

FAMILY-GRAM

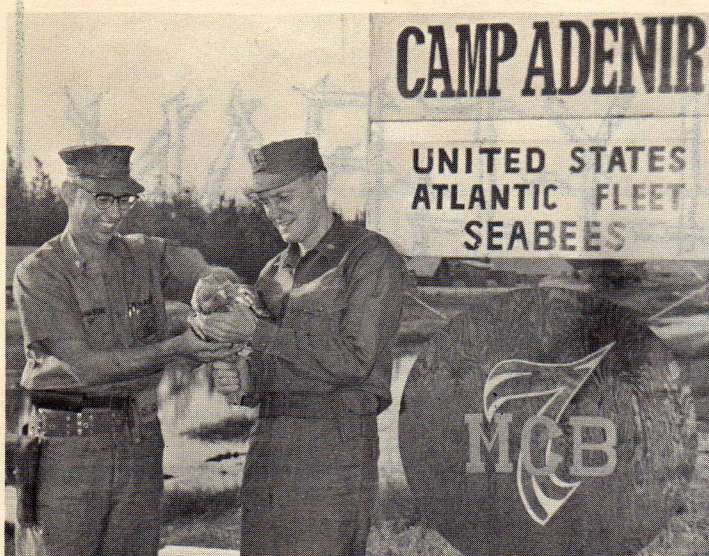
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VOL I NO III U. S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION
FIFTY-THREE

MARCH 1968





CAMP ADENIR TRADITION: CDR LAWSON PASSING DUCK TO CDR BOWERS, AS CAMP CHANGES BATTALIONS.



LCDR R.H. SHACKLEFORD (MCB53 OPERATIONS OFFICER) ACCEPTS NOT TO WILLING DUCK.

CDR. R.A. BOWERS MCB53 COMMANDING OFFICER AND CDR L.D. LAWSON MCB7 COMMANDING OFFICER CHANGE BATTALION SIGNS AS MCB 53 RELIEVES MCB 7 AT CAMP ADENIR

COMMANDING OFFICER.....	CDR R.A. BOWERS CEC, ,
EXECUTIVE OFFICER.....	LCDR R.H. KNAUF CEC, USN
STAFF.....	LT J.R. FIOL CHC, USNR
	ENS B.L. CRAIN USNR
	JO2 R.D. BURNS
	SN F.F. HUTCHINS
PHOTOGRAPHERS.....	PH3 EDWARD L. WESTHUSING
	EAD3 MICHALL R. SUTTON

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CAPTAIN'S LETTER

I am pleased with the efforts of Chaplain Fiol, our photographer, and our Public Affairs personnel in putting together this family-gram, the first published by U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FIFTY-THREE in Viet Nam. I am sure that you will find the material enlightening in that it tells you, primarily by photographs, how the Men of 53 live, work, and relax here in DaNang East.

U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FIFTY-THREE has had its share of anxious moments. The North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong welcomed 53 to Viet Nam in late January with the treacherous truce violation of which you are well aware. 53 weathered this storm and is now fully engaged in the construction business. Fortunately, the casualties were few and mostly minor. Eleven Purple Hearts have been awarded to Battalion personnel. Because of the initial trying experiences, the battalion is now one of great spirit and integrity.

The truth of this last statement is evident in everything I witness: the Civic Action Program in which projects of great social worth have been undertaken for the Vietnamese civilian populace, especially for the children; the construction programs, many items of which are of critical importance to the Marines and Army troops whom we support; the conduct and achievements of our details who have served at times at Khe Sanh, Dang Ha, Hoi An and Quang Tri since our arrival; and the day to day activities of the men who exhibit great capacity for responsible service, and always with a smile. You can be proud of your sons, husbands, and friends of 53.

