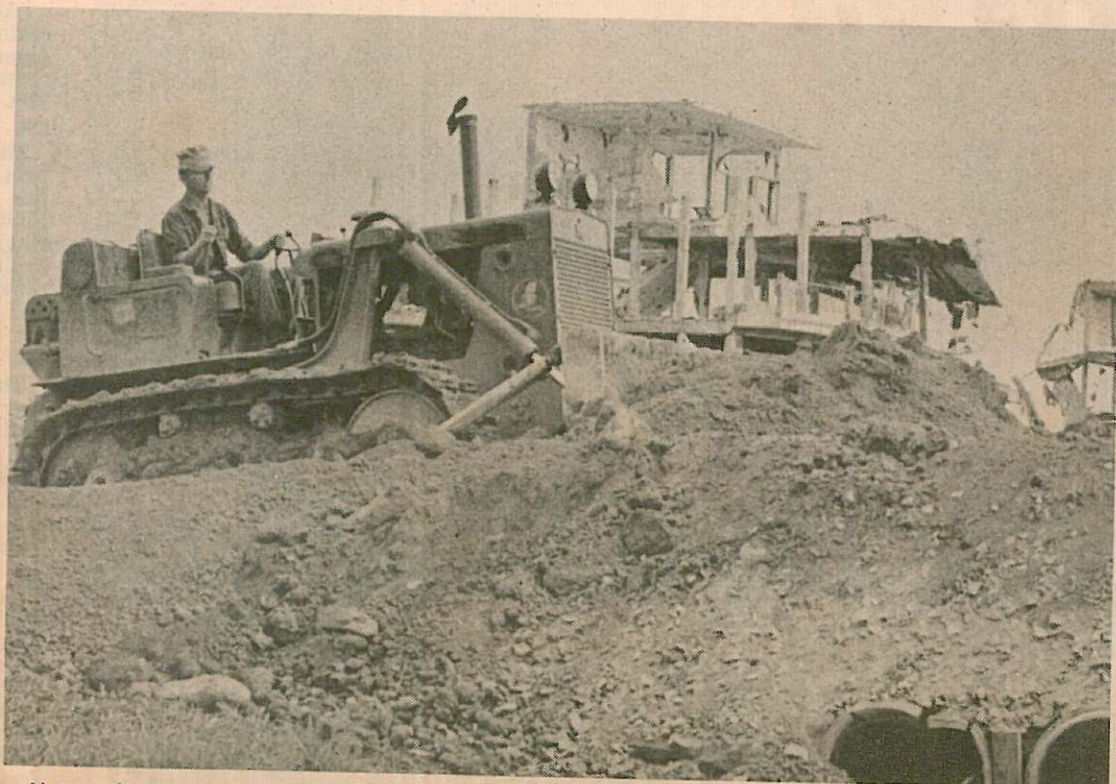


Seabees Erect Refugee Housing



Heavy bulldozer clears a road to housing area, making movement of supplies easier.

SAIGON (USN) — Seabees are building new homes for refugees amidst the stone and wire skeletons of the bombed and burned buildings of Gia Dinh Province just outside of Saigon.

The verdant fields where the Seabees are working appear to be peaceful and calm. However, ARVN soldiers patrol the area searching for indications of the anticipated third assault on Saigon while water buffalo roam lazily in the fields nearby. The Seabee's wood frame structures provide a dramatic contrast to the rubble that is a mute testimony to fierce and violent battles that took place here not long ago.

Construction at the largest Seabee site in Loc Hoa Hamlet is faced with marshy, rice pad-

dy terrain and further complicated by almost constant rain. Because of these conditions, all structures must be raised above the mud on concrete blocks.

Knowing many Vietnamese in this area prefer soil to wood floors, the Seabees have designed and are installing decks which the occupants can remove after the rainy season. The floor can then be filled in with dry earth and the wooden planks can be used for other purposes.

The Seabee housing project is part of Operation Dong Tam (Hearts United) which involves Vietnamese, U.S. Army, Air Force and Navy builders and engineers.

The many Vietnamese made homeless as a result of Tet and

the May attacks on Saigon and the surrounding area prompted the establishment of Operation Dong Tam.

In response a 50-man detachment from Mobile Construction Battalion 58, headed up by Lieutenant (Junior grade) Terence A. O'Neil began work on Tan Phu Hamlet. By the end of the month, the Seabees had completed housing for 140 families.

Joined by an additional 44 Seabees from I Corps, the entire Seabee Dong Tam effort, completed in early August, accommodates 675 families or 3,375 Vietnamese refugees.

Story & Photos
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Navymen look back on bullet-riddled buildings.



Unloading prefabricated floors are Navymen of Battalion 58.



Wire skeletons of bombed, bullet-riddled buildings provides a dramatic contrast to the nearly completed buildings having the finishing touches put on.