

MCB Fifty-Eight



Family Gram  
4 February 1969  
Davisville, Rhode Island

Greetings:

This familygram finds the Great FIFTY-EIGHT in the final stages of preparation for our third tour in Vietnam. Quite a few changes have taken place over the past months of our homeport period. Not the least of these, has been the large turnover of personnel. We are almost a new battalion now. We extend a warm welcome to all our new Seabees and their dependents. Welcome aboard to our family. I trust that our time together will be a happy and rewarding experience.

Over the past months we have had an opportunity to watch the progress of the newcomers in the various phases of technical and military training and I can proudly say that I think we have the finest battalion in the U. S. Navy.

Now that our technical skills are up to par and we have completed the extensive and rather cold military training, both here at Camp Fogarty and at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; we are ready to deploy. Our Advance Party has already arrived in-country and are making necessary preparations for the Main Body's arrival.

Our base camp in Vietnam is one of the older Seabee camps but by the same token it is the best due to constant improvements. Being located right on the South China Sea should provide more than adequate recreation opportunities on Sunday afternoons. Sleeping and eating facilities are outstanding and should keep our morale high.

As in previous deployments, we expect to be quite busy conducting all sorts of construction projects in Vietnam. Your Seabee will be devoting long and hard hours to his job. For this reason I want to encourage you to make every effort to write your Seabee often, supporting him with your love and interest. He needs to hear cheerful, newsy items about you and home. In the past, many of the men enjoyed receiving short tape recordings and small packages which bring home a little closer.

You may rest assured that we will do everything possible to insure your Seabee has a safe, interesting and rewarding experience while in Vietnam. I feel each man is a vital and important part of the Great FIFTY-EIGHT and his interests and concerns will be shared by us all.

I am quite proud and personally thankful for all the efforts and sacrifices that each man has made to make MCB FIFTY-EIGHT truly "Great."


While we are gone, I'm sure you at home may have your moments of doubt or discouragement. I urge you to try not to become overly worried, but instead find some healthy outlet in your community and church. Being actively involved in worthwhile pursuits will keep your mind off of your own troubles, prevent your Seabee from being alarmed, and help time pass quickly. Your community offers many fine opportunities for wholesome activities. If nothing else, a dependable friendly neighbor or relative who will occasionally "bend an ear" can be most helpful.

In the event of a serious emergency at home, seek competent help immediately. Should your Seabee be required to return for an emergency, first contact your local Red Cross Chapter. They will provide the necessary authentication required by the Navy for "emergency leave" and when we are advised by the Red Cross we shall see to it your Seabee will be on the earliest flight back for the emergency.

In the event I or my staff (Chaplain, Medical Officer or a Company Commander) may be of assistance to you, please feel you may write directly to us. Above all, rest assured that we are all interested in your welfare as well as that of each Seabee and we stand ready to give assistance if needed.

I will be writing to you regularly after our arrival in Vietnam.

Sincerely,



C. J. MATHEWS

Commander, Civil Engineer Corps  
United States Navy