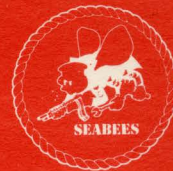




CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS
100th ANNIVERSARY
MARCH 2, 1967

UNITED STATES NAVY
CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS
SEABEES IN ACTION

"CONSTRUIMUS, BATUIMUS - WE BUILD, WE FIGHT"
"CAN DO!"



SEABEES
25th ANNIVERSARY
MARCH 5, 1967

JOIN THE SEABEES - SERVE THE WORLD

U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SEVENTY ONE
FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 09501

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No. 32-67 (57)
By Lieutenant (junior
grade) J.A. Smith, USNR

SEABEES WORK TOWARD GOAL OF NEW ASIA

First hand experience has convinced Navy Seabees of the need to win Vietnamese allies to a better way of life if we are to triumph in the war against communism.

The Seabees, those legendary fighter-builders of World War II and Korean War fame, have a prime mission in Vietnam to construct bases, airstrips and facilities in support of combat troops.

In addition, they are spending all the time they can spare in helping our Vietnamese friends improve their way of life.

This is done by Seabee battalions and by 13-man Seabee teams, termed the "Navy's Peace Corps," which serve full-time as teachers, helpers, and friends to the people of South Vietnam and Thailand. These teams work side by side with allies in building community improvements such as roads, bridges, dams, schools, hospitals and water and sewer systems.

Similar to people everywhere, the South Vietnamese want things and crave to learn how to produce them. Seabees, with their many building skills, possess the very kind of knowledge which the citizens of underdeveloped and war-torn nations need and want so much.

Help supplied by Naval Mobile Construction Battalion SEVEVTY ONE, stationed at Chu Lai, South Vietnam, generally illustrates the effort being made by all Seabee units in Southeast Asia.

For instance:

One morning a U.S. Army Lieutenant telephoned to say, "the village

-more-

of Ly Tra was razed last night by the Viet Cong. Can you help?"

The next day, a truck bursting to the seams with scrap lumber rolled out of the MCB-71 camp for the 45-minute trip to Ly Tra. To the Americans a truckload of scrap lumber seemed somewhat insignificant, but to homeless Vietnamese it offered the opportunity to build a new home-- to replace what had been destroyed.

This is civic reaction. The Americans coming to the rescue! A gift to the hapless farmer to fulfill his immediate need by replacing what had been destroyed by the enemy.

But, more important and exciting than civic reaction is the daily Civic Action program conducted by Seabees and other units of the Armed Forces in Vietnam.

The road that Americans help build to link a village to nearby markets, the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) which may save the eyesight of a young Vietnamese child, the fresh-water wells drilled in remote areas, these are some of the things that make up Civic Action.

On a regular basis, Chaplain Bill Dennis, who is MCB-71's Civic Action officer, Battalion Medical Officer Jerry Hubbell and Dr. Sam Winsper, battalion dentist, and their staffs travel by truck to nearby villages.

On arrival, they set up offices near trucks and, with the help of Seabee hospital corpsmen, treat the myriad of ills prevalent in villages not previously exposed to modern medical science.

The people mostly need remedies for skin infections. With each treatment, the medicos dispense soap bars and instructions in personal hygiene.

Doctor Winsper and assistants settle down to the extraction of teeth beyond repair. For some of the patients, it is the first relief ever known from the consistent pain in their jaws.

The chaplain's course is not so clear. As Civic Action officer, he is involved in the socio-political field. He is the man who the village chief must look to for that new road, the rebuilt school...the opportunity for pure drinking water.

Yet, his is not a simple task, for Seabee Chaplain Dennis, above all, must be tactful. The guise of American defender will not win these people to our side. Instead, the chaplain must foster a community spirit by stimulating the villagers into wanting to help themselves. This is Civic Action.

The chaplain knows that the impetus must come from the Vietnamese with the Americans prodding as unobtrusively as possible. If the Americans build a road and give it to the Vietnamese, it is still the Americans' road. But, if Americans help the Vietnamese to build a road, it is a road that belongs to the South Vietnamese people.

The Viet Cong would have a tough time mining the latter road, but would probably find it much easier to mine a road which was an outright American-built gift.

It is Chaplain Dennis' job to cajole, inspire, prod and aid the friendly Vietnamese in their drive for a better life. This is Civic Action--the day-to-day competition with the Viet Cong for the lives and minds of the people.

The struggle isn't easy as Vietnamese allies sometimes question our motives and American commanders must devote men and material to battle as the first priority, Civic Action second.

But, Seabees have found if they do their Civic Action job well, an intangible something occurs within each hamlet which binds it closer to our side.

If Civic Action falters, the Viet Cong will return to the hamlet each night to find encouragement or, at the least, acceptance.

Civic Action is as simple--and important--as that.

-30-

1967 marks the 25th anniversary of the U.S. Navy Seabees; the 100th of the Navy Civil Engineer Corps whose officers lead the Seabees in action; and the 125th of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (formerly Bureau of Yards and Docks).

(DEAR EDITOR: We Seabees hope you can use this copy and we would appreciate a tear sheet mailed to:)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE 09D1
Yards and Docks Annex 2B-35
Washington, D. C. 20390