

**BEES BATTLE 'IVAN THE TERRIBLE' TO SAVE PENSACOLA**

**UNITED STATES NAVY**

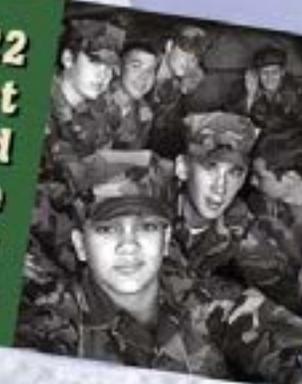
# SEABEE

CONSTRUIMUS BATTUIMUS ISSUE NO. 3, 2004 WWW.SEABEE.NAVY.MIL



## WHO WAS SEABEE TEAM? 1104

**NMCB 22  
Journalist  
Named  
Navy Reserve  
Photographer  
Of The Year**



⊕ **Change of Command  
at 1NCD/NCFC**



⊕ **Holidays with the  
Desert Bees**



⊕ **Reserve Battalions  
Gear Up for OIF**



**The little-known story of Dong Xoai and  
the Seabee awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR**

**SEABEES TEST NEW CAMMIES ⊕ ICAP: SUCCESS TAUGHT HERE**



Seabees assigned to Echo Company of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 joined air detachment personnel in October for field exercise *Operation Gulf Mist* at Camp Shelby, Miss. The battalion, based in Gulfport, Miss., was completing field training prior to deploying to Iraq.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PHOTOGRAPHER'S MATE 1ST CLASS ROBERT R. MCRILL





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Units or organizations with Seabees assigned are authorized no-cost distributions of *SEABEE* Magazine (ISSN 1546-8429). Send requests by mail or fax 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.

**CIVILIAN SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Paid subscriptions to the official magazine of the U.S. Navy Seabees, *SEABEE* Magazine, are available from the Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954, or call (202) 512-1800 and ask for the publications order desk. The best method for obtaining a paid subscription is to point your Web browser to <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> and enter the Search term *SEABEE*. This returns a means to enter your subscription via a secure credit card transaction. Current subscription prices are \$25/year \$7/issue FPO/APO/domestic and \$36/year \$9.80/issue foreign.

**POSTMASTER**

Send address corrections to the editor at the magazine address shown below.

**AUTHORIZATION**

The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of the Navy.

**EDITORIAL**

*SEABEE* Magazine (formerly *Beeline*) is scheduled quarterly (except for combined or other special issues) by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command public affairs office from the historic Washington Navy Yard, "the Quarterdeck of the Navy." Our readership consists of Active and Reserve Seabees and CEC officers and their families, as well as veterans, retirees and the general public. Letters and electronic mail are welcome on all Seabee-related topics and, if published, are subject to editing for length and clarity. Written and photographic submissions that show Active and Reserve Seabees safely at work and at play are strongly encouraged. We prefer to receive all written and photographic submissions by e-mail to [seabeesmagazine@navy.mil](mailto:seabeesmagazine@navy.mil). Film or digital images should include captions, be unmodified, and digital files should measure at least 300 dpi and 5x7 inches. All submissions must include the author's full name, rank/rate, postal address, duty contact telephone number(s) and e-mail address. Submissions by regular postal mail are strongly discouraged due to security precautions that may damage fragile contents. If necessary, send all postal mail to:

NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND  
Attn: Editor, *SEABEE* Magazine (Code PA)  
1322 Patterson Avenue SE Suite 1000  
Washington Navy Yard DC 20374-5065

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**CONTACTS**

E-mail: [seabeesmagazine@navy.mil](mailto:seabeesmagazine@navy.mil)  
Voice: (202) 685-9024 or DSN 325-9024  
Fax: (202) 685-1484 or DSN 325-1484

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*Stay Navy. Stay Seabee.*



# F O R E W O R D



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

SEABEES ARE GETTING IT DONE in the global war on terrorism, in homeport and in humanitarian assistance. From Fallujah to Rota, Guam to State Department outposts, and out as far as helping victims of the Southeast Asian tsunamis, our hard-working Seabees and Civil Engineer Corps officers make us proud everyday.

We're especially proud of the performance of our first-rate Reserve Seabees in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. *OIF* obviously presents its own challenges to the kind of work Seabees do, whether construction or humanitarian, but the Reserve component is shouldering its load seamlessly with the Active forces. They are all Desert Bees, doing the same job at combat speed.

This is no surprise to those who have helped mold the Reserve training regimen. Reserve training already has benefited from and been changed by the lessons learned in *OIF*, and our forces operate without regard for whether they are "full time" or "part time."

There is no more forceful a validation of that than this: The forward-deployed commander of the 1st Marine Engineering Group (IMEG) is RDML Raymond K. Alexander, the Reserve deputy commander of the 1st Naval Construction Division (1NCD).

The challenges of *OIF*, however, include dealing with the sacrifice of war. In this issue, we have the sad duty to report on the death of Steelworker 3rd Class Eric Lyle Knott, a Seabee from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4, and the wounding of several from NMCB 4 in the same attack. See page eight for the story of these brave Bees.

We salute the change of command at 1NCD in this issue. RADM Robert L. Phillips has become the second commander of the 1st Naval Construction Division with the retirement of RADM Charles Kubic.

RADM Phillips was the former vice commander here at the Naval Facilities

Engineering Command and has a clear understanding of the Seabee calling from all angles. We look forward to working with him again as 1NCD continues its fine work at home and abroad.

Our cover story in this issue deals with a topic and a person that newer Seabees may know little about—Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields. Shields was with Seabee Team 1104 in Dong Xoai, Vietnam, and he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in a fierce battle there. His medal is on permanent loan for display at the CEC/Seabee Museum at Port Hueneme, Calif.

Seabees helped out at home when Hurricane Ivan tore through historic Naval Air Station Pensacola, the ancestral home of Navy aviation training. Almost literally as "Ivan the Terrible" rolled out of Pensacola, a fast-reaction convoy of Seabees from NMCB's 1 and 74 with tools and heavy equipment was rolling in the other side—and our MUSE techs arrived to restore electricity.

One issue necessarily close to a Seabee's heart has always been the working uniform—classically, the several versions of cammies. On page 20, take a look at the new Navy Working Uniform (NWU) in several camouflaged forms now being tested by Seabees and others. The patterns differ and the colors differ, and our Seabees most definitely will put them to a rigorous suitability test! Once the data from the wear tests are in, the Navy will decide which uniform and patterns will be worn based on that data.