Very truly yours,

R. A. BOWERS
Commanding Officer

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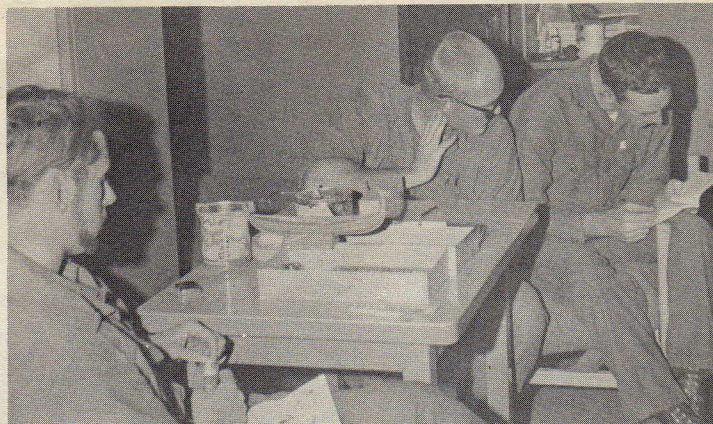
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CAMP ADENIR



MEN OF HEADQUARTERS COMPANY RELAX IN THEIR BERTHING HUT (LEFT TO RIGHT ANDERSON, B.R. EAD3, BACKLUND, R.A. EAD3, CAUSBY, L. EAS3)



PICACHE, D.S. TN HAVING HAIR CUT BY MANION D.N. CN. IN BATTALION BARBERSHOP

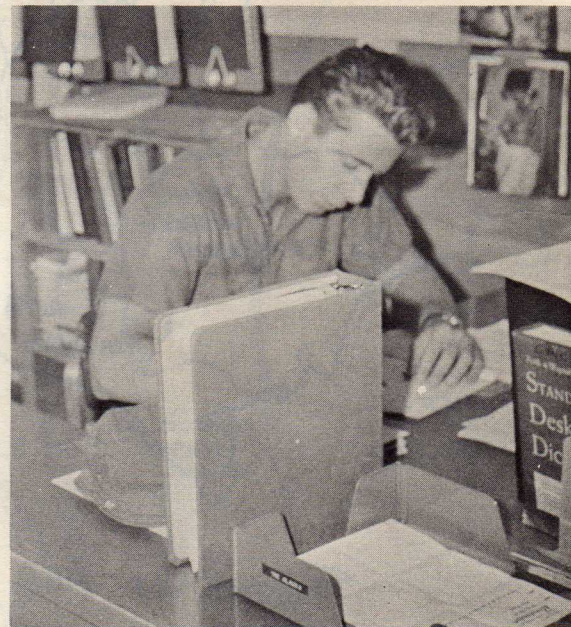


SW1 JACKSON, GALLEY MAA, PASSING THE WORD TO GALLEY PERSONNEL

FACILITIES



CHOW LINE EM MESS.

