

MCB-74:CH/dc
5750
Ser

From: Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
SEVENTY-FOUR
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Subj: Annual Updated Command History; submission of
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.1 dated 8 November 1966
Encl: (1) Narrative History USNMCB-74
(2) Photo and Negative of Commanding Officer USNMCB-74
(3) Biography of Commanding Officer USNMCB-74

1. Enclosures (1) through (3) are forwarded in accordance with reference (a).

G. W. SCHLEY

Copy to:
✓NAVFAC Historian
COMCBLANT
COMCBPAC
COMSERVLANT
COMSERVPAC
20TH NCR
21st NCR
CB Museum, Port Hueneme
3rd NCB
30th NCR

Enclosure (1)

USNMCB 74 COMMAND HISTORY FOR PERIOD 1 JAN 1967 - 1 JAN 1968

A. Brief Chronology of Outstanding Events

1. Completion of Gulfport Teen Center 1 February 1967.
2. Mount out to Camp Lejune, North Carolina March 1967.
3. Departure of 1st advance party to Camp Haskins South, Red Beach, Danang, Vietnam 1 May 1967.
4. Departure of 2nd advance party to Vietnam 15 May 1967.
5. Battalion mount-out to Red Beach, Danang, South Vietnam begins 5 June 1967, completed by 10 June 1967.
6. Immediate departure of a detail of 1 officer and 50 men to complete the construction on Monkey Mountain.
7. Visit of Capt C. G. BAKER, CEC, USN, Chief Staff Officer 3rd Naval Construction Brigade, 7 June 1967.
8. Visit of Rear Admiral W. M. HEAMAN, CEC, USN, COMCBPAC 19 June.
9. Departure of 1 chief and 9 enlisted men to Hill 724 in support of 1st Marine Air Wing 1 July 1967.
10. Visit of Captain R. D. THORSON, CEC, USN, Com 31st NCR and CDR D. H. BODTKE, CEC, USN of CBC Port Hueneme 6 July 1967.
11. Visit of Captain G. A. GOETZKE, CRC, USN, Chief of Staff, 3rd NCB 18 July 1967.
12. Return of Monkey Mountain detail 26 July 1967.
13. Visit of Captain R. C. ENGRAM, CEC, USN, Com. 20th NCR 1 August.
14. Departure of a detail of 1 officer and 58 men to Cau Hai 3 August 1967. This detail returned 1 December 1967.
15. Rear Admiral R. C. LACY, COMFVSUPACT, Danang
Major General ROBERTSON, C. G. 1st Marine Division

Enclosure (1)

Brigadier General HERBOLD, C. G. Fleet Logistics Command

Captain A. R. MARSHALL, CEC, USN, Co., 30th NCR

hosted by USNMCB 74, 25 August 1967.

16. Change of command ceremony at 3rd NCB involving 1 officer and 60 men of USNMCB 74, 31 August 1967.
17. Visit of Rear Admiral BARTLETT, CEC, USN, Com. 3rd NCB, 4 September 1967.
18. Captain C. G. MILLER, CEC, USN, Chief of Staff CBPAC, CDR B. HAKENSON, CEC, USN, Logistics Officer, CBPAC, and LCDR V. YOUNG, CEC, USN, Equipment Officer, 31st NCR conducted a Command and Logistics inspection on 23 and 24 September 1967.
19. On site inspection of representative CB work in Vietnam by Rear Admiral H. L. MILLER, USN, Chief of Naval information on 28 September 1967.
20. Detail Uniform consisting of 1 officer and 23 enlisted men departed Danang by LST for Duc Pho landing 6 October 1967 to construct heavy steel fuel tanks. Returned 25 November 1967.
21. Visit by Commander W. L. WILSON and LT. J. HENLY of COMCBPAC on 28 and 29 October 1967 to conduct an operations and administrative inspection.
22. On 22 November 1967, Rear Admiral J. V. BARTLETT, Com 3 NCB visited MCB 74 and toured Civic Action Projects under the cognizance of the battalion.
23. LCDR F. M. NEWCOMB of COMCBPAC visited MCB 74 on 12 November 1967 to conduct the annual Plans and Training Administration Inspection.
24. On December 8, 1967, CDR B. J. HACKINSON, CBPAC Logistics Officer visited Camp Haskins, with CDR C. DONNELLY III CBLANT

Enclosure (1)

- Logistics Officer whose stay included 9 and 10 December also.
25. On December 21, 1967, Rear Admiral J. W. KELLY, Chief of Chaplains, visited Camp Haskins at this time MCB 74 hosted a conference of all construction battalion Chaplains in Vietnam.
 26. Departure of MCB 74's advance party took place on 31 December 1967.