The world is changing, the Navy is changing, and that means the Seabees' world is changing as well. As the Navy creates new opportunities for Sailors to serve, Seabees will always be among the first to raise their hands and say *Can Do!* 🌐

# SEABEE



## NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND

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Chief of Civil Engineers

### John E. Roark, Jr.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Harrell T. Richardson

FORCM(SCW)  
FORCE MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER  
OF THE SEABEES

### Virginia Bueno

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

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DEPUTY COMMANDER

### Kevin C. Timmons

CMDCM (SCW)  
COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

### Daryl C. Smith

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

## STAFF

### Daniel Charles Ross

Chief Journalist, USNR (Active)  
EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command  
Public Affairs & Communications

### OIF Bureau Chief

JOC(AW) Suzanne Speight, USNR (Active), Camp Fallujah

### Senior Contributors

JOC Kevin Elliott, USNR  
Patrick Peterson, *Biloxi Sun Herald*  
PH1(AW) Arlo Abrahamson, PH2(AW) Michael D. Heckman

## CONTRIBUTORS

CAPT Tom Berisson, LT Eileen D'Andrea, LT Chris Neish  
CUCM Robert Kidd, CEC(SCW) Delbert Terrell  
JOC Maria R. Escamilla, GySgt Patrick Goldthorn  
JO1(SCW) Kate Roberts, JO1(SW) Dennis J. Herring  
JO1(SW) Scott Sutherland, JO1 Mike Miller  
JO1 Philip Achten, UT1 Walter Urtz, PH1 Mike Wornor  
PH2(AW) Philip Forrest, JO2 Leslie A. Shively, JO2 Brandon Shultz  
BU2 Jerome Kirkland, YN2(AW) Kathryn Billington  
CPL Paul Leicht, LCPL William L. Dubose III  
JOSN Matthew Schwarz, SKSN(SW) Marsha L. Ernst  
Joan Shields Bennett, Jimmy Piccotti, Mary Anne Mascianica

and every Seabee everywhere, everyday.



2003 Chief of Information Merit Award  
BEST MAGAZINE-FORMAT PUBLICATION



SEABEE Magazine is the official publication of the United States Navy Seabees, Active Duty and Reserve, celebrating 62 years of proud Seabee service.



## Seabees impart skills and build hope for eager Iraqi construction tradesmen

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY BU2 JEROME KIRKLAND

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq — After the initial success of the Iraqi Construction Apprentice Program (ICAP), members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) began additional rounds of

teaching construction skills to Iraqi youth.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group (IMEG) runs the overall program and provides guidance to instructors from NMCBs 74 and 23. IMEG funds the

projects and overseeing ICAP classes, which are conducted in four cities. NMCB 23 assumed the program when that battalion relieved NMCB 14.

The ICAP is designed to teach enough basic construction skills to 14-25-year-old Iraqi students that they can then get a meaningful job in their local communities. The classes are organized to give each student an overview of electrical, carpentry, plumbing, and masonry trades so that the students can later concentrate on the construction field they most want to pursue.

The program is divided into two stages, beginning with six to eight weeks of classroom and hands-on instruction followed by four to six weeks of on-the-job training. The schedule is flexible to allow the program to be tailored to student needs.

ICAP has been so successful that hundreds of local Iraqis want to attend. Plans to expand the program are in development. The program helps Iraqi youth earn new respect in their local communities, provides new jobs and helps the Iraqi people rebuild their country and their future.

Upon completion of the ICAP program, students are awarded a completion certificate and a prized tool belt containing such tools as hammers, tape measures, squares, screwdrivers, chalk lines and retractable razors.

The tool belts are a gift of friendship from the American people via the nonprofit group Spirit of America. SoA provides students the basic tools needed to begin their careers in the construction trades.

Since OJT training runs concurrently with a new class, new instructors were added, bringing the new total to seven. One of the new instructors, Equipment Operator Constructionman Thomas Gilberti, from Delray Beach, Fla., said, "This is what we came here to do, to help the Iraqi people." When asked to describe his young students, Gilberti's comment was "They're just like American kids."

Another new instructor, Builder 2nd Class Nathan Allen, Jr., from Green Acres, Fla., said, "I like the idea about helping them out because they're a bunch of young guys just starting out." 🌐

See related feature on p40. — Ed.



# NCF Commemorates Seabee Killed in OIF

STORY BY CEC(SCW) DELBERT TERRELL & JO1(SCW) KATE ROBERTS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PH2(AW) PHILIP FORREST



**A**round the globe from Fallujah, Iraq, to Rota, Spain; from Sigonella, Sicily, to the Caribbean Islands; and from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to their homeport of Port Hueneme, the Seabee Nation stood together as one amid memorial ceremonies conducted across several time zones to celebrate the life of Seabee Steelworker 3rd Class Eric Lyle Knott.

Knott had deployed with a sizable air detachment to Camp Fallujah, Iraq, in support of the Marines of the 24th MEU in *Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)*. He was killed Sept. 4, 2004, and three other Seabees were seriously wounded, when a single round of indirect mortar fire impacted near where Knott and several others were working.

Eric Lyle Knott was born Oct. 12, 1982, to Randy and Vera Knott, of Grand Island, Neb. He was the youngest of four children, and enjoyed drama and singing as well as getting dirty off-roading in a four-wheeler. He graduated from Grand Island Senior High School in the spring of 2001.

Following in his oldest brother's footsteps, he enlisted in the Navy, reporting to boot camp on June 14, 2001. He completed Steelworker "A" School

in October 2001.

Knott reported for duty to NMCB 4 in December 2001 and fulfilled a deployment to Okinawa, Japan. In 2003, he was assigned to the battalion's air detachment and deployed to Turkey and Iraq in support of *OIF*. Knott was on his second tour in Iraq.

The Seabees who served with Knott in Iraq constructed a memorial for their fallen brother in the shape of an upturned M-16 rifle, topped with a Kevlar helmet. They also flew a flag over the camp and later signed it. NMCB 4 Seabees deployed to Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain, keep a large color portrait of Knott in the galley. His table is flanked with flowers as he dines alone, but his plate is never empty.

"I never heard him say a bad thing about another person," said Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class Joy Ramirez. "He'd

help anyone out, and was a great friend you could really count on."

NMCB 4's Command Chaplain (LT) Carl Rhoads said, "I will miss his smile and I consider myself truly blessed to have known him."

Such sentiments were echoed by everyone who knew him, as well as by those who wish they had known him better. The time Knott spent with his unit was brief but memorable.

