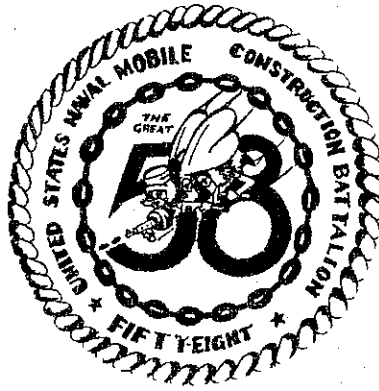


FIFTY-EIGHT



FAMILY-GRAM

27 September 1966
Camp Lejeune, N. C.

GREETINGS:

At this writing we have finished the first three weeks of our four week training period here at this huge Marine Corps training base. Some of us have actually been here four weeks already, as our first flight left Quonset Point on Monday, 29 August. It took 14 flights to transport the Battalion with the last arriving at nearby Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station late Saturday, 3 September. Because of the Labor Day holiday, our training started Tuesday, 6 September.

The first week consisted of lectures and demonstrations, with some limited field problems in compass marches, map reading, and ambush/counter-ambush tactics. The second week was largely spent in the field for live firing of our various weapons, including M-14 rifle grenades and the 3.5 inch rocket launcher, M-60 Machine-Gun and M-79 grenade launcher. Last week we had a full scale Battalion field defense exercise lasting three days and nights. It was much like the one conducted during our No-Man's Island training exercise, with the addition of wood ticks, chiggers and snakes. We finished the week with a Pass-In-Review in honor of Lieutenant Colonel COOPER, the Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, our host Marine Battalion. The "Host" Battalion provides all of the instructors as well as the aggressors for our field exercise, and coordinates our support requirements. This week we will be on the Rifle Range for qualification firing of the M-14 rifle and .45 pistol.

In addition to the general instruction, special courses were conducted in radio communications, field cooking and field medical practice. We also had a two week course in Counter-Guerrilla warfare attended by 60 men and 2 officers. With all of this training added to that which we conducted at Davisville, we feel fully ready for our fast approaching overseas deployment.

In regard to our deployment, I wish to pass on to you some information which may be of comfort and value to you as you anticipate the months of separation ahead.

I recently visited our planned deployment area to inspect the base camp facilities and anticipate work assignments. Our camp will not be uncomfortable, and will provide adequately for all of our basic needs. While we will be extremely busy and expect to work 6½ days a week, there will be time for adequate rest. Our tasks will be many and varied, giving us our long-awaited chance to use the training conducted over the last seven months since our commissioning.

While we are on deployment, the procedures for you to follow in the event of a serious illness, accident or death in your Seabee's immediate family will be to contact your local Red Cross official. The Red Cross will then verify the emergency and telegraph their verification to us. Because of time, distance and the heavy volume of message traffic, it is common to experience delays in the delivery of messages. You also must understand that men will not be sent home on emergency leave for ordinary reasons. Each case will be given very careful consideration, but the reasons for granting emergency leave must be extraordinary.