100 YEARS OF BOB HOPE: THE 1972 DIEGO GARCIA CHRISTMAS SHOW

UNITED STATES NAVY

SEABEE

ISSUE NO. 3, 2003

Seabee Engineer Reconnaisance Teams

SWIFT SILENT STEALTHY

BAND OF BROTHERS II: AN OIF REDUX

Bob Hope Christmas Show, Diego Garcia, December 1972

"Mama, don't take my Kodachrome away."

— Paul Simon

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PHAN LAMEL J. HINTON, NMCB 40

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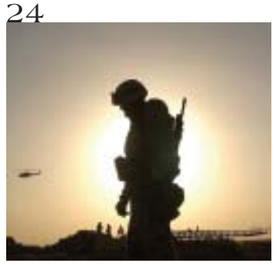

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Since their inception in World War II, Seabees have been dependent on other units and services for engineer and construction intelligence. Those days are effectively over. SERT reconnaissance of the battlespace brings engineers and construction specialists where they can put stealthy eyes — and even hands — on Seabee objectives. And just wait until you see the cool ATVs! Part I of two parts.

DEPARTMENTS

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Greetings from one of the newest top dogs in the Navy — the same one we had before. Our MCPOS is now the *Force* Master Chief of the Seabees, the return of a title (and influence) not seen in the Seabees since the 1980s. In this issue's column, Force discusses the several new methods the Navy is deploying to make you smarter, more effective — and thus more promotable.

7 F.O.B.

A new department: "Front Of the Book." This issue, featuring a fascinating new CEC/Seabee museum plan in development that seeks to memorialize our history and our heroes. With a modern facility and exciting exhibits, Seabee history will move out of a Quonset hut and into the 21st century.

8 Reporter's Notebook

The selfless good works of Seabees in the United Kingdom are brought to bear on a Habitat for Humanity project, plus a Seabee Reservist runs his annual bowl-a-rama for "Toys for Tots." He raises big money, big hope and *many* toys.

10 Newsbreak

Small-town California welcomes home its Seabees in a big way; The Desert Bees name a camp for their fallen shipmate; NMCB 40 celebrates Thanksgiving Okinawa style; 1NCD restructures the NCF Reserve billets; NMCB 74 honors the Original Fearless; SECDEF drops in on Okinawa Bees; Seabee Reserve unit fends off the U.S. Army (and police snipers); RADM Kubic honors Seabee Betty; "King Bee" and "Road Dogs" honor Seabees on Veterans Day at the Seabee Memorial; NAVFAC changes command; *OIF* Bees earn Presidential Unit Citation; RADM Kubic awards medals to Reserve Bees in Times Square — with an assist from ABC News; "Seabee MCs" are not rappers, but they met at the Seabee Memorial.

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You can enter the *SEABEE Magazine* Photo Contest. In fact, you really *should* enter it. Right away. Here's how. No, seriously, *right away*. That's us sitting by the mail room.

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SEABEE

MILITARY RECIPIENTS

Units or organizations with Seabees assigned are authorized no-cost distribution of *SEABEE* Magazine. Send requests on official letterhead signed by the commanding officer or officer in charge, and citing number of unit personnel, to the editor at the magazine's postal address or fax number shown below.

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Stay Navy. Stay Seabee.

FOREWORD

HARRELL T. RICHARDSON (SCW)
FORCE MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE SEABEES

THE SAYING GOES, "The more things change, the more they stay they same."

That saying is now so obsolete it isn't funny. Our Navy is changing in significant ways for the better, not least of which reasons are the extraordinary new ways we will train you and provide you with the knowledge to excel now — and enjoy a robust civilian career when you get out.

Task Force Excel (TFE) you already know about, but adding to that storehouse of professional knowledge now is Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). NKO, Sailors' one-stop shop for career management, is now available on Secure Internet Protocol Network (SIPRNET).

Since its inception, over 90,000 users have registered in NKO, utilizing the site more than a half million times and downloading more than 330,000 documents. Last June, the classified version of NKO was activated and administrators began migrating content to this site.

Now communities that primarily use the SIPRNET, such as the intelligence, cryptology and submarine communities, can connect and take advantage of all the great tools that NKO offers. NKO 's expansion doesn't stop with the classified side of the Navy.

A new "lightweight" version of NKO is now being developed and will operate without requiring Internet access. Success will be based on the ability to operate in a "disconnected" environment as well as the ability to replicate data to and from shore. This capability will be important to Seabees when they are away from home port. Check out all the details on the Web at www.nko.navy.mil.

While there on the NKO Web site, click in on *Sea Warrior Discovery*, a tutorial developed by Navy Personnel Command to initiate our Sailors into the Navy's modern approach to human resource management and development. The tutorial details the elements of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark's Sea Power 21 Transformation Roadmap, which includes Sea Strike, Sea Shield and Sea Basing theories.

Building solid training and educational foundations for Seabees in the Naval Construction Force is what the new Center for Seabees and Facilities Engineering (CSFE) is all about. The Center is taking advantage of initiatives being implemented Navy-wide by the Task Force for Excellence through Commitment to Education and Learning (EXCEL).

The CSFE is completing new job task analyses for the seven Seabee ratings (builders, construction electricians, construction mechanics, engineering aides, equipment operators, steel workers and utilitiesmen), as well as for the functions of the new center itself. There will be more news on this important topic soon.

On this issue's cover is a story about some exciting new Seabee work — the Seabee Engineer Reconnaisance Team. The SERT is not "The Rat Patrol," but rather a swift, silent and stealthy way to collect vital information in the forward battlespace.

Our Special Commemorative Double Issue covering Operations *Enduring Freedom* and *Iraqi Freedom* was a resounding success, thanks to the extraordinary work done by the Desert Bees and by the incredible journalists and photographers who recorded the words and images. There were so many stories we couldn't include all of them (even in a double issue), so we're following up with a few more this time — including a news item on the award of the Presidential Unit Citation to the Desert Bees. *Ooh-rah, Seabees!*

Does anyone *not* know of Bob Hope? When he died this year at age 100, he was celebrated as a veteran comedian, actor and radio star. But Bob Hope was held in highest regard over the decades by generations of military for whom he tirelessly performed his famously funny USO shows.

In this issue, while we mourn his passing, we're happy to commemorate Mr. Hope's amazing contribution to America's military in a story that connects him directly to Seabees.

As always, stay in touch with us. Send your story ideas, observations, kudos, complaints or comments to seabeemagazine@navy.mil.

SEABEE

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and every Seabee everywhere, everyday.

SEABEE Magazine is the publication of the United States Navy Seabees, active duty and reserve, celebrating 61 years of proud Seabee service.

F.O.B.

New CEC/Seabee Museum Memorializes History and Heroes

THE CEC/SEABEE MUSEUM began almost by accident, when CEC officers and Seabees returned from the Pacific at the end of World War II. Bees brought home with them thousands of artifacts, journals, photographs and other records of their experiences.

Now museum officials and the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation have undertaken a $12-million capital campaign to build the architecture and exhibits for a contemporary new CEC/Seabee Museum on Naval Base Ventura County in Port Hueneme, Calif. With help from sponsors and support from Seabees everywhere, the new museum could open to the public within the next three years.

In history, much of the Seabees' original historical material naturally accumulated at Port Hueneme, where farsighted officials stored these irreplaceable treasures and established the Seabee Museum in 1947. In 1956, the collection was moved to two huge Quonset huts where the items were catalogued and put on display. In the years since, additions to the buildings have expanded the display areas.

The museum has since become a Seabee landmark and a great success, attracting more than 15,000 visitors per year. But unsuitable storage facilities and lack of climate control in the aging structures have put the museum's exceptional collection of artifacts and documents at risk. The exhibits, many of which developed more than 20 years ago, are now outdated.

In response to the deteriorating situation, a new facility and exhibition will update the CEC/Seabee legend to offer previously untold chapters of the story. With unimpeded accessibility to the general public, the new museum is designed to reach a much larger audience than before.

The museum concept design shown here represents preliminary concepts for the new CEC/Seabee Museum. The next stages of the project will expand upon these concepts and provide detailed designs for each component of the museum.

The design team and museum staff considered many factors while developing a design that is unique, exciting, cohesive and engaging. There were three goals for the visitor's personal experience — discovery, adventure and appreciation. These themes are woven throughout the museum experience, from arrival, through the exhibitions and out into the exterior environments.

Visitors will explore the museum at their own pace and following their own particular style of learning. Information is expressed through many levels, from simple to detailed and in many forms.

The aging Quonset huts that house the current museum pale in comparison to the spectacular new architectural design for the CEC/Seabee Museum. Based upon its architectural presence alone, the new structure will enjoy a new level of credibility, not only among military museums, but within the international museum community.

The goal of the design was to create a structure typical of those built by Seabees, for Seabees, with representative CEC and Seabee technologies. Gutsy tilt-up concrete walls will be emphasized and abetted by towering pontoon masses, reinforcing the museum's themes, while honoring the heroic design and construction efforts of WWII. Also, piercing the powerful anchor of the main building is a shaft of light, creating an open space and reflecting the transcendent mission of the CEC and the Seabees as protectors of American freedom.

Victory Plaza heralds the visitor's arrival with a feeling of celebration and grandeur. The American flag stands proudly over the plaza, whose surface arcs around the "Roads to Victory Circle" in a wave-like pattern crafted from thousands of commemorative bricks. Tall masts support sheets of weathered steel, each bearing a symbol created of punched metal. The emblems include the Navy's Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment, and the seven Seabee ratings.

A subtle "V" shape draws visitors toward the museum entrance. As they approach, visitors discover more CEC and Seabee construction techniques incorporated within the architecture — exposed concrete pier "foundations," a stylized Quonset hut (framing the conference room), raw concrete walls imprinted with form marks and screed lines and a galvanized corrugated steel roof.

The entrance doors are supported within a massive weathered frame. To the right are the bold emblems of the CEC and Seabees, as well as the logo of the new museum, set off from the building's surface by dramatic cove lighting. Through a tall glazed wall, visitors are afforded a peak into the Grand Hall. All told, an impressive and memorable presentation.

Visitors may spend as little as one hour or as much as a day at the museum. On their way out, visitors are encouraged to add themselves to the museum mailing list, which will inform them of upcoming special events and short-term exhibitions. Young adults can also learn more about how to join the CEC or Seabees.

Lizzie Colbert, Brett Farram, Travis, their 1-year-old son, and U.K. Seabees work on the Habitat for Humanity house.

U.K. Habitat For Humanity A Natural For Seabee Volunteers

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JO1(SS) DAVE KAYLOR

LONDON – The Seabees took the lead role in the United Kingdom's Habitat for Humanity program in 2003. A well-established program in the United States, it is still in its infancy in the U.K.

The Southwark borough south of the Thames River in London was home to such notable figures as Charles Dickens and William Shakespeare, as well as William Penn and John Harvard, founder of Harvard University. Established 2,000 years ago by the Romans, the borough is now one of the poorest in the United Kingdom.

According to Habitat for Humanity, more than 15,000 families are on waiting lists for housing in Southwark.

The Navy's involvement in the Southwark project began in the fall of 2002, originating in the wardroom of Commander, United States Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR) headquarters in London.

"It began in the wardroom, but we quickly realized the great potential for team building within the entire command," said LT Tim Sullivan, who coordinates the Navy volunteer schedules here with Habitat for Humanity. "The command personnel responded wonderfully."

Navy volunteer involvement was initially limited to one day a month. But by May 2003, the number of volunteers had twice exceeded the site's daily capacity, requiring a third day of work each month. And it didn't stop there. Commander, Naval Activities United Kingdom (NAVACTS), based in West Ruislip, joined with NAVEUR in providing additional volunteers, again increasing the number of monthly volunteer days.

With NAVACTS came an added benefit to the Southwark program: *Seabees*. Volunteer Seabees from the Public Works Department at West Ruislip provided specialization at times in the project when a more professional construction skill level was needed.

Navy volunteer organizers once again faced the challenge of an overabundance of volunteers for some scheduled days — a dilemma the small staff at the Southwark site was glad to encounter.

"Finding volunteers is definitely getting easier from when I started," said Shirley Walters at the time, volunteer coordinator for the Southwark site. "When the American Navy came on board last year, it was first in small groups, but after word got around they are coming in much larger groups and more often."

The volunteer spirit among the Sailors was persistent and contagious. As additional volunteers signed up for each session, they sought openings in a schedule already clogged with veterans returning for more. Except for the Seabees, of course, many volunteers at the project site had more enthusiasm than construction skills, performing at their own pace under the guidance of an experienced site manager. Many have never held a hammer.

The highly skilled Seabee labor force was an unexpected bonus for the charity and accelerated the estimated completion date of the final building.

They framed and poured the cement slab for the third and final building on the Habitat site — a feat accomplished in only one day. Prior to the slab, the Seabees erected the perimeter fence undeterred by a steady rain.

"Seabees are known worldwide for helping people," said BUCS Jim Bracken from NAVACTS PWD. "This kind of work is fun for Seabees. As long as you keep them busy, they're happy."

The skills the Seabees bring to these projects are quite apparent to Alan Wellington, Southwark site construction manager.

"They've set a benchmark we're not like likely to break. Without them we would have persevered, but it would have been a mammoth task."

According to Wellington, without Seabees, the slab would have been poured in five sections over a six-week period. Most likely, he would have provided the only skilled labor.

Seabees and Sailors volunteered in large numbers for the Habitat for Humanity project outside of London, England, one of only three such sites in the U.K.

With the Seabees in place that day, the experienced construction manager's most difficult task was slaving over the barbecue for an hour.

While the Seabees poured the slab, an eager family excitedly watched the foundation of their new home take shape. Lizzie Colbert, Brett Farram and their 1 year old son Travis had been notified of their selection only three days earlier.

"It still hasn't sunk in," Colbert said, as she mingled with the bustling volunteers. "If it wasn't for this, we would never have the opportunity to own a home here. They said to come out on Friday and see the U.S. Navy work. We were very excited. We can't wait to get started ourselves."

New homeowners are required to contribute a minimum of 500 hours of labor or "sweat equity" to the building process. The houses are then sold to the families at cost and with no-interest mortgages usually repaid over 20 years.

"People have their misfortunes and it's just nice that people are looking out for each other," a volunteer said. "We all have problems, but when you come out and you see and hear about some of the problems these people have, it just makes yours seem so small."

"It's a 'win-win' situation for everybody," said Wellington. "We watch the lives of the owners change.

"In turn, the Sailors who are helping are actually seeing a part of that change and it changes their lives, too. It's about as good a feeling as you can get," Wellington said.

Thanks to that volunteer spirit, 11 Southwark families experienced the dream of owning a home. Four more families will share that dream in November.

Habitat for Humanity is an international charity founded in 1976 and dedicated to building affordable housing for low-income families. To date, more than 125,000 homes have been constructed worldwide. For more information on Habitat for Humanity International, visit www.habitat.org.

SW1 Behe (left, below) and the Cambria County 'Tots' Marines raised $5,000 and more than a thousand toys from 250 charity bowlers and generous local businesses.

SEABEE SANTA RAISES $5000 FOR 'TOYS FOR TOTS'

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LT LILA J. BAKKE

ALTOONA, Pa. — SW1 Dave Behe is a Seabee with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23, Detachment 0523, based in Ebensburg, Pa., and once again he proves that the *Can Do!* attitude isn't limited to the active duty realm. On Nov. 29, at the F. A. Gerhart Lanes, located inside the Bavarian Aid Society here, he held his 6th Annual No-Tap Bowling Tournament for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots. About 250 bowlers competed in three shifts to raise $5,000.00 in cash and more than 1,000 toys for the Marine Corps Reserve program.

The toys and cash donations benefited more than 1,200 children in the local Cambria County area, explained Marine SGT Kittenger, Assistant Toys for Tots Coordinator. The county area had been especially hard hit in the recent economic downturn; 475 families signed up for the 2003 Tots program when the norm for this area is 100 families.

More than 80 local businesses also supported the effort, making cash gifts and donating raffle prizes. This year, a special drawing for a Pittsburgh Steelers' helmet and football, signed by No. 97, Kendell Ball, and donated by the team, raised nearly $500.00 by itself.

"Without Dave, we'd have nothing," Kittenger said. Behe visited more than 150 businesses to generate donations for the event. "He's outstanding," said Marine SSGT Shearer, Toys for Tots Coordinator. "He goes above

and beyond the call of duty to make this work. He's our second biggest donator."

"I look forward to this event all year long," Behe said. He and his brother John, a former UT1 and Vietnam veteran, brainstormed the idea in 1998.

"When I was overseas during Desert Storm/Desert Shield, I saw the other side, kids that had nothing," explained Behe. That's when he decided to try to make a difference in children's' lives. Behe and his brother are the second generation in his family to serve in three wars. His father was a German prisoner of war during World War II, and his father-in-law also served in combat then.

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program began in 1948 and has since then collected and distributed over 285 million toys to children of disadvantaged families. The cash donations and toys raised in an area are, in turn, distributed to children of families in the same area. You can help by donating a toy to your local U.S. Marine Corp Reserve unit or by making a tax-deductible donation to the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, P.O. Box 1947, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. 22134.

NEWSBREAK

Welcome home!

Small-town California presented one of the biggest patriotic tributes to returning American fighting forces in modern times.

STORY BY JO1(SW) SCOTT SUTHERLAND, NMCB 5
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PH2(AW) PHILIP FORREST, NMCB 4

OCEANSIDE, Calif. — Recognizing America's recent version of rocket's red glare and bombs bursting in air over Iraq, tens of thousands of people lined the streets of this military community Oct. 25 for the Defenders of Freedom Parade, a public tribute to the men and women who served with the Camp Pendleton-based I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and the Seabees of its Marine Engineering Group (I MEG) returning from *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

Ten thousand Seabees, Sailors and Marines marched in ranks, highlighting the parade down a mile-long stretch of city streets. A patriotic crowd — adorned with everything red, white and blue and "Welcome Home" banners — paid energetic homage to the service members who returned home from the global war against terrorism in Iraq earlier this year.

As confetti shot out of military cannons and Marine Corps attack helicopters flew overhead, the enthusiastic crowd said "Thank you" time and time again to the Sailors and Marines during the two-hour love fest.

"I've never had this many people say 'thank you' to me in such a short period of time," said Steelworker 2nd Class Joshua Eichelberger, who served in Kuwait earlier this year with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 5 based out of Port Hueneme, about 100 miles north of Oceanside. "The fly-over was cool, too. I haven't seen helicopters fly that low since we were in the desert."

Guest of honor was the former Marine Corps gunnery sergeant and veteran movie actor Ron Ermey (*The Boys in Company C, Full Metal Jacket, Toy Story 1 & 2*). He currently hosts "Mail Call," a cable TV show about the technology used throughout history by armed forces.

"Oceanside went the extra mile today," Ermey told the cheering crowd as the Marine Corps provided demonstrations of assault landing craft as a backdrop. "There should be more of these parades around the country, because you guys are the patriots. You took it upon yourselves to get into harm's way. For that, I say thank you."

Lt. Gen. James Conway, the commanding general of I MEF who led 45,000 Sailors and Marines during *OIF* and the global war against terrorism, thanked the crowd, city and state political leaders for the "outpouring of patriotism and good fellowship."

Conway saluted Sailors and Marines in the parade from a reviewing stand. Later, he told a crowd gathered in an amphitheater in the city park that there are two questions service members ask themselves when they are called on to serve in a war like the one in Iraq.

"First, will my family be provided for? And second, will my countrymen back home support us?" said Conway. "I can honestly reply yes to both questions."

Conway added, "The Sailors and Marines of I MEF will go wherever we're needed, and we'll make you proud."

In addition to the troops and fly-overs, the parade featured military and high school marching bands, tanks and other military vehicles, dignitaries and speeches, and post-parade entertainment at the amphitheater near the city pier.

Besides the contingent of locally based Marines in the parade, Navy Seabees, representing the expeditionary force as part of the

I MEF Engineer Group (I MEG), provided elements from 11 battalions and support units for the gala celebration. I MEG Commander Rear Adm. Chuck Kubic, who leads the First Naval Construction Division, proudly led the Seabees along the parade route and later was joined by the audience for a rendition of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The crowd showed its appreciation for the Bee's war efforts by shouting "Go Navy!" all along the route.

Among many others, the accomplishments of Seabees during *OIF* included building a 22-acre aircraft parking apron to support a Marine Air Wing ("Weapons of Mass Construction," last issue), erecting six non-standard bridges across several rivers and canals in Iraq, and constructing an enemy prisoner of war camp.

The Defenders of Freedom Parade was an event on a grand scale of military celebrations. The day of patriotism in the military community of Oceanside was certainly the biggest in the city's history.