At the memorial service in Iraq, unit Commanding Officer CDR John Korka said, "Today it is our turn to say 'thank you' to Petty Officer Knott for his sacrifice. And to make a promise; a promise that we, the Seabees of NMCB 4, will move forward and fulfill our duty and our obligation to complete our mission on this deployment, while our 'Seabee Angel' watches over us and guards us." 🌐



HM1(FMF) Carlos Martinez signs a memorial flag that was given to the parents of SW3 Eric Knott. The flag was purchased by Knott's Seabee shipmates and hung outside his room for a week of personalizations prior to the memorial service.

# Three From Four Awarded Purple Hearts

STORY BY JO2(SW) BARBARA SILKWOOD

PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHAN JOHN P. CURTIS & JO1(SW) SCOTT SUTHERLAND



En route from Bethesda to Port Hueneme, BUC Darion Williams (above left) and CUCM Martin Yingling (center) were greeted at Andrews AFB by FORCM of the Seabees Harrell Richardson (near right) and RADM Mike Loose (far right). Below is a souvenir piece of shrapnel removed from Williams.



THREE SEABEES FROM NAVAL Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 received Purple Hearts during a ceremony Nov. 16 at Naval Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme, Calif.

Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers RADM Michael K. Loose presented the medals to Master Chief Constructionman Martin Yingling, Chief Equipment Operator Darion Williams and Steelworker 3rd Class Justin Sasser.

The three had been injured in a rocket attack Sept. 4 while working in Camp Fallujah, Iraq. Steelworker 3rd Class Eric Knott, who was killed during the same attack, was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart in September.

Friends and family of the Purple Heart recipients attended the ceremony, along with more than 1,000 Seabees from the Thirty First Seabee Readiness Group, NMCB 40,



The awardees were greeted by a formation of shipmates, well-wishers and media on the Port Hueneme grinder.



NMCB 5 and NMCB 3.

“Today, NMCB 4 is deployed across the globe, operating in three theaters, supporting three unified commands. From the Caribbean to Europe to Southwest Asia in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, they personify our ‘*Can Do!*’ rally cry,” Loose said.

“There is no doubt in my mind that every Seabee in NMCB 4 is with you in spirit today,” he said to the award recipients.

Loose said the ceremony honored all Seabees, since they carry the global war on terrorism to foreign shores in hope of never fighting on American shores.

“I thank each and every one of you for wearing the cloth of our nation, for your many sacrifices and for your distinguished, selfless service,” Loose said. “Freedom and liberty are not innate rights. They are precious, they are priceless, and they are great gifts that have to be earned, protected and defended at all costs.”

After the pinning, Seabees and civilians alike stood in line to shake the hands of the men who nearly lost their lives, offering their thanks in remembrance of the one who did.

“You don’t ‘win’ this award,” Yingling said. “I feel honored that I was able to come home alive; that I was able to serve my country,” he said.

Sasser, who still wears a cast on his left arm, was also hit with shrapnel during the explosion. A bruised nerve in his arm limits movement of his fingers and wrist, but he said the damage isn’t permanent and he should be fully recovered in a few more months. Despite his wishes to the contrary, Sasser isn’t scheduled to rejoin his unit for the current deployment.

“It’s nice to get this award, but I would rather be with the troops, with my guys in Iraq,” Sasser said. 🌐

## The gang that *Can* shoot straight

STORY BY GYSGT PATRICK GOLDTHORN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PH2(AW) PHILIP FORREST

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — As the military advisor assigned here in Iraq to the Seabees' Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4, I was instructed by the battalion operations officer to provide firearms training to the Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Team, Tactical Movement Team and Quick Reaction Force. This would be intensive training for the “We Fight” portion of the classic Seabee motto, “We Build, We Fight.”



CDR Steven Stefani (left) practices small arm fire. Seabees (opposite, top) got trigger time on the range to refine skills.

The firearms training I have received in 19 years in the military has placed a hefty emphasis on marksmanship while standing at the rifle or pistol range in a pristine range setting. If the weapon malfunctioned, you were often given an “alibi” and allowed to re-fire the qualification. The point is to learn the correct shooting technique and to practice those methods until they stick.



In such a training scenario, little emphasis is placed on clearing the malfunction or “fixing the problem” at combat speed. I wanted to change that.

As a firearms instructor and Seabee military advisor, I’m kind of typecast in my role. I’m a Reservist who previously spent six years on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps infantry, then left active duty after *Operation Desert Storm* and joined the Marine Corps Reserve.

When not mobilized, I’m a veteran firearms instructor in my Texas law

enforcement job. Blending years of experience in the Marines with my work leading a SWAT team, I tailored advanced Seabee weapons training here to focus on more advanced techniques.

Beyond simply improving marksmanship, we enhanced proficiency at simple but essential tasks, such as how to more effectively change magazines under stress, how to clear malfunctions, shooting from different combat firing positions, shooting while moving and how to survive and win a gunfight. Such skills help save lives when it matters, and it often matters here.

While at Camp Fallujah, the battalion’s Seabees have made several trips to the weapons range. I started my training with the basics of marksmanship, sight alignment and trigger reset. We then moved on to how to carry our gear and magazines, reloading—and the important difference between an empty reload (when the magazine is empty) and a tactical reload (when there is a lull in the fight and you want to top off your magazine).

Next, we focused our attention on malfunctions—the variations of fail-



*“The enemy doesn’t care about your problems. He doesn’t care if it’s hot, whether you’re tired, if your feet hurt or if you forgot to clean your weapon. When you have a problem or your gun jams here, you can’t hold up your hand and expect a range officer to come help.”*

to-feed, stovepipe and double-feed conditions. Each drill was practiced numerous times, all basic functions that are simple to perform. The intent of this training is to improve upon already developed conditioned response.

NMCB 4’s combat teams now incorporate practice of fundamental malfunction drills that will likely increase their mission readiness and ability to immediately remedy any weapons malfunctions. These skills save lives.

The enemy doesn’t care about your problems. He doesn’t care if it’s hot, whether you’re tired, if your feet hurt or if you forgot to clean your weapon. When you have a problem or your gun jams here, you can’t hold up your hand and expect a range officer to come help. There will not be a range officer in a gunfight. Whether it is your fault, my fault, or nobody’s fault—simply get the gun back in service and into the fight. Just handle it.

The Seabees are more effective today because they are trained the way they fight—better to effectively fight the way they have trained. 🌐



Military adviser GySgt Patrick Goldthorn brings years of active duty USMC and civilian police SWAT skills to his role of weapons instructor for the Desert Bees.

