

NMCB--74:CH:ap
5750
Ser 975
7 October 1969

From: Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
SEVENTY-FOUR
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)
Subj: Command History for Fiscal Year 1969; submission of (OPNAV Report
5750-1)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A
Encl: (1) Narrative History
(2) Danang Deployment Completion Report
(3) Danang Deployment Cruise Book
(4) Chu Lai Deployment Completion Report
(5) Chu Lai Deployment Cruise Book
(6) Personnel Roster

1. Enclosures (1) through (6) are submitted in accordance with reference
(a).

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USNMCB 74 COMMAND HISTORY FOR FISCAL YEAR 1969

A. Brief Chronology of Noteworthy Events

1. 3 JUL 1968 - Complete airlift to Chu Lai, RVN.
2. 10 JUL 1968 - Sustained direct mortar hit on rock dump at Cam Lo. Small arms fire caused one (1) WIA. One hour later (1) WIA as result of claymore and small arms fire.
3. 20 JUL 1968 - Personnel temporarily assigned to NMCB-5 transferred to OPCON NMCB-7.
4. 3 AUG 1968 - Captured AK 47 presented to Battalion by Commanding General, Americal Division in appreciation for assistance given in Landing Zone construction.
5. 5 AUG 1968 - Selection of NMCB-74 as Best of Type in Atlantic Fleet for fiscal year 1968, announced at Battalion Quarters.
6. 10 AUG 1968 - Detail WHISKEY deployed to Dong Ha to perform construction on MER Program.
7. 10 AUG 1968 - Detail X-RAY deployed to Quang Tri to perform construction on MER Program.
8. 11 AUG 1968 - Battalion Holiday to celebrate receiving "E".
9. 8 SEP 1968 - Twelve (12) man crew deployed to Quang Ngai as Detail YANKEE for construction of utilities systems on Provincial hospital.
10. 26 SEP 1968 - VADM E. R. ZUMWALT, COMNAVFORV, briefed on Chu Lai construction mission.
11. 2 OCT 1968 - CDR J. A. D'EMIDIO relieved CDR G. W. SCHLEY as Commanding Officer, NMCB-74.
12. 15 OCT 1968 - Detail WHISKEY returned to Camp Shields.
13. 18 OCT 1968 - LCDR F. G. KELLEY relieved LCDR E. W. THOMAS as Executive Officer, NMCB-74.
14. 27 OCT 1968 - 55 men TAD to NMCB-7 at Dong Ha returned to Camp Shields.
15. 15 NOV 1968 - Detail X-RAY returned to Camp Shields.

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16. 17 NOV 1968 - CDR C. J. MATTHEWS, Commanding Officer, NMCB-58, arrived with 4 officers on pre-deployment inspection.
17. 30 NOV 1968 - Visited by RADM W. M. HEAMAN, Commander, Construction Battalions, U. S. Pacific Fleet.
18. 8 DEC 1968 - Received 6 Army of Republic of Vietnam Equipment Operators for training.
19. 22 DEC 1968 - "Builder's Chapel" at Camp Shields dedicated by RADM J. W. KELLY, Chief of Chaplains.
20. 18 JAN 1969 - NMCB-58's Advance Party arrived.
21. 19 JAN 1969 - NMCB-74 Advance Party enplaned for Gulfport, Miss.
22. 30 JAN 1969 - Detail YANKEE returned to Camp Shields.
23. 4 FEB 1969 - NMCB-58's Commanding Officer arrived.
24. 9 FEB 1969 - NMCB-58 assumed command of Camp Shields.
25. 10 FEB 1969 - Commenced Main Body airlift to CONUS.
26. 14 FEB 1969 - Detail VICTOR returned to Camp Shields
27. 15 FEB 1969 - Completed Main Body flights to Gulfport, Miss.
28. 4 MAR 1969 - Visited by Secretary of the Navy, The Honorable J. H. CHAFFEE ..
29. 11 MAR 1969 - Death of EACN JONES, L. R., due to aspiration of gastric contents due to left subdural abscess.
30. 14 MAR 1969 - Visited by Vice Chief of Naval Operations, ADM B. A. CLAREY.
31. 26 APR 1969 - Visited by Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable F. SANDERS.
32. 12 MAY 1969 - 230 Men deployed to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for training with NMCB-1.
33. 24 MAY 1969 - Camp Lejeune party returned.
34. 24 MAY 1969 - Battalion party at Broadwater Beach Hotel, Biloxi, Miss.
35. 26 MAY 1969 - Commenced Battalion Block Military Training.
36. 31 MAY 1969 - CM3 E. L. DEADMORE killed in automobile accident.

