



**COMMANDING OFFICER
U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION
FIFTY-EIGHT
FPO NEW YORK 09501**

Familygram
25 August 1969
Chu Lai, South Vietnam

Greetings:

In this familygram, I'd like to tell you something of our Seabee Teams. Although they are far from our main body at Chu Lai, they are still a very important part of the "Great FIFTY-EIGHT" team and are not forgotten. They live and work directly with the people, helping the Vietnamese to help themselves. Through on-the-job training, simple construction projects, new sanitation measures and by providing on-site medical assistance, they are teaching the people how to upgrade their way of living.

I recently returned from visiting our two deployed Seabee Teams, 5803 and 5804. Both the teams have already established an outstanding reputation for their enthusiasm and ability. Those of you who know the men on both teams should not be surprised at that, for they are among our very best, and each of them volunteered to be on a Seabee Team.

Seabee Team 5803, with LTJG Eric Strom in charge, deployed to Chau Doc Province in January. This is the third Seabee Team in Chau Doc and they have a unique compound. They work and live out of an old French fortress-like building. Chau Doc is a province capital right near the Cambodian border, and offers many good projects in which the Vietnamese can be trained to perform progressively more difficult jobs. Team 5803 will be relieved in October, and the team members will return to the battalion.

Seabee Team 5804, with LTJG Koleszar in charge, is establishing a new site at Rach Gia, which is located on the Gulf of Thailand. Being on the water, the main source of industry is fish, with rice second. The team is presently directing most of its efforts towards building the team's headquarters, consisting of masonry living quarters and shop spaces. They are currently about 80 percent complete. The prospects for re-warding work are excellent in Rach Gia. Team 5804 will also be relieved in October and the team members will return to the battalion.



ROBERT STAFF
5 OAK CT
VOORHEESVILLE NY 12186-9412

The Delta country differs greatly from the I Corps area that we in the battalion know so well. The difference is more than just its flat terrain for miles and miles. The people who inhabit the area are more prosperous, and hence, visibly happier than those we see everyday. Still, the people of the delta need a great deal of help to restore the normal functions of city and state governments that we take for granted in America. In this, particularly, the area of public works training our Seabee Teams excel. Everywhere I went, there were thumbs up and cries of "Seabee, you number one!"

Here in Chu Lai everyone continues to pull together to get our jobs done before returning home.

Charlie Company is hard at work on project "Concrete Sky." Over 300 feet of revetments have been moved so that the footings could be poured for the first group of seven "wonder arches" at Marine Air Group 12. Twenty-two men are fast assembling these giant structures which will soon provide the ultimate in protection for the valuable Marine tactical fighters.

Our detachment to Landing Zone Baldy completed soil cementing 1.3 kilometers of Route 535 in record time and have returned to camp. Their job has greatly lessened the dangers faced by our soldiers traveling in the area. Two other detachments have "mounted out" to Tra Bong and Minh Long and are hard at work repairing the Special Forces Runways there. The airfields are extremely important to the mission of the units there.

The men of the quarry are scheduled to return to our main camp in October just prior to the battalion returning to CONUS. They have done an outstanding job at Cam Lo providing the essential material for construction projects in the Northern I Corps. Everyone can take justifiable pride in the great job they have done there.

Commander Jack C. Rickels, Mobile Construction Battalion Seven's Commanding Officer, and two of his staff officers have completed their predeployment visit to Camp Shields. This is always a welcome time as it indicates that an arduous deployment is drawing to a close.

During our last few weeks here, continue to write your Seabee regularly. Mail call is the most popular time of the day for all of us and we like to hear our names included.

May God bless and keep all of you safe.

Sincerely,



C. J. MATHEWS
Commander, Civil Engineer Corps
United States Navy