

FIFTY-EIGHT



FAMILY-GRAM

29 July 1966 ^{II}
Davisville, Rhmie Island

Greetings,

Last week found almost the entire Battalion deployed to Noman's Land, a small island about 1 3/4 miles long by 1 mile wide that lies about 10 miles offshore in the Atlantic Ocean near Martha's Vineyard. This uninhabited island is owned by the Navy, and is used as a bombing target by the Navy and the Air Force. The purpose of our brief deployment was to conduct a combined mobility and military tactical exercise. The mobility exercise was designed to give us the experience of embarking the Battalion and it's equipment and debarking "over the beach".

We left Davisville on July 20th aboard the USS Ashland, an LSD (Landing Ship Dock), and went ashore that evening, using an LCU (Landing Craft Utility) for the shuttle between ship and shore. We immediately set up a camp and established defenses against attacks by "aggressors", a small group of our own men especially selected for this assignment. In addition to our military exercises in defensive tactics, while on the island we repaired some roads and constructed new bombing targets. The Battalion remained on the island three days and two nights before returning, bone tired, to Davisville on Friday evening. The experience was rewarding for all of us individually and there is no doubt that it significantly enhanced our overall Battalion capability.

Since our last Family-Gram the Battalion performed its second Pass-in-Review on the occasion of the change of command at the Construction Battalion Center at Davisville. The parade honored Captain Joseph H. Barker Jr., CEC, USN, who retired after 30 years service. The Great Fifty-Eight was accompanied by a second battalion made up of personnel from other Davisville units. Together we formed a Regiment. The men looked sharp and military in dress whites and performed in the outstanding manner which has come to be expected of the Great Fifty-Eight.

Among other major events of the past few weeks was the return of our detachment from Camp Lejeune where they underwent four weeks of military training with MCB 40. We welcome them back after finishing their extensive training. Some members of this group were assigned as the aggressor force for our Noman's Land deployment. This gave them a chance to demonstrate the skills they had learned.

Prior to and since our recent island training exercise, we have been conducting "team" training projects. These projects are intended to train a crew to work together efficiently on larger scale endeavors than practiced in formal courses of instruction. Such operations as strong back tent erection, site grading, and hut erection are being undertaken. With this kind of training we hope to have many well qualified crews ready when we deploy.

Sincerely,

W. W. DeGroot 111
CDR, CEC, USN
Commanding Officer