It might also have been the biggest outpouring of red, white and blue in the lives of many deserving Seabees and Marines, young and old alike.

The hero status bestowed upon them was well deserved.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JO2 JACOB JOHNSON

Above, BUCN Brian Morvant (left) and BU3 Vincent Planetta complete a sign last August renaming their desert worksite. Below. Mrs. Bollinger is presented with her son's Navy Commendation Medal by CDR Jeffrey T. Borowy (left), commanding officer of NMCB 133, and CAPT Mark Handley, commanding officer of 22 NCR.

Gulfport Honors Fallen Shipmate

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JO3 COREY WEBER

GULFPORT — When he left for Iraq, Builder 3rd Class Doyle "Wayne" Bollinger had plans to install new carpet in his mother's home, where he practiced the building skills he learned during two years as a Seabee.

But on June 6, the 21-year-old from Poteau, Okla., became the first Seabee to die in a combat zone since the war in Vietnam.

"He'd put a floor in the dining room for me. He had other projects he wanted to do," said Bollinger's mother, Wyvonne, who Nov. 24 received the Navy Commendation Medal presented posthumously to her son, who was killed when a piece of ordnance accidentally detonated in the area where he was working near al-Kut.

Bollinger's Gulfport-based unit, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133, built a prisoner of war camp, repaired highways and repaired a bridge over the Tigris River before the accident. An investigation determined the weapon that killed Bollinger and injured three other Seabees was not a booby trap.

During the memorial service, Bollinger's mother told the members of NMCB 133 that she was proud of the unit's work in Iraq.

"I'm very proud of my son and just as proud of the people who came back home," she said.

At 6 feet 2 inches and 170 pounds, the young Seabee was remembered by his mother as "all arms and legs" and good intentions.

During his last last visit home, he spent hours working on a water heater and finally fixed it. His mechanical talent was put to good use as a Seabee.

"He wanted to know how things worked," she said. "He took things apart, but he always put them back together."

Bollinger's fellow Seabees found him likable, competent and heroic in understated ways. After an earlier deployment to Guam, he requested permission to take a civilian course in firefighting so he could become a volunteer firefighter.

"He wanted to serve more and do more," said CAPT Mark Handley, commander of the Twenty Second Naval Construction Regiment, based in Gulfport.

"His commitment was unwavering," Handley said. "We'll forever be proud to call him one of our shipmates."

— Patrick Peterson
Biloxi Sun-Herald

Before heading home from its deployment, NMCB 40 has Thanksgiving Okinawa style

STORY BY PHAN JOHN P. CURTIS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHAN LAMEL HINTON

BU3 Leota Phillips (left) and UT1 (SCW) Mark Stone changed the Camp Shields welcome sign as NMCB 40 turned over the facility and all of their projects throughout the Pacific to NMCB 5.

Dancers perform a Polynesian Island program called the *Tahiti Apariva Himene* in front of members of the battalion during NMCB 40's multi-cultural Thanksgiving celebration on Okinawa.

CDR G. E. "Dwyn" Taylor (above right in black shirt), commanding officer NMCB 40, and LT Jeffrey Plummer (far right in green shirt), command chaplain, serve Seabees at Thanksgiving.

CAMP SHIELDS, Okinawa — Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40's Multi-Cultural Heritage Committee (MCHC) and the battalion's galley crew threw a Thanksgiving Day 2003 dinner — with festivities that included sharing the diverse cultural experiences of the battalion.

In the battalion galley Nov. 27, NMCB 40 commanding officer CDR Dwyn Taylor opened the celebration by giving thanks.

"Looking back on this past year, we count our blessings as NMCB 40 and as Seabees," he said. "We had a really good deployment, no accidents of a significant nature and we haven't lost anyone. As Americans, we enjoy a freedom no other country on this earth enjoys."

He then asked everyone to join him in a moment of silence to consider those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that freedom we enjoy. LT Jeffrey Plummer, command chaplain, gave a prayer before the men and women of "Fighting FORTY" enjoyed a dinner of turkey, steak, ham, stuffing, gravy, yams, pecan pie and pumpkin pie.

"The food was off the chain," smiled Construction Electrician 3rd Class (SCW) Ladon Johnson of Bravo Company. While people enjoyed their dinners, they also enjoyed performances of entertaining cultural dances presented to the battalion.

Engineering Aide 2nd Class (SCW) Lole Chamberlin was one of the event organizers.

"It was food and friends under one roof," said Chamberlin, president of the MCHC and a native of New Zealand who grew up in American Samoa. "It was good to see people performing a dance from another culture than their own and doing it so well."

Chamberlin taught a New Zealand dance called the *Haka* and a Tahitian *Apariva Himene* dance to other Seabees in preparation for the Thanksgiving performances.

Storekeeper 3rd Class Stacey Mok participated in the Tahitian *Apariva Himena* and also demonstrated the Korean Farmer Drum Dance that her mother taught her as a child.

Additionally, people from outside the battalion participated in the Thanksgiving festivities. A group of Filipino dancers under the direction of Ms. Linda Okuma of Navy Campus also performed. One performance was called *Tinikling*.

"It was very impressive," said Builder Constructionman Jerry Bennett of Charlie Company.

The Filipino dancers also performed *Binasuan*, which consists of dancing with candles in a glass in each hand and on top of their heads.

At the end of the festivities and representing Native American Heritage Month, CECN Eli Bishop and other Seabees performed a Cherokee War Dance.

As they prepared to head home, the Bees spent the remainder of their turkey day resting and relaxing in preparation for the December turnover of Camp Shields to NMCB 5 and the completion of their 2003 pacific deployment.

The Seabees of NMCB 40 had been on deployment since June and returned to their homeport in early December.

1NCD Restructures NCF Reserve Units

NORFOLK, Va. — The First Naval Construction Division (1NCD) announced a series of actions that will transform the reserve component of the Naval Construction Force (NCF). These actions will enable the Seabees to improve mission readinesss in the years ahead and help the NCF achieve a required reduction of more than 2,000 billets. The sweeping transformation, representing one of the largest sets of changes in the NCF ever undertaken at one time, went into effect Oct. 1, 2003.

Since the mid-1990s — despite aggressive and creative recruiting programs — the NCF (and the entire Naval Reserve) have regularly experienced difficulty filling junior enlisted vacancies in the ranks. Part of the NCF transformation recognizes this issue by authorizing more senior billets in lieu of junior billets in the units.

The resulting manning levels after this adjustment is fully implemented will strengthen both the readiness and capability of Reserve NCF units.

During the recent war in Iraq, Seabees reinforced their *Can Do!* legacy while again redefining their role on the battlefield. Every type of Seabee unit was represented in the war, performing traditional missions and embracing new ones that emerged in the battlespace.

Reserve units and personnel represented almost a third of the Seabees deployed to the Middle East and comprise just under half of the Seabees deployed across the globe. Since February 2003, more than 1,800 Seabees have been mobilized in support of the global requirements of the NCF.

Defining the shape of this force structure reduction was a considerable challenge. In the final plan approved by the Chief of Naval Operations, the Reserve component of the NCF will include four Regiments, 12 Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB), two Construction Battalion Maintenance Units (CBMU), one Naval Construction Force Support Unit (NCFSU) and augment units for the active regiments, Seabee Readiness Groups and Construction Battalion Centers.

Reserve Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 26 use a crane to lift a Douglas EA-3B "Skywarrior" reconnaisance plane from a trailer in front of the Naval Station Rota, Spain Bachelor Officer Quarters. The plane was a static display moved from its original location to make room for parking lot expansion.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JOC ROBERT PALOMARES, USNR

The only planned unit losses in the NCF include the decommissioning of NCFSU 3 and elimination of designated augment units for active NMCBs. Seabees belonging to these units will be reassigned within the NCF.

In addition, the reserve component of the NCF will consolidate multiple training detachments into single NCF units at most of the reserve centers.

This will improve the ability to train NCF personnel, enhancing the overall readiness of Reserve Seabee units and maintaining a Seabee presence at nearly every reserve center across the country.

These changes created a demographic imbalance across the force. To address the mismatch, some reserve training detachments and/or unit locations will be realigned to balance unit strengths, improve command and control and minimize driving distances to unit headquarters locations. The approved plan realigns 23 detachments to new units and relocates CBMU 202 from New London, Conn., to Camp LeJeuene, N.C.

The relocation of CBMU 202 headquarters better aligns more than 300 billets with available personnel, but also enhances the Seabees' strategic alignment with the Marine Corps — a relationship critical to reinforcing Seabees' role on the 21st century battlefield.

Below is the summary of realignments.

— CDR William Sheedy, 1NCD

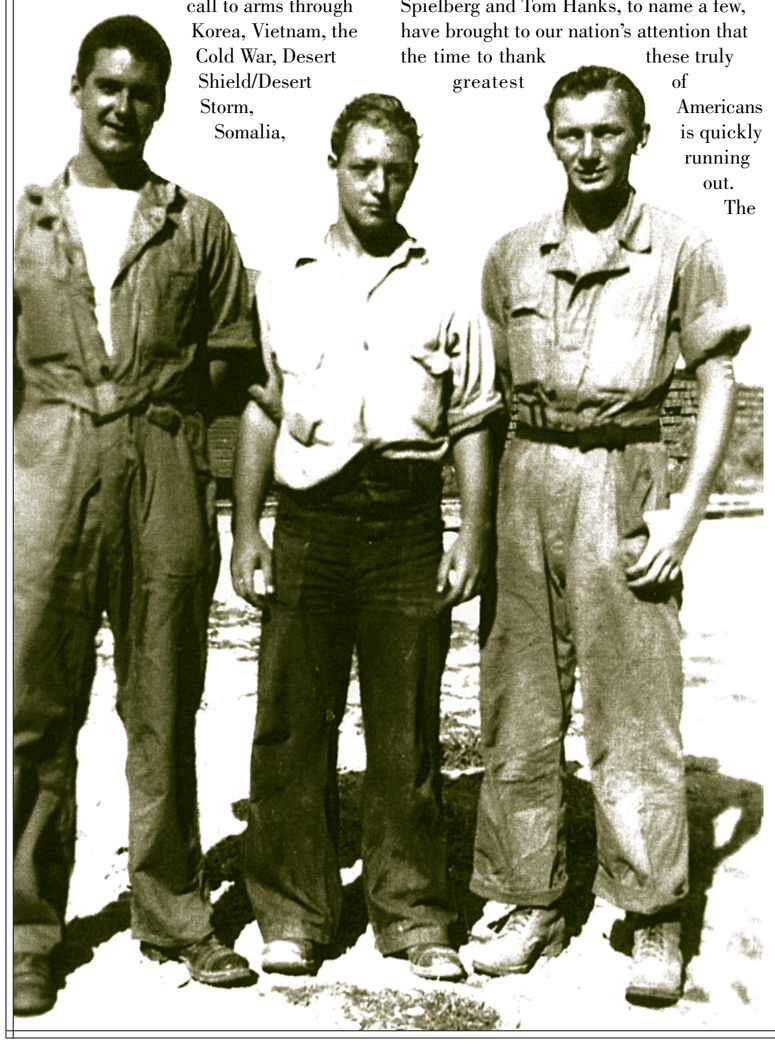
DETACHMENT REALIGNMENTS	FROM	TO
Providence, R.I.	CBMU 202	NMCB 27
New Haven, Conn.	CBMU 202	NMCB 27
Albany, N.Y.	CBMU 202	NMCB 27
Harrisburg, Penn.	NMCB 21	NMCB 23
Wilmington, Del.	NMCB 21	NMCB 23
Vienna (Youngstown), Ohio	NMCB 23	NMCB 26
Akron, Ohio	NMCB 23	NMCB 26
Wilmington, N.C.	20 SRG	CBMU 202
Raleigh, N.C.	20 SRG	CBMU 202
Greensboro, N.C.	20 SRG & NMCB 24	CBMU 202
Asheville, N.C.	NMCB 24	CBMU 202
Charlotte, N.C.	NMCB 24	CBMU 202
Columbia, S.C.	20 SRG	CBMU 202
N Charleston, S.C.	NMCB 14	CBMU 202
Columbus, Ga.	NCFSU 3	20 SRG
Bessemer, Ala.	NCFSU 3	NMCB 24
Tuscaloosa, Ala.	NCFSU 3	NMCB 24
Gulfport, Miss.	NCFSU 3	NMCB 28
Evansville, Ind.	NMCB 26	NMCB 24
Decatur7, Ill.	NMCB 26	NMCB 25
Peoria, Ill.	NMCB 26	NMCB 25
Cape Girardeau, Mo.	NMCB 28	NMCB 15
Albuquerque, N.M.	NMCB 22	NMCB 17

NMCB 74 Honors the 'Original Fearless'

STORY BY CDR CLIFFORD M. MAURER
COMMANDING OFFICER, NMCB 74

NO SEABEE WILL ARGUE with an assertion that our tremendous successes of today are firmly rooted in the legacy cultivated by the original Seabees of World War II. All Seabees that followed, answering our nation's call to arms through Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and most recently, Iraq, have strived to build upon the *Can Do!* spirit that was willed to us by our Seabee forebears.

In recent years, some fairly famous persons, such as Tom Brokaw, Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks, to name a few, have brought to our nation's attention that the time to thank these truly greatest of Americans is quickly running out. The "Citizen Soldiers" of WW II saved our world and then went on to build the greatest nation the world has ever known. That's why I was more than a little excited when I received an e-mail from Rick Brown, son of former MM2 Marvin "Brownie" Brown, requesting my help to honor his father and two of his shipmates, surviving plankowners from CB74 — the "Original Fearless."



Rick Brown, an Air Force Reserve Technical Sergeant and a Philadelphia firefighter by profession, had been activated for *Operation Enduring Freedom* and then later for *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. While at the Willow Grove, Penn., reserve center, he happened upon the May issue of *All Hands* magazine. An article about NMCB 74's accomplishments in desert operations captivated him and he wondered if there was a connection between NMCB 74 and CB74, his father's old WW II unit about which he had heard countless stories.

Of course, the two are one in the same. Through the Internet, Rick was soon in contact with me and planning was underway to recognize what remaining members of CB74 we could locate.

As with many WW II veterans, MM2 Marvin Brown, SF3 Fred VonBraunsberg and MOMM3 Joe Lynch found the experience left an indelible mark on their lives. All three, each an original CB74 plankowner, enlisted in March of 1943. They were at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va., when CB74 was commissioned on April 28, 1943, under the leadership of LCDR Fremont Elliot, CEC, USNR.

In the next six months, the battalion moved to Camp Endicott, Rhode Island; then onto Camp Parks (near San Francisco); next it was to Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California, where they marched, drilled and were assigned their first equipment. From here they embarked on troop transports, with the equipment loaded onto LSTs, and sailed to Pearl Harbor. It was time for CB74 to enter the fight in the Pacific.

In short order, they were back aboard LSTs heading south to the Gilbert Islands. The unit landed on Tarawa's Betio Island on Nov. 23, 1943, only three days after the 2nd Marine Division's D-Day. Under months of regular Japanese aerial attacks, CB74 produced fantastic feats of construction accomplishments on Tarawa, the "unsinkable carrier." CB74 later followed the Marines onto Kawjalein Island in the Marshall Islands and then ultimately ended the war on Okinawa, Japan. That is where the battalion was deactivated on Oct. 31, 1945.

On the weekend of Sept. 27-28, 2003, my wife and I had the opportunity to meet with Brownie and Fred at Rick and spouse Gerry Brown's home in Northern Philadelphia. Unfortunately, Joe Lynch couldn't be there, being too ill to travel from his home near Baltimore. When we arrived at the Brown's home (where Brownie and his wife, Jean, also reside), we were impressed to see in the front yard stood a flagpole with our national ensign waving from the mast; on the starboard yardarm were the Navy and Marine Corps flags and from the port yardarm flew the POW/MIA and Seabee flags.

Brownie and Fred are your classic World War II vets; they didn't have too much to say about what they did. The canned answers often were, "Oh, we didn't do anything special." Today, of course, we all know that to be false. Brownie, for example, had been the recipient of a Purple Heart, awarded after he was injured when a land mine destroyed the bulldozer he was operating.

What these heroes were eager to talk about were their shipmates. For elderly men who may have difficulty recalling what they had for dinner the night before, their recollection of buddies' names, families and fate through life was amazing.

They described each man with whom they shared a tent, where his cot was located and even his hobbies. Both men rattled off shipmates, their families, where they lived, what they did and when they passed away as if they were reading through a ledger. You could see the glow on their faces as they recalled, with deep fondness and admiration, their fellow Seabees.

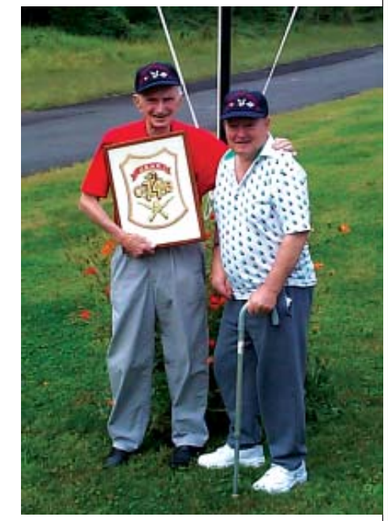
In the mid 1960s, many of the CB74 plankowners started to gather every year or two. But by the late 1980s, the robust group that started out with more than 100 had declined to only a few. That's when they decided to stop gathering. Each meeting was just too sad. Of that original group, there are only these three left.

If Fred and Brownie are fair examples of their fellow WW II veterans, as we're sure they are, their contributions to our great nation far exceed their individual efforts. Fred's brother landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. Two days later he lost his life to a German mortar round. Marvin and Jean Brown had four children and their two sons both went into public service. One, a Philadelphia policeman, now retired, and Rick, the Philadelphia firefighter.

Fred and Kathleen VonBraunsberg had seven children, most of whom entered some form of public service. Their son Dan is a recently retired New York City firefighter from Queens Ladder Co. 160. He was at Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001.

I had the honor of presenting these historic Seabee heroes with Plankowner Certificates, NMCB 74 plaques, hats, unit coins — and heartfelt letters of gratitude for their being the Original Fearless. As Fred cleared the tears from his eyes, I asked him if he had any words for the Seabees of today.

"Take care of your buddies," he replied. "They will be your friends for life."



Left: Joe Lynch, Marvin Brown and Fred VonBraunsberg as they appeared in WW II as three of the "Original Fearless." Top left: The original CB74 battalion crest, sent home to an aunt by Marvin in 1943 and returned to him about 1958. Top: Fred and Marvin today. Middle: CDR Maurer presents NMCN 74 commemoratives to the "Original Fearless." Bottom: Sons USAFR TSGT Rick Brown (left rear) and retired firefighter Dan VonBraunsberg join their fathers for the Seabee presentations.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PHAN JOHN P. CURTIS

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa, Japan — The Honorable Mr. Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, visited with Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 Nov. 16. The SECDEF visited Okinawa and met with local officials to discuss the U.S. military presence in Okinawa. Rumsfeld made time to meet with the Seabees and answer questions.

Flowers for Seabee Betty

STORY BY JO1 KATE ROBERTS
PHOTOGRAPH BY LT BRANDON HARDING

GUAM — "Thank you Seabee Betty for all you did for so many Seabees for so many years," said RADM Charles Kubic, Commander First Naval Construction Division, as he gently laid flowers upon the grave of beloved Seabee Betty (right).

A tropical breeze stirred the fragrant bouquet on the ground. Undoubtedly, Seabee Betty memories were felt in the hearts of the Seabees present at this solemn occasion.

Many Bees, former and current, young and old, have their favorite Seabee Betty story. Maybe it was a party she threw or a favor she did, but all Seabees agree on one thing. >>

RADM Kubic lays memorial flowers on Seabee Betty's grave Aug. 8, 2003.

"There will never be another Seabee Betty," said the commanding officer of NMCB 4 CDR Jim Worcester. Most who knew her would agree.

The woman behind the legend was born Vicenta Chargualaf Peredo, on September 10th, 1934, in the village of Yona, Guam. She died June 9, 2003. Seabee Betty enjoyed throwing large parties for her Seabees, inviting all her friends and relatives. She offered huge amounts of food and drink and worked hard to make the Bees feel welcome.

She was a woman who opened her heart and home to Seabees for decades. "She was an ambassador, possibly the biggest advocate for us in Guam," said CDR Worcester with a smile of remembrance.

Seabees enjoyed all that Seabee Betty did for them, and they never forgot that. She was invited to many wardroom dinners and Seabee Balls. Additionally, Seabees purchased building material out of their own pockets to restore Seabee Betty's home after a Typhoon damaged it in 1997.

Seabee Betty left big shoes to fill. Many new Seabees are left saddened because they will never have the honor of meeting her, or better, sharing in one of her famous feasts.

