



FEB. 1966

GREETINGS:

As you may already know, your son is reporting to one of the most distinguished Naval Mobile Construction Battalions in naval history. United States Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 58 will be recommissioned on 15 March 1966. A commissioning ceremony will be held at 10:00 A. M. in the Max Kiel Gymnasium, U. S. Naval Construction Battalion Center, Davisville, Rhode Island.

MCB 58 is the second of four battalions to be recommissioned. Each was chosen for its exemplary record during World War II. The 58th Naval Construction Battalion was originally commissioned on 28 December, 1942 at Camp Allen in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Battalion's first taste of action came on 13 August, 1943 when they arrived at Vella Lavella from Guadalcanal. Despite continuous harassment from Japanese bombers, they succeeded in establishing a fighter airfield. For this action the Battalion was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation, which stated in part "-for outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces during the invasion and establishment of a fighter air base on Vella Lavella, Northern Solomons, from 13 to 31 August 1943".

On 17 April 1944, the Battalion began construction of a PT boat overhaul base, personnel camp and fuel tank farm at Los Negros in the Admiralty Islands.

The Battalion's last major task came with the invasion of Okinawa. There they worked day and night to establish and maintain roads, bridges, water supply, communications and earth work for permanent installations. Despite 261 enemy air raids during the period of 7 April to 30 June 1945, the Battalion succeeded in keeping Yontan airfield in continuous operation.

Soon after this, the Battalion was gradually phased out and in May 1946 was decommissioned after nearly 4 years of outstanding service.

In view of the outstanding service record of the 58th Naval Construction Battalion, we have adopted "The Great Fifty-Eight" as our motto. We pledge ourselves to live up to the great reputation achieved by our predecessors.

Sincerely,

Ward W. De GROOT III
Prospective Commanding Officer

P. S. This is the first of many Familygrams from "The Great Fifty-Eight". In our next Familygram I'll give you some idea of the training that we are conducting.