote this article to our Camp Lejeune deployment.. fine deployment that it was.

We arrived at Camp Lejeune with some doubt as to exactly what kind of training we would receive. For those who did not attend military training here at Davisville, all was new and interesting.

H Company had the inner perimeter during our field exercise. As in all situations where a large number of people are brought together, there are a number of humorous incidents and A Company had their share. DASH, SN, happened to get lost when he left his fighting hole in order to wake COPELAND, YN2, and finally found his way after wandering aimlessly through the woods. TOWE, CN, fell in a fighting hole occupied by FRENCHY BOSCUET and after landing on top of him was asked, "Halt, who goes there." I'm surprised Frenchy did not ask him for the password. Ask BURNS, JO3 how his trousers and shirt got all ripped up, how HE VIN, PN3, got his toe broken, and how NOLLSCH, YN3, came out without a scratch.

By the way the Fleet Sailors led by PHILLIPS, SN, of H Company, set up an M-60 Machine Gun in 18 seconds; 2 seconds faster than--Guess Who--"A" Company. Now see Who is best!

NEUMAN, YN1, was nicknamed CYCLOPS, by a number of his colleagues.

So as deployment time draws near the Keystone Company remains in pretty good shape, except for some Chigger bites and is ready to take its place along with the rest of the Battalion down south.

H Company bids you smooth sailing and good luck.

NOLLSCH, YN3

Another surprise, or series of surprise is the weapons caches. These are usually found in the most discreet places, like the village chief's pigpen, the village graveyard, and under the altar of the Buddhist bonze. It is quite an experience to go through here looking for these caches and the V.C. that may be hiding in the village. Almost all of the caches are booby-trapped, which necessitates tying a long line to them, taking cover and pulling.

Another subject covered in this school was raiding guerilla camps. We were taught to cordon off a camp, attack it, set up a perimeter against counter-attacks and search and destroy the enemy's base of operations.

After a week of these courses of training, along with a class in map and compass reading, we were ready for a week of simulated counter-insurgency maneuvers in search of the enemy. The enemy was chosen from the local Marines and was dressed in an assortment of clothing that best depicted the V.C.

Our first assignment was to sweep through an area in search of the enemy. None was found. After a hearty meal of C-Rations, we started another sweep through a different area in search of the enemy. Again the search brought no results. A patrol base was set up and both recon and combat patrols were sent out to locate the enemy, which brought better results. The second day was spent in search and clear operations which proved to be more successful than the first day had been.

We came back to the bivouac area about ten that night for a well earned rest. We awoke the next morning to find one of our radio operators, KADLIK, missing. It seems that he was separated from the group in the dark, and the battery in his radio went dead, so he couldn't contact us by radio. He remained awake all night while we were asleep and waited for us to come looking for him the next day.

All together, the two weeks out there were well-spent, and everyone learned a lot about the people we will be dealing with in Southeast Asia. Probably the main point about the school taught was how to react; not how to act; not where to look for trouble, but to sense it before it happens; to be suspicious of every-thing everybody, and to achieve the necessary reflexes to overcome anything that may arise during patrols and other counter-guerilla operations. It was also stressed that the best way to defeat the guerilla is to be aggressive, and they had a sign on the outdoor classroom which pictured Joe Bonatz, USMC, standing there with his weapon in one hand, a big stogie in the other, and saying, "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, 'cause I'm the toughest lutha' in the valley!"

SHINNICK, SWE3

(INDIVIDUALITY CONT)

Be prepared for differences in thought, behavior, customs, etc.

Be patient, persistent, consistent, acceptable and accepting.

Be interested in people as individuals.

Be alert to areas of agreement rather than disagreement.

Be aware of possible long-range consequences of gifts, actions and reactions.

Be adaptable when moral principles are not involved.

Be prepared to treat the Asian as you would desire to be treated.

Be aware of your attitudes. Your actions will produce good or bad for others.

Be understanding, compassionate, concerned.

Determine to be the best example possible.

Chaplain R.E. BLADE

(TRAINING CONT)

A Pass-in-Review in honor of LT COL Charles G. COOPER, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion 8th Marines, was held on Friday, September 23, 1966. In the words of CDR Ward W. DEGROOT III, Commanding Officer, it was the Battalions finest performance to date.

The final week was spent at the rifle range and this was considered by many to be the most profitable. It gave those who hadn't fired the M-15 or .45 caliber pistol a few days to better familiarize themselves with their particular weapon. The results were that a great many qualified and many expert shooters.