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37. 31 MAY 1969 - Commanding Officer and four (4) officers departed for pre-deployment visit to Camp Rhodes, Quang Tri, RVN.
38. 11 JUN 1969 - Pre-deployment inspection team returned.
39. 16 JUN 1969 - Commenced 5-day Battalion Military Field Exercise.
40. 26 JUN 1969 - Pre-Administrative Inspection by COM2ONCR.

B. Narrative History USNMCB-74 Fiscal Year 1969

1. Command Organization and Relations

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion SEVENTY-FOUR was recommissioned on 3 December 1966, under the command of CDR G. W. SCHLEY, CEC, USN, who remained as Commanding Officer until relieved on 2 October 1968, by CDR J. A. D'EMIDIO, CEC, USN. (Annex J-1) (Enclosure 4)

On 1 July 1968, the first day of this Fiscal Year History, NMCB-74 was deployed to Camp Shields, Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam. Operational Control was under THIRTIETH Naval Construction Regiment, THIRD Naval Construction Brigade, and Commander Naval Construction Battalions, U. S. Pacific Fleet. When the battalion returned to homeport in Gulfport, Mississippi, Operational Control was transferred to TWENTIETH Naval Construction Regiment and Commander Naval Construction Battalions, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. At all times, Administrative Control remained with COMCBLANT.

During the Chu Lai deployment, the Battalion detached several details. On 20 June 1968, under the command of ENS. A. D. BAKER, Jr., CEC, USNR, Detail VICTOR departed Camp Shields for the rock quarry and crusher site at Cam Lo, RVN. This detail was later placed under the command of CWO R. H. BECKER, CEC, USN. Between seventy-five (75) and

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ninty-eight (98) personnel were maintained at this Detail for the entire deployment. (Annex J-13)

Detail WHISKEY was deployed to Dong Ha, RVN, on 10 August 1968, with fifty-nine (59) enlisted personnel under the command of LT J. D. HUBBARD, CEC, USN, for assistance to NMGB-7 in construction of cantonments for the Minimum Essential Requirements (MER) Program. (See Chronology # 6 , and Annex J-11) (Enclosure 4)

Detail X-RAY, comprised of 49 enlisted personnel, and commanded by LTJG M. P. PENTI, CEC, USNR, was sent to Quang Tri, RVN, to assist NMGB-11 in cantonment construction for the Minimum Essential Requirement (MER) Program on 10 August 1968. (Chronology Item # 7 .)

Detail YANKEE, with eleven enlisted personnel under UTC R. E. SIMPSON, USN, was sent to Quang Ngai, RVN, for construction of the Civilian Organization for Revolutionary Development Systems (CORDS) hospital project. Specifically, this detail worked on the secondary power system, interior wiring, water and sewage distribution systems. This Detail departed on 8 September 1968, and returned on 30 January 1969. (Chronology Item # 9 .)

Two Seabee Teams were deployed in the Siagon area. Seabee Team 7401, with LTJG C. R. CARY, CEC, USNR, as Officer-in-Charge, was located in Tu Duc, RVN. Seabee Team 7402 was located near Lai Thieu, RVN, with LT H. J. BROWN, CEC, USN, as Officer-in-Charge. (Annex J-17) (Enclosure 4)

Two additional Seabee Teams were formed in early 1969. Seabee Team 7403 is currently in training at Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Mississippi, and will deploy in late September 1969 to Vietnam. ENS

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D. L. WILLAMAN, CEC, USNR, is Officer-in-Charge. Seabee Team 7404, also in training at Gulfport, Mississippi, expects to deploy in late August 1969, to the Trust Territory, Pacific Islands. ENS P. F. HIMOVITZ, CEC, USNR, is Officer-in-Charge of Seabee Team 7404.

On 29 June 1968, sixty-seven (67) enlisted personnel were detached for Temporary Additional Duty with NMCB-5. These men were transferred to the Operational Control of NMCB-7 on 20 July 1968, and returned to this command on 27 October 1968.

In addition to our own personnel detached, NMCB-74 also hosted a detail of one officer and nine enlisted men from NMCB-12. This party was assigned to the construction of berthing spaces for Marine Air Group 13, and was billeted and supported by NMCB-74.