The question left on everyone's lips remains, "What will become of her legacy?" CDR Worcester's eyes sparkled as he answered.

"It's up to us to keep her legacy alive. We will continue to tell her story and she will become part of our lore," he said. "We owe that to her."

Reserve Bees Fend off Army — and Police Snipers — During FEX-03

STORY BY JO3 PAT MIGLIACCIO & SN JACQUELINE WARD

MILWAUKEE – Seabees from Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) 1 Detachment 416 successfully defended their base camp from an aggressor force consisting of Army National Guardsman (ANG) and civilian police experts during a mock war game.

Approximately 40 Reserve ACBees participated in the training exercise that occurred in Bender Park, a scenic hide-away located in Oak Creek, Wis., just south of Milwaukee. Situated along the shores of Lake Michigan, the park and its dense foliage and rough terrain were a perfect setting for the realistic combat simulation.

The mission of ACB 1 during wartime is to go ashore with the Marines. "Basically we're a 5-star hotel for the Marine Corps," said LCDR James Beier, commanding officer of the detachment. "We're their logistics department. We manage the camp, camp security, motor pool and weaponry. As the Marines move forward and clear an area, ACB 1 will eventually follow and establish secondary bases."

Camouflaged with leaves, branches and green face paint, ACB 1 separated into squads and traversed the rugged land learning how to find their location. "Everyone in the unit has to know how to use grids, compass and protractor to read a map," EOC Tim Hendrickson said. "It's a fundamental part of Seabee combat warfare."

The war games began in earnest after nightfall. The small enemy force consisted of Oak Creek ANGs — and a sniper team from the Oak Creek Police Department (OCPD). Both would attempt to penetrate a defense perimeter defended by ACBees and then try to capture a large green flag located at the unit's Command Operation Center (COC).

The night training was very realistic. Guardsmen fired blanks to simulate live weapons fire. An OCPD sniper team, heavily camouflaged in ghillie suits, joined the Guardsmen as they attempted to penetrate ACB 1's defense perimeter.

"We could hear a lot of movement in the brush," said BU2 Robert Rutherford, another weekend planner of the event. "The Army was very active and 'shot' a couple of our people when they captured a listening post, but overall things went very well."

Both sides sustained casualties during the timed exercise, but ACB 1 was declared the winner when the small opposing forces failed to break the Seabees' defense.

"ACB 1 did a great job," Beier said. "I'm especially proud of our enlisted folks, who did the majority of the planning for this exercise. They did an outstanding job coordinating training with two other independent agencies and worked well with them. We had a very aggressive work schedule, got in a lot of good training – and we put up a strong defense. The Army National Guardsmen and Oak Creek police never accomplished their objective of capturing our flag."

'King Bee' and 'Road Dogs' Honor Seabees on Veterans Day 2003

RADM Michael K. Loose, Commander NAVFAC, Chief of Civil Engineers — and King Bee of the Seabees worldwide — made the annual Veteran's Day pilgrimmage to the Seabee Memorial near Arlington National Cemetery to lay a commemorative wreath with Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees Harrell T. Richardson. A big contingent of Navy Seabee Veterans of America (NSVA) and Vietnam Era Seabees provided a large gallery of participants, family members and spectators. Among the latter was former EO2 Dutch Van Tassel (center, in "Navy Seabee" ball cap), who served as a Seabee in Vietnam circa 1967-69. Arrayed around him and RADM Loose are his supportive colleagues from the Road Dogs Motorcycle Club of Southern Maryland. From left, Russell Selig (USN 1976-80; 2001 Harley-Davidson FLH TC1); Brett Willette (USAF, 1984-98; '03 H-D FLS); Al Kincaid (USANG 1965-66, USN '68-69; '86 H-D Liberty); Don Bowen ('88 H-D Police Special); Chuck Appelle ('03 H-D FLH-T); and Dan Williams ('03 H-D Super Glide). Below, Dylan D'Andrea displays his Seabee flag during the ceremonial posting of the colors. U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOC DANIEL CHARLES ROSS

New Leader Takes Charge of Naval Facilities Engineering Command

RADM Michael K. Loose to Command the Navy's Worldwide Facilities Engineering Organization

RADM Johnson (L) is congratulated by the CNO (R) upon his retirement, while RADM Christopher E. Weaver, Commander Navy Installations, looks on. Below left, Johnson "goes ashore" for the last time with his wife, Terry. Below, RADM Loose assumed command of NAVFAC at a Washington Navy Yard ceremony.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOC DANIEL CHARLES ROSS

WASHINGTON NAVY YARD — Rear Adm. Michael K. Loose, Civil Engineer Corps, USN, assumed command of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) and became the 40th Chief of Civil Engineers in a ceremony here Oct. 24..

RADM Loose relieved RADM Michael R. Johnson, CEC, USN, who had led NAVFAC since October 2000. RADM Johnson, who departed the Navy Jan. 1, 2004, after 34 years of military service, was retired by the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark, USN.

RADM Loose, 49, a native of Albuquerque, N.M., comes to NAVFAC from Norfolk, Va., where he served as Commander NAVFAC Atlantic Division, and Fleet Civil Engineer, Commander U.S. Atlantic Fleet. As NAVFAC commander, RADM Loose is the Navy's senior ashore representative to the professional engineering community and construction industry. He received his second star in a ceremony at NAVFAC on Nov. 26.

His other assignments have included Vice Commander, NAVFAC; Commanding Officer, Navy Public Works Center, Pearl Harbor and the Commander Navy Region Hawaii Program Manager for Regional Facilities, Environmental, Safety and Passenger Transportation; Facilities Officer. Loose is a Seabee Combat Warfare Officer and a Professional Civil Engineer in the state of California.

During the ceremony, ADM Clark awarded RADM Johnson the Distinguished Service Medal — the Navy's highest peacetime award — for his efforts in leading 13,300 personnel in 22 subordinate commands and activities responsible for executing $9 billion of global work. According to his award citation, Johnson "guided the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Civil Engineer Corps in establishing the highest standards of excellence in the planning, design, construction and management of the naval shore facilities across the globe" and "propelled NAVFAC into the 21st Century as a recognized leader in the delivery of facility engineering solutions, both within the Department of Defense and private sector."

Under his command from October 2000 to October 2003, Johnson achieved a number of innovative and cost-cutting projects in support of the Navy and Marine Corps combat mission, including the establishment of a new First Naval Construction Division/Naval Construction Forces Command structure by merging two Seabee brigades of 18,000 to provide a single command interface for Seabee operations worldwide under RADM Charles R. Kubic.

Johnson is qualified as a Seabee Combat Warfare Officer, is registered as a Professional Engineer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and is the current national president and Fellow in the Society of American Military Engineers.

NAVFAC manages the planning, design, construction and public works support for shore facilities for U.S. Navy activities around the world, providing the Navy's forces with the operating, expeditionary, support and training bases they need. NAVFAC is a global organization with an annual volume of business in excess of $9 billion. As a major Navy Systems Command and an integral member of the Navy and Marine Corps team, NAVFAC delivers timely and effective facilities engineering solutions worldwide.

Seabees Earn Presidential Unit Citation for *OIF*

NORFOLK — Seabees who deployed in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* under the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) Engineer Group (I MEG) were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation Nov. 14. The medal is the highest Navy unit award.

"During the 33 days of combat, to the transition to civil-military operations, I MEF sustained a tempo of operations never before seen on the modern battlefield, conducting four major river crossings, maintaining the initiative and sustaining forces. The ferocity and duration of the campaign was made possible through the skills and determination of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and coalition partners comprising I MEF at all levels, all echelons, and in all occupational fields," the citation read.

Seabee units that served under I MEG from March 21 to April 24 are authorized to wear the ribbon. For the listing of approved units, see CMC MARADMIN 507/03. This listing is currently under administrative review and additional units may become eligible for the award in future updates.

U.S. Navy Seabees played a major role in *OIF*, constructing ammunition storage areas, aircraft parking areas, a prisoner of war camp, bridges and roads. After major hostilities ended, they repaired schools, police stations, fire stations and other government buildings, and repaired utility systems to help the Iraqi people. They also performed quality of life improvements for I MEF troops, including beddown, showers and utility improvements.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY EO1 SANDI L. GROVE

WASHINGTON NAVY YARD — All of the Master Chief Petty Officers in the Seabee continuum met in October with Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees Harrell T. Richardson for their semi-annual conference. In addition to attending the NAVFAC change of command, the Master Chiefs gathered at the Seabee Memorial for a class picture.

Reserve Bees Wow Times Square — Oh, And Diane Sawyer

RADM Kubic awards medals to NMCB 21

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DARYL SMITH

NEW YORK — With a backdrop of two Seabee Humvees parked on the sidewalk, news media and curious New Yorkers gathered around the unusual sight in Times Square in the early morning of Sept. 5 as a group of Seabees received medals in front of the Navy Recruiting Center.

RADM Charles R. Kubic, Commander of the First Naval Construction Division and the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) Engineer Group (I MEG) presented medals to five U.S. Navy Seabee Reservists from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 21 who recently returned from *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Two are from the New York area, and the others are from neighboring states.

ABC's *Good Morning America* broadcast the event live. Host Diane Sawyer spoke to the Seabees and thanked them for their work in Iraq.

"These guys moved into Iraq 72 hours after the combat troops. It was an awesome thing they did," Sawyer said.

"I'm extremely proud of this group of Seabees," RADM Kubic said. "They not only had to restart the Iraqi infrastructure, but also win the trust and confidence of the Iraqi people."

Some of the medal recipients have direct ties to New York City. One works for the Sanitation Department on Staten Island; one is a New York bus driver; and both were mobilized with the New York State Militia after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

The Meritorious Service Medal and Combat Action Ribbon were awarded to CDR Charles R. (Rick) Sherer, who served as officer in charge of the NMCB 21 Air Detachment in Iraq.

The Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal was awarded to EO1 Daniel Quinn, CM1 Patrick A. Sabatini, BU1 Ronald Cozza and UT1 Daniel P. Hazley. Hazely also received the Combat Action Ribbon.

This was Hazley's first trip to Times Square. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said the steamfitter from Feasterville, Penn. who served as an assistant platoon commander for the battalion during *OIF*.

His experience in Iraq is one he would never forget, especially regarding the Iraqi children, who trusted the Seabees and eventually helped them gain the confidence of their parents.

"The Iraqi people really appreciated everything we did, but it all started with the children," Hazley said.

NMCB 21 activated and deployed an air detachment of about 125 Seabees to Kuwait and Iraq in support of *OIF/OEF* on Jan. 29. They initially deployed to Al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait, where they performed quality-of-life improvements for coalition forces based there.

They later crossed the line of departure into Iraq on March 24 and moved to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr, where they upgraded living conditions for U.S. Marines and British forces.

They performed major civil infrastructure repairs in support of the Iraqi people as well as coalition forces, including a variety of utility work on water, sanitation and electrical systems to get the port operational for the inflow of humanitarian aid as well as military supplies.

Their projects included renovations to the Al Amead School, Sukeina Girls School and Amar Ibn Yasir School, Sawa Boys School and Atfal Al Baraim School.

They also installed lighting at the Samawa Police Station and Samawah Traffic Police Station and provided electrical, carpentry and painting work to the Rumaythah Police Station.

NMCB 21, a Seabee reserve battalion, is based in Lakehurst, N.J., with detachments in four states.

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF HOPE:

1903-2003

THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM TOP DEAD-CENTER ANYWHERE, SEABEES FORGED A U.S. NAVY BASE ON LONELY DIEGO GARCIA. THAT'S WHEN BOB HOPE'S FAMOUS USO SHOW ARRIVED (WITH MISS WORLD) FOR A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EVENT.

The 1972 Bob Hope Christmas Show

STORY COURTESY NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
LEAD AND PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABH2 CARL "VIG" VILLANUEVA

One of the major projects for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and the major project for the U.S. Navy Seabees in the 1970s was scratching out a naval complex on the atoll of Diego Garcia, part of the British Indian Ocean Territory. Diego Garcia is just one of the 52 coral atolls of the Chagos Archipelago, located in the Indian Ocean 960 miles south of India and seven miles south of the equator. The heavily vegetated, 6,700-acre atoll was a horseshoe-shaped rock with a perimeter of only 40 miles and average elevations of from three to seven feet. The beach was close to everything.

On Oct. 24, 1972, the U.S. and British governments signed an agreement concerning the construction of a large U.S. Naval Communication station on Diego Garcia. The purpose of the facility was to provide a necessary link in the U.S. defense communications network and furnish improved communications support in the Indian Ocean for ships and aircraft of both governments. The U.S. Navy was to build the facility using Naval Construction Force personnel — Seabees.

The Diego Garcia base was initially planned as an austere communication station with necessary supporting facilities, including an airstrip. On Jan. 23, 1971, a 9-man reconnaissance party landed on the atoll to confirm planning information and carry out a preliminary survey of the beach landing areas. In early March, a 50-man party of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1 and from Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) 2, as well as other specialist personnel, arrived by LST.

They were followed by an advance party of 160 men from NMCB 40. These troops were to construct a temporary Seabee camp with water and electrical distribution systems, a dining hall, laundry, refrigeration and storage facilities. Finally, they were to build an interim 3,500-foot airstrip.

In October and November, Detachment CHAGOS of NMCB 71 and the whole of NMCB 1 arrived and marked the beginning of large-scale construction ops. NMCB 1 built the transmitter and receiver buildings and placed the base course for the permanent runway and parking apron.

In July 1972, NMCB 62 relieved NMCB 1 and took over the island projects. Later, the full 8,000-foot permanent runway with adjoining taxiway and parking apron wouldn't be completed until March 1973. On March 20 of that year, exactly two years after construction began, the U.S. Naval Communication Station, Diego Garcia, would be officially turned on. But in December of 1972, long before the Seabees could even dream of finishing their complex construction projects, a special, once-in-a-lifetime event took place.

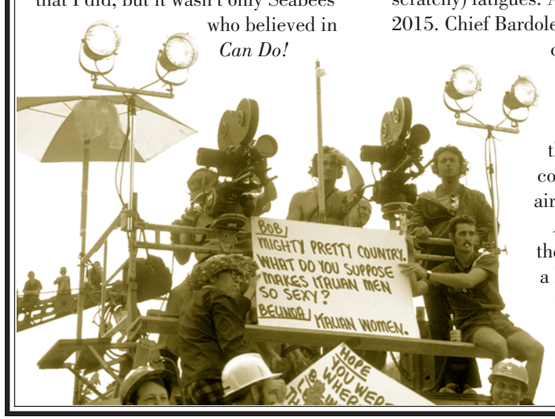
On Christmas Day of '72, the first C-141J "Starlifter" transport dropped out of the sky onto a newly completed 6,000-foot runway with the famous Bob Hope Christmas Show. >>

SEABEE QUARTERDECK, DIEGO GARCIA 1972

HOWARD HEINZE: I was a surface warfare officer, a Lieutenant O-3, kind of dumped onto Diego Garcia as what I saw as a message about my career potential — but I was the Special Services Officer and I had a blast. I wasn't in the Seabee command structure per se, but reported through the Logistics Support Component to a Lieutenant Commander as OIC.

I had few people working for me other than a few guys the battalion didn't need and were on loan. Well, this ragtag group and I managed to get the radio station up and operating, the mini-golf installed and a number of other innovations, which were vastly improved later. But, on the other hand, we had crabs all over the place and the diving and fishing were great.

I take a little credit for getting Bob Hope Christmas Show to the island. I got there in late July of 1972 and a few weeks later, I put together an informal letter to the USO — over my own signature — asking, "How could we do this and whom should we contact?" I never heard anything else about it until I heard that he was coming. I was thoroughly chewed out by the Seabee commander for doing whatever it was that I did, but it wasn't only Seabees who believed in *Can Do!*



So, Mr. Hope came to our lovely island and brought the first jet to land on our ever-expanding airfield. His show was like some others except it was in the rain. *Many* lovely ladies accompanied him and the Seabees and other guys showed their expected appreciation.

What touched me then, and still does now, was the end of the show. Delores Hope, a lovely, matronly lady, came out to sing "White Christmas." She asked for participation from the audience and we mostly pitched in, but on her last chorus, instead of "... may all your Christmases be white," she substituted," may all your Christmases be *home*." ⊕

HOPE SHOW CRANE CROWD >

CARL "VIG" VILLANUEVA: I arrived on the island 12/15/72. Here are my Diego Garcia diary entries.

Christmas Eve, 12/24/72

Up around 0700. Mark and I went to breakfast then went on the ocean side of the island to look around and take pictures. Saw a couple of old cannons at one of the points.

Guy walking by showed us a school of bluefish in shallow water just a few feet off shore. We walked through the jungle for about an hour taking pictures.

Ate lunch (Chiefs served the noon meal; turkey) and then went snorkelling for awhile.

Started wearing my new fatigues this afternoon. I have a sunburn and it's hard moving around in the new (stiff and scratchy) fatigues. A plane came in at 2015. Chief Bardole, Chuck Lambert and I checked out the runway lights and lit 2,000 feet with smudge pots (not enough lights for the runway). Saw many coconut crabs at the airfield.

After getting back from the 2015 plane, was given a beer by some drunk guy dressed up as Santa and then went to listen to a group practice in the EM Club. Took a shower and then wrote this. Tried to get some sleep before having to be at the airfield by 0100 for the 0200 "Bob Hope Show" camera/advance party plane coming in.

Christmas Day, 12/25/72

The 0200 plane didn't arrive until 0300 this morning! Got secured about 0430. Back to the hooch and slept until about 0900. Had to go to the airfield to sweep the runway in preparation for Bob Hope's C-141. The plane came in about 1300.

Though this was the first jet to land here, the C-141 landed with plenty of room to spare. *Lots* of nice chicks!

Stopped at the Crash Barn to get my camera then rode into town in the crash truck. It rained heavily for about an hour and a half before the show could start, but the show did go on as planned.

Despite the bad weather, it ended up a really nice day and an equally good show! Guys were on cranes, roofs, everywhere. Afterwards, back to the airfield. Emptied the [toilets] on the plane and put out smudge pots.

The plane finally departed 1830. By the time two other aircraft (C-130s) took off, it was 2100.

Hung around air ops until 2200 in case the planes had to turn back. Back to town and ate (FIRST TIME TODAY!). Then back to the hooch and opened up Christmas gifts.

Sat out on the beach drinking a beer that was given to me by one of the guys playing poker in the hooch. Took a shower and then tried to get some sleep.

Couldn't sleep because of the poker game going on. Took my pillow and found a vacant bunk in "Hilton's Heroes" hooch. To sleep by 0130. ⊕

CAPT T.K. JONES, CEC, USN (RET.): I remember Bob Hope's WW II radio shows, including two shows he was bleeped off the air for off-color jokes. They were great jokes, but I don't think you would want to put them in your tribute.

Well before I saw his shows as a Seabee officer in Vietnam, though, I actually met Bob Hope back in my home town of Chattanooga afterWW II, when his radio group came to town to broadcast the show. In 1948, he wound up broadcasting from my high school because the acoustics were better than the Chattanooga Civic Auditorium. His entourage included Jerry Colona and a new bandleader named Desi Arnaz, who was very temperamental during rehearsals.

I particularly enjoyed meeting Bob and Jerry, because they were so down to earth. They came backstage at the school one day with a bag full of Krystal hamburgers, and Jerry was clowning around putting the little burgers in his mouth one by one, taking one bite of the little burgers and rubbing his belly. Bob was sitting next to him eating and giving a litany of jokes and amens to the Colona act.

I was treated to meeting all these stars because I was a member of my high school stage crew, and I was honored to pull the curtain for the Hope Show. He brought the house down as soon as the curtain parted by commenting, "Good to be here …"and, noticing the people in the balcony,"… oh, I didn't see you all up there on the shelf, but welcome!"

I was thrilled to be part of his show after watching his many WWII newsreels and listening to his radio shows. Later, in Vietnam, I attended several of his shows in Saigon and Danang and loved every minute of them. No one can ever replace Bob Hope. ⊕

COMEDIAN/ACTOR REDD FOXX (L), BOB AND BABES

KARL "FUZZY" MANZER: I am a second-generation Navy man. My father was a machinist mate on *USS Wharton* and he was present at the Bikini Atoll atomic bomb test. In 1972, I was an aerographer's mate, my small trailer was located at air ops and I lived in the same hootch as Vig (the poker games were a hassle if you didn't play poker. This was serious poker. An SK1 won enough money to buy a bar in Bangkok.).

At any rate, I was there as Bob's plane was unloading — the sight of all those beautiful women was *impressive*. One of the show staffers approached me and asked me if I would like to be in the show. I said sure!