To many, the month of September was long, but much knowledge and information was learned that will be very beneficial to our overseas deployment.

rain for an hour till he got "well". And Mr. M. must have had insomnia. Walking and down the lines all night. I think he was looking for his tent or a "cat hole". I know Roseberry and Digue and lots of the guys would've been glad to tell him to go. We were bested by companies on both flanks in breaking fire discipline, I Company out did us in snoring in the fighting holes, with a few exceptions, ha, Rats! looks like the only things we're best in are morale and modesty, HEE, HEE, F

Firing! Now that was O.K. Except that butt business. "Up, Down, Lick'em and S'em". No kidding that shooting was a real gas. If I could just keep my knees from knocking in that stupid "off hand" position, I'd be O.K. I found that I was knocking the crease out of my trousers. Then there was that idiot walking up and down the line asking me about those goose eggs on my scoreboard. Dont you feel sorry for Mr. P. He missed his expert in pistol and ruined the start of the second round ribbons on his massive chest. TOUGH!

All in all we really dug it down at the swamp. Getting up at 0430 was just real great. We bought back with us several large chigger bites and been scratching ever since and "ALL" in Delta Company singing "hymn" to the Company Commander.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL!

DELTA DEMONS

Good Lord, but it was hot that day! muggy! Sweaty! Not much! Just enough wringing enough sweat out of your greens to shower and shave the next A.M. But don't get me wrong we were real glad to get out the swamp! (Would you believe Camp Lejeune, N.C.) And what a welcoming Committee. They were really great. Stay with us the whole time, and made every effort to be near. Yeah, near, like under your skin, man! Some welcoming committee! Ticks, Chiggers, Snakes, and Mosquitoes. Understand that they didn't care much for Walker or the counter-insurgents. We can't all be popular. Some people went nuts out there asking anyone who served on Chief Schmidt "Snake Guard!"

And that FEX. Whatever that was! Some guy said it means "field exercise" but I've heard alot better names for it than that. Our Company Commander says we're outstanding out there. Horse radish! Every company out there did better than us in one thing or another! Like Echo Company: they let alot more aggressors through their lines than we did. How about Bravo Company, they let 70 aggressors through. Delta, None! (Come on you guys, we can do better than that) Charlie Company out did us too, they had almost 50% of their men in their tents during Condition One! And we didn't have a (Even Chief Tardy was up all night playing games with the road guards) Hey, do you see Chief Tardy with that stupid tag around his neck? He said he was wounded but we all knew it was just another sea story. So we left him in t

"DITTO"

POEM

THE INDISPENSABLE MAN

Sometime, when you're feeling important,
 Sometime, when your ego's in bloom,
 Sometime when you take it for granted,
 You're the best qualified in the room,
 Sometime when you feel that your going,
 Would leave an unfillable hole,
 Just follow this simple instruction,
 And see how it humbles your soul.

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
 Put your hand in it up to your wrist,
 Pull it out, and the hole that's remaining,
 Is a measure of how you'll be missed.
 You may splash all you please when you enter
 You can stir up the water galore,
 But STOP, and you'll find in a minute,
 That it looks quite the same as before.

The moral in this quaint example,
 Is do just the best YOU can.
 Be proud of YOURSELF - But remember,
 THERE IS NO INDISPENSABLE MAN.

MASTHEAD

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Editor
 BLAZE
 USN MCB-58 PAO
 FPO NY, NY 09501

Commanding Officer:
 CDR W.W. DeGROOT III

Executive Officer:
 LCDR L.D. LAWSON

Public Affairs Officer:
 LTJG R.A. DERR

Editor:
 R.D. BURNS, JO3

Asst. Editor:
 J.L. HOLLIS, SN

LETTER of APPRECIATION

The following letter was received from CDR A.C. PERKINS, CEC, USN, Chief S Officer NCR-21, and forwarded to the Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FIFTY-EIGHT.

Subj: Project D-12 - Conversion Storehouse S-18 to School Facility

1. The establishment of Direct Procurement Petty Officer Program at Davisville in the spring of 1966 was a provision of additional classroom facilities an urgent necessity. Since Public Works forces were already committed at that time, the Commanding Officer requested that conversion of 30,054 square feet of former storage space be considered for accomplishment as a training project for Seabee forces. The response to this request was most gratifying. Not only did I undertake accomplishment of the project but the whole-hearted enthusiasm exhibited by all echelons made possible partial occupancy of the facilities in advance of the project completion. Final completion only two days before original target completion date. \$50,000 worth of materials was installed and some 3,037 man days were invested.
2. The quality of workmanship is of note. The comments of users and visitors alike have been complimentary. Please transmit to all who participated in this conversion project my sincere appreciation.