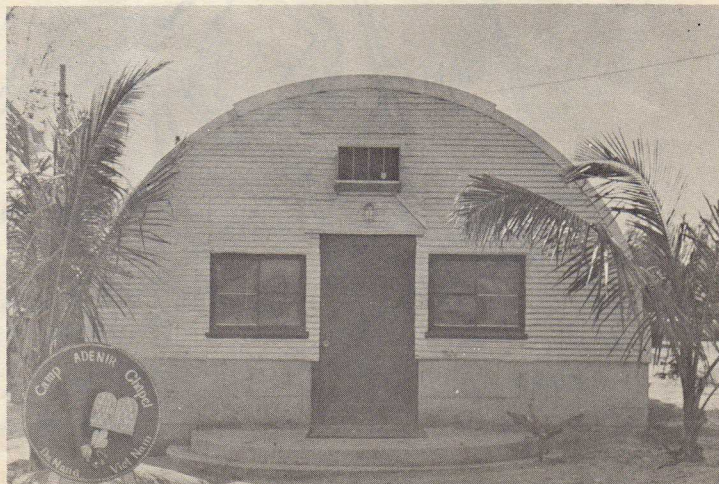


WITH ASSISTANCE FROM BUC J.E. BURGESS, SH2
F.D. WALKER MANAGES CAMP EXCHANGE. TOP

TAKING CARE OF THE CONSTANT STACK OF
WORK IN THE ADMIN OFFICE CLAUSS, C.M.
YN2. ABOVE RIGHT

CHAPEL AT CAMP ADENIR AT RIGHT

AT WORK IN OPERATIONS OFFICE, (LEFT TO
RIGHT DICKEY, J.C. EAD2 SELESKY, K.G.
EAD3). ABOVE



SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS SPONSORED BY SEABEES

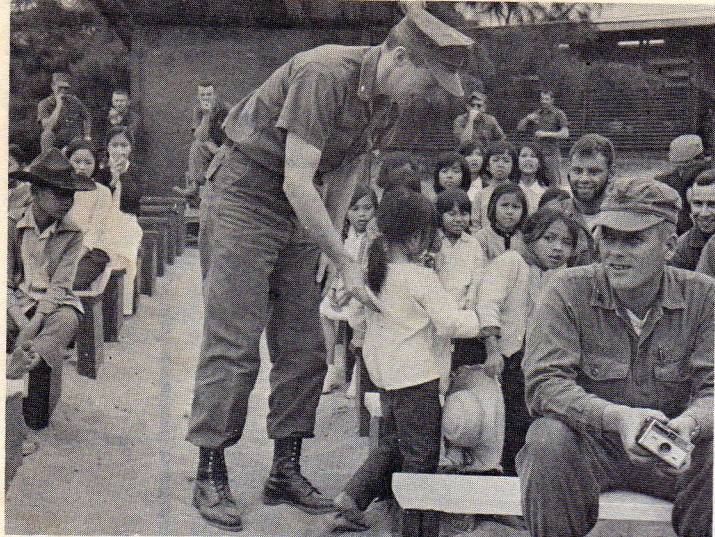
North of Camp Adenir, DaNang East, is a village that is similar to many of the refugee villages throughout South Vietnam. The village, known as Son Cha, has more than its share of poverty and disease. Keeping food in their children's stomachs is a full time task for the Vietnamese parents and financing an education for them is practically impossible.

Help was needed and was given by MCB-7 and is now being continued by the Seabees of U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FIFTY-THREE, which is presently deployed at Camp Adenir.

A scholarship fund, initiated by MCB-7, has been turned over to MCB-53's Civic Action Officer, Chaplain J. Robert Fiol from St. Louis, Missouri. Through his direction and the donations of the Seabees in MCB-53 who want to help, 49 children of Son Cha will be able to continue their elementary education.

The Seabee scholarship average approximately \$2.25 per month for each sponsor (according to the child's grade). Each monthly payment is directed to the battalion's Civic Action Fund for the Scholarship program and from there is given to the school's superintendent. One scholarship is worth about \$20.00 and covers only the child's tuition fees for one full year of education. Books, writing materials, and other needed school supplies are provided for by the international "CARE" foundation.

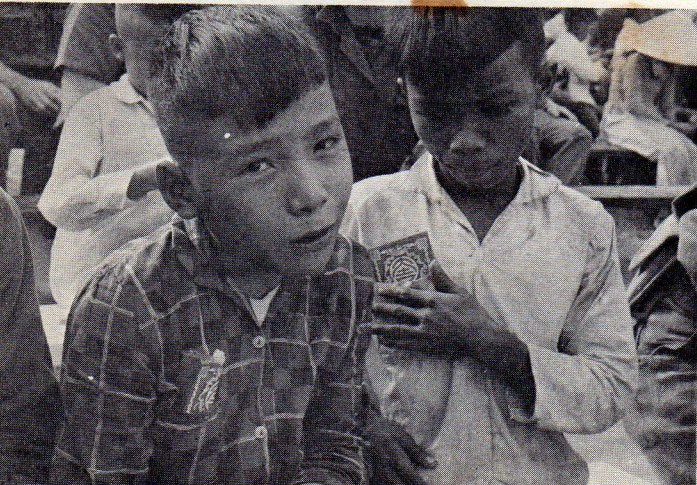
Chaplain Fiol summed up the purpose of the program in this way: "Even though we have only been at Camp Adenir a short time we have already noted many of the problems and injustices associated with the war in Vietnam. As so often is the case, the children are the ones who suffer the most. We feel that one small part that we, as Seabees, can do to help the future of the Vietnamese is to assist in the education of the unfortunate victims of this war. For this reason we have presented to the Seabees of 53 the possibility of sponsoring Vietnamese children in school. These children are the ones who would not ordinarily have the opportunity of having a formal education. The program has received enthusiastic support from the men of the battalion, and we anticipate increasing the number of children that we are able to send through school."