## **RADM ROBERT L. PHILLIPS ASSUMES COMMAND OF THE FIRST NAVAL CONSTRUCTION DIVISION**

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARYL SMITH

NORFOLK, Va.—RADM Robert L. Phillips relieved RADM Charles R. Kubic Nov. 5, 2004, as commander of the First Naval Construction Division/Naval Construction Forces Command (INCD/NCFC) Nov. 5

at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Norfolk, Va. The guest speaker was ADM William J. Fallon, commander, Fleet Forces Command.

Kubic had commanded the INCD/NCFC

since its commissioning on Aug. 9, 2002. The stand-up of the division transformed two Seabee brigades into a single command exercising worldwide command and control of the Naval Construction Force (NCF)—



including about 16,000 active duty and Reserve Seabees. Since that historic stand up, Seabees have been heavily involved in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

Kubic served concurrently as commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group in Iraq. He was awarded the Legion of Merit during the change-of-command ceremony.

Addressing Seabees worldwide, Kubic said, "I ask each of you to reflect with extreme pride on the past several years. I also ask each of you to remain focused like a laser on the challenges the Seabees have yet to face in a world that clearly yearns for peace despite being embroiled in conflict."

He concluded by saying, "You have succeeded on all fronts and have added many chapters to the heroic legacy of the Navy's building and fighting Seabees. You're truly the most powerful, the most courageous, and the most capable combat construction force the world has ever seen. [When] you face an uncertain future, place confidence in your leadership and in yourselves. Be bold; be proud; and be safe. Thanks for all you have done and for all that you have sacrificed for our Navy and for our Nation. And, above all, thanks for being Seabees."

Fallon also commended the performance of Seabees during the last few years.

"The performance and inspirational courage of people within this division, under fire, in a lot of tough places, and in some pretty challenging climates, has been inspirational," he said. "You've been focused on the war but haven't skipped a beat in other activities and engagements worldwide. Every theater of operations in the world today has Seabees engaged, helping make things better for people, enabling us to do our job around the world."

Upon assuming command, Phillips said, "My commitment to you is that I will lead you and that I will provide a clear vision for you. I am here to serve you and to put the right resources in your hands so we do, in fact, build a better tomorrow."

Phillips reports from Washington, D.C., where he previously served as vice commander of Naval Facilities

Engineering Command (NAVFAC) and as Assistant Chief of Civil Engineers, and later as Deputy Director of the Shore Readiness Division on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations.

Phillips received a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy and a Master of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the Carnegie Mellon Program for Executives.

He was selected for flag rank in June 2000 while serving as commander, NAVFAC Southwest Division in San Diego. From October 2000 until August 2002, he served as commander, Second Naval Construction Brigade and commander, NAVFAC Atlantic Division.

The new INCD skipper is no stranger to the Seabees, having previously served as operations officer of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4; Guam operations officer for Naval Construction Battalions, Pacific Fleet; commanding officer of NMCB 5; and executive officer of Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, Calif. 🌐

*'My commitment to you is that I will lead you and that I will provide a clear vision for you.'*



SEABEE MAGAZINE PHOTOGRAPH BY LT EILEEN D'ANDREA CEC USN

Witnesses to history, below from left to right: Chaplain (CAPT) Stephen Gragg, CHC, USN; RADM Charles R. Kubic, CEC, USN, outgoing skipper of 1NCD; ADM William J. Fallon, USN, commander, Fleet Forces Command; and RADM Robert L. Phillips, CEC, USN, only the second commander of the global Seabee division.



## Navy Reserve Battalion Rain-Qualifies With M16

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JO1 MIKE MILLER

FORT DIX—Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 21 held essential M16 rifle qualifications at Fort Dix, N.J. Personnel attended the shoot-X from five Seabee detachments.

The Reserve Seabees were training hard in anticipation of an intense upcoming field exercise.

Also attending were LCDR T.J. Bartley, commanding officer, and Chief Storekeeper John M. Bennett from Navy Reserve Avoca, Pa., the Seabee battalion's Det. 0521 home Reserve center.

"We train all the time with non-Seabees. We're happy to accommodate non-Seabee units and personnel when we can," said LTJG Peter Myers, NMCB 21 military training officer. "In fact, we used to train with Fleet Hospital Fort Dix personnel prior to that unit's decommissioning. And last month we had some inshore boat units onboard. Everyone should have M16 training. We are one force and [ours] is one fight."

Shooters lined up on the firing line as remnants of Hurricane Ivan swept through the base, creating a wet, sandy, windy environment.

Bennett said, "Shooters had a hard time lining up the targets with all that water splashing off their sights, and once the safety goggles got wet and foggy, it was hard to even see the target, let alone hit it."

Still, 19 out of 35 shooters qualified marksmen or sharpshooter with the M16 rifle, 15 for the first time. One Sailor qualified expert marksman.

Bartley said, "The credit goes to Gunner's Mate 1st Class James Curtis, the range master; Chief Builder Jack Deffler, NMCB 21's military training chief, and the rest of the range staff for getting these members qualified in adverse weather conditions. Their expert instruction and guidance was critical to this training evolution."

Weapons skills contribute to Navy Reserve readiness, regardless of rating or unit, Myers said.

"Seabees train in all weather conditions. The enemy doesn't stop fighting because of rain. Also, Seabees are now clearing

houses in Iraq, which was traditionally the job of the Marine Corps and the Army. We need to be ready—we *all* need to be ready.

"And we will be ready," Myers said. 🌐



BU3 Jack Deffler ensures all is clear on the firing line (below). Firing range instructor BU3 Matthew G. Scull instructs SKSN Melissa Mancak during M16 qualifications.

## 'Three-Bee' Master Chiefs Reenlist En Masse

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY JO1 PHILIP ACHTEN

Thanks to the technology of video teleconferencing (VTC), the distance between Camp Anaconda in Iraq and Camp Covington in Guam disappeared as four Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 3 master chiefs reenlisted together Sept. 21, 2004. Deployed in Iraq with Task Force Sierra, Command Master Chief Michael Mrsny, Master Chief Constructionman Wayne Ayala and Master Chief Equipmentman Gary VanDoren (below left to right) took their vows of enlistment together with Master Chief Utilitiesman Brian Libs—who clocked in electronically from Guam where he was serving with NMCB 3's main body. NMCB 3's LTJG Lakeeva Brooks delivered the oath of reenlistment to the four. While the pixilated images on the VTC screen and the five-second delay didn't detract from the ceremony, Hurricane Ivan did delay it briefly. The original ceremony was scheduled earlier, but VTC connections routed thru the Gulf Coast had been disrupted by the hurricane and the ceremony was temporarily in limbo. At the completion of the reup ceremony, commemorative flags that had been flown over Camp Anaconda, Iraq on Sept. 11, 2004, were presented to each of master chief. All told, the four Seabee master chiefs have served the United States Navy for 97 years. 🌐





The Bees were limited to the tools they could bring with them—even the aggregate used to produce concrete had to be loaded onto a barge from the mainland and then shipped to the island.