JOHN D. BURKY
 CEC, USN
 Commanding Officer CB

While devoted to specific overseas areas, interest, at rate of 10% will be paid on savings accounts of personnel.

See disbursing for the details.

COUNTER INSURGENCY

"Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil cause I'm the meanest 'man' in the valley." Well, that's pretty close anyway.

We have some pretty mean men in MCB-58 and I'd like to tell you about the 60 men that attended the Counter Guerilla Warfare Center course at Camp Lejeune for the two weeks in which the rest of the battalion were playing games.

Ensign Lord and Myself were extremely proud of our Seabees with the completion of each exercise in which we shared the environment of our Marine allies. Our pride and delight were consummated on the 2nd to last day when we ran the cordon and sweep operation on Guerrilla Camp Number 5. Both Marine Captains were sure that those Seabees had finally screwed up and had gotten themselves lost when they broke in on the cordon element made up of squads from C and D companies. Captain Sampson said, "Ah Ha! you are lost!" and I replied, "Ah Ha! if I'm lost, how come Kindall and I have a guerrilla prisoner?" It seems that the sweep element made up of squads from A and B companies had moved into position so quietly and efficiently that the guerrillas, expecting an attack and not spying any Seabees, thought that we had gotten lost and were ready to call it a day. Meanwhile the cordon or blocking force had moved in behind the guerrilla camp very quietly and were waiting for the correct time to move right into their positions. Kindall and I made a recon of the camp and in so doing captured a guerrilla who was stumbling down the trail. It was during the merciless questioning of the guerrilla by the Fearsome Foursome of Kindall, Castonguay, Golis, and Opp that the two Captains made their accusations and spoiled our whole operation. Anyway, it was fun earlier in the day watching Thilking, EO3, put the fear of God into those three guerrillas that we shot and then had to run down in the briar patch.

The mission of the course is "to instill in the Marine the senses, suspicions, reflexes and reactions that will enable him to defeat the guerrilla." Everyman learned through the constant application of patrol procedures, ambushes, rabbit hunts hammer and anvils, cordon and sweeps, encirclements, etc, what a tough nut this is. But we also learned that through coordination, constant practice, physical conditioning, and determination this "scum of the earth" - this so called invincible guerrilla, this VC Huk, or whatever else he may be called--can, is, and will be defeated in Vietnam, in the Phillipines, in Thailand or wherever the Communist aggression or "wars of liberation" threaten the poor, starving, illiterate, and diseased peoples of the developing nations of the world.

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LOAN SHARKS PREY ON INNOCENT GI'S

It is expected that when we deploy to our overseas camp we will be greeted not only by military personnel there, but also by unscrupulous loan sharks. According to a recent article by Mr. Jack Anderson in the Washington Post, many servicemen will purchase a car from an assumed honest John Dealer and make payments on it and upon return to the States discover that the dealer is non-existent. Not all the dealers in Southeast Asia fall into this category, however, there has been an alarming increase in the number of these GI defaulters. "These kids are easy pickings for the extortionists and usurers," say House Banking Committee Chairman Wright Patman (D., Texas), whose committee has received several hundred complaints about the racket. "The Defense Department belatedly is trying to stop this fleecing of servicemen." Skilled "now you see it now you don't financing companies," have been preying on American servicemen prior to their trip overseas. "One of Mr. Patman's investigators found a used car lot less than 100 yards from the main entrance of an Alabama Army post offering no money down deals. Several Officer Candidates had been hooked into buying cars for \$50.00 per month for the first four months, after which the payments shot up to \$20.00 a month on the theory that they would be commissioned and could afford the increase. Many servicemen towns around the U.S. are glutted with sharpies trying to sign military

(CONT PAGE 8)

(GUERRILLA CONT)

We learned also to appreciate much more the outstanding job which our Marine allies are doing in Viet Nam and I'm sure as Seabees we will be better able to provide construction and military support to the Marines in the fine tradition with which Seabees have become famous.

I have to mention Kaderlik from D Company at this point. Kindell was proud of him as he stayed up all night to insure the safety of our camp. On another occasion Kaderlik pretended to get captured and learned valuable intelligence from the guerrillas. Unfortunately, he was unable to escape.