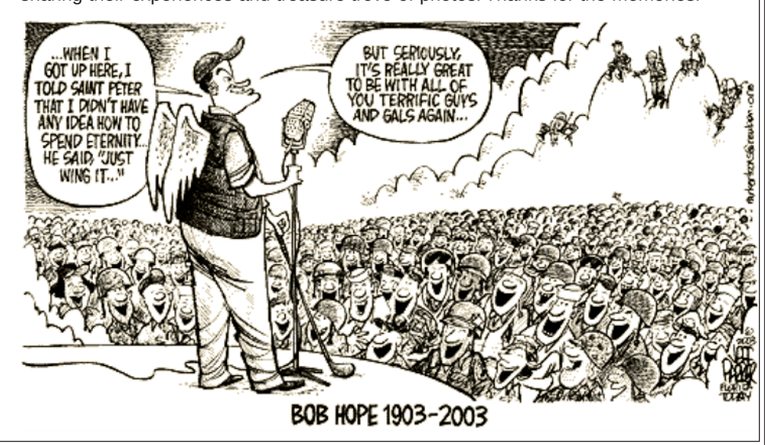
He took my name and told me to come around before the show to get a script. He gave me the script (which was pretty loose) and took me to Bob's dressing room to run through the lines. I was supposed to sing a song to Miss World and they told me to really go *ga-ga* over her. *I could do this.*

They sat me in the front row. When they cued me, I got up and went on stage (above). It wasn't very hard to go ga-ga over her! I can still feel that beautiful body in my arms *to this day*, and a woman in a red dress is still the hottest thing I can think of. The whole thing was pretty overwhelming.

I had suspected that most of the skits were pre-planned, but being inside of it was different. When I was in Bob's dressing room, I was overwhelmed at how tired he was. His schedule must have been brutal.

I turned 50 in 2003 and it's hard to believe that thirty years have passed. ⊕

An incredible and robust subculture seems to have grown up around the people and units who served on Diego Garcia over the years, particularly in the early '70s. Anyone interested in those days can find more information by clicking in on Vig Villanueva's commemorative Web site at www.members.tripod.com/carlvillanueva/id22.htm. We're especially grateful to the former ABH2 Villanueva, John Delso and many of others for sharing their experiences and treasure trove of photos. Thanks for the memories.



We few,
we happy few,
we

Band of Brothers

The War In Iraq Slowed Down, But The Humanitarian Work Of The Seabees

To Rebuild a Broken Nation Went On The Rev Limiter. Bees Built Schools, Repaired Electricity And Water Distribution, Renovated Schools And Public Places — Even Rebuilt Police Stations And Helped Local Victims Of The Iraqi Regime Recover Lost Family Members From Mass Graves. Though Faced With Coordinating Local Contractors, Numerous Seabee Units, Different Ratings, Differing skill Levels And Much More, The Naval Construction Force — the Desert Bees —Worked As One. As a Band Of Brothers (And Sisters). An OIF/OEF Redux.

A river runs through it The Ad Diwaniyah River runs through the middle of Ad Diwaniyah in N.E. Iraq, where NMCB 7 was deployed.

Ever wonder what life is like for Seabees out in the field? Sure, letters and photos home and even electronic mail paint a pretty rosey and exciting picture, don't they? But until now, you couldn't really get the full Seabee Experience without raising your right hand.

Here's s a chance to get your very own idea of what field life is like for the men and women of the Desert Bees — c'mon along and let's play the home game!

⚓ Lock all your friends and family outside your home. You should only communicate by postal mail. Hold each letter for four to five weeks and then discard at least two out of every five. For e-mail, send it to a bad address to simulate crashing of seaward or dust storm-hindered communications links.

⚓ Surround yourself with more than 1,000 people you don't know. Make sure many of them snore like gasoline-powered lawn trimmers, use free-form "exotic" language and have dip cups or ashtrays everywhere (for additional fun, just discard all the dip cups and ashtrays).

⚓ Monitor all home appliances hourly, recording all information however minor. Be sure to use a "tagging system" and tag each appliance with its hourly status.

⚓ Do not flush your toilet for five days to simulate the aroma of 50 people living in your home.

⚓ Cut your hair weekly — making it shorter and shorter each time until you finally seem bald or look like you lost a fight with a mad sheep shearer.

⚓ Work in 19-hour cycles, sleeping only four hours at a time to ensure your body doesn't care if it's day or night.

⚓ Listen to your favorite CD six to 10 times a day for three to four weeks or until your ears bleed, whichever comes first, and then listen to your tentmates' music until you're actually happy to get back to your favorite CD.

⚓ Set your alarm to go off at 10-minute intervals for the first hour of sleep to simulate the various times that the watches and work crews bump around in the dark to wake you up.

⚓ Place your bed on a pile of sand to ensure you can't step onto an actual floor. Use a specialized clock that randomly sets off your fire alarm, sounds a police siren, or that sounds like a helicopter taking off.

⚓ Have foodstuffs delivered to your garage in small, tightly sealed plastic bags and eat them 4-8 times a day for a month.

⚓ Prepare all your meals blindfolded using only the spices you can grope for, or none at all. Remove the blindfold and eat everything in front of you in three minutes!

⚓ Periodically, shut off all the power in your house (and if you're playing the Pro Game, shut off your neighbors' power, too!), then run around shouting "missile inbound! missile inbound!" When no missile arrives, restore power no later than 10 hours later.

⚓ At least once a month or more, force the toilet to overflow to simulate your "shipmates'" bathroom habits.

⚓ Buy a gas mask, smear it with a commonly available hair prep, then wear the mask until you fog up the face shield and can barely see. Wear this continuously for 14-20 hours every other day for at least a month.

⚓ Study the owner's manuals for all your appliances. Routinely take them apart and put them back together for practice.

⚓ Buy 50 cases of inexpensive grade triple-Z toilet paper, but securely lock up all but two rolls. Be sure one of the two remaining rolls is wet at all times.

⚓ Hit your forehead or shins with a hammer every two days as you walk through a door.

⚓ Rig your shower so that the flow rate randomly varies from a drip to a trickle. For extra points, arrange for periods of no hot water followed by water temperature that rapidly cycles from minus-2 degrees to more than 120 degrees.

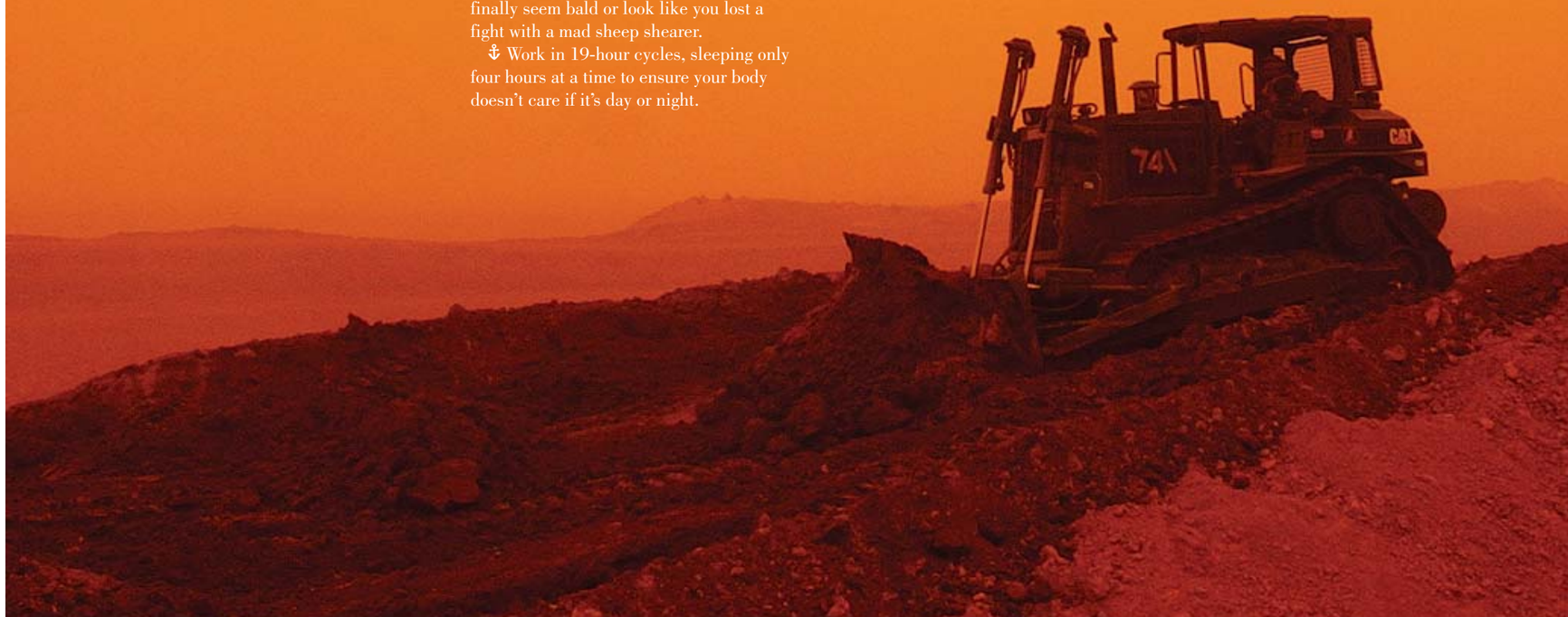
⚓ Repaint the interior of your house every month, whether it needs it or not. Consider doing the same thing to the exterior, the garage and possibly your neighbors' houses.

⚓ Eat bagged food at least twice a day.

⚓ Drink at least six 1-liter bottles of water every day, but never be anywhere near indoor plumbing.

⚓ And of course ... find the loudest, most irritating person you can locate, especially if only a casual acquaintance, and make sure you have a conversation with them at least 37 times a day.

Rinse and repeat!



Band of Brothers: The Lone Seabee

Somewhere in Southern Iraq, an unknown member of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 gets ready to take over the watch in a bunker for night security while his fellow Seabees work diligently at finishing a Maby-Johnson medium girder bridge, March 27, 2003.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PH1(SW) AARON ANSAROV, FLTCOMBATCAMGRUPAC

CERTIFIED HARD

U.S. Marines and Navy Seabees have had a special relationship ever since America's first offensive in WW II at the Battle for Guadalcanal. In combat again more than 60 years later, this close and unique relationship held true once again in Kuwait and Iraq in the form of the remarkable First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group — a wildly successful, new and effective joint combat engineer concept called the MEG.

STORY BY COL MICHAEL C. HOWARD, USMCR & LCDR MEG REED, USNR

The Naval Construction Force (NCF) provides a critical combat construction capability to a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). Under recent operations in Kuwait and Iraq, the NCF element of the MAGTF evolved into the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) Engineer Group — the 'MEG'. With a focus on 'jointness,' the MEG employed an efficient task-organized structure designed to integrate task forces from active and reserve units of the Navy, Marine Corps and Army to execute a wide range of operational engineering requirements.

Toward the end of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (*OIF*), the MEG technically became a "CMEG" ("C" for combined) when a Republic of Korea (ROK) engineer battalion joined its ranks.

Band of Brothers

The MEG concept dates back to the period following *Operation Desert Storm* (*ODS*) when Marine LtGen Anthony C. Zinni, then I MEF Commander, envisioned a growing need for more coordination on the battlefield and synchronization among engineers of the different military services.

In the fall of 2000, then I MEF Commander Marine LtGen Michael W. Hagee approached RADM Charles Kubic of the First Naval Construction Division (1NCD) with a proposal to operationalize the MEG concept under the command of a Seabee flag officer. The MEG that resulted implemented the visions of Generals Zinni and Hagee by fully integrating the expertise Marine Corps, Navy, and Army engineers.

RADM Kubic assembled the newly configured MEG in Kuwait in support of I MEF's involvement in *Operation Enduring Freedom* (*OEF*) and later, *OIF*.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCBs) began by deploying to Ali Al Salem and Al Jaber Air Bases in Kuwait. Once on the ground, they completed infrastructure improvements to operate Marine fixed-wing aircraft well in advance of the main *OEF* force flow.

At Ali Al Salem, the projects included a munitions storage area (MSA) and site preparations for AM-2 matting for helicopters. At Al Jaber Air Base, the projects included a refueling ramp, site preparation for AM-2 matting to base AV-8Bs, an MSA and what became the signature Seabee project: a 20-acre C-130 concrete parking ramp that would be used by F/A-18s (see "Weapons of Mass Construction," Double Issue. – *Ed.*).

This pad included enough concrete to pave a road from the Nation's Capitol to Dulles airport and was built in a little over 90 days.

Seabee task organization created

"The MEG has come together as a living, breathing organism. It will prove itself in the upcoming weeks. All of you have been hand selected for your unique roles and now make up this special band of pirates." RADM Kubic said while addressing the MEG staff during an all-hands meeting in February 2003.

A few months after Seabees started flowing into theater, the MEG Command Element (CE) began forming up at Camp Commando in Kuwait. It consisted of some 40 Marines from the Seabee IMA Det. and 4th and 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, not to mention Army augmentation from the 265th Engineer Group and a wide range of additional Navy units. All told, the 125 personnel of the CE represented some 24 different commands.

Seabees historically have been assigned construction tasking via individual battalions. For the first time in Naval Construction Force (NCF) history, battalions and units were task-organized as regiments around separate capabilities. Task Force organization offered more flexibility to adapt available resources from each of the battalions into smaller groups that could move more quickly and efficiently. With the responsibility to provide engineer capability throughout the I MEF area of operations, the MEG organized into three regimental task forces: Task Force Mobility (TF Mike), Task Force Construction (TF Charlie) and Task Force Endurance (TF Echo).

Designed to construct non-standard bridges and conduct route maintenance, TF Mike was designated the main effort for supporting the 1st Marine Division (1MARDIV)'s forward mobility.

TF Charlie's missions were berm reduction and construction of I MEF enemy prisoner of war (EPW) Holding Areas (HA), line-haul support for all MEG units and repair and maintenance of main supply routes (MSR). Charlie was also tasked with supporting each task force with equipment decontamination capabilities in case of chemical attack.

TF Echo supported TFs Mike and Charlie by pushing logistical assets to them and initiated civil-military construction operations in the rear while combat forces pressed the attack north. They were also responsible for training and acclimating MEG units that flowed into theater under the "reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSO&I)" system.

The MEG CE provided the Command and Control to ensure that the Task Forces were poised to execute current and future tasking. The I MEG force structure pulled together NMCBs 4, 7, 74 and 133; three Reserve Seabee heavy air detachments from NMCBs 15, 21 and 25; a Naval Construction Force Support Unit (NCFSU 2); a Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit Detachment (CBMU 303); an Underwater Construction Team (UCT 2); the 265th Army Engineer Group with the Army's 1092nd Engineer Battalion (C) (W) and 478th Engineer Battalion (C) (M); plus and a Korean Engineer Battalion. All this manpower totaled nearly 5,000 troops.

These are new combat concepts for a new kind of war. Seabees developed, tested and then proved in combat three new concepts that will forever change the way Seabee units operate in future deployments.

In the past, Seabees were usually based in a rear area and were brought forward to replace assault bridges, repair runways and build forward bases well after the attack. With smaller forces going into the attack on "quick strike" missions where speed and momentum was essential, the Seabees' role in *OIF* was critical to support maneuver elements not only after the attack, but also *during* the attack.

For the first time in Seabee history, the Bees joined the attack and maneuvered closely behind the ground combat elements.

The MEG scheme of maneuver consisted of moving the three task forces in echelon behind, and in support of, the 1st MARDIV's attack. The MEG plan called for all units to move forward, establish a base of operations, and then push detachments out to work sites from base camps.

To support the extensive maneuver of MEG units, RADM Kubic directed >>

his staff to establish a Jump Command Post that he could utilize with a small staff for command and control as his forces became spread out across the vast battlefield.

SERTs were established in each battalion. Considered the eyes and ears of the MEG, the objective for the squad-sized, tactical SERT was to move engineers forward as quickly and early as possible to evaluate critical facilities such as roads, bridges and airfields. They provided key information to construction elements so that planners could select the best location to focus engineer effort and tailor their tools and materials to the mission. [See more detail on the fascinating SERT concept in this issue's cover story. — *Ed.*]

"Seabee Jedi" from I MEG Future Operations staff facilitated expeditionary engineer solutions by exercising engineer "reach-back" capability. They linked SERTS with the MEG CE and Naval Facilities Engineering Command engineers at Pacific Division (PACDIV) in Pearl Harbor and Atlantic Division (LANTDIV) in Norfolk.

Deliberate planning and rehearsal

As project work progressed, the CE focused on future operations planning by organizing a series of Operational Planning Teams (OPTs).

The OPTs covered mission analysis of the requirement to emplace non-standard bridges rapidly so as to sustain the critical momentum of the attack. The 8th Engineer Support Battalion (ESB) would employ its assault bridging for gaps in the attack, while the MEG would follow directly in trace and replace these bridges with more permanent and capable sustainment bridging. The MEG would then recover the assault bridges and push them forward so they could be re-used. This leap-frogging was replicated throughout the attack. The Seabees chose the Mabey-Johnson Bridge, a more modern version of the WW II Bailey bridge, to accomplish this vital mission.

> *"For the first time in history, Seabees crossed the line of departure in regimental formations as part of a Marine Expeditionary Force order of battle. The First Naval Construction Division is proud to serve with I MEF as the main effort of the I MEF Engineer Group. Now it's time to get to work. Can do!"*
>
> *— RADM Charles Kubic*

Prior to the onset of *OIF*, Seabees trained and prepared for every conceivable engineering challenge and enemy tactic that might occur during hostilities. The MEG later rehearsed these many possible wartime scenarios — including working through a dreaded chemical attack that never came.

After months of planning, preparation and anticipation, MEG Seabees were poised and ready for any action the President of the United States would direct. The Order of Battle in this Iraq War placed SERTS and lead MEG elements directly behind the Marines in the forward area as the 1st MARDIV and Task Force Tarawa (from 2nd Marine Division) attacked north. And so it was on March 21 that Task Force Mike led MEG teams towards Iraq.

TF Charlie, loaded with Class IV (construction materials) for the Enemy Prisoner of War HA site, crossed the Line of Departure in trace of RCT-1. The MEG identified the first two missions for TF Mike: Emplacement of the first Mabey-Johnson Bridge along MSR Tampa just north of the Euphrates, and the construction of a Highway 1 to Highway 7 western Connector Route to bypass the dangerous "Ambush Alley" east of An Nasiriyah.

Both missions would be crucial to keep the Marines' assault supported as it advanced north of the Euphrates and toward the Tigris.

In one of his daily situation reports, RADM Kubic reported: "Seabees are dug in along Highway 1 with berms, crew-served weapons and AT 4s, and will continue constructing Mabey-Johnson bridge throughout the night. We build, we fight."

The MEG deployed with 1,120 meters of bridging material and planned to employ it at key crossing sites on Iraq's Euphrates, Tigris and Diyala Rivers. Had Iraqi engineers blown every bridge in the MEF's path, there would have been 1,800 meters of gap. However, as the war unfolded, it became apparent that Saddam Hussein's forces had not destroyed bridges to the extent expected, so there was less Seabee bridging required.

However, TF Mike was still engaged in keeping roadways and airfield infrastructure (known as lines of communication) open for 1st MARDIV movement. This meant completing and re-surfacing dirt roads already heavily traveled by troops and performing large-scale dust suppression operations.

Task Force Charlie teams also maintained lines of communication through numerous convoys between Kuwait and Iraq. Charlie convoys hauled extensive earth-moving, line-haul, construction, weight and material handling capabilities with a wide assortment of bridging material, construction items, food and water deep into Iraqi territory. During three weeks of hostilities, TF Charlie line-haul personnel conducted more than 45 convoys providing units of the MEG over 500 tons of materials and supplies.

Task Force Charlie constructed an enemy prisoner of war holding area with a final capacity of 14,400, despite a debilitating sandstorm that significantly impeded progress.

Task Force Endurance's role expanded during the opening days of the ground war in Iraq. The task force was assigned the mission to maintain an alternate supply route (ASR) from Kuwait into Iraq. This route was key to the resupply of TF Tarawa during its initial attack to Jalibah and An Nasiriyah.

As the war progressed and MEG forces moved deeper into Iraq, TF Echo was given additional missions involving rear area construction and security.

Seabee achievements during the attack were nothing short of miraculous considering the MEG was constantly moving thousands of troops and civil engineer equipment through dozens of locations — and advancing nearly 400 miles from Kuwait to Baghdad in only 22 days. Convoys were hard and alert, and Seabees returned fire with deadly accuracy when they were challenged.

Seabees had one of the biggest U.S. Navy roles in *OIF*. They were among the first troops in-theater to help prepare the battlespace, continuing on through the fight, and staying afterwards to help win the peace via civil-military operations long after other units departed the AOR.