MEN OF THE BATTALION MEETING THE CHILDREN THEY ARE SPONSORING PRIOR TO PARTY.

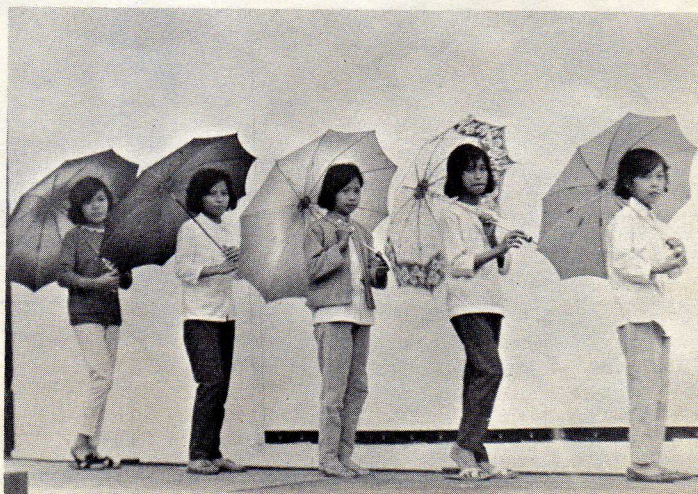


LT(JG) M.D. BRINKLEY TALKING WITH A FRIEND FROM SON CHA VILLAGE.



(ABOVE) SOME OF THE SCHOOL BOYS AFTER RECEIVING TET GIFT ENVELOPE.

(RIGHT) CHILDREN OF SON CHA SCHOOL ENTERTAIN MCB 53 WITH A PROGRAM OF LOCAL DANCES.



COMMUNICATIONS

Communication plays a very large and important role in each of our lives. We feel that communication with our friends and family is necessary if we are to remain in touch with them and be able to perform adequately.

Communications between the folks at home and those overseas is a very important and essential part of our operation. It has a very direct relationship on our morale and work output.

The first and most obvious means of communication is the postal system. On the whole mail service is fast and efficient, but sometimes there are unavoidable delays.

Another means of quick communications is through the services of your local Red Cross chapter. In the event that it is necessary to contact the serviceman because of illness or some emergency in the family, the Red Cross serves as a go-between in communications between the serviceman and his family in matters of health and welfare. The field director of the chapter will arrange for verification of the need for emergency leave, if that is necessitated, as required by the Navy.

In the following article we briefly explain another means of communication, the MARS station.



J. NICHOLS PC1 OVERSEES SORTING OF MAIL BY POSTAL CLERKS T.J. YOUNG SN, R.L. STINEBAUGH, SN, AND J.E. KELLOG, PC3.



D.L. DELONG E01, TAKING A BREAK TO CATCH UP MAIL.

MARS

The Military Affiliated Radio Station (MARS) located at Camp Adenir, DaNang East, Republic of Vietnam was recently delivered into the hands of the Seabees of U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Fifty-Three, the relieving unit for Mobile Construction Battalion Seven.

Services rendered by the 53 MARS station include both the transmitting and receiving of personal calls, official calls, and telegrams. It operates on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis, and is available to over 8,000 servicemen in the DaNang area. The Army, Marines, and Air Force, as well as Seabees are eligible for this service.

Personal calls may be made for a period of 3 minutes. They may be placed to any city within the United States. A party may call either station-to-station or person-to-person.

The rate of cost on personal calls is based on the distance from the gateway station in the Continental United States to wherever the call is placed.

Messages sent through the MARS circuit are known as MARSGRAMS. These may be sent anytime, day or night, free of charge. Incoming emergency telegrams may be sent by the Red Cross to this station for faster service.

Official calls may be made to Okinawa, Japan, the Philippines, Hawaii, and the Continental United States during allotted frequency times.

In approximately 6 months a MARS station will be operated out of Davisville, Rhode Island, which will be a gateway for those placing calls to the Eastern part of the United States. There are currently stateside stations in Camp Pendleton, California; Fullerton, California; and Honolulu, Hawaii now in use by the Camp Adenir Station.

The 53 MARS station is a great asset in keeping up the morale of these Seabees and was set up with that purpose in mind.