As of 30 June 1969, NMCB-74 had 25 officers and 887 enlisted personnel attached for duty. (Enclosure 6)

2. OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The deployment of NMCB-74 to Chu Lai, RVN, was in accordance with COMCBPAC Operation Order 11-68. The main body movement was accomplished between 25 June and 3 July 1968. The return to homeport, under the same OPORD, was accomplished from 10-15 February 1969.

As an integral portion of the preparations for a third deployment to RVN, 230 men were deployed to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, on 12 May 1969. They received two weeks training on crew served weapons and returned to homeport on 24 May 1969.

The period 16-20 June was spent at Keesler Air Force Base rifle range for Battalion Field Exercises. Approximately 98% of the available

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personnel participated in this evolution.

a. Operational Statistics

The deployment Completion Report annexed to this History contains all the necessary facts and figures dealing with personnel, equipment, construction and logistics. Even though NMCB-74 returned to homeport prior to the beginning of this History, the Danang Deployment Completion Report is submitted as an item of Historical record.

b. Construction Assignments

Throughout the eight (8) months at Chu Lai, RVN, NMCB-74 was tasked with a wide variety of projects in support of Marine Airgroups 12 and 13, as well as the Americal Division of the U. S. Army, and the Naval Support Activity, Detachment Chu Lai. A sampling of the more important projects will be discussed. For more detailed information on these and all jobs, consult Annex E of the Deployment Completion Report. The latter includes project costs, man power utilization and completion percentages.

(1) POL Storage (South Tank Farm)

To increase the fuel capacity and refueling efficiency of the various air commands stationed at Chu Lai, a facility to store and distribute 44,000 barrels of fuel was ordered. The work order included preparation of the site by leveling and the construction of oiled berms. Concrete pads were installed, upon which were constructed

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four 10,000 barrel welded steel tanks, and four 1,000 barrel tanks, with external piping. Fuels to be stored in this facility included JP-4 (jet fuel), diesel fuel and gasoline. (Annex E-5 and J-8&9). (Enclosure 4)

(2) MAG-12 Group Headquarters Building.

A pre-engineered "Pascoe" building measuring 40' x 144' was erected to house the command headquarters. This project began on 6 January 1969, and was 42% complete at the time it was turned over to our relieving battalion, NMCB-58. (Annex E-11) (Enclosure 4)

(3) Parachute Loft.

To provide a facility for the maintenance and packing of parachutes used by all the air commands stationed at Chu Lai, a 40' x 90' "Pascoe" building was erected, with a specially engineered loft measuring 20' x 17' and 40' in height. This job included site preparation, concrete slab and utility installation (Annex E-12 and J-5) (Enclosure 4)

(4) Hangar

During an enemy rocket attack, an Ammunition Supply Point was hit, causing the explosion of a large quantity of ammunition. The concussion from this explosion caused the collapse of a large aircraft hangar at MAG-12. NMCB-74 was assigned to build a new and larger hangar on the same site. To meet this requirement, it was necessary to remove the damaged structure and dig out

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the original foundations. The completed building was 312' x 98', with the hangar peak over 60' high. (Annex E-24 and J-3) (Enclosure 4)

(5) Sewage treatment Facility.

The Army's 2nd Surgical Hospital Company, located at Chu Lai, required adequate sewage treatment. A sewage lift system was installed, along with 3000 feet of sewage pipe leading to a two cell sewage lagoon. (Annex E-26)
(Enclosure 4)

(6) Aircraft Parking Apron.

A major earth moving project was undertaken in the site preparation for a large apron at the Chu Lai Air Field. After grading, filling and compaction of the site, several steel and concrete culverts were installed to provide adequate drainage. Over 10,000 cubic yards of concrete were placed for a 500' x 500' apron. This job was one of special pride for Delta company, as they were required to manufacture "T-bars" for the expansion joints, in that saw blades were not available. In so doing, approximately \$6,000, was saved. The rapidity of the concrete placement was also notable. A crew was supplied to the RMK contractor's concrete batch plant, and transit mixers from both RMK and the Battalion operated in rapid relays. The concrete apron was 10'' thick, with the edges thickened to 16". (Annex E-29 and J-15) (Enclosure 4)

(7) Paving.