Before hostilities had officially ended, the MEG pursued civil-military operations (CMO) projects by combining efforts of coalition forces and local citizens with the goal of improving the general welfare of the Iraqi people. Some of the CMO work included Quality of Life (QOL) projects in support of the I MEF at its many locations throughout Iraq.

The MEG approach to civil-military construction implemented for each city was to identify, prioritize and assign projects. A cost and duration threshold,

The Desert Bees were versatile, productive and, above all, highly effective in Kuwait and Iraq in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Many of those tasks continue today in the phase following active combat, including classic Seabee humanitarian roles. At right (top to bottom), a Seabee grader helps smooth the way for a coalition base camp; Bees built and maintained numerous bridges, this one by NMCB 40; and members of NMCB 7 depart for their final move to Camp Moreell from Camp Castle.

Ad Diwaniyah —This reaction team received a call that men were outside the camp with weapons. SWCN Darrell Stevens secures the .60-caliber machine gun to the shipboard mount while BUCN Thomas Clifton prepares his M-16 rifle for the call. BUCN (SCW) Joseph Day sits in the rear of the vehicle and will be the first to respond at the scene. The call turned out to be a training call to test the teams reaction time and ability to respond. U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JO1 LISA KEDING

allowing the task forces to select approved projects, categor-ized the projects. The system opened the door for contracts to be executed in Iraq, providing a much-needed and welcome income stream for the Iraqi people.

A Civil Affairs Team in each city or town, with MEG Civil Engineer Corps officers and senior enlisted experts, conducted assessments of electricity, water, sanitation, food distribution, transportation systems, trash/debris removal, emergency housing and public buildings.

Local citizens were encouraged to request assistance, provide information leads and even to work on projects with the coalition forces.

A Navy Construction Capability (CONCAP) contract made possible the use of a variety of funding sources for critical construction and support during this phase. Another unique way of obtaining money for projects was to apply for seized U.S. dollars amassed by Saddam Hussein and his regime.

Task Force Mike built the first CMO bridge — also the first real CMO project in Baghdad— and deployed twin 60-meter Mabey-Johnson bridges to span the Diyala River. The Diyala bridges ensured two-way traffic along a major artery into and out of Baghdad and are intended to be a lasting contribution by I MEF to the Iraqi people.

During hostilities, coalition forces intentionally damaged a section of bridge over the Sarabadi River. Instead of rebuilding a completely new bridge, Seabees repaired existing damage with a minimum of work and employed a Mabey-Johnson bridge to span only the damaged portion of the bridge.

During this phase, Task Force Charlie made extensive concrete repairs at Blair Airfield in Al Kut. The runway was designated to be the primary landing strip for I MEF fixed-wing aircraft. Seabees cleared vehicle obstructions and repaired bomb craters for the runway to be capable for use by aircraft up to C-141 "Starlifter" sizes and capabilities.

Marine LtGen Conway recognized the completion of the project during a video teleconference when he said, "Over 1000 yards of concrete, 30 huge craters, two runways, a taxiway — just a fabulous job by the Seabees. God bless the Seabees!"

Dust suppression efforts, begun during hostilities, were expanded through an intricate and innovative solution. The MEG task forces figured out a way to produce a dust inhibitor at an Iraqi asphalt plant previously owned by Saddam Hussein's son, Uday. This saved the Marine Corps and U.S. taxpayers nearly a million dollars.

Task Force Echo's first CMO tasking started before the Stabilization phase officially commenced. A Seabee detachment was assigned to Umm Qasr to provide engineering assessments and execute the work necessary to get the port reopened and ready to receive humanitarian assistance ships. They assisted in the reinstatement of the city's electrical power and helped with water purification and distribution. The work expanded into community assistance projects, such as the donation and construction of a playground and soccer field.

In An Nasiriyah, Seabees and Army engineers helped local citizens restore utility services, provided security, cleared roads of debris and rehabilitated structures such as hospitals, an orphanage, a civic center and the An Nasiriyah courthouse.

While all of these CMO projects were underway, the task forces never diverted from their traditional mission of supporting the Marines, and continually assigned teams to construct field showers, latrines, shaving tables, picnic tables and benches, and other living necessities.

The MEG concept, originally envisioned in 1995, is still valid. *OIF* clearly demonstrated that the U.S. Navy Seabees bring tremendous capability to the MAGTF's fight. There was valuable refining of tactics and doctrine within the MEG both before and throughout the war. Task Organization is an essential facet of force relevance; readiness and capability are just as vital.

The accomplishments of the MEG are significant and hold true to the tags of three task forces — Mobility, Construction and Endurance. The MEG earned an honored position as a major subordinate command within I MEF. Seabees have proven again in combat that they can be counted upon to go into battle alongside Marines. This solid teamwork, positive interaction, accomplishments, and speed of execution throughout the Iraqi War, have made a unique statement in U.S. and world military history.

In under four weeks, the I MEF covered the same distance it took Britain four years to cover during its WWI Mesopotamian campaign. As an integral part of I MEF, the engineers of the MEG and their game-winning, task-organized, MAGTF configuration, played a vital role in this historic campaign called *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. As such, the MEG concept is now hardened and combat-proven as an important new "arrow in the quiver" of the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

As it was on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Inchon and Hue City, so it was in Iraq. Marines and Seabees fought and built alongside each other, always moving forward together at remarkable and unheard of velocity.

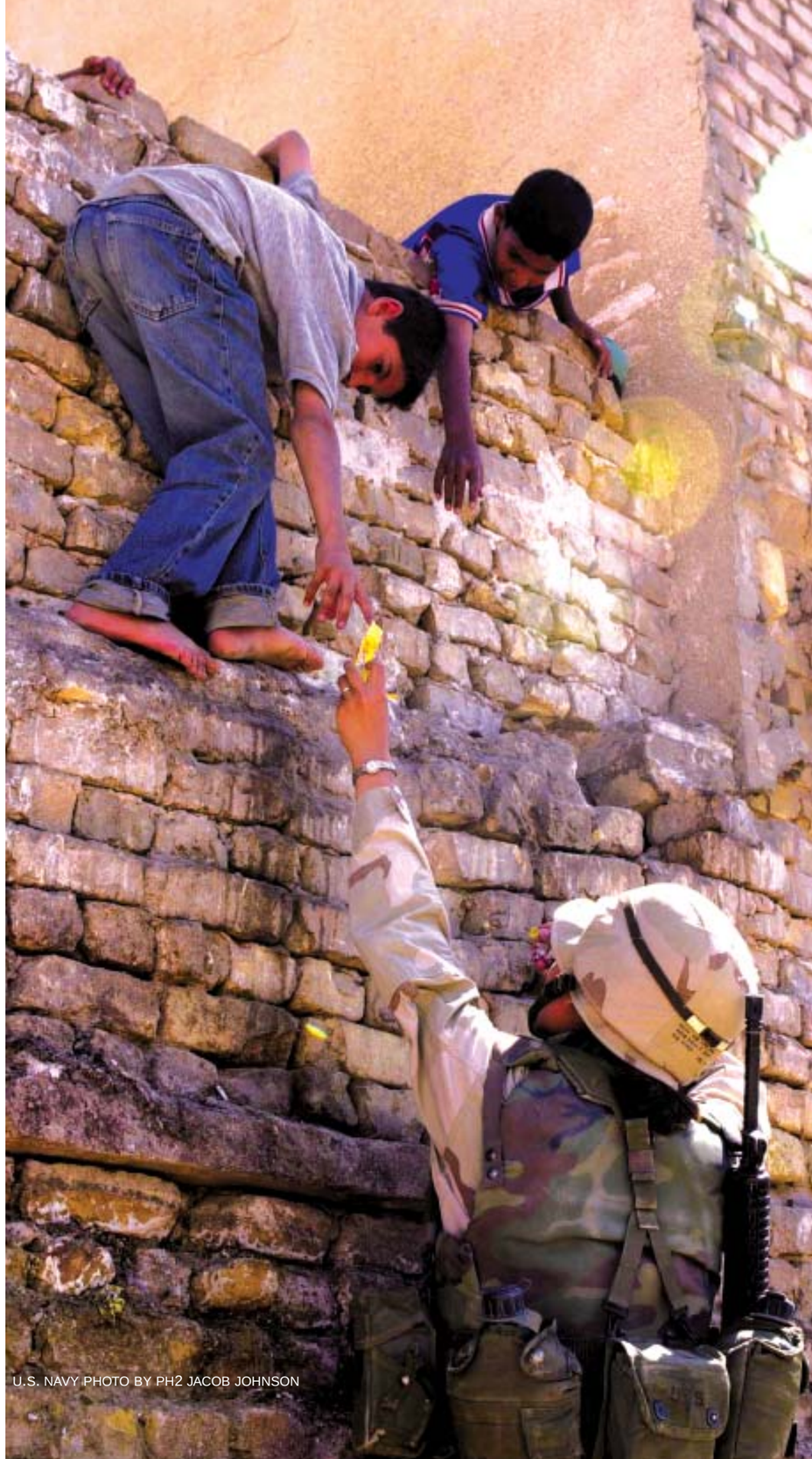
Can Do! and *Semper Fi!* are nearly synonymous for these amazing Naval warriors.

COL Mike Howard, USMCR, is a Reservist who was recalled to OEF/OIF to serve as the MEG G-3 Operations Officer. He is a ranch owner from near Portland, Ore., and commands the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, 4th MARDIV.

LCDR Meg Reed, USNR, is a Reserve public affairs officer recalled to OEF/OIF as the MEG PAO at Camp Commando. Reed, from Burke, Va., is also the Reserve PAO for 1NCD.

Band of Brothers

Al Kut — EA2 Ji Lee, from Alexandria, Va., hands out candy to kids near Al Kut Cemetery. Seabees from NMCB 133 restored this resting place of British soldiers who died in WW I.



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PH2 JACOB JOHNSON

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 21class picture in Umm Qasr.

A Seabee's Story

How a Seabee Reservist Went to War — and How His Employer and Union Welcomed him Home With Open Arms

STORY BY PHIL REISMAN, THE JOURNAL NEWS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EO2 ROCCO UMBRO, JR.

ROCCO JOHN UMBRO, JR., wore a military uniform and carried an M-16 rifle, but he didn't go to bloody Iraq to fight. He went there to rebuild.

Umbro, 34, is a Reservist in the Seabees. To be exact, he is an equipment operator second class, which means he handles heavy-duty machinery like bulldozers, backhoes and front-end loaders. Literally speaking, he has assisted Uncle Sam in the arduous, uphill task of clearing away the rubble of totalitarianism in advance of paving a road to freedom.

It is fitting to write about Umbro now, in the immediate aftermath of Saddam Hussein's ignominious capture. Even in shabby isolation and defanged captivity, the fallen dictator remains a larger-than-life symbol of evil. But Saddam's reign of terror is over and that is owed largely to the selfless commitment of thousands of American men and women — many of them ordinary citizen-soldiers — who left their quiet lives here in order to risk them abroad.

Umbro is one of those people, a modern-day Minuteman. He could be your next-door neighbor. Maybe you know him, or somebody like him.

Like his father and namesake, Umbro was born and raised in New Rochelle, N.Y. He went to New Rochelle High School, as did his two older sisters. Four years ago, he married Carla Valencia in Mexico.

Umbro has been a Yonkers Contracting Corp. employee since 1992 and is a member of Local 137 of the International Union of Operating Engineers based in Briarcliff Manor. Fred Cardillo, a project manager and Umbro's boss at Yonkers Contracting, said that Umbro is a highly valued employee because of his ability to man so many different types of equipment.

"There's some guys who just have a knack for that — and he's one of those guys," Cardillo said.

Nicholas Signorelli, Local 137's business manager, echoed Cardillo's sentiments in plain-spoken terms.

"I happen to have the best operators," he said. "I don't care where you go — New York, Connecticut, Jersey — and everybody knows that because we've got rock up here.

"You know, we don't have sand like in Long Island and Jersey. We have rock here, my friend. And Rocco happens to be one of my best. He's young, wiry and very modest."

In February 2003, Umbro was called to active duty by his reserve unit, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 21. Without complaint, he said goodbye to his wife and toddler son, Daniel. As a Seabee, his mission was to win Iraqi hearts and minds by essentially doing in the Mideast what he did as a civilian in Westchester: improving the quality of life through construction projects.

He crossed the border less than a week after the war started. At one point, he found himself in the port city of Umm Qasr, where the Seabees laid out and graded a community soccer field, refurbished an elementary school and built a road to the port's ferry. Umbro was spotted by a reporter-photographer for an online engineering newsletter, who snapped his picture. It showed the Seabee in profile wearing a canvas-covered Kevlar helmet that had decals of the American flag and British Union Jack. On one side of the helmet, he had written a paraphrase of the Shakespeare line: "We brave, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers." On the other side were the words: "Operating Engineers Local 137."

Unseen was the photo of his 3-year-old son that he had taped to the inside of his helmet.

Umbro returned safely to his New Rochelle home in August. If you commute over the Tappan Zee Bridge, you've probably seen him operating an asphalt spreader on the Cross Westchester Expressway.

Everything was back to normal, except for one thing. Umbro was a little poorer. He had earned a small salary as a Seabee, so small that while he was overseas he lost a difference of about $12,000 in pay at Yonkers Contracting, not to mention thousands of dollars more in benefits.

But his company and his union paid him back for the sacrifice. At a surprise party in Elmsford, Yonkers Contracting presented him a check for the lost wages and Local 137 restored his benefits, which included an annuity fund and welfare coverage.

Signorelli said it was the least that could be done for a man who helped build playgrounds and roads.

"I feel this boy went over there and he did his duty, which was tough for him," Signorelli said. "But he had a good attitude. I was impressed with him. I feel it's my duty to do whatever I can for him."

He reflected on his service in Iraq and the people he met and helped there. The good people far outnumbered the unfriendly, he said.

Umbro also said he was grateful for the money he received [from his company and union].

"I'm very happy about that," he said. "It helps a lot, believe me."

For one thing, he and his wife are expecting another child. "We call it a 'Freedom Baby,' " Umbro quipped. So, when does the doctor say the baby is due?

July Fourth, of course.

Umbro in-country

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY GEORGE DRAPEAU III

WELCOME HOME, SEABEE Paul Hubert (L) and Fred Cardillo (R) of Yonkers Contracting presented Umbro with three checks, making up the lost difference between his civilian salary and his active duty Seabee pay.

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In his own words:

A week after the war started, we moved north. The first city we went to was the port city of Umm Qsar and we set up camp in one of the buildings.

One of our first projects was to repair a school, which we repainted, fixed all the windows and got the electric service back up. It was nice to see the local kids playing and running around like kids should be!

We also built them a soccer field and a playground that they also really loved, and we repaired a road to the ferry landing so trucks could bring food and water to the people all through southern Iraq. After that we installed five water tanks in town and started to distribute water to the tanks.

Seeing people run to get in line for water would first make you feel bad — and then good that you were helping them. It makes you appreciate America and all that we have in our country.

We soon moved north again to As Samawa, about 260 km south of Baghdad, where we supported the 2/5 Marines and occupied a train depot. Our mission was a lot bigger now. Not only did we support the Marines' missions, but we also had a lot of humanitarian work there. We fixed a number of schools and three police stations, a pontoon bridge and installed screens in the windows of the old Baath Party buildings that the Marines occupied in town.

Me and another buddy of mine, EO3 Trevor Minor, were tasked to help the Marines with our track excavator in the excavation of a mass grave site — which revealed an estimated 1,400 bodies of people who were believed to be Kuwaitis from the first war in 1991.

Our unit also helped with the countless convoys back and forth to Kuwait with supplies to support the Marines digging fighting positions in and around town.

We did more "regular work," too, like making a leach field for showers and then setting them up, leveling some ground so the field hospital could set up and digging burn pits for garbage. I was "just a Reservist," had never had any active duty, didn't have any prior service, and this experience has been the time in my life. So far.

I will never forget the things I saw and the work my Seabee brothers and I did for the Iraqi people. That expereince, those people — and those Seabees, we band of brothers— will be with me forever.

—EO2 Rocco Umbro, Jr.

The Helmet That Launched A Thousand Stories

Andrew Wright was embedded with Seabee units during OIF. When he wrote this story last spring for the influential trade journal Engineering News-Record, *nobody knew Rocco Umbro from page 8 in the phone book. That quickly changed.*

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW G. WRIGHT

UMM QASR, Iraq — Gear inscriptions can reveal as much about their owner's allegiances as a tattoo. The back of Seabee Rocco Umbro's Kevlar "brain pan" cloth cover sports the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes.

Coalition commanders ordered their troops not to raise their nations' flags, to underscore that this was not a conquest, but a war of Iraqi liberation. Occasionally the banners went up briefly for a quick battlefield photo to e-mail home, but they were then packed away in a Humvee or tank. But helmet art was permitted.

On the front of 33-year-old Equipment Operator 2nd Class Umbro's helmet was a portion Shakespeare's oft-quoted Henry V "Band of Brothers" speech. Repopularized by the late Stephen Ambrose's World War II tale and HBO series, the words will resonate as long as there are comrades in arms:

We brave, we few, we happy few, We Band of Brothers

But the words on the left side of Umbro's headgear offered a clue to his state-side location, affiliation and loyalties — Operating Engineers Local 137. Umbro lives in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. He usually wears a different hard hat as a heavy equipment operator for Yonkers Construction Co. "I drive a lot of the same equipment back there that I'm driving here — dozers, loaders, graders, everything but a cherry picker. I was studying for the test to qualify on that, but it will have to wait until I get back," he said back in April.

Umbro, a Seabee Reservist with Lakehurst, N.J.-based Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 21, was recalled to active duty last fall. In Kuwait he was part of the crew that placed a 12-inch-thick, 20-acre concrete pad at a U.S.-Kuwaiti military airport before Christmas 2002 ("Weapons of Mass Construction," last issue).

Since then, he helped grade and improve 18 miles of the main supply route and served in Umm Qasr, Iraq, working on port improvements. On Sunday, April 6, 2003, he drew gunner duty on a truck filled with reporters visiting the port.

The Iraqi liberation campaign was set in motion by the events of Sept. 11, 2001, he says, and as a New York-area native, he is happy to do his part. He is also happy to represent Local 137 and Yonkers.

"My union and my employer have been really great about me being here. We were all over the World Trade Center [site] after 9/11," he says.

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DESERT BEES

Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133, including BU3 Jeremiah King (L), from Pass Christian, Miss., smooth the surface of newly lain concrete with rakes. BU2 Jeremiah Sperry (opposite page), from Helena, Montana, takes a break after tamping down concrete with a jitterbug to submerse gravel from the surface of the runway. Below, BU3 McCorkle, from Napoleon, Ohio, smoothes the surface of newly lain concrete with a screed board at Al Kut Air Base, Iraq.

Seabee repairs to a major Iraqi airfield made humanitarian aide possible

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY PH2 JACOB JOHNSON

The Desert Bees liberated Iraqi military construction material to restore a runway and bring a ray of hope to shattered Iraqi lives.

AL KUT, Iraq — If an airport is more than just a place where planes land, the same can be said about a military air base. The cargo a plane carries might save lives, rebuild schools, treat the sick, or heal a community.

That was the force driving Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 (part of the I MEF Engineer Group, providing construction support and aid the reconstruction of the local communities) to work day and night to repair the main Iraqi military airfield runway near the city of Al Kut, Iraq. The result of the Bees' efforts solved a supply problem that had been slowing humanitarian action to a crawl for coalition forces throughout the Wasit province.

Republican Guard soldiers had destroyed the runway prior to coalition forces taking over the Al Kut Air Base, using explosives to put eleven craters along the 11,000-foot strip and rendering it unusable. The repair process sounds simple enough: Fill the holes with concrete. It's rather more involved than that, however.

"It wasn't easy," said BU1 Michael Zangli, of Upper Black Eddy, Penn. "We started out using jackhammers to clean the edge of the craters, but we weren't getting anywhere with a runway made with 12-inch thick reinforced concrete."

The area around the craters was heaved up by the explosion, making it necessary to remove all of the concrete in the entire affected pad. Equipment operators worked in shifts so they could run a hydraulic pavement breaker (a huge jackhammer attached to an excavator) 24 hours a day.

The 8th Engineering Support Battalion attempted to blow a dozen pads with C-4 explosive, but drilling the holes required to place the explosive turned out being more time consuming than using the hydraulic concrete buster.

Once the residual concrete was removed and a rectangular area created, it was filled and compacted to create a level surface for the concrete. Wire-reinforced mats were tied into the steel reinforcements in the surrounding pads to add strength to the finished product.

When the team ran out of the wire-reinforcing mats, they fabricated more using steel rebar liberated from a nearby Iraqi military construction site.