B. Narrative

1. Command Organization in Relations

USNMCB 74 was reborn on 3 December 1966 as Gordon W. SCHLEY, CDR, CEC, USN received her command from Rear Admiral A. C. HUSBAND, CEC, USN in a recommissioning ceremony at Gulfport, Mississippi Construction Battalion Center.

By January 1967 the battalion preparation for deployment 6 months hence was in full swing at CBC, Gulfport, Miss., its homeport. Advanced technical and military training was undergone by the battalion to prepare it for support of marine units in the I corps of Vietnam. The rigorous training program was pointed toward developing the skills, both military and occupational, of its 730 men to a fine edge. A significant accomplishment in the area of training projects was the completion of a teen center for the city of Gulfport. Utilizing the skills of its equipment operators, steelworkers, and builders, the battalion completed this undertaking by 1 February 1967.

Looming large in the training spectrum was the mount-out to Camp Lejune, North Carolina in March 1967. Here the battalion acquired the military skills it would need to employ in their forthcoming deployment to Vietnam. While at Camp Lejune, 74's seabee talents were put to use improving facilities in the area, and re-

ceiving commendations for their efforts. The Lejune training exercise was under the direction of the 1st I. T. R..

2. Operations

On 1 May 1967, the first advanced party boarded C-141's for their deployment to Camp Haskins South, Danang, Vietnam. This was soon followed by the departure of the 2nd advanced party on 15 May. The main body of the battalion began its deployment on 5 June 1967 and completed the airlifting of the 730 men and 24 officers by 10 June 1967.

Having made preparation for a smooth yet rapid turn-over from MCB 58 to MCB 74, immediately upon arriving in-country a detail of one officer and fifty men were dispatched to Monkey Mountain to complete the construction begun there for the 1st Marine Air Wing. This detail returned on 26 July 1967, having completed their assigned task in a highly satisfying manner.

Another detail of one chief and nine enlisted men to Hill 724 departed 1 July 1967 in support of the 1st Marine Air Wing. Their tasks included massive reconstruction of the access road and the erection of improved facilities.

3 August 1967 found the departure of still a third detail of one officer and fifty-eight enlisted men to Cau Hai. This detachment experiencing the most primitive of living conditions were given the task of refurbishing 16 miles of Vietnamese Route #1 between Danang and Phu Bai, South Vietnam. This detail was to experience the most severe harassment by the Viet Cong offered MCB 74. The men sustained and repelled several mortar attacks and exchanges of small arms fire and ultimately 18 Purple Hearts were awarded to those

Enclosure (1)

functioning in that area, but gratefully no deaths were recorded. This detail distinguished itself in construction of several timber bridges and the perfecting of extensive drainage systems on the mountainous road. The detachment returned on 1 December 1967 having accomplished all assigned duties in spite of innumerable difficulties including inclement weather, the necessity to establish three successive camp locations and the disturbing practice the enemy had of blowing up of newly completed projects. It should be noted also that a small portion of this detail was located at Lang Co for purposes of timber storage and the establishment and operation of a rock crusher.

Finally a detail consisting of one officer and twenty-three enlisted men departed Danang by LST for Duc Pho Landing on 6 October 1967 to construct heavy steel fuel tanks in support of army units there. The detail made the last amphibious landing of the season being delayed five days in extremely heavy seas. All men and equipment were returned to Camp Haskins by 13 November 1967 by sea lift excepting one man who completed testing and returned on 25 November 1967.

The unsung portion of a Mobile Construction Battalion is the main body at the base camp which does its job on a day by day basis in fair weather or foul. The majority of the battalions efforts of this past year can be recorded in this category. The battalion was called upon to undertake a great variety of projects that taxed the ingenuity and imagination of both officers and men. Laboring largely in support of marine units, the battalion completed tasks ranging from storm drainage to helo pads. Perhaps the largest single operation was the construction of Ammunition Storage Point number 2

Enclosure (1)

behind Camp Books which housed the Force Logistics Command of the Force Service Regiment under the Third Marine Amphibious Force. This project demanded literally the removal of mountains and when completed total rearranged the topographical construction of that area, this accomplishment stands as a tribute to the effectiveness of disciplined men and heavy equipment. ASP-2 is a primary supply point in the Danang area, designed to hold 30,000 tons of ammunition.