## Improving San Nicholas Island Easy as 1-2-3 for the Seabees of NMCB 5

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JO1(SW) SCOTT SUTHERLAND

**W**hile Navy Seabees are deployed across the globe supporting the war against terrorism or doing contingency construction, a detachment of Seabees contributed their skills to preserve history on one of the Navy’s missile range sites off the California coast.

A dozen Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 5’s Civic Action Team (CAT) Palau placed 20 cubic yards of concrete on San Nicolas Island Sept. 15, the first step in the construction of a historical interpretive center. San Nicolas Island, located about 70 miles off Point Mugu, Calif., is one of the Navy’s major weapons testing facilities on the West Coast. Its military significance dates back to World War II and its environmental importance dates back even further.

After CAT Palau Seabees arrived on the island, they spent two days getting an environmental brief and getting their tools and equipment ready to place concrete. Normally, they’d have construction equipment like graders and excavators available to prepare the site. Because of the remote location and the unavailability of Seabee heavy equipment, they had to prepare the old fashioned way—with picks, shovels and rakes. “This was similar to what we might have to do in a contingency situation, which is to work without the convenience of our construction support equipment,” said Construction Mechanic 1st Class Benhur Gagan.

Seabees loaded their toolboxes on a C-130 “Hercules” cargo plane

a week before the trip. They were limited to the tools they could bring with them—even the aggregate used to produce concrete had to be loaded onto a barge from the mainland and then shipped to the island.

According to CAT Palau operations crew leader Builder 1st Class Joe Pruis, Seabees placed concrete and smoothed the 1,000-square-foot surface in only five hours.

“Part of the work included placing 106 wedge-setting anchor bolts, which will be used to anchor the framing walls,” crew leader Pruis said. “Eventually, we’ll also do that work. We’re determining the timeline for when we’ll begin framing.”

“I’ve been asking for the Seabees since I’ve been on the island,” said CDR Raymond Schenk, officer-in-charge of Naval Outlying Landing Field San Nicolas Island. The Bees were helping to build the island’s “interpretive center,” which will show a historical timeline of the island’s past and, according to Schenk, greatly enhance the way the Navy does business when military and political leaders visit the island for tours.

“Seabees represent the skill, talent and resources we need here,” Schenk said. “Being 70 miles at sea, we’re about as isolated as you can get. These guys can do what we can’t. This concrete slab for the interpretive center is something I haven’t been able to get done in two years. The work Seabees do is second to none. I was a big Bee fan when I got here and I’m a bigger fan now.” 🌐



Two of Shively's award-winning photographs. Left, NMCB 22 commanding officer CDR Steven Young hands off a battalion coin to another Seabee as a memento and token of thanks for participating in a run between members of his battalion and NMCB 28. Right, members of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Alamo Battalion, crowd into a troop truck to head back to their barracks after a busy day learning navigation skills and testing their physical abilities. The Alamo Battalion is closely affiliated with NMCB 22 and often spends weekends drilling with the Seabees.

## NMCB 22 JOURNALIST CHOSEN AS 2004 NAVY RESERVE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

STORY BY  
JOC MARIA R. ESCAMILLA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
JO2 LESLIE A. SHIVELY

NEW ORLEANS—A panel of judges in October selected Journalist 2nd Class Leslie A. Shively, from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 22 Detachment San Antonio, Fort Worth, Texas, as the 2004 Navy Reserve Photographer of the Year.

Shively is a frequent contributor to *SEABEE* Magazine. Her winning portfolio was chosen from a pool of entries sent by Navy Reserve photographers from around the world.

Shively served with NMCB 22 for nearly four years, publishing a unit magazine and creating a public affairs program for the battalion.

This is the second time Shively has been selected as Navy Reserve Photographer of the Year. Her first was in 2002.

"I've got the best job in the Navy," Shively said. "I get to serve my country

and fellow citizens doing what I love—talking to people, photographing what we do during training and spreading the news about the important work our Navy people are doing here and overseas battling terrorism."

Shively was also awarded first place in separate categories for combat camera, news and illustrative.

Other winners who placed in the category competitions included Utilitiesman 2nd Class Kenneth J. Irwin, Naval Construction Force Support Unit 2, Port Hueneme, Calif. UT2 Irwin also was a 2002 honoree.

The winning photographs were featured in the November issue of *The Navy Reservist* magazine. See additional contest imagery in a gallery located on the Navy Reserve Force Web site at [www.navalreserve.navy.mil](http://www.navalreserve.navy.mil). 



*Crater Repair Project  
No Problem For 'Can  
Do!' Seabees In Iraq*



A U.S. Marine Corps CH-60 Sea Knight passes Navy Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23 as they place concrete during December repairs to the south runway at Al Asad Airport, Iraq. The mobilized Reserve battalion repaired numerous impact craters to expand flight line operations. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht. At bottom, the proof of effectiveness.

USMC PHOTO BY LCPL WILLIAM L. DUBOSE III



STORY BY JOC(AW) SUZANNE SPEIGHT

AL ASAD, Iraq—In true *Can Do!* spirit, Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 have made permanent repairs to 31 giant craters at the Al Asad airfield—a military runway critical to operations in central Iraq.

The key runway at the airfield was used to accommodate F/A-18 “Hornet” fighters, C-130 “Hercules” and C-5 “Galaxy” cargo planes, but it had been out of service with battle damage for more than a year when the Seabees moved in.

According to LT Donald Panthen, I Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF) Engineer Group assistant operations officer, the Seabees’ performance has been outstanding despite a number of project difficulties.

“The Seabees completed this job ahead of schedule and in spite of material

shortages, contractor delays and insurgent activity,” Panthen said.

When NMCB 23 officially took on the project in October, work was behind schedule by more than three weeks and additional existing craters had been added to the project.

Permanent crater repairs require extensive measures, such as cutting and removing the damaged pavement, excavating the soil, filling the hole and compacting the material, then capping the crater with concrete.

“It’s comparable to patching giant potholes, each five feet deep and up to 80 feet across,” said LT Stephen Fichter, detachment officer in charge (OIC).

“Operating in a war zone adds another layer of difficulty to an already challenging project,” Fichter said.