Manpower assistance was given to the 9th Marine Engineer

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Battalion in paving Highway QL#1, North of Chu Lai.

The NMCB-74 Asphalt paving crew applied the surface to the road bed prepared by the Marines. (Annex E-55 and J-14) (Enclosure 4)

(8) Bunkers.

Utilizing a NMCB-74 concept, 230 pre-fabricated wooden bunkers were manufactured for the Chu Lai Defense Command. A double plywood wall filled with 20" of sand was utilized for protection, as opposed to the normal sandbagging method. This design also offers the advantage of providing unlimited flexibility in the height of the bunker. (Annex J-6) (Enclosure 4)

(9) Builder's Chapel.

By pre-fabricating triangular plywood beams, an A-frame chapel was erected at Camp Shields. This design offered the advantage of maximum strength while utilizing minimum cost construction materials. The Chapel was dedicated by RADM J. W. KELLEY, Chief of Chaplains, on 22 December 1968. (Annex J-7) (Enclosure 4)

3. SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS

The basic supply and logistic support to the Battalion was the P25A Organic Allowance received "in-country" before the main body arrived. This allowance had been processed for the Supply Overhaul Assistance Program (SOAP) at Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.

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Replenishment of the allowance was accomplished through requisitions from (1) Naval Support Activity, Danang, RVN (Chu Lai Detachment), (2) Commander Naval Construction Battalions, U. S. Pacific Fleet Detachment, Okinawa, (3) U. S. Naval Supply Depot, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, (4) Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California, and (5) Naval Supply Center, Oakland, California.

Material necessary for construction projects were requisitioned from THIRD Naval Construction Brigade, located at Danang, RVN.

Provisions and stores were received from NSAD-Chu Lai, on a "forced issue" basis. Refrigerator storage facilities located in camp were adequate to permit weekly menu planning.

The Navy Exchange, although operated by NMCB-74, was actually a branch of the U. S. Army Americal Division Exchange, operating under the Army/Air Force Exchange System, Republic of Vietnam. The Americal Division was the only source for Exchange merchandise available to NMCB-74.

The inherent problem of a Battalion in Chu Lai is that of shipping and receiving material. The logistics pipeline from CONUS for both air and surface shipments terminates at Danang. All shipments had to be transhipped due to the lack of a deep-water facility at Chu Lai.

Because of the communication difficulties between Chu Lai and Danang, a team of four expeditors, headed by a Chief Petty Officer, was assigned Temporary Additional Duty to THIRD Naval Construction

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Brigade. Their function included coordination of construction and other high priority materials from Danang to Chu Lai and to details North of Danang.

4. CASUALTIES OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT

Since the great majority of construction jobs were assigned within the Chu Lai Defense Command enclave, the threat to life from enemy action was greatly reduced. NMCB-74, in two deployments did not lose a single man from hostile fire. One man received shrapnel wounds on 10 July 1968, when Detail VICTOR came under enemy fire. Another was wounded by an incoming rocket propelled grenade on the same date. On 12 December 1968, numerous 81mm mortars fell within the Detail VICTOR perimeter, resulting in one WIA.

5. PERSONNEL

Annex A of the Chu Lai Deployment Completion Report covers such items as manning levels, reenlistments, educational services, safety and disciplinary summaries.

6. MEDICAL/DENTAL

See Annex A, Chu Lai Deployment Completion Report. Of special interest is the relatively low incidence of venereal disease, due largely to a concerted educational program in both homeport and prior to Rest and Relaxation (R&R) trips.

7. CHAPLAIN

See Annex A of the Chu Lai Deployment Completion Report.

During homeport, the Chaplain had additional duties in counselling dependents of men deployed with other battalions and in the Chapel program of the Construction Battalion Center. As Duty Chaplain,

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he was occasionally called upon to deliver casualty messages in the Gulf Coast area, and to provide funeral services for retired personnel.

8. COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

The many "We Love Our Seabees" bumper stickers seen in the Gulfport area is indicative of the high esteem in which the civilian community holds the Seabees. This attitude is fostered by on-the-job training experiences involving actual construction at various civic and recreational sites. Seabee Team 7404 provided a refreshment stand for a little league baseball diamond. A Troop House, swimming pool and tent platforms were built at Camp Iti-Kana for the Gulf Coast Girl Scout Council. In return, a picnic and beer-bust was given by the Girl Scouts for the men involved. NMCB-74 was able to complete 37% of a recreational site preparation for the Disabled American Veterans before wet weather forced a return of the project to TWENTIETH Naval Construction Regiment.