Much of the battalion's vertical constructive effort was centered in the FLC compound and marine units in the surrounding area. Thus the builder companies were found construction sixty-two strong back hootches, installing storm drainage, rehabilitating sewage facilities, rehabilitating buildings designing water and electrical distribution systems, constructing ammo pads and helo pads, fortifying perimeter defenses, constructing officers' quarters and a new chapel. All for local marine compounds, much at the Tango Area, 1st MAW.

MCB 74 was instrumental in maintaining roads NO. 4, 3, 8, 2, and 1 in the immediate Danang area which task utilized a recently installed asphalt plant which is operated very successfully.

Finally MCB 74 undertook significant camp improvements including hootch rehabilitations, sidewalks, new EM club, a greatly enlarged perimeter, improved sanitary facilities and a drainage system.

Just before the end of the year, MCB 74 was honored with a high priority project just north of its camp. This undertaking required the complete leveling of a vast tract of land and preparing it to receive army aircraft units. Most significant in this project was the fact that it had to be completed in a month or by January 15, 1968. The entire battalion turned to on a three shift twenty-four

Enclosure (1)

hour a day schedule, and by 31 December 1967, great progress had been made and all indications are that this final project deadline will be met.

Several additional accomplishments may be noted here. The battalion was chosen to engineer and install the first Ammi bridge in country, and completed all preliminary tasks regarding it. However, due to late delivery, final installation was not possible. MCB-74 also created a first by engineering and developing pre-cast bridge panels which were installed successfully on Routes 3 & 4.

While at Camp Haskins South, MCB-74 adopted a CAP unit and provided them much appreciated support.

The major attack on the Danang Air field which took place in early September effected the battalion greatly. MCB-74 was charged with the rehabilitation of numerous 1st Marine Air Wing buildings which suffered concussion damage to roofs and walls. Among the largest rehabilitation jobs were the communications center and the galley. During this week period, MCB-74 was on the alert in bunkers six nights out of eight.

Rounding out the constructive effort of the battalion we must mention the new contonement built for the 7th Motor Transport Marine Company, and the total rehabilitation of a induction center for the Vietnamese Army in the city of Danang.

The men of the battalion finished the year in a very humanitarian way by giving Christmas parties for 5 hamlets, in some instances complete with Santa Claus. This was part of the Civic action effort which was suitably capped a week later by a ceremony at Phouc Quang hamlet attended by Admiral J. V. Bartlett, CEC, USN, at which the battalion

Enclosure (1)

Commanding Officer and Civic Action team received District Commendation. This was the 2nd commendation received from the district during the battalions deployment.

The cumulative totals of any deployment of a Naval Mobile Construction are almost always staggering. The amount of work put forth by the seabees always calls for admiration. During this deployment in the last six months of 1967, MCB 74 worked a total of 182 man days with a 41.4% of direct labor. Its vehicles traveled 968,320 miles and its equipment operated a total of 108,090 hours, and moved over 1 million yards of earth.

3. Special Topics

a. Civic Action

(1) The Civic Action Team consisted of (a) LT H. L. BERGSMA, Battalion Chaplain and Civic Action Officer, and (b) F.

TAYLOR, BUL. The battalion philosophy toward the pacification effort was to encourage self-help among the people themselves. Thus it was not felt that an extensive civic action team was needed, but rather a few men available to stimulate constructive thought and provide competent supervision was more desirable. Though the completed structures are done with workmanship perhaps inferior to that which the seabees could accomplish, and the job takes longer, the reward of the people having a sense of accomplishment and dignity as well as responsibility toward the structure is more than worth it. The small civic action team also tends to build the all-important support with the people more strongly since they have more frequent contact with

Enclosure (1)

the same people. In addition, contribution of a highly motivated and competent interpreter to the success of the battalion's program cannot be over emphasized.

(2) On an equal par with the proper philosophy of civic action and the effective use of personnel, is the procurement of materials. Had KCB 74 to depend upon the materials supplied by USAID through VN Government officials and G-5 FLC, it is unlikely that much would have been accomplished. This material procurement system is a supply labyrinth of confusion and frustration. With the present system it is difficult to schedule projects, keep promises and commitments. Had it not been for the extremely successful State-Side material preparation made by the battalion, and the resourcefulness of the team and battalion assistance, the civic action would likely not have been the outstanding success it was.

Enclosure (1)