Third Marine Air Wing Commanding General, Major General Keith J. Stalder (above right), gives the Seabees of NMCB 23 his appreciation for the renovation of the new flightline. Senior leaders from the Seabee continuum added their kudos, including (from left) 1NCD CMDMCM Kevin C. Timmons, RDML Raymond K. Alexander, IMEG commander and RADM Robert L. Phillips, 1NCD commander. Left, a 23 Bee cuts concrete on the flightline.

According to Fichter, quality sand and gravel are in short supply in the surrounding Al Anbar province and there are only a few nearby quarries for obtaining the scarce raw material.

“Getting gravel and sand from the quarries is dangerous due to the security situation in that area,” he said. “We can’t just order up material and have it delivered. Here, we have to go and get our own stone and sand.”

In addition, an explosive ordnance disposal team must visit supply sites prior to loading material to check for improvised explosive devices and mines. Supply convoys travel with tight security.

In spite of these obstacles, the Desert Bees, led by project OIC LTJG Todd McNamara, completed one runway three weeks ahead of schedule. The crew produced more than 3,600 cubic yards of concrete for the job.

“From the start, we’ve empowered our Seabees on the ground to find what works and get the job done,” Fichter said.

The Seabees produced their own formulas for concrete, considering that the quality of sand and gravel vary widely from source to source.

“It’s like trying to make cookies all taste the same, even though your ingredients are different in every batch,” Fichter said. “We keep adjusting our recipe, depending on what kind of material we have at the time.” The Seabees produced concrete for the project using only two “crete-mobiles,” a major accomplishment considering the diminutive mobile concrete mixers are designed for a much smaller workload.

“This project has not been easy,” Fichter said. “I think our positive attitude has been a key aspect of this project. We have established good working relationships with fellow Soldiers and Marines, so when we need repair parts or additional equipment, they are glad to help out. Good will goes a long way—and is easily built—using the diverse skills found in ordinary Seabees.” 🌐



(Back row, from left) NMCB 23 C.O. CDR Willington Lin and NMCB 14 C.O. CAPT John D. Prien, III; (front row, from left) NMCB 23 Command Master Chief Ronald Hartle, NMCB 23 operations officer LCDR Robert Oliver, NMCB 14’s operations officer LCDR Donald Marconi and BUCS Mike Perrine.

## *Reserve Battalions Rotate; First Time Since WW II*

AL ASAD, Iraq—Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 14 commanding officer CAPT John D. Prien III turned over Seabee construction responsibilities here to CDR Willington Lin, commanding officer of NMCB 23.

NMCB 14, headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., concluded its first battalion call up since World War II. NMCB 23 replaced the Florida battalion from its homeport at Ft. Belvoir, Va.

“This is an historic day, as this is the first time in the annals of Seabee history that one Navy Reserve battalion has relieved another Navy Reserve battalion in a combat theater,” Prien said at a subdued turnover ceremony held at a U.S. camp near Fallujah, Iraq.

With emotion in his voice, Prien spoke of the seven NMCB 14 members killed earlier this year and how Seabees turned tragedy into triumph.

“This camp is hallowed ground, where Seabee blood has been spilled for the cause of freedom and the ongoing fight against terrorism,” he said.

After Prien retired his battalion colors, the NMCB 23 colors were raised. Lin thanked his predecessors for their mission successes and wished them a safe and expedient return to their families and home detachments.

Lin also welcomed members from NMCB 7 augmenting his battalion.

“The focus now and throughout our deployment will be constant vigilance on safety and preparedness,” Lin said.

—JOC(AW) Suzanne Speight and  
PH2(AW) Michael D. Heckman

WASHINGTON—The Navy introduced a set of concept working uniforms Oct. 18 for Sailors E-1 through O-10, in response to the fleet’s feedback on current uniforms.

The Seabees are among those testing the new Navy Working Uniform (NWU) prototypes. Amphibious Construction Battalion 2 in Little Creek, Va., will test 60 sets; 40 test sets will go to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 in Port Hueneme, Calif.; and the Thirty First Seabee Readiness Group in Port Hueneme will test 20 sets.

The Seabees are expecting to adopt the same style and pattern of uniform as “Big Navy,” but possibly with a different set of colors for its unique camouflage requirements around the world. The new uniforms, which began wear-testing this winter, were unveiled aboard *USS Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) at an all hands call with Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott.

“We realize that there are Sailors out there who are eager to receive the NWUs, but we are determined to do this the right way and come up with a uniform that our Sailors will appreciate,” Scott said.

Shore Sailor of the Year (SSOY) Chief Dental Technician Michele Villagran had a chance to see preliminary designs of the concept uniforms during the SSOY selection process. She said she liked the look and feel of the lightweight yet sturdy material.

“Overall, I think they look more professional, and I think the majority of the fleet will be happy with them,” Villagran said. “It will definitely be a new and very much needed look for the Navy.”

The NWU concepts offer four variations to be tested in the fleet. Each variation offers a combination of different patterns, dominant colors, fabric finishes and designs.

Scott said these concepts are only the initial version of what the working uniform may ultimately look like. To assist in deciding exactly what uniforms Sailors will be wearing, Task Force Uniform (TFU) developed a set of concept uniforms.

“The concept uniforms are much like a concept car at an auto show,” Scott said. “It’s only a preliminary design of the final model, and judging from the fleet’s response, we can make modifications to the final design.”

The TFU initiative began after Sailors in



## Task Force Uniform Announces E-1 Through O-10 Working Uniform Concepts; Seabees Will Test Them

the fleet expressed their concerns about the current status of Navy uniforms. Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) ADM Vern Clark determined there should be an evaluation of the uniform requirements.

Upon completion of a Navy-wide survey last year, TFU went to work on interpreting more than 40,000 surveys with the help of an organizational psychologist to determine what changes Sailors desired. Some of the concerns expressed were that there are too many uniforms, they wear out quickly and are difficult to maintain. They also commented on the need for a working uniform that would be practical in different working environments and climates. The majority of respondents said they preferred a Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) style of working uniform.

The NWU is being designed to take the place of utilities, wash khakis, coveralls, woodland green, aviation green, winter working blue and tropical working uniforms. The normal wear life is designed to last up to 18 months, compared to the current wear life of six months for the working uniform.

The working uniform design is not

intended to camouflage Sailors against the background of a ship. Instead, the multiple colors on the uniform—navy blue, deck gray, haze gray and black—are common in the maritime working environment, making them a more practical choice.

“What we have heard from Sailors aboard ship is if they get a small spot of paint or grease on a pair of solid-color utilities or coveralls, it’s easily visible and detracts from the uniform’s appearance,” Scott said. “With the Navy Working Uniform’s multicolor pattern, a small spot or stain may be almost entirely unnoticeable.”