9. CIVIC ACTION

During the Chu Lai deployment, Civic Action projects were carried out primarily on Cu Lao Re Island, 18 miles off the coast of Vietnam. Because of the transportation difficulties, this was a limited program. In addition, land was leveled, rock and sand provided, and many loads of scrap materials were given to the Catholic orphanage at Chu Lai, in preparation for a new and improved kitchen facility. See Annex I of the deployment Completion

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Report for details of the program.

10. SPECIAL TRAINING

Five enlisted personnel from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam 10th Engineer Combat Group were billeted at Camp Shields, Chu Lai, for training purposes. They were instructed by equipment operators in the operation and maintenance of heavy mechanized equipment for a period of 8 weeks. See Annex A, page 19, for a letter of appreciation from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. (Annex J-16). (Enclosure 4)

11. AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS

On 17 August 1968, word was received from CBPAC that NMCB-74 had been awarded The Navy Unit Commendation for the period ending July 1967.

See Annex A, page 14, of the Deployment Completion Report for individual awards.

In addition, Annex A includes numerous commendations from "customer" commands, Regimental, Brigade, Force and Fleet commanders.

NMCB-74 was awarded the COMSERVLANT Battle Efficiency Award as the "Best of Type" for Fiscal Year 1968.

Seabee Team 7401 was selected as recipient of the Construction Battalions Pacific Detachment, Republic of Vietnam Award for excellence during the period October-December 1968.

The galley at Camp Shields was selected as the THIRTIETH Naval Construction Regiment's best mess during the Chu Lai deployment.

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A recommendation for the Navy Unit Commendation for NMGB-74 was submitted jointly by MAG-12 and MAG-13 upon completion of our Chu Lai deployment. The result is still pending.

12. NOTABLE RECORDS.

During the period in which Detail VICTOR was detached to the quarry and rock crusher at Cam Lo, it crushed 2018 tons in one day for a new "in-country" record. This occurred on 20 December 1968.

13. DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

See Chronological Summary

Item 28 - Secretary of the Navy

Item 31 - Assistant Secretary of the Navy

Item 30 - Vice Chief of Naval Operations

Item 22 - Chief of Chaplains

Item 10 - Commander Naval Forces Vietnam

Item 17 - Commander Construction Battalions U. S. Pacific Fleet

14. ADMINISTRATIVE INSPECTION

The Annual Administrative Inspection by COMCBLANT was conducted on 7-9 July 1969. While this is actually within Fiscal Year 1970, it is included here because all the preparations were made in Fiscal Year 1969, and it is believed that this inspection most accurately reflects upon the command as it was constituted in Fiscal 1969.

For the first time within the memory of the various inspectors and other officers at CBC, Gulfport, an Admin Inspection was completed without any numerical grade falling below 90. The

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Battalion was rated "High Excellent", and the overall numerical grade was 94. Of special note is the accomplishment of the Supply Department in attaining a 94, since their grade during the previous inspection had been 85. Some of the affirmative comments made by the inspecting officers are quoted below:

"The most uniform enlisted lockers"
"The best barracks since CBC Gulfport was re-opened"
"With minor exceptions, the cleanest weapons"
"An outstanding quality control program"
"A record of over 93% completion rate of scheduled training"
"The Dental Department's Preventive Dentistry and Civic Action programs while in RVN...far superior to other NMCB's homeported at Gulfport."

Area grades assigned are listed below:

Command	95	Outstanding
Military Readiness	90	Excellent
Administration & Personnel	90	Excellent
Contingency & Mobilization Readiness	94	Excellent
Supply	94	Excellent
Operations	94	Excellent
Technical Training	96	Outstanding
Automotive & Construction Equipment	97	Outstanding
Safety	94	Excellent
Special Services	95	Outstanding
Chaplain's Activities	95	Outstanding
Dental	96	Outstanding
Legal	95	Outstanding
Medical	96	Outstanding
Post Office	95	Outstanding
Public Affairs	96	Outstanding

The overall grade of 94 was the second highest awarded to an Atlantic Fleet Battalion in the past three years. Significantly, there were no major discrepancies noted in any area. Needless to say, the morale of all personnel and the unit pride gained in this inspection are items of continuing gratification.

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