Once leveled, cleaned up and the mat tied in, forms were installed to place concrete. The Bees couldn't buy concrete because it would have been difficult to have delivered and even more difficult to communicate with the locals. It wasn't until an interpreter was hired that it was decided that the Seabees could purchase the ingredients for concrete and concoct it themselves.

They used a truck dubbed a "cretemobile" to automatically mix the components of sand, gravel and cement. The truck was intended to lay sidewalk-sized portions of concrete — but the Seabees set out to pour over 600 yards of 12-inch thick concrete.

"We're not used to pouring concrete with cretemobiles," said crew leader BU1 Scott Bernard, from Alma, Mich. "We're dealing with extreme heat temperatures and wind, which causes us to have to work a little faster than usual. We're doing pretty good now that we've gotten used to the pace of the cretemobile."

The team hustled about the cretemobile, fed by two Seabees at the top of the machine who scramble to keep it filled with ingrediants. The heat and wind didn't allow the team to break or slow the flow of concrete. Everyone had his or her own task and everyone worked together to get the job done.

Two Seabees used rakes to spread the concrete while another followed with a "jitterbug," a device that submerses the gravel beneath the surface of the concrete.

Two other Seabees on either side of a screed board level the concrete, all stages of the project happening simultaneously in different portions of the slab. Others put a finishing surface on with a bull float even while new concrete was being formed down the line.

After the slab was edged to slightly round the perimeter of the slab to minimize chipping, it was allowed to set. Before the concrete was completely hard, it was finished with a broom that completely evened the surface of the pad.

"It feels great to help the people of Iraq," said BU3 William McCorkle, from Napoleon, Ohio. "Even if it is just by fixing a runway. Without the runway, we can't get the supplies we need to do other good things."

Iraq's former Al Kut Air Base was dubbed Blair Field in honor of Marine LCPL Thomas A. Blair, from Broken Arrow, Okla., of the 2nd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, Marine Air Control Group 28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, Cherry Point, N.C., who was killed in March 2003 during the taking of a bridge in the city of An Nasiriyah.

JO2 Jacon Johnson was the I MEG Task Force Charlie PAO.

Task Force Charlie Builds A Holding Area For Enemy Prisoners Of War — That Isn't Used

CAMP SPARTAN, Iraq — It was Task Force Charlie's first construction project in Iraq, a 300 by 1,000 meter holding area to accommodate an expected 14,000 prisoners of war. Before it was completed, the Seabees would face challenges and danger, but they would also emphasize the meaning of Can Do.

In the pre-dawn hours of March 21, the 124-member air detachment of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 rolled across the Iraq-Kuwait border. Midway to the site, two of the tractor-trailers hit unexploded ordnance on the road.

"It was a small explosive," said UTCN Marco DeJulio. "It just sent some shrapnel into the tires. But, if you'd have been walking there, you'd have lost your foot."

Five tires were repaired and the convoy continued without further incident, arriving in late afternoon at Camp Spartan, as it was dubbed by the 60-man U.S. Marine security detail attached. The Seabees quickly went to work.

"The first thing my team did was set up a yard for all the timber we were going to use for the towers. Then the engineering aides staked out the corners of the cells and we went behind them driving stakes and laying concertina wire," said DeJulio.

Other teams working in 12-hour shifts constructed berms and built the eight 10-ft tall guard towers while Marines stood guard.

On the last day of the project, with approximately 90 percent of the facility completed, construction was halted when a sandstorm with winds in excess of 70 miles an hour slammed the camp for 18 hours. The Desert Bees huddled in vehicles and the two-man tents they had for shelter.

"We stayed in a high-back Humvee," said ET2 Ignatius Powell. "IT2 [Martin] Rieger and I were on communications watch and that vehicle was one of the safest places to be. By the time, it was over, we had been in there for 36 hours."

The damage was minimal — a four-hole burnout blown over, two tents lost and one minor injury sustained. Six hours later, the holding area was completed. Then the Seabees got the news: The facility would not be needed. All the detainees captured were too far north of the camp to make its use practical.

Initially disappointed, the Seabees have found something of value in the experience.

"It's amazing to see people in absolutely horrendous conditions, pulling together and still making jokes about the situation," said BUCS(SCW) Troy Kellerman, assistant officer in charge of the air det.

"What I'll remember is the teamwork between us and the Marines," said DeJulio. "This is the first time I've had exposure to another branch of the service and working together. That's what I joined the Seabees to do — go build something to the best of my ability and then move on to the next thing."

Upon completion of the project, the Seabees did move on, to main supply route maintenance in support of the many coalition convoys that flowed into Iraq.

— JJ

Band of Brothers: Sister Seabee

BU3 Kristalyn Kae Nelson from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 offers a smile as she prepares for things to come during *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Her camp location had just been told to prepare for a major sandstorm to hit with winds in excess of 50 knots.

U.S. Navy Photograph by PH1(SW) Aaron Ansarov

"Can Do Four!" is a rallying cry for the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4. It has helped them face down various tough challenges over the years — and most recently helped them turn the side of a hill into a helo pad in just 40 days.

CE3 Jared Parr helps teach a Jordanian child how to smooth concrete for a Jordanian hospital helo pad while BU1(SCW) Jody Binnette supervises.

Seabees Paved the Way in Karak

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JO3 SHAWNEE MCKAIN

AL KARAK, Jordan — The Seabees, well known for coming to the assistance of U.S. coalition partners, came to Jordan last August to build a helo pad for the Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein Hospital to improve its emergency medical services. According to Col. Malik Husein, a Jordanian Army officer, this hospital, like many in Jordan, has a lack of medical services.

"This area is in need of a helicopter pad, because it is in the middle of the country and too far away to drive to Amman," Husein said. "Now the people of Karak will be able to fly to Amman quickly if they still need medical care."

The U.S. Embassy in Jordan works closely with Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, 5th Fleet and the Jordanian Army on community relations projects. Two years ago, the Royal Jordanian Health Ministry built a helo pad at a hospital in Al Aqabah.

The helo pad in Karak was built as a humanitarian aid mission and to provide real-world training for the Seabees. It is the second of 12 helo pads planned by the embassy.

"Right now they're only building helo pads in Jordan, but our design can be built anywhere else," said LT Eric Haun, a Navy civil engineer. "These became a priority, so we wanted to get them finished."

The Seabees began construction in July and have worked nonstop since then to finish the project quickly while maintaining standards.

NMCB 4 came into the project expecting to pour the concrete for a helo pad, help lay surrounding asphalt, add the finishing touches and leave. But as Seabees know, it's rarely that simple. Several challenges arose during the construction phase of the project.

"We had to come in and demolish the two existing buildings on the site and grade everything to elevation, so we could pour the concrete," said job supervisor BU2 Jose Carrillo. "Their concrete is a lot different than ours, and it was tricky. We had to work with it to get it right, but it turned out very well."

In addition to laying down the concrete, the Seabees had to install electrical wiring for the helo pad's lighting.

"They had different wire coating than we're used to. It was really stiff and hard to work with," Carrillo said. "We also had to use transformers to make sure the lights would operate safely."

The Seabees couldn't bring their own heavy equipment or supplies due to weight restrictions, so they relied on the Jordanians to get them what they needed.

"The city we're in didn't have a lot of the supplies that we need, so the contractor had to go out of his way to get our stuff from another city about an hour away," EO2 Ethan Townsend said. "That took up a lot of time we didn't really have."

To overcome these challenges, the Seabees utilized the few Jordanians who spoke English to help get the supplies they needed.

"We didn't understand them and they didn't understand us, so we had to use a lot of hand signals. Sometimes it got pretty crazy," Townsend said. "We also couldn't go out in town by ourselves, so we had to try to explain to them what we needed. It was rough at times, but we came through and finished the job."

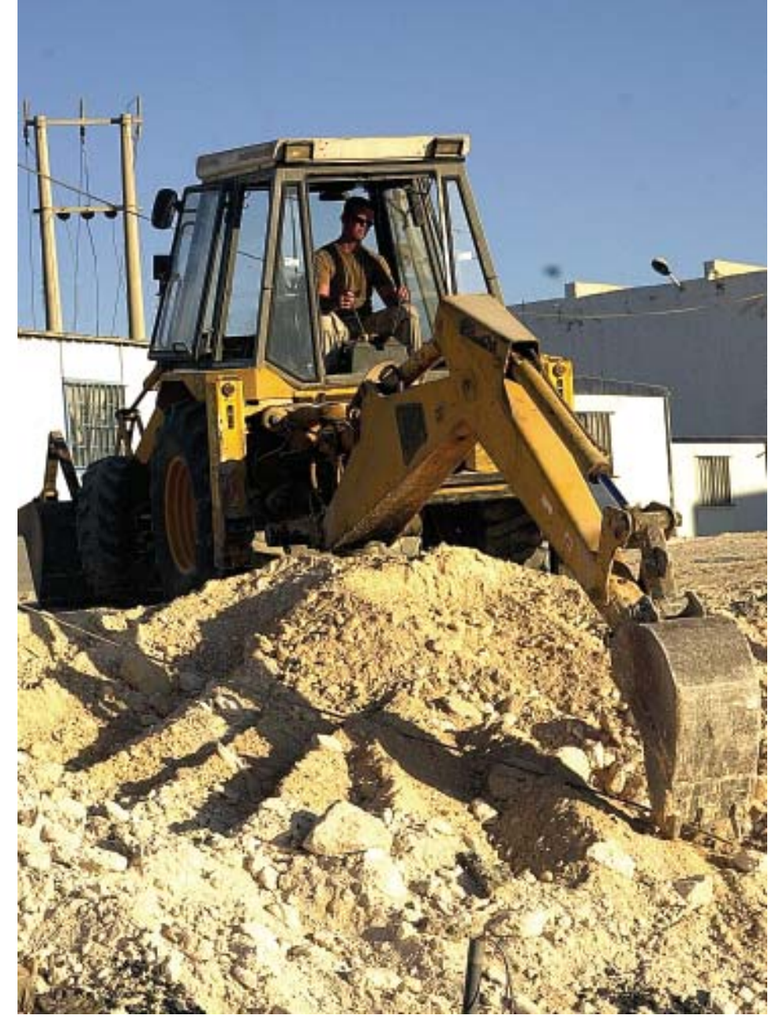
Even though they had a few obstacles, it was all in a day's work for the Seabees. NMCB 4 would do its part, and other deploying Seabee battalions would finish the rest of the planned helo pads.

"We're ecstatic about the project and the work the Seabees have done here," Haun said. "They turned the side of a hill into a flat, useful surface. We're really pleased."

SW1 Mike Uehara trims excess caulk around the helo pad for the Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein Hospital.

"I'm really very thankful to the team and we really enjoyed working with them," Husein said. "I'm really proud to work more with the Navy. We learned a lot from each other, and the people of Karak appreciate it very much."

"We're just doing what we can to help them out," Townsend said. "They're beautiful people, and overall, we had a good time out here."



EO2 Ethan Townsend (above) moves dirt around the helo pad to stabilize the dirt wall and rid the dirt of rocks. CE3 Jared Parr (below left) explains to a Jordanian soldier the size drill he needs to complete his part of the project. BU3(SCW) Jeremy Hunt (below right) drills a hole in the pavement so lights around the helo pad can be installed.

SEABEE ENGINEER RECONNAISSANCE TEAM

COVER STORY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JOC KEVIN ELLIOTT
&
PHAN LAMEL HINTON

SINCE INCEPTION IN WW II, THE US NAVY SEABEES HAVE BEEN DEPENDENT ON OTHER UNITS AND SERVICES TO PROVIDE THEM WITH ENGINEER AND CONSTRUCTION INTELLIGENCE IN ORDER TO PLAN OPERATIONS DURING TIMES OF MILITARY CONFLICT. HOWEVER, THE RECONNAISSANCE UNITS PROVIDING THE INTELLIGENCE FROM THE AREA OF OPERATIONS GENERALLY DID NOT CONTAIN TRAINED ENGINEERS OR EXPERIENCED CONSTRUCTION PERSONNEL. ACCORDINGLY, THE INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE SEABEE UNITS IN THEATER DID NOT NECESSARILY CONTAIN SUFFICIENT DATA TO ADEQUATELY PLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS.

RECONNAISSANCE IS AN ESSENTIAL, CONTINUOUS FUNCTION CONDUCTED BY THE COMMANDER TO COLLECT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENEMY AND THE BATTLESPACE. THE MOBILITY OF THE MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE (MAGTF) RELATIVE TO THAT OF THE ENEMY IS INTEGRAL TO MANEUVER WARFARE.

ENGINEER RECONNAISSANCE OF THE BATTLESPACE PROVIDES IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO THE PLANNERS AND DECISION MAKERS OF THE NCR, THE NMCB AND THE MAGTF AND ITS ELEMENTS. THE ROLE OF ENGINEERS IN RECONNAISSANCE AND INTELLIGENCE PREPARATION ON THE BATTLESPACE SUPPORTS THE COMMANDER'S DECISION PROCESS IN DETERMINING A COURSE OF ACTION.

AT FORT HUNTER-LIGGETT, MONTEREY, CM3 ROBERT D. HAMMEL OF SACRAMENTO, CALIF., PRACTICES A STEALTHY MOVE TO A BETTER POSITION FOR RETURNING FIRE ON AN OPPOSING HOSTILE FORCE DURING A SERT TEAM EXERCISE. HAMMEL IS ASSIGNED TO NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION 40.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PHAN LAMEL J. HINTON

The Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Team (SERT) concept of operations (conops) is being refined as more experience is gained in both training and operational environments. In addition, no one intends to reinvent or overlook similar conops that have already proved successful for others. The SERT manual that eventually results, to be published in two parts, is heavily informed by Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-17.4, Engineer Reconnaissance, the U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 5-170, U.S. Army Engineer Reconnaissance and the U.S. Army FM 31-23 (ID), Special Forces Mounted Operations.

Part 1 of the SERT book of knowledge will provide engineer reconnaissance techniques, tactics and procedures. Part 2 will provide mounted operations techniques, tactics and procedures for movement to the area of operations (AO). We'll touch on highlights from both draft books to outline the exciting and vital SERT mission and capability.

Much later, each part of the TACMEMO and the NTTP as a whole will evolve as SERT Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)develop and the SERT mission becomes an organic aspect of Seabee and USMC combat, civil and other operations. To successfully plan and execute an engineer-oriented reconnaissance, commanders should also review the information in MCWP 2-15.3, Ground Reconnaissance, for detailed planning guidance and MCWP 3-11.6, Scouting and Patrolling, for information on small-unit tactical training.

Combining command and control, maneuver, fires, intelligence, logistics, and force protection within a sound plan — and then aggressively, violently and flexibly executing the plan to defeat an enemy — generates combat power. The key to using combat power effectively is gathering information about the bad guys and their battlespace through reconnaissance.

Reconnaissance provides up-to-date information that helps a commander's planning and decision making during operations. Accurate and timely reconnaissance enhances maneuver, fires and force protection. In addition to other critical forms of intelligence gathered in the AO, construction engineer-specific reconnaissance gathers data that the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) commander can use to increase operational tempo.

Simply, to take the fight to the bad guys.

Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Teams consist of a seven-man reconnaissance element and a three-man liaison officer element. The recon element reports to the liaison element.

SERT Liaison Officer (LNO)

The LNO acts as the "construction agent" for the supported unit, directing NCF elements to provide the warfighter with responsive construction solutions. The LNO maintains communications with the SERT recon element forward and the NCF assets in theater, which are the NCR and the NMCB.

Data collected through engineer reconnaissance should be treated the same as information collected by all other types of reconnaissance. This information must be conveyed to the supported unit commander along with the other data collected. It could be critical for the intelligence estimates being formed.

The senior engineer assigned to the engineer reconnaissance mission must clearly understand the mission and commander's guidance and know what is expected of his engineers during the reconnaissance. Also, he must be given the areas or points of concern to be reconnoitered and know what information he is expected to gather.

The engineers must be focused on the obstacles, mobility or enemy engineer assets. However, the team should be prepared to report on non-engineer-specific information as part of its mission. The G2/S2 must provide the engineers with all of the available engineer- oriented information concerning mines, obstacles, etc. they may encounter during the mission.

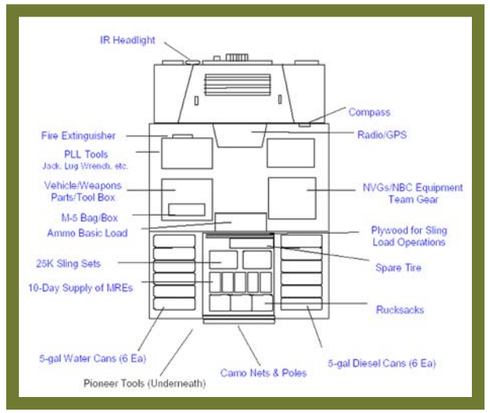
The engineers must be a part of the supported unit's reconnaissance plan at the earliest stages. Reconnaissance is a vital part of the Intelligence Cycle. Early and continuous collection and analysis of engineer reconnaissance data provides for a more comprehensive understanding of the battlespace — and can allow for a broader range of courses of action.

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (IPB) is a systematic approach to analyzing the enemy, the weather and the terrain in a specific geographic area. It integrates enemy doctrine with the weather and terrain as they relate to the mission and the battlespace environment. This is done to determine and evaluate enemy capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action.

As the threat estimate process develops, a number of critical locations will become apparent (including key terrain and man-made features, such as bridges and fords). These areas are important because significant events are likely to occur there. It is within these areas that objectives are likely to be chosen or targets will appear.

SERTs will be employed to provide the >>

Naval Construction Force (NCF) with increased construction engineer support for the MAGTF. Sophisticated communications methods will enable reach-back to the global capabilities that the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) offers, providing serious real-time engineering solutions to the battlefield. SERT provides NCF "eyes forward" to get the "ground truth" construction and repair data early for critical construction tacks, allowing for fast design solutions and sourcing of manpower, tools, equipment and materials. This allows the NCF much greater capability to maintain modern maneuver warfare.



Example vehicle load configuration.

Construction engineer reconnaissance contributes to the objective of intelligence, reducing uncertainty by providing accurate, timely and relevant knowledge about the threat and battlespace. And without being a clone of that old TV show, "The Rat Patrol," being a member of a SERT squad is probably one of the most fun, most combat-relative duties in the Seabee inventory.

Mission

The primary mission of the SERT is to collect construction engineering-oriented technical information for the supported unit to consider in the design and tasking of construction projects. Engineers must be able to perform this mission day or night, mounted or dismounted — and in various terrains and environments — without detection by the enemy. Stealth is key.

A construction engineer reconnaissance may also be conducted in benign environments, to collect information about the terrain and mission supply route(s); locate additional bypasses of terrain features or obstacles; locate suitable locations for encampments, logistics storage areas and engineering materials (such as lumber, concrete and water, etc.).

General Characteristics of SERT Missions

Typical engineer reconnaissance and equipment include both the parent engineer unit and the supported unit for combat support and combat service support. It will feature specialized equipment (e.g., surveyor's set, range finders, digital photography equipment, etc.) and motor transport, especially for route reconnaissance. Additional engineers with special training to accomplish specific tasks or gather specific data may also be included as needed.

Loading GMV in an MH-47 for Infiltration

A SERT will normally have versatile capabilities to meet the anticipated needs across a spectrum of potential needs. The team will have expertise in detecting and evaluating obstacle systems, and can evaluate any mobility concerns along a route.

Providing technical information concerning obstacles and conducting an analysis of what assets will be needed to reduce obstacles is also important. If necessary, teams will evaluate bypasses of obstacles and, if included in the mission orders, mark the bypasses or obstacles accordingly.

Providing detailed technical information on routes and specific information on bridges, tunnels, fords, and ferries along a route, as well as assessments of battle damage and suggested remediation, is also important. Such knowledge can minimize surprises, shorten planning and hasten subsequent repairs.

SERT-specific training

Personnel transferring from regular Seabee units to SERT will be required to acquire additional skills in addition to those that they bring with them. Prior to becoming SERT qualified, a Seabee will be expected to have mastered the basics in two areas of proficiency.

First, it's a given that a Seabee will be knowledgeable in the usual Navy military disciplines. Second, the Bee must be well versed in the skills of the rating and rank that he holds. SERT-specific training will include small-unit tactics (mounted and dismounted), advanced weapons qualifications and applied knowledge of various communications systems used in reconnaissance and reconnaissance techniques. SERT training and requirements will be cataloged in a forthcoming Mission Training Plan (MTP). Evaluation of the training effectiveness and deployment availability for SERT units will be set forth in a Fleet Exercise Publication (FXP).

Limitations on a SERT mission

A reconnaissance mission has some limitations. Complete engineering data is time consuming to collect – so reconnaissance activities will require more time, unless the size of areas to be reconnoitered, or the number or distances of routes to be reconnoitered, is often thereby reduced.

