



19 December 1966
Camp Haskins, Da Nang
Republic of Vietnam

Greetings:

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all. I hope this Family-Gram finds you in the best of holiday spirits. All of us here have been looking forward to the holiday season, and, although it certainly won't be a white Christmas, it will be a warm one. We're planning several parties, a special Christmas chapel service, and we hope to be given some extra time off from the work routine to relax and enjoy the Yuletide.

As the New Year rolls around, it seems a good time to stop and reflect on the events of the past year. It was just a short 9 months ago on the Fifteenth of March that the "Great Fifty-Eight" was commissioned. Since that time we've grown and developed into a Battalion of Seabees with a personality, character and, above all, a pride in itself and the Navy it serves. The demanding effort involved in putting together a functioning organization of 800 men has, at times, been frustrating to all of us. But the overwhelming feeling is one of rewarding accomplishment. We've come a long way towards fulfilling our pledge to make Fifty-Eight truly great. To continue our pursuit of this goal is our New Years' resolution.

The project work mentioned in the last Family-Gram is, in the most part, complete. A 500 man galley was dedicated on 12 December for the First Marine Regiment a month after starting the project. We also recently completed a walk-in refrigerator complex, consisting of sixty-four 675 cubic foot "reefer" boxes, which MCB One started prior to our arrival. Other projects still under construction include an aircraft parking apron at the Da Nang Air Base; a maintenance shop for the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang; a communications facility and data processing center, living huts and a 500 barrel water tower for the nearby Marine Corps Force Logistics Support Group; and shower and laundry facilities for our camp.

Since our arrival, Special Services has been working on several projects for camp recreation. They have installed 2 pool tables, 2 ping pong tables, a slot car track, and a hobby shop resale store. They also have all sorts of sporting goods to check out and are now organizing intramural competition.

Another facet of camp life of interest is the Vietnamese "general store", called the Beehive. It's located within the camp and is run by a local merchant. There are about 15 employees, and they offer local merchandise for sale, tailoring, hair cuts and laundry services. This opportunity to meet and deal with the local people is an enjoyable experience for all of us.

In closing, let me again extend to you my very best wishes for a most enjoyable Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

W. W. DeGroot 111
CGR, CCC, USN
Commanding Officer

P. S. I hope you enjoy the enclosed special edition of "Blaze".