Another positive aspect of a multicolor pattern is that wrinkles caused by daily wear would be less visible, and the new uniforms will be wash and wear with no ironing required.

“Why should we need to iron a working uniform? The NWU fabric treatment will be a considerable improvement over the previous working uniforms,” said Scott. The proposed plan is for the NWU to be the primary working uniform used in all Navy communities and duties, including watchstanding. The NWU is also being

designed for wear outside the gate. Sailors will be able to go off base without having to change from the working uniform into their service uniform or civilian clothes.

With the CNO's approval for a wear test, the Navy is working to provide as many possible options for Sailors to choose from during the wear-test period.

Among the options will be:

- *Woodland versus digital pattern*
- *Blue versus gray as the uniform's predominant color*
- *Tapered blouse versus standard-style blouse*
- *Rounded versus pointed collar*
- *Performance T-shirt versus cotton undershirt*
- *Pleated versus non-pleated trousers*
- *Elastic versus adjustable waistband*
- *Button versus zipper trousers*
- *No-polish suede versus polished leather boots*
- *8-point versus round top cover*
- *Pocket locations and design*

The Navy also plans to wear-test a blue parka that will ultimately match the design pattern of the final working uniform. The parka will be designed for wear in various weather conditions, including sub-freezing temperatures, wind and heavy rain.

The NWU was designed to address the concerns of the fleet, Scott said, and a test of how the uniforms respond to the needs of Sailors can only be determined by the fleet-wide wear test and evaluation before formal adoption and mass production.

The fleet-wide wear test, scheduled to begin this winter, will be conducted at commands around the world and across the spectrum of different platforms. Approximately 60 participants, both male and female, officer and enlisted, will wear-test these concept uniforms over a broad spectrum of commands and locations.

The vision of Task Force Uniform is to give Sailors a cost-effective set of uniforms presenting a professional appearance, recognizing naval heritage, and offering versatility, safety, ease of maintenance and storage, utility and comfort.

For more information about Task Force Uniform or to view or download additional photos, visit [www.news.navy.mil](http://www.news.navy.mil). 🌐

## ... AND MORE UNIFORM MODS MAY WELL BE COMING SOON

WASHINGTON—Task Force Uniform (TFU) announced significant changes to the Navy Uniform Regulations, which were recently approved by Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Vern Clark.

These changes are among the first initiatives being rolled out as a result of Task Force Uniform. The Uniform Regulation changes were made based on fleet input from interviews with Sailors, command site visits, comprehensive research and data collected from a Navy-wide uniform survey. The survey collected feedback from more than 40,000 Sailors throughout the fleet.

The approved changes include women's skirts, identification badges, civilian bags, women's handbags, communication devices and breast insignia. One of the changes effective immediately will be the authorized wear of civilian bags while in uniform. This includes briefcases, gym bags, backpacks, suitcases and garment bags. The specific guidance on wear and appearance for each is outlined in NAVADMIN 209/04.

Another revision that was effective immediately is the wear of a wireless communication device, such as a cell phone, PDA or pager for official business, while in uniform. The device cannot be visible from the front, and must be worn on the belt, aft of the right or left elbow. Specific guidance and further details on the proper wearing and use of these devices is contained in the NAVADMIN.

Female Sailors may now wear civilian handbags while in uniform, but must meet the specific criteria and be worn in the manner prescribed in the NAVADMIN. Women's uniform handbags are now an optional uniform item; it was no longer a prescribed seabag item or issued at recruit training as of Oct. 1, 2004.

In addition to the handbag, women's skirts were also designated an optional uniform component as of Oct. 1, 2004. This applies to both service and dress uniforms, and may no longer be prescribed. Female Sailors who desire to wear a skirt will still be able to purchase them through the Navy Uniform shop. There is also new guidance regarding silver breast insignia and identification badges.

NAVADMIN 209/04 serves as the interim change to the Navy Uniform Regulations. 🌐



### Navy introduces concept service uniforms for Sailors to E-6

The service blue uniform will be worn year-round and will take the place of the summer white and winter blue uniforms. Dress uniforms, such as "Cracker Jacks," will not be affected by this wear test. Each uniform offers options for Sailors to choose from and give feedback to Task Force Uniform. Feedback from the fleet will be used to determine the final year-round service uniform.

# Seabees Pitched In On ABC-TV's 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition' (... but you didn't see it on TV)

STORY BY MARY ANNE MASCIANICA  
AND YN2(AW) KATHRYN BILLINGTON  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SKSN(SW) MARSHA L. ERNST

A Kingston, Wash., family benefited from the generosity and teamwork of Navy volunteers when the ABC-TV show, "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" built them a new 3,200-square-foot custom home Nov. 10-17.

"This is one of the largest, most beautiful houses we've built, and for an unbelievably deserving family," said Extreme Makeover: Home Edition host Ty Pennington. "It was a tremendous effort, and when we sent out a call for help, the Navy answered. An absolutely fantastic bunch of people—they made such a difference!

Thank you so much, everyone—the Navy is awesome!"

Nearly 200 crew members from *USS Columbus* (SSN 762) and *USS Ohio* (SSGN 726), Seabees from Construction Battalion Unit (CBU) 418 out of Bangor, Wash., and some crew members' spouses answered a call when the show asked for local volunteers to help with the humanitarian project.

The family, a widow and her three daughters, had been living on their property in a utility shed with no running water, cooking on a camping

stove and depending on their neighbors for showers, since their house burned down last March.

Despite the chilly, wet, windy weather, a six-bedroom home was built, furniture



moved in and landscaping completed (including a fountain and hot tub) in a week's worth of around-the-clock labor. Thanks to the Sailors' teamwork with the construction company, a neighborhood eyesore was quickly transformed into a \$500,000 home now located on a manicured piece of real estate.

"We had several meetings during the two weeks prior to the event beginning, and I was overwhelmed from the start," said Chris Larsen, location manager for the show. The Seabees from Bangor came



EO2(SCW) Eric Zarn stages one of the bulldozers used to begin the demolition of the storage shed.

through in a big way, providing heavy equipment and volunteers to help.

"We started by delivering 80 *Columbus* and *Ohio* Sailors in four 15-ton trucks the first day," said CBU 418's Master Chief

Utilitiesman Christopher P. Murphy. "We brought in dozers to demolish the old, burned-out home and utility shed the family had been living in. We also put up the production crew's living, working and eating spaces, and we put in a drinking water tank. The teamwork and coordination it took to pull this all together was pretty tremendous."