Engineer units must have dedicated personnel and equipment in order to conduct SERT reconnaissance operations. Engineers must train and rehearse extensively with their supported units to ensure that all SERT members and augmented personnel understand the reconnaissance training, tactics and procedures to be used during the mission.

SERT transportation assets

Use of motor transport reduces travel time to and from the area or point to be evaluated. Reduced travel time means more time is available to gather the detailed data required of most SERT missions. This is especially true for route reconnaissance, when movement between points of concern along the route allows more time to stop and evaluate suspected or known areas of interest.

Engineer reconnaissance of a route won't normally require detailed inspection of every segment. Soil or compaction tests, inspection of battle damage or damage caused by natural occurrences (e.g., flooding) may only require brief stops along a route.

Absent these requirements or concerns, route reconnaissance often allows relatively speedy transit between points of concern.

The collection of data intrinsic to engineer reconnaissance (such as for bridges) is very time consuming. Air transportation of the team allows more time on site to collect necessary data.

Also, air transportation is effective in preliminary surveys of large areas and aids in identifying locations that may require detailed engineer reconnaissance on the ground. It can also narrow down prospective sites suitable for engineer operations, such as bridging, ferries, emplacement of obstacles, and so on.

The Command Element (CE) is the Naval Construction Regiment (NCR), the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) or the NMCB Air Det (NMCB AD) and it possesses organic construction engineer capabilities. The NCR or the NMCB determines the final construction engineer solution and provides a smoothed order for construction projects.

The CE possesses an organic construction capability by its very nature because a SERT capability is present in the NCR. The NMCB normally provides direct support to elements within the MAGTF. The NMCB or subordinate command retains construction engineer capabilities and the preponderance of equipment and specialized personnel. The NMCB or subordinate element is the primary source for construction engineer reconnaissance (SERT) support at the forward edge of the battlefield (FEBA) and at the immediate rear of the FEBA.

Engineer Reconnaissance Planning

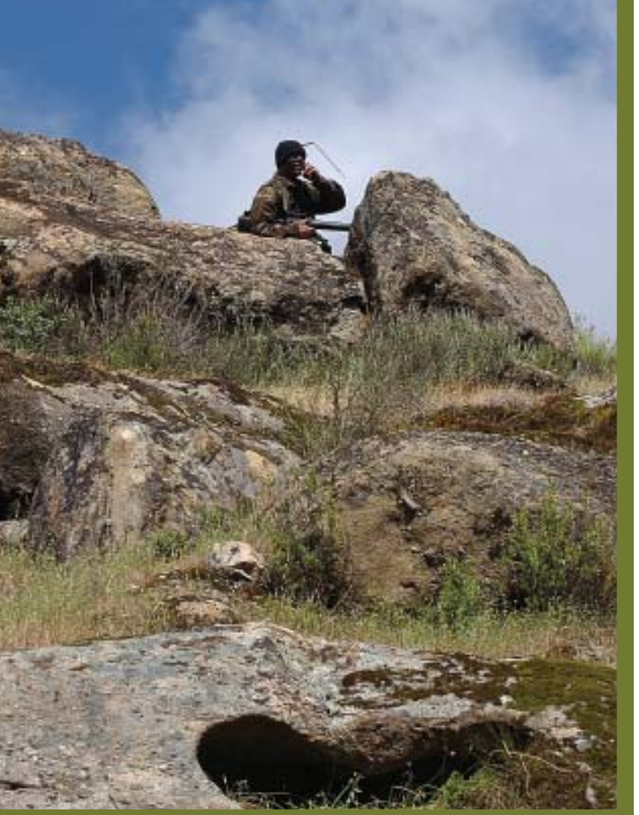
The G2/S2, in coordination with the G3/S3, prepares a detailed Reconnaissance and Surveillance Plan (RSP) that graphically depicts where and when reconnaissance missions must be executed to provide required engineering information. The RSP must contain specific tasks and priorities for all of its elements. The supported unit's G2/S2 should brief the reconnaissance leader on the disposition of friendly forces and the unit's scheme of maneuver.

Once at the designated site(s) the SERT members should confirm or deny the information provided by the G2/S2. The reconnaissance members look for engineer-specific information about the AO (composition, requirements, more). The information obtained during the reconnaissance must be relayed quickly to the LNO and NCR based on the guidelines provided during the mission briefing.

A tactical reconnaissance is conducted to gain information forward of friendly lines or to provide current, accurate information about terrain, resources, obstacles, and the enemy within a specified AO. A SERT reconnaissance is conducted to gain engineering information for the NCR or MAGTF. During an engineer reconnaissance, engineers may assist maneuver units in reconning the terrain to determine its effects on maneuverability and the enemy situation. When the enemy is located, the engineers remain undetected and help determine his strengths and weaknesses with a focus on enemy engineer activities and obstacles.

A SERT provides the information necessary to allow ground combat forces to maneuver against the enemy, attack >>

CM3 Derek Savage, 32, patrols from the top of a Humvee at Camp LeJeune, N.C., during a drill with NMCB 23's SERT for *Exercise Sharp Wedge '03.* Savage is a Reservist from Hopewell, Pa.



US NAVY PHOTO BY PHAN LAMEL J. HINTON

IT2 Class Matthew L. Steiner of Foley, Minn., relays information to headquarters from a high point on a mountain so nothing will interfere with his signal during a SERT team training exercise at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Monterey, Calif. Steiner is assigned to NMCB 40.

him where he most vulnerable and apply overwhelming fire and mass to destroy or otherwise defeat him. Engineer reconnaissance can provide key additional information needed to allow combat forces the freedom to maneuver and knowledge of enemy obstacles and their likely impact.

That said, it must be remembered that reconnaissance of enemy positions and capabilities is not the primary mission of SERT. Detailed instruction for conducting ground reconnaissance and patrolling operations can be found in MCWP 2-15.3, Ground Reconnaissance, and MCWP 3-11.3, Scouting and Patrolling, respectively.

Purpose and fundamentals

Engineers should consider all engineer reconnaissance missions to be tactical in nature, even in areas considered safe. There are three types of engineer reconnaissance: route, zone, and area. These are normally technical in nature.

Technical reconnaissance involves gathering detailed data that requires close, on-site observations and measurements. Examples of technical reconnaissance may include precise measurements of metal girders on a bridge, measurements for a tunnel, soil conditions, and so on. Technical reconnaissance normally takes place during any of the three types of engineer reconnaissance missions.

Reconnaissance techniques achieve a balance between an acceptable level of risk and the security necessary to ensure mission success. This balance is often a trade-off between speed and security. The faster the reconnaissance, the more risk a reconnaissance team accepts and possibly the less detailed reconnaissance it conducts.

Route reconnaissance

A form of reconnaissance focused along a specific line of communications, such as a road, railway or waterway providing new or updated information on route conditions and activities along the route. This ensures the commander has the latest information about the route's current condition, and the existence of obstacles and observed problems and potential problems (low areas subject to flooding, for example). It also is intended to confirm the route's suitability for the types and numbers of vehicles to traverse it.

Zone reconnaissance

This is a direct effort to obtain detailed information concerning all routes, obstacles (including chemical or radiological contamination) and terrain within a zone defined by boundaries. A zone reconnaissance normally is assigned when the enemy situation is vague or when information concerning cross-country trafficability is desired. The zone is a smaller, defined area within the AO.

Commanders normally assign a zone reconnaissance mission when they need additional information prior to traversing the zone with maneuver units or equipment. Engineers produce information about routes, cross-country trafficability, terrain and obstacles. A zone reconnaissance is often most suited for gaining information about an AO where long-term operations are anticipated or when information for possible future uses are required.

Depending upon how much technical reconnaissance activity will be performed in the zone, commanders should expect that the engineer reconnaissance would be more time consuming than a typical non-engineering reconnaissance of the same size zone.

Area reconnaissance

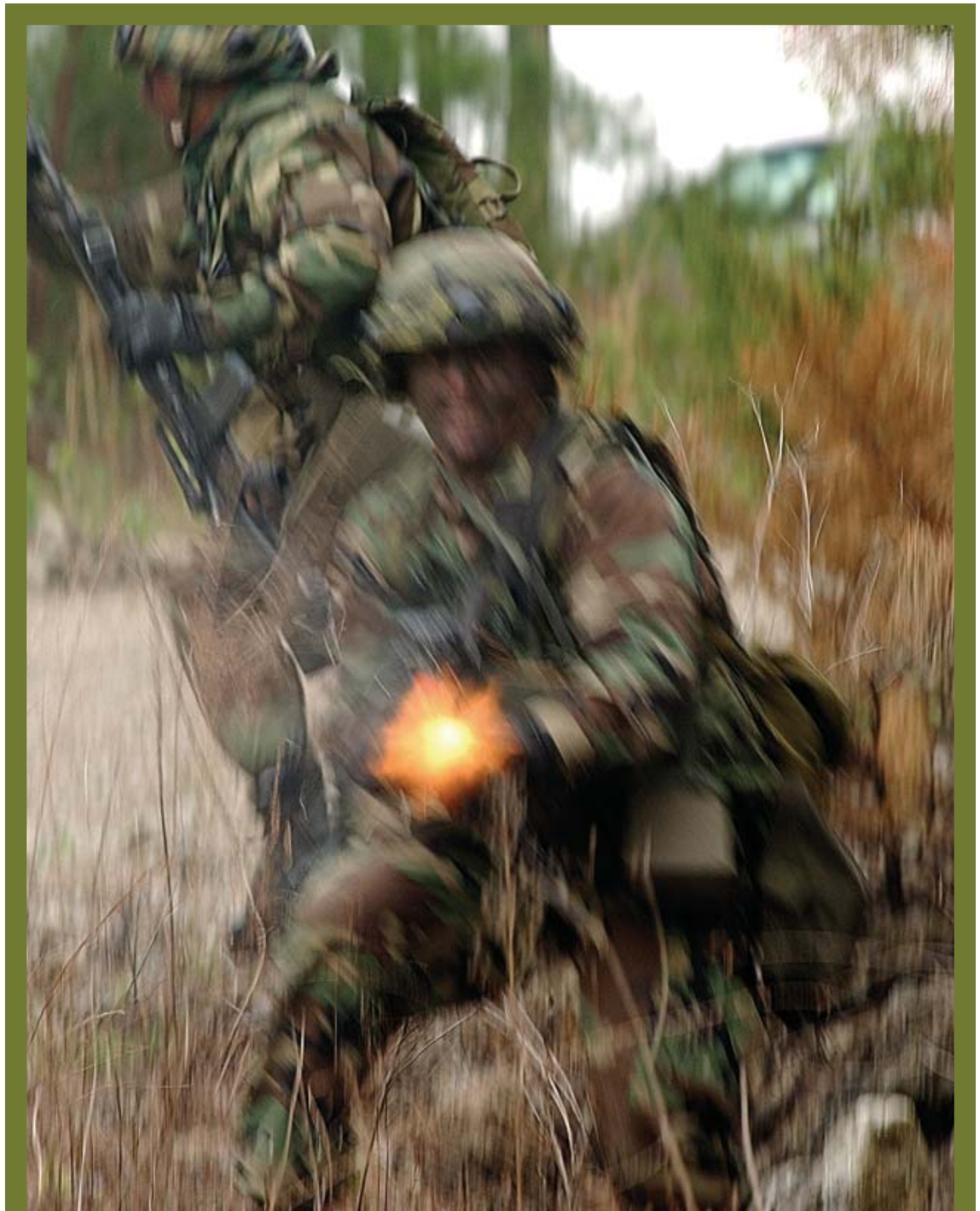
A form of reconnaissance operations that is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning the terrain or AO, such as a town, ridgeline, woods or other feature critical to operations. An area reconnaissance could be made of a single point, such as a bridge or installation. A SERT unit normally conducts an area reconnaissance to support operational plans with specific information about point, localized sites or objectives.

Support of obstacle reduction/breaching operations

The SERT will normally encounter enemy obstacles during its mission. It isn't a primary task for reconnaissance units to reduce encountered obstacles. Reduction activities can compromise the security of the reconnaissance team, are time consuming and may require additional personnel and equipment such as demolition, shovels, wire cutters and more that add to mission support requirements. A commander should consider assigning obstacle reduction tasks to a reconnaissance mission only when the benefits outweigh security and logistical concerns.

If a SERT mission provides data that compels a commander to conduct a deliberate or hasty breach, the engineers participating in the reconnaissance mission become an even more valuable asset. They are the primary source for trafficable routes to the breach sites. The team can propose locations for positioning the Breaching Task Force elements or the maneuver unit's hasty breaching assets (dispersal sites, cover and concealment) and determining the specific breach sites. The team may already know the locations of the enemy on the near and far sides; have soil and terrain analysis in the breach area; and locate the forward edge of any minefields.

Route classification is a tool that helps determine what loads of vehicles can travel along a route and how fast it may travel. >>



EO3 Richard Coble, 31, a Naval Reservist from Jacksonville, Fla., fires an M-60 during NMCB 14's SERT drill.

"In the hot zone" at Fort Hunter-Liggett as SERT 40 sets up defensive perimeters around their convoy to simulate return fire on their enemy during the battalion's annual field exercise.

After a route is reconned, the results are transferred to an overlay for display on a map. During war or military operations other than war (MOOTW), only the necessary and essential facts about a route are gathered as quickly and safely as possible. This information is placed on a route-classification overlay and supplemented by additional reports.

During AO reconnaissance, detailed route-classification missions are performed to obtain information for future use. Route classification may be conducted throughout the AO, both in the rear areas and at the FEBA. The first step in understanding the technical portions of a route reconnaissance is understanding what information is needed to complete a route-classification overlay.

Route-classification overlay

A route classification overlay depicts a route's entire network of roads, bridge sites and other major features or points of concern. These items have been reconned and the data recorded as support documentation for the route overlay. A route classification gives details on what obstructions will impact the movement of personnel, equipment and supplies along the route. Engineers possess special training to conduct route reconnaissance and classification.

Bridges

A bridge reconnaissance provides commanders with the bridge load carrying capabilities along a certain route or what materials are needed to destroy a bridge. Because of the complexity of analyzing bridges, engineers should perform all bridge reconnaissance.

The manual that this story on based upon will review in significant depth an extensive range of bridge load classification and bridge destruction analysis, detail that we have no room for here.

Nevertheless, know that bridge load classification allows vehicle operators to avoid bridge failure (and maybe also avoid a sudden trip into the water) by determining what can cross without causing damage.

Common bridges in use today include timber or steel trestle bridge with timber deck; steel stringer bridge with concrete deck; concrete steel stringer bridge; concrete T-beam bridge with asphalt surface and masonry arch bridge.

To properly classify a bridge, the SERT must know key information concerning the bridge's basic components, including:

Approaches Approaches may be mined or booby-trapped, requiring thorough investigation during a reconnaissance.

Substructure The substructure consists of the abutments and intermediate supports that transfer the bridge's load to the ground. It's important to measure all aspects of an abutment, including its height, width and length, the abutment wings and the intermediate supports for bridge demolition missions.

It may even be more effective to destroy the intermediate supports or abutments when compared to the rest of the bridge structure.

Superstructure (upper part of a bridge) The superstructure consists of several elements.

The STRINGERS rest on and span the distance between the intermediate supports or abutments. Stringers are the superstructure's main load-carrying members. They receive the load from the flooring and the vehicles and transfer it to the substructure.

The FLOORING SYSTEM often consists of both decking and tread. The decking is laid directly over the stringers at right angles to the centerline of the bridge. The tread is laid parallel to the centerline of the bridge and between the curbs.

The CURBS are placed at both edges of the flooring to guide the vehicles. A vehicle with an axle wider than the traveled way between the curbs cannot cross the bridge. Most bridges, however, >>

RADM Chuck Kubic, Commander 1NCD (center in above-left photo), is shown with SERT 7 during *OIF*. NMCB 40's SERT team establishes a security perimeter (top right) so the rest of the team can better complete its mission during the battalion's FEX at Fort Hunter-Liggett. SERT 40 sets up communication antennas (below) before heading out on its training recon. BUC(SCW) Richard D. Bucholtz (right), of Port Hope, Mich., documents specifics about the objective bridge located by SERT 40 to determine if it can be safely and effectively used for troop and convoy movement.

allow for vehicular overhang beyond the normal traveled area. This allowance is called horizontal clearance above the curbs and is a safety factor. Commanders must perform a risk analysis before attempting such a crossing.

RAILINGS along the bridge are built to guide drivers and to protect vehicular and foot traffic.

TRUSSES are used in some bridge superstructures, either above or below the traveled way to increase the load carrying capacity. A truss is a structural element made of several members joined together to form a series of triangles.

The NUMBER OF MEMBERS in each span is noted where applicable (for example, stringer bridges and concrete T-beam bridges). Exact dimensions of specific bridge members are taken as outlined later in this chapter.

The SPAN LENGTH is measured from center to center of the supports. The bridge's classification is usually based on the weakest span. If the weakest span is apparent, no other spans need to be measured. If the weakest span is difficult or impossible to locate, all spans must be classified. Even if several spans look identical, actual measurements should be taken to prevent error.

The TRAVELED WAY WIDTH is measured between the insides faces of the curbs. The horizontal clearance on a truss bridge is measured from a point 1.21 meters above the roadway.

It is essential to note the bridge's general condition, paying particular attention to evidence of damage from natural causes (such as rot, rust and deterioration) or combat action. Classification procedures presume that a bridge is in good condition. If the bridge is in poor condition, the class obtained from mathematical computations must be reduced according to the classifier's judgment.

Route signs and symbols

A SERT mission may be tasked with establishing signage during the route reconnaissance, or the information gathered will be used by other units to emplace signs as required. Engineers are responsible for providing the MAGTF or AO commander the information necessary to ensure proper signage to implement traffic controls. Engineer units may be assigned the task of acquiring or making and installing the signs, but non-engineer units may also be required to perform this function. Standard signage is used to aid drivers when encountering a bridge.

The appropriate military authority in the area specifies which signs are to be illuminated. Primary considerations go to hazard and direction signs.

The system of lighting should remain operational for a minimum of 15 hours without refueling or changing batteries. In normal conditions, each commander assigned responsibility for a route must ensure that signs are visible at night and other periods of reduced visibility, taking necessary precautions in tactical situations.

Under reduced lighting conditions, the positioning of the signs and the methods adopted to make them visible (illumination or reflection) must enable personnel to see them from vehicles fitted with reduced lighting or filtering devices.

SERT TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

#	BILLET	RANK	RATE	ELEMENT
1	OIC/Engineer	03	5100	LNO
2	OPS Specialist	E6	BU/SW	LNO
3	Comm Specialist	E5/E6	UT	LNO
4	AOIC/Engineer	02/CCWO	CEC	Recon
5	Bridge/Structural	E7/E8	BU/SW	Recon
6	Equipment/Vertical	E6	EO	Recon
7	Engineering Aid/Autocad	E5/E6	EA	Recon
8	Electrical PWR Spec	E5/E6	CE	Recon
9	Mechanic	E4/E5	CM	Recon
10	Comm/Crypto Spec	E4/E5	ET/EC	Recon

Next Issue: Have ATV, Will Travel – More Fun Than A Circus Thrill Show

In 2001, the concept of a Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Team (SERT) began to take shape. Since there are few military events in the world involving the U.S. in which Seabees are not in some way involved, initial teams were trained for pending and potential international crisises that were developing at that time. As the SERT unit's value became more recognized, RADM Kubic directed the organizing, outfitting and training of the first eight SERT units to operate from the corresponding eight construction battalions stationed around the globe. SERTs are mounted detachments that must be prepared to operate in low or medium-intensity conflicts, over terrain consisting of high deserts with rugged mountains to low deserts with sand dunes plus in salt marshes, arctic snow and ice, tropical forests, jungles and over the topography of the middle latitudes. In other words, SERT must have organic mobility anywhere in the world a current crisis dictates. The capability of these detachments to go long distances unassisted gives the Joint Forces Commander an effective way to obtain engineer data from the forward edge of the battlespace. The photograph above shows a 10-man SERT mounted detachment, task organized for a 3-day, 300-mile mission without re-supply. Lots more next issue.

NMCB 40's CE2 Chance W. Agnew, of Whittier, CA. keeps an eye out for enemy attack while his convoy moves toward its objective during a Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Team exercise. SERTs are extremely mobile, versatile and adaptable across all forms of terrain.

Teachers and school children at the Dar Al-Salam school in Ad Diwaniyah greet U.S. forces and Iraqi townspeople before a ribbon-cutting ceremony reopening the school. Seabees from NMCB 7 worked with Iraqi contractors to repair internal and external structures at the two-building school.

Schools In!

