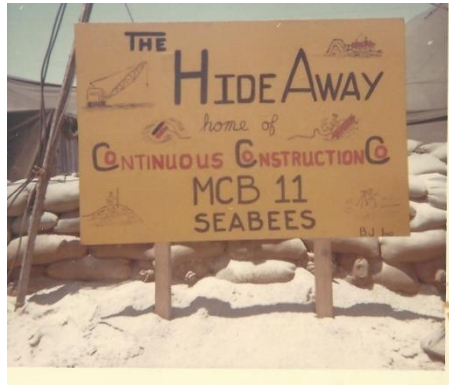


MCB 11 Hide Away



Cua Viet RVN

I arrived in Dong Ha, RVN with the MCB 11's advanced party and within a few short weeks was detached to Cua Viet with other personnel from MCB 11 to build an LST ramp and off-loading/staging site to ferry supplies and ammunition to Dong Ha and the Northern I Corp. Chief Willis instructed me to take my 782 gear and some extra clothes but said I should only be out there for a few short days.

Even though this was a detachment from the battalion it was almost like the Seabee team that I was a member of later that year, Seabee Team 1110. Everyone worked together day and night to get the job done. Hence the name "Continuous



Construction Company" on the sign. As the EA Surveyor I was responsible for the layout, line and grade as needed during the construction of the ramp but this did not occupy all my time.

Consequently, in the Can-Do spirit I pitched in on

other tasks during the second shift (night) such as driving the sheet piling for the ramp support and



driving a Mississippi Road Scraper (MRS) to transport sand from down the beach to backfill behind the sheet pile wall. This assignment turned out to be more than a few short days.

During this time our detachment worked together as a unit separated from the main battalion and were feeling like we were left unattended in a beach Hide-A-Way away from the war effort in RVN even though we had a squad of Marines with us for guarded protection. Subsequently myself and a builder (do not remember his name) designed and built the Yellow Hide-A-Way sign that became the focal point of the Cua Viet location and was used in numerous photo-ops about Cua Viet. I even saw the sign highlighted in the film documentation of the history of MCB 11 in RVN.



Of course, the beach vacation atmosphere did not last long. Upon partial completion of the LST ramp the first LST landed and began unloading supplies of ammunition and jet fuel on to the beach for staging and further transport to Dong Ha via Mike boat. As a result, Cua Viet became a sitting duck and that first night a barrage of 140mm rockets engulfed our beach. The first round landed in a bladder of JP4 jet fuel and all hell broke loose. Ammunition for the 155mm and 175mm at Dong Ha went up in massive explosions.

Fortunately, the LST had departed for the night not wanting to be part of our sitting duck scenario. I do not know the exact number of rockets that hit the beach that night but heard it was over a hundred each. In the heat of the attack, I managed to get into a bunker with only ammunition and no one else. After getting my wits about me it became apparent that I was in the wrong bunker so maneuvered myself about the camp until I made it to my assigned bunker. (Lucky to have made it under all the incoming rockets) Now with the other Seabees, we spent the night in a bunker and were depending on the Marines to hold off any ground attack but fortunately the ground attack never came. The next morning it

became apparent the NVA had a forward observer (FO) just outside our compound and just wanted to destroy our supplies, nothing else at that time. Of course, that changed as time moved forward and Cua Viet became a major focal point for supplying the Northern I Corp.

Shortly thereafter I was picked up by Seabee Team 1110 and was deployed to Long Xuen in the Mekong Delta never to return to Cua Viet. But my sign for the MCB 11 Hide-A-Way lived on and became MCB11 history at Cua Viet.

Bill Womack EA2