Haley was the favorite of Johnson, EOL from A Company. Johnson could always tell where Haley was because of the foo-foo juice that he wore. Haley was a real swamp fox though and he couldn't understand how Castonguay and myself managed to get through three swamps and come up smelling like roses. I won't bore you with details. Suffice it to say that there were some strategic logs at our swamp crossings.

The ambush that Kell's squad from C Company pulled off deserves special mention here. It was the only one that I observed. I was acting as an instructor at the time. It was so perfectly executed that although I knew within 10 yards of where it was, when it hit I was knocked off my feet by surprise.

I would like to sum this up by saying that this course was the finest ever for me and if I had to go through it again, I wouldn't ask for a finer group of men.

LTJG GRUNT

(LOAN SHARKS CONT)

men to contracts that will tie up their pay abroad." Some of these people actually operate in the war zone, since there are no restrictions on private businessmen going into this area of rest and recreation areas.

The article goes on to state that "from all over the world, letters have poured into the pentagon from servicemen who have been chiselled out of their payments or have been charged high rates than they were led to expect. The complaints have been lodged not only against big name companies that are still doing a multimillion-dollar business."

So...men of the Great FIFTY-EIGHT.. beware of any quick sales pitch you may encounter here in the states and all when overseas.

Buy
Bonds

Safety Sam CHAPLAIN

THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUALITY

All of us in the Great FIFTY-EIGHT are exposed to the subject of safety in our daily routine. How many of us stop and think about safety in the home, office, vehicle, or on the construction site before we start our work?

Since MCB-58 has been commissioned we have had our share of accidents ranging from minor cuts to death. Our frequency rate of accidents is not as high as some other Construction Battalions and this is a good indication of peoples attitudes towards safety. This by itself is not sufficient. We have a higher caliber of personnel all around in the Seabees than the other Armed Forces, we have some of the best training programs and qualified instructors available to us, plus the fact the Navy furnishes us with tools and equipment that are designed with safety in mind. The most important factor is still the man or men using this equipment, through knowledge and their common sense. Without the proper attitude towards safety it is possible for us to fail in our mission.

Let us not be guilty in our actions and attitudes toward safety to cause injury, death to our buddies.

NOW IS THE TIME

We will soon be leaving these great United States, leaving our loved ones behind. Now is the time to get all of our personal affairs squared away.

The most important thing you can do is make sure your wife and dependents have their ID cards and that they are up to date.

If you have any outstanding bills, make arrangements to pay for them before you leave. A letter of indebtedness doesn't look very good in your service jacket.

If your property and vehicle insurance is to expire during our overseas deployment, make plans for renewal now. Clear up all traffic citations prior to departure, a warrant of arrest could be awaiting you upon your return.

These are just a few of the many many things you must do in order to enjoy yourself while overseas.

If you have any questions see your Career Counselor today.

In America we believe in the supreme worth of the individual. In the Far East Buddhism also stresses individuality, for it declares that self-salvation is for any man the immediate task. Man is not his brother's keeper, but must find his own way to Nirvana. He must escape the Wheel of existence by eliminating all desires or cravings. Merit is gained through good works. For the Buddhist bonze or monk this may be done through giving sermons or meditating. For the layman it will include meditation before Buddha's statue and giving gifts to the Pagoda and the bonze. The denial of desire means submission to fate and resignation to life as it is. He proves a struggle to become involved in a drive toward a better life, toward acquiring material things, for all such are illusory. The real virtues in this sense are patience and humility.

The foregoing create the following behavior:

1. Avoid showing anger to anyone who offends. The more annoyed the Oriental becomes the more polite he will be. He will speak in a softer voice and he will smile more. Therefore loud speech, vulgarity and anger by Americans are actions which create anger and hostility.

2. Humility is revealed in attempts to make you feel completely at ease. You will be seated higher than your host. Humility prevents the Oriental from contradicting you, even if you are wrong. And verbal agreement will be given to your plan, even when there is no intention to follow it up with action.

3. Teachings of individuality and eternal Nirvana tend to hinder industrial growth, capital investments and general economic growth, as these run contrary to the idea that man can find ultimate success only in the denial of the very drives which build these facilities.

Men in all cultures-including the Oriental-respond to problems in one of four ways: (1) fight or resist; (2) admit, accept or surrender; (3) take flight or flee; and (4) ignore the problem. With the foregoing in mind, and in view of what you might observe or experience in Southeast Asia it may be beneficial to mention some guidelines for you

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