For children in Central Iraq, schools renovated and reopened by Seabees become reason for celebration

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JO1(FMF) LISA KEDING

AD DIWANIYAH, Iraq – Thanks to the humanitarian work of countless Seabees, ribbon-cutting ceremonies have become frequent occurrences at schools in many Central Iraq towns. During the ceremonies, children show up in small crowds to greet guests and take part in the events at the school.

But the children of Ad Diwaniyah seemed to have more enthusiasm in their smiles and an extra zest in their laughter when there school was reopened with happy festivities.

The ceremony marked the completion of reconstruction efforts at the Al Azhar Primary School for Boys, which Seabees and Marines deployed to the area helped make happen.

One of the two contracting teams assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 worked with Marines from 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines to negotiate the contract for the repairs at the school. The contracting team followed the construction project until its completion.

Seabees from NBMCB 4 began the project two months ago, but turned the project over to NMCB 7 Seabees prior to their scheduled return to the States. The Seven Seabee team worked with school officials to plan the repairs at the school, which Iraqi contractors completed.

For this school, like many others in the area, Seabees went over the list of requests made by officials at the school. They then performed a site assessment of the school to ensure successful repairs to the school.

"We go to a school and come up with a scope of work that needs to be done. We then put a work request out for bid to contractors from the area," said UTC(SCW) Richard Steffee, one of the two contracting chiefs at NMCB 7.

The team goes through dozens of bids for each contract before selecting a contractor. They look for quality and experienced contractors, but also for fair bids and expediency of work. The two Seabees teams stayed busy overseeing 35 projects in Ad Diwaniyah.

"We do a lot of wheeling and dealing to get the best work for the money for these schools. The Iraqi contractors who repair the schools do a lot of extra work for us and they take an enormous amount of pride in their work," said Steffee.

But Steffee said the most interesting occurrence at the Al Azhar school could be seen in the actions and personalities of the children who live nearby. He explained that some of the children used to throw rocks at U.S. forces as they drove by or when they stopped to visit the school.

"We went from going there and feeling threatened every day to feeling 100 percent welcome and appreciated," said Steffee. "You see happy faces now, and no one is hiding in the background picking up a rock. "

Not only have the actions of the children changed near the school, but also the ways the Seabees and Iraqi contractors do business have evolved into a more trusting relationship, Steffee said. The contractors invited the Seabees to Iraqi-style lunches once or twice a week, he explained. "We sit down and break bread together and talk about things as if we were old friends," said Steffee.

Similar praise for the Seabees who visited and helped to repair the school could be heard in the headmaster's comments after the ceremony. "It was a great assistance for us — for rebuilding our school — and I feel as if they are my brothers," said Hussein Shakir, headmaster of the Al Azhar Primary School.

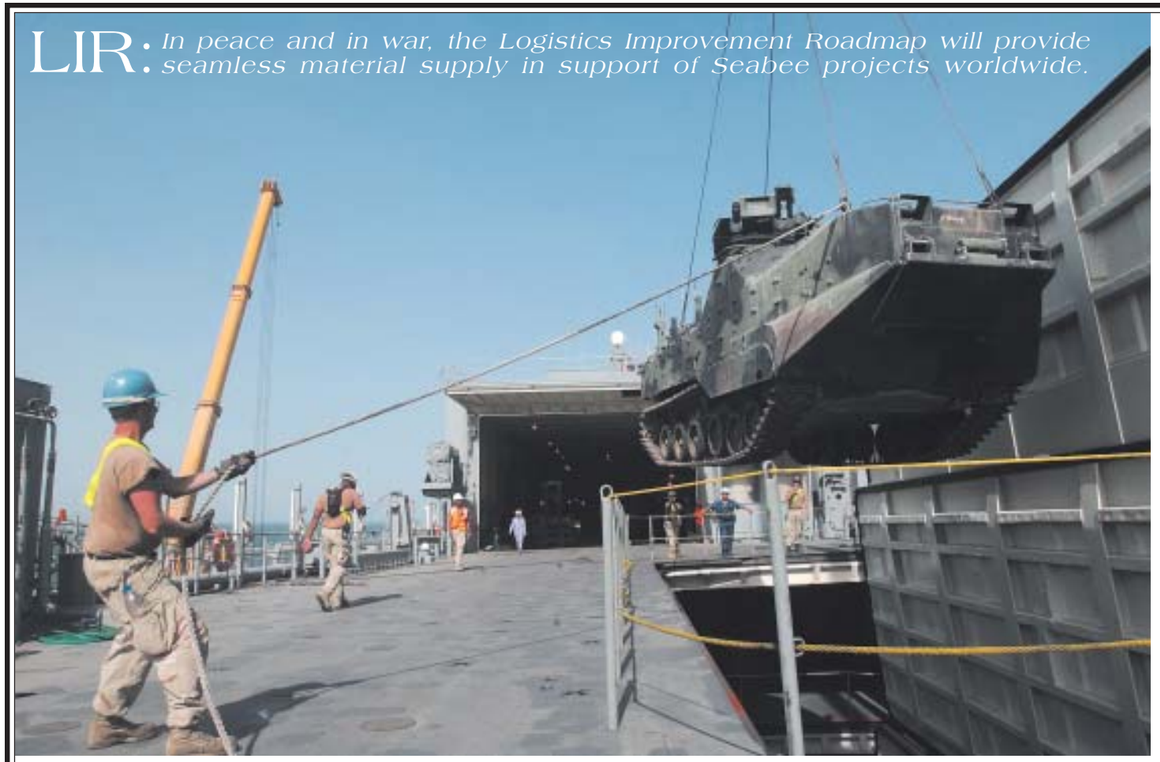
In the afternoon, Steffee and Lt. Brian Clapp, the contracting officer for the team, visited several schools in the area to oversee work that was in progress and met with contractors to discuss future projects at many damaged and rundown schools in the town.

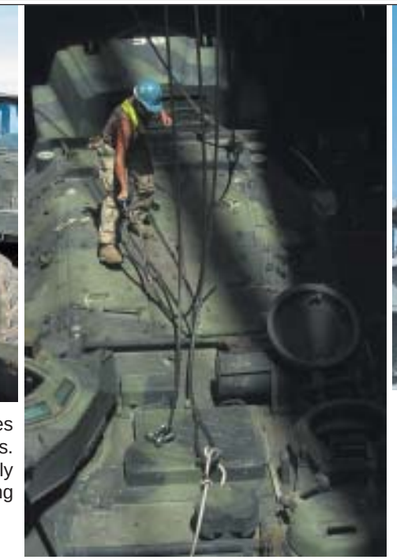
After a morning that started with cheerful celebration, it was back to the rubbled grounds and classrooms for the Seabee team in the afternoon. The efforts of Seabee contracting teams and other U.S. forces continue to shape the rebuilding efforts in this Iraqi town — and give daily reasons for these Iraqi children to put down their rocks.

UTC (SCW) Richard Steffee (left), one of NMCB 7's two contracting team chiefs, stands to the right of Majeed Abdul Hameed, one of the two local Iraqi contractors who worked with the Bee team to repair and reconstruct the Al Azhar Primary School for Boys. The Seabee contracting team and both Iraqi contractors attended the ceremonial ribbon-cutting ceremony at the school. Iraqis are typically very friendly people and often freely provided chai tea to Seabees rehabbing the school (near right). Only three takers managed to finish the sweet tea. Six schools in Ad Diwaniyah have hosted ribbon-cutting ceremonies to celebrate the reconstructive efforts of Seabees and Iraqi contractors, but during the ceremony at the Al Azhar Primary School for Boys, the big draw was a trio of Iraqi musicians. An Iraqi boy (far right) decided to take a turn on the drums to celebrate the new face of his school and the freedom Iraqis say they now feel. Among the six schools renovated and reopened by Seabees, every ribbon-cutting ceremony turned into a significant local event accompanied by lots of participation by happy parents and children, including these four girls in a school reopened by Seabees from NMCB 4. At the Damascus Secondary School for Girls, Aqeel (below), 17, a senior Iraqi skilled worker assisted in making and applying stucco to several of the school's rooms prior to the Seabees making much needed repairs to the ruined electrical systems.

The simple act of going to market is a full-dress affair for Seabees in Iraq. A three or four-person security team keeps watch at the vehicles while members of the MWR Committee go shopping. BU3 Darryl James makes friends (right) with Iraqi children. Hassan's market, where the committee buys sodas and electronics, is on the left.

LIR: *In peace and in war, the Logistics Improvement Roadmap will provide seamless material supply in support of Seabee projects worldwide.*





The key to rapid deployment of Seabees and Marines in contingencies is equipment in pre-positioned stores. Bringing those stocks back home for reuse is equally important, here with Bees loading ships in Kuwait during *Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

STORY BY CAPT JIM COWELL AND CDR DAVE COZIER
PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY PH1(AW) ARLO ABRAHAMSON

FOR THE PAST 61 YEARS, the Seabees have constructed thousands of miles of roads — including the "five roads to victory" across the Atlantic and Pacific in World War II. As the Seabees move into the 21st century, they have a need to build a new kind of road — a road that is paved with the Seabee Logistics Vision.

With buy-in and support from throughout the Seabees, the newly named Naval Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center (NFELC) is spearheading this effort.

The Naval Construction Force (NCF) Logistics Vision is to provide Seabees with a highly effective and efficient logistics system that is capable of equipping, moving and sustaining the force; is interoperable with the Navy, Marine Corps and Joint environments; is comprised of flexible and responsive systems and processes; and is consistent across the NCF.

The blueprint for achieving this goal is called the Logistics Improvement Roadmap (LIR). This plan is built around five functional areas of Seabee logistics:

1. Project material estimation, procurement, and distribution
2. Sustainment of current readiness
3. Mobilization to meet time-phased force deployment document (TPFDD) timelines
4. Seabee load-out aboard maritime prepositioning force (MPF)
5. Modularization, containerization and modernization (MCM)

The Logistics Working Group (LWG) has begun to shift its view of the Seabee Table of Allowance (TOA) assigned to each NCF unit. In the past, the TOA was looked upon as a collection of material and equipment – all put in a box and hauled around with us.

Today, the NCF regards the TOA as their weapons platform, with the various assemblies within the TOA as the weapons systems. This is not unlike the way the surface Navy looks at a ship as their weapons platform. The TOA is the Seabees' "ship."

The NCF is a completely integrated force. Therefore, our logistics improvement initiatives are applicable to all NCF units, active duty and Reserves.

Whether deployed to one of the forward deployed sites around the world in peacetime or deployed in support of a contingency, one of the major hurdles is providing Class IV materials to the Seabees to feed the construction machine. It's the fuel for construction operations.

There are numerous and well-known challenges associated with getting Bees the right materials at the right time. The bulky nature of construction materials and the long supply lines to remote sites adds to the complexity. When possible, Seabees use host-nation supplies, but to meet the full mission requirement we must be able to supply material to any environment, even third world countries without robust economies.

The goal of LIR is to provide seamless material supply to support Seabee projects worldwide in both peacetime and wartime. One of the major initiatives is a partnership with General Services Administration (GSA) and Defense Supply Center (DSC) to use their construction material vendors to develop a "Seabee vendor" system. The vision of this concept is to have a one-stop vendor that has the capability to prepare a bill of material, order and ship construction material to anywhere in the world.

Although we will maintain an organic capability to perform this function, the "Seabee vendor" will be a new tool for Seabees that will reduce workload and improve the efficiency of delivering materials to Seabees.

Getting Seabees in the field the logistics support they need to perform their "We Build – We Fight" mission is essential. We're implementing and enhancing MicroSNAP as the NCF standard for unit-level inventory, financial management and maintenance, including deployment training of personnel, inventory/data entry, follow-up reporting and monitoring. The LWG is also examining the possible use of MicroSNAP to provide unit-level TOA management.

Next the LWG is adopting standard Navy Configuration Data Management (CDM) and Ships Configuration and Logistics Information System (SCLIS) processes to control the configuration of our Seabee "ship." This is be accomplished by converting current TOA data to standard Navy logistics hierarchal structure in the Weapons System File. This will allow inventory visibility in conjunction with the implementation of 3M (Maintenance and Material Management) and reliability-centered maintenance across the NCF.

Recent history has demonstrated the Seabees' need to sustain themselves in a joint environment. To do this, the LWG is developing plans to maximize compatibility with other-service equipment, ensuring support and data exchange processes exist and function. In addition, the LWG is also evaluating adaptation of the Marine Corps Small Unit Logistics System to the NCF.

Although much of the Seabee TOA is pre-purchased and staged around the world, there are numerous deferred-from-buy items for each TOA that must be obtained as needed — at the time of mobilizations. Accurate and up-to-date attainment plans are essential to obtain these thousands of items of material and equipment. Roles and responsibilities of commands involved in TOA mobilization have changed considerably in the past several years and are being identified and documented in a Mobilization Standard Operating Procedure, after which an update of the various Local Support Plans can be completed. These plans include Reserve personnel processing, training, and outfitting processes of the various TOAs.

In the 1990s, the NCF enhanced its capability to support the Navy/Marine Corps Team by adding one battalion and one regiment TOA to each of the MPF Squadrons. Now that eight of nine ships are loaded and deployed (USNS *Wheat* was completed in March 2003), this functional area addresses the need to maintain this equipment and the need for Seabees to practice getting their gear off the ship and integrated with the Marine Corps.

The LIR is a transformational initiative, moving Seabees from decades-old stand-alone systems and bringing them into the 21st century. The resulting alignment with standard Navy logistics systems will ensure that Seabees have full capability, interoperability — and robust support as they move into the battlefield of today.

CAPT Jim Cowell is the commanding officer of the Naval Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center (NFELC). He has served numerous duties with the Seabees, including two deployments to Okinawa and one to Puerto Rico. He previously served as commanding officer of NMCB 4 and made deployments to Okinawa and Puerto Rico.

CDR Dave Cozier is the NFLEC executive officer. He has four tours with Seabees, including XO at NMCB 3 and Officer in Charge, Construction Battalion Unit 410. He was the public works officer in Panama during Operations Safe Haven *and* Sea Signal.

BU3 KRISTALYN KAE NELSON WAS CAPTURED BY PH1(SW) AARON ANSAROV

Take the plunge.

Enter the *SEABEE Magazine* Photo Contest

YOU CAN BE A PUBLISHED PHOTOGRAPHER by capturing Seabees and CEC officers at work and at play. The entire Seabee Nation is your subject for the first-ever *SEABEE Magazine* Photography Contest.

You do not have to be a professional photographer, either! Far from it, in fact. We're looking for those classic slice-of-life images that safely reflect the full spectrum and diversity of the Seabee Experience, from work site to after work — to a "beauty shot" of your favorite piece of heavy equipment.

Hey, a dozer can be a *beautiful* thing.

All images published in *SEABEE Magazine* are automatically entered, but this is a pretty great chance for you Seabees, CEC officers, and even Seabee vets, retirees and family members to enter, too.

Anyone and everyone is strongly encouraged to submit their photos as long as the subject matter is related to Seabees. All we ask is that you submit original work not previously or concurrently submitted to any other contest.

What we want

Seabees do some of the most interesting work in some of the most fascinating locations on earth. Photos of Seabees, non-Bee members of Seabee units, CEC officers and their activities are all good places to start, whether on duty or off. You decide what makes the best picture for you. Black-and-white or full color images are both acceptable.

What we don't want

We cannot accept laser-printed, photocopied or faxed images, instant or Polaroid™ images.

How to submit digital images

With the prevalence of high-quality digital cameras today, and the ease with which we can accept electronic files, we strongly encourage you to shoot and submit high-quality digital photos. All digital images must be sized to 300 dpi at 5x7 inches at minimum.

A complete caption or description of what's happening in the photo must be included (preferably embedded in the electronic file), and all recognizable persons must be fully identified by rank/rate, name and unit.

To submit electronic images, send an e-mail with the image(s) attached to **seabeemagazine@navy.mil**. If the submitter is not the photographer, please include the photographer's full rank/rate, name, unit and contact telephone numbers as well as the submitter's info.

You may also burn a compact disk with your images, if necessary, and send the disk with your entries in secure packaging to the contest postal address below.

How to submit prints

If not shooting original digital, we strongly encourage you to shoot high-quality print film instead of slide or transparency film (though slides are OK). Many print films are well sharp enough to rival many of the slide films.

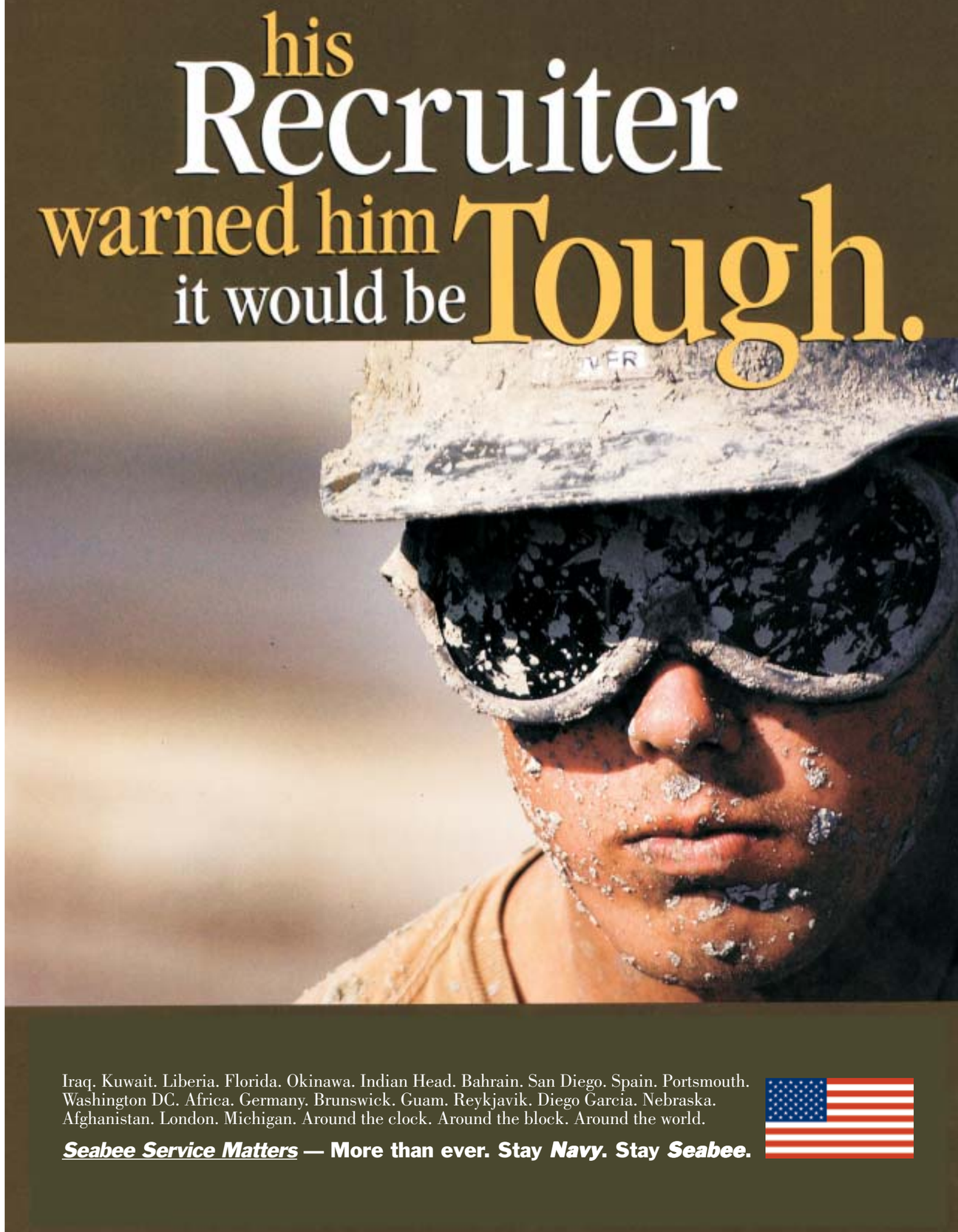
In any case, even drugstore and storefront photo processors will often be happy to scan your negatives to a CD when your film is processed. You can send the CD itself or e-mail photos to us from the disk.

Prints (or CDs) may be sent to: *SEABEE Magazine*, Attn: PHOTO CONTEST CODE PA, 1322 Patterson Avenue SE Ste 1000, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5065.

While overnight delivery is not required, U.S. Postal "Express Mail" or a delivery means other than routine first-class mail is strongly recommended to avoid possible damage in transit or security handling.

Deadline

The deadline has been extended in order to accept additional entries. All submissions must be in our hands no later than June 30, 2004 — so get shooting now!



NEVER FORGET
DEC. 7, 1941 ★ SEPT. 11, 2001