SHOWING HOW TO PLACE A CALL TO THE STATES ARE U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION FIFTY-THREE'S MARS OPERATORS (1-R) ENGINEERING AID SURVEYOR THIRD CLASS JAMES T. MOODY FROM SEATTLE, WASHINGTON AND BUILDER SECOND CLASS CHUCK LOYZELLE FROM RUTLAND VERMONT. (OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY EAD3 M.R. SUTTON) M.R. SUTTON)



UTB2 V.A. FERRARO SERVING THE MEN OF SECURITY WATCH IN EM CLUB.



MEN RELAXING IN ACEY-DUCEY CLUB.

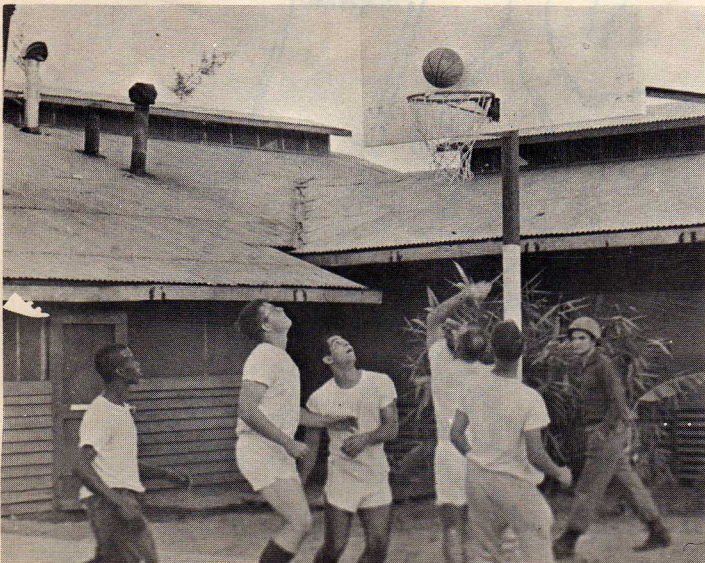
SPECIAL SERVICES

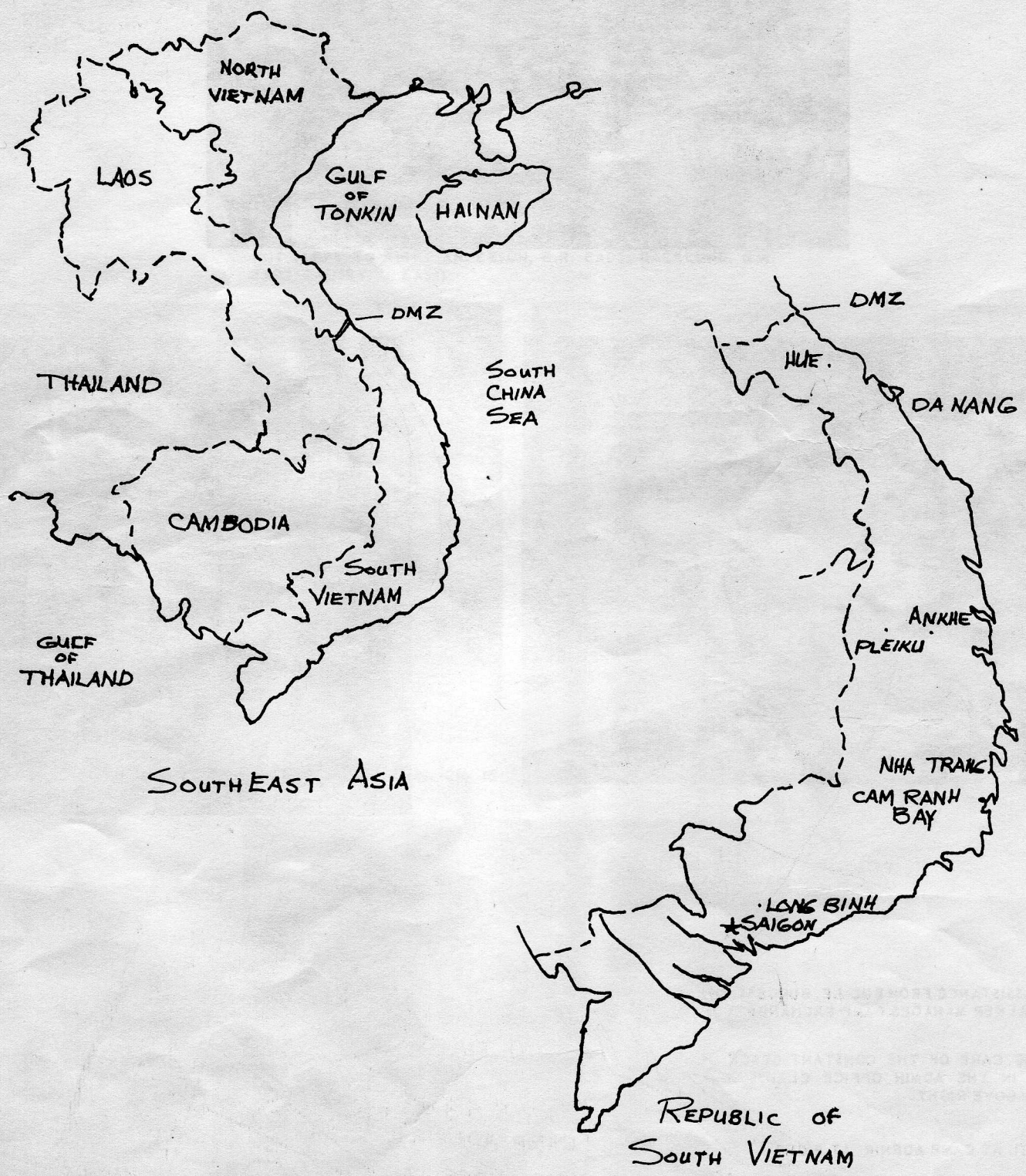


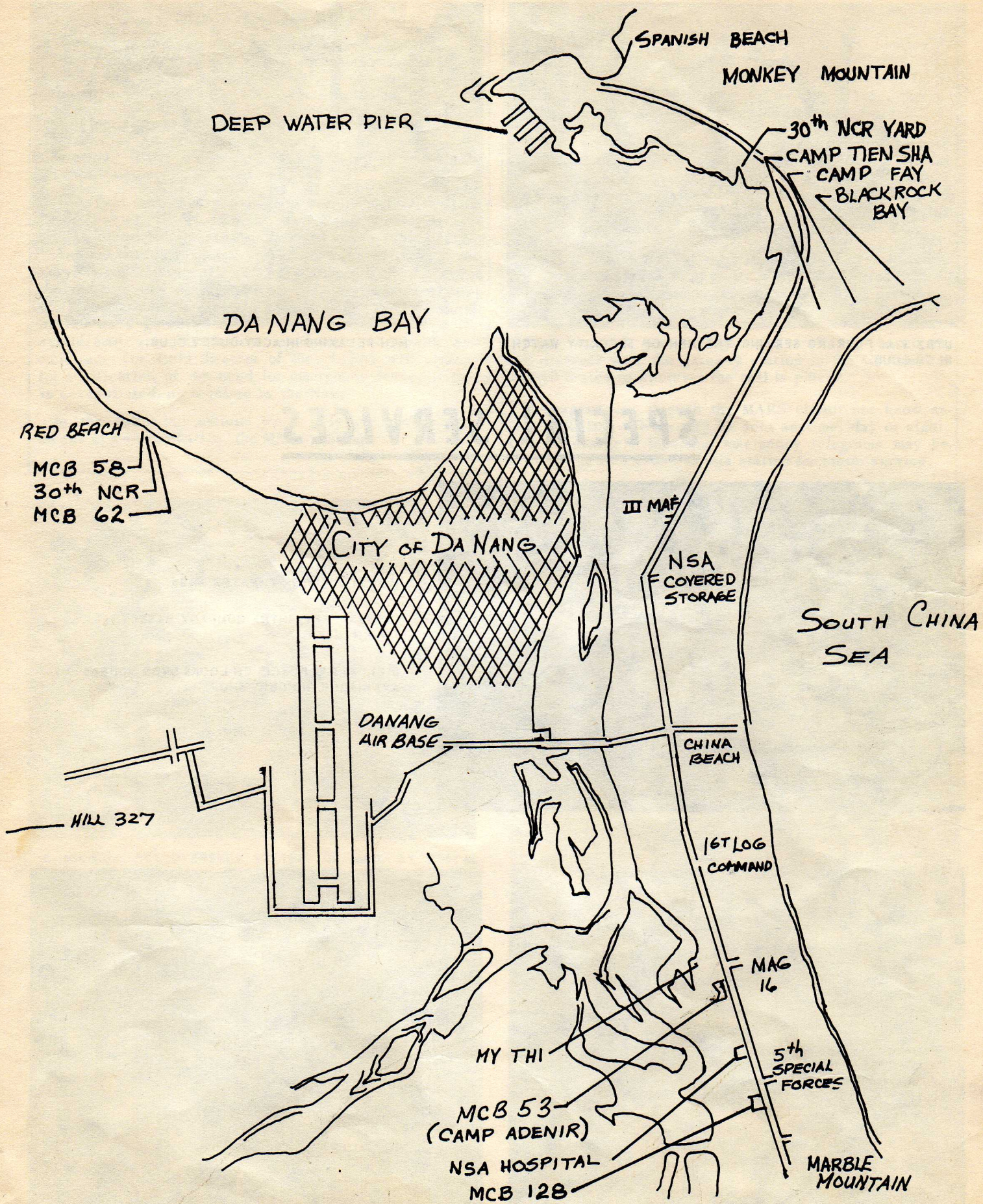
(LEFT) OUTDOOR THEATER AREA.

