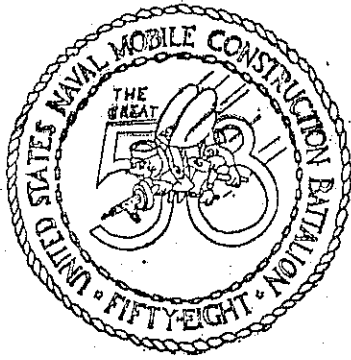


MCB Fifty-Eight



Family-Gram

2 October 1967  
Davisville, Rhode Island

### Greetings:

Our time in homeport has passed very quickly and many changes have taken place since our last Familygram. The most important change has been in personnel. Many old friends have left the Battalion and 150 new Seabees have joined us. We will miss those who contributed so much to the Battalion during the last deployment. We welcome the newcomers to the Great Fifty-Eight Family and send special greetings to you who are receiving the Fifty-Eight Family-Gram for the first time. As I have in the past, I will try to keep you informed of what we are doing by means of the Family-Gram.

Let me give you a few highlights of what we have been doing here in CBC, Davisville. Following an initial leave period (well-earned by all, I must add), our homeport time was divided into four training phases:

- Phase 1 - Individual class training in construction skills, and on-the-job training on homeport construction projects. We completed this phase on Labor Day.
- Phase 2 - Military Training at Camp Fogarty, about five miles from CBC. This is a three week period when virtually the entire battalion either learns or reviews military skills. We completed this phase last week.
- Phase 3 - Military training with the Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. We will deploy to Camp Lejeune this week.
- Phase 4 - Crew training at CBC, Davisville. When we return from Camp Lejeune we will drill our actual Construction crews on typical projects.

In mid-September some eighty men from Alpha Company conducted an embarkation exercise to practice loading construction equipment aboard ship and off-loading over the beach. They loaded 22 pieces of equipment on the USS Ashland (LSD-1) and steamed out to Noman's Island, a small island in the Atlantic near Martha's Vineyard. While there they graded roads and the dirt airstrip on the island, and conducted a military defensive exercise. On the morning of departure from the island the rough seas prevented completion of reembarkation from the beach. The threat of Hurricane Doria caused us to call for rescue helicopters from NAS Quonset Point to fly the 48 men remaining back to Davisville. This was quickly accomplished and the men involved had another good Navy "Sea-story" to tell.

Among the training projects we have completed are the renovation of the Davisville Credit Union Office spaces; the interior and exterior renovation of our headquarters building which was formerly a warehouse; and barracks repairs at Davisville and Quonset Point. There were two projects across Narragansett Bay at Newport. One was the relocation of a 95 foot flagpole from the ferry landing to Miantonomi Park overlooking the Naval Station. The other training project was the Construction of a drill field at the Navy Officers' Candidate School. Our Seabees had to remove 2000 cubic yards of dirt and replace it with gravel, place the base course and finish grade the field for paving.

Our most significant project was the construction of the Camp Fogarty Seabee Memorial. On 23 September the former Sun Valley Military Training Area was renamed Camp Fogarty in honor of the late Congressman from Rhode Island, John C. Fogarty. Our Seabees hauled in a 38 ton boulder on which was mounted a bronze plaque. They constructed a strikingly beautiful brick memorial surrounding the boulder. Congressman Fogarty was a former Seabee who had been a brick mason before being elected to Congress. His former union assisted in the brick laying.

Our Camp Lejeune training which begins next week includes two weeks of individual combat training, and specialized training in field medicine, field cooking, field communications, bridge-building, mines and demolitions, and counter-guerilla warfare. The training concludes with a battalion-size field exercise during the third week. We will defend ourselves against Marines acting as aggressors.

When we return to CBC, Davisville, the battalion will undergo an administrative inspection and then turn its attention to deploying our advance party. At this same time we will drill our construction crews in a number of pre-planned projects.

Before the year ends the Great Fifty-Eight expects to deploy again to construct facilities for the Navy and Marine Corps.

I am deeply and sincerely proud of our Seabees and I know you are too. Each of them is well-trained and motivated to do its best. Anyone who is concerned with our Nation's future would be gratified to see how much the young men of today can accomplish when they are given a purpose. I look forward to your continued support of your Seabee. Support and encourage him to the best of your ability while he is home, and write often while he is away. Remember too, that we always have your welfare in mind. If at any time you need assistance please let me know what we can do for you.

Best wishes, good health and smooth sailing to each of you.

Sincerely yours,



W. W. DeGROOT 111  
Commander, CBC, U. S. Navy  
Commanding Officer