(LOWER LEFT) INTRA-COMPANY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT.

(BELOW) S.R. FORCE, CN LOOKS OVER MODELS AVAILABLE IN HOBBY SHOP.







The Vietnamese celebration of TET begins at the start of each Lunar Year, falling approximately at the end of January and beginning of February of the Solar Calendar. TET basically is a holiday marking an old year fading out and a New Year's arrival, but the celebration will vary with local customs.

TET is not only an occasion to rest and have a good time in compensation for many days of hardship and toil but it is also an opportunity to remember one's ancestors, maintain the latter's graves, to visit relatives and friends, tighten family ties, and to forget the conflicts and differences of the past year so as to welcome together a happy and hopeful New Year.

The Vietnamese believe strongly that each life is governed by the stars, which change each year bringing the hope that the change will be for the better. TET is also a Birthday for young and old, regardless of Birthdate. It is a period of deep religious expression for the Saints, Gods, and Ancestors. The people try to be kind and generous to one another throughout the Holiday which officially began at 2400 hours on the 30th day of the 12th Lunar month (January).

Preparation for TET began early. Narcissus, cherry and apricot flowers are purchased. Rice cakes (sticky rice with mashed beans, peppers & onions inside and wrapped in a banana leaf) are made. Papaya, turnips, carrots, and pineapple are dried in the sun, then pickled in a fish sauce along with garlic, onion, hot pepper, and peanuts! Red melon seeds are also widely used.

The starting of the New Year is believed to influence the outcome of the next year. Firecrackers are used extensively, signifying happiness. And gifts of clothing and money (placed in red envelopes) are given to the children.

"CHAO ONG NAM MOI"... A Happy New Year to You!



As part of our overall mission in Viet Nam the Battalion has a Civic Action program--to try and cement relations with the local population and give to them the opportunity to better their present condition.

One of the first Civic Action projects the Battalion was involved with was the TET (Vietnamese New Year) celebration. Each of the hamlets of the village (several hamlets make up a village) assembled for the festivities, which centered around giving gifts to the children.

The (Top) picture shows the children waiting for the introductions to finish.

(Right) picture--the introduction of Village Chief.

(Bottom) picture--CDR. R.A. Bowers presents a gift to the window of the hamlet chief who was killed by the Viet Cong. More than 5,000 similar gifts were distributed to the children of the village by various Seabee, Marine and Army Commands in the Danang East area.



PANORAMIC VIEW OVER DANANG RIVER FROM CAMP ADENIR.

FROM: COMMANDING OFFICER
U.S. NAVAL MCB FIFTY-THREE
FPO, NY, N.Y. 09501

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

TO: _____