It's not often that U.S. Navy Seabees get a chance to play TV star. However, with the program's production crew rolling into town, the Seabees were among the first group of construction workers

called upon. "We received a call from Chief Bill Hobbs over at the Bangor public affairs office, wanting to know what the Seabees could provide in the way of supporting the build," said CBU 418 Officer in Charge LT Jeff Bartlett. "Master Chief Murphy, my ops chief, immediately engaged and attended the planning meeting on Nov. 8 where the whole build began to take shape."

Soon after the planning was completed, 11 Seabees from CBU 418 were mobilized for the opportunity of a lifetime; helping

a needy family as part of a well-known national TV program would be fun, but the Bees also would be giving back to the community and spreading a little classic Seabee cheer in the process.

The CBU Bees were tasked with building two large tents to house the TV production crews, although only one tent was eventually needed. When the Bees knocked that project out in less than two days, the ABC crew immediately saw an opportunity to use them elsewhere.

“The production crew decided it would be great if they could get the Seabees to drive the demo crew onto the site the morning the build started,” Bartlett said.

Seabees provided that transportation to the demo crew and assisted in crowd control at the jobsite. Having the Seabees roll up in their covered stake trucks with the fleet Sailors in tow may have made for great TV, but also served a separate purpose. Parking around the site was very tight and bringing the crews in via truck alleviated many of the parking headaches facing the crew. More than 1,200 personnel were involved in the build over the course of the week.

Although a prime mover on the set, CBU 418 couldn’t have accomplished the mission without hands extended from sister units in the Washington area, including CBU 421 in Everett and CBU 417 at Whidbey Island, along with EODMU 11/17 at Whidbey and NMCB 18 out of Fort Lewis. They readily answered a call for additional stake trucks, an extra dozer and a tractor-trailer that were needed to support mobilizing all the assets required for the demolition and build.

Licensed Seabees were able to quickly pick up equipment from the sister units and deliver it to CBU 418, where it was spit-polished and readied for prime time. This included installing canvas covers, detailing all the trucks and loading materials and equipment.

After all the prep work was completed,

two D5 bulldozers were online for the morning of Nov. 12, the day the demo and build began. Equipment Operator 2nd Class (SCW) Eric Zarn and Equipment Operator 2nd Class Michael Gravley had great fun in beginning the demolition of the shed—while show host Pennington, camcorder in hand and taping the ensuing mayhem, shouted, “Hey Dore family! This is the Navy Seabees destroying your home!”

Hollywood had arrived, courtesy the U.S. Navy Seabees.

Once the production crew had sufficient footage of the vintage Seabee dozers in action, the dozers were loaded up and contracted equipment was brought in to complete the tear-down. Armed with distinctive Seabee stencils and BEEP stickers (battalion equipment evaluation program; BEEP stickers identify equipment inspected for turn-over to another Seabee unit), the Bees wasted no time in laying unofficial claim to any piece of equipment



not currently in motion. The Seabees unofficially BEEPed more than five D9 dozers, four excavators and an unlimited amount of ABC crew production vehicles.

“Overall, I think the ABC crew was very impressed with the Seabees and the Navy,” ops boss Murphy said at the time. “We were glad to help out as a part of the overall effort. Seabees and construction, they go hand in hand, and this was excellent training for our people.”

With a team effort from a handful of TV stars as well as hundreds of other volunteers, dedicated production crew

members, area homebuilders, neighbors, Sailors and Seabees of the U.S. Navy, the Dore’s new home was “revealed” to them Nov. 17.

The Sailors worked every job the production crew needed help with—the landscaping, painting and anything else. Even those Sailors who were not quite handy with a hammer and nail found other ways to help out with the project.

“We have assisted the production crew anyway we can: crowd control, assisting in building the garden boxes, digging post holes—everything and anything,” said Fire Control Technician 1st Class Sean Timothy Frost, a *Columbus* crew member.

The end result was even more than the show’s producers and host could have asked for, and they were thankful for the Sailors who helped give the family a desperately needed fresh start.

“Words fail me—I just don’t have enough words of praise for the caliber of the people we’ve been dealing with,” Larsen said of his new Navy friends. “The quality of their work ethic, making things go right. These Sailors have impressed us beyond all expectations. The quality and caliber they represent are rare [and] they represent the best in human nature. We are overwhelmed by them.”

Despite the producers’ undeniable vocal enthusiasm, only a few submarine Sailors made it to the edited broadcast that was

scheduled to air Jan 9.

Regrettably, the Seabees filmed contributions were left on the cutting room floor. 🌐

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Far left, SW1(SCW) David A. Brown is interviewed by Extreme Makeover: Home Edition producer Ed Sanders while CE2(SCW) Joey M. Decourval measures an area for wall studs. Above, Seabees hustle furniture back into the new home prior to the reveal to the unsuspecting Dore family.

According to official incident reports, the first Viet Cong mortar round hit the Dong Xoai Ranger camp without warning at around 2345 on June 9, 1965. Master Chief Equipmentman **Johnny Ray McCully** was on duty and had just finished making rounds of the compound with a Cambodian guard. He'd stepped into the barracks in the Ranger camp and was drinking coffee with **Army Sergeant 1st Class James Taylor**, the Special Forces senior medic, when the first explosion rocked the camp. Yelling for everyone to take defensive positions, **McCully** grabbed his M14 rifle, 300 rounds of ammunition and ran toward the northwest area berm surrounding the Ranger camp where **Steelworker 2nd Class William Hoover**, **Utilitiesman Plumber 2nd Class Lawrence Eyman** and **Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields** were returning fire. Hoover had been injured from shrapnel to an arm, leg and his back, and **Shields** already had shrapnel wounds in his head.

RESSED BY THE CONSTRUCTION IN  
THE SEABEES QUICKLY PROVED  
THEIR TOTAL COMPETENCE.

HIGH MORALE, EXPERT SKILLS, VERSA  
GENUITY, STRONG DEVOTION TO D  
AND DEEP SYMPATHY FOR THE NEE  
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FIGHT IANS



SEABEE TEAM 1104 OFFICER IN CHARGE FORMER LT FRANK A PETERLIN AT THE SEABEE MEMORIAL IN ARLINGTON VA ON VETERANS DAY 2004

In June of 1965, McCully, officer-in-charge LT Frank A. Peterlin and the members of Seabee Team 1104 repelled a harrowing 14-hour assault on a U.S. Army Special Forces compound by more than 2000 Viet Cong that killed five of the 20 Americans assigned to Dong Xoai, Vietnam—and wounded every one of the survivors. Seven Silver Stars, eight Bronze Stars, a Navy Unit Commendation and numerous Purple Hearts were among honors for those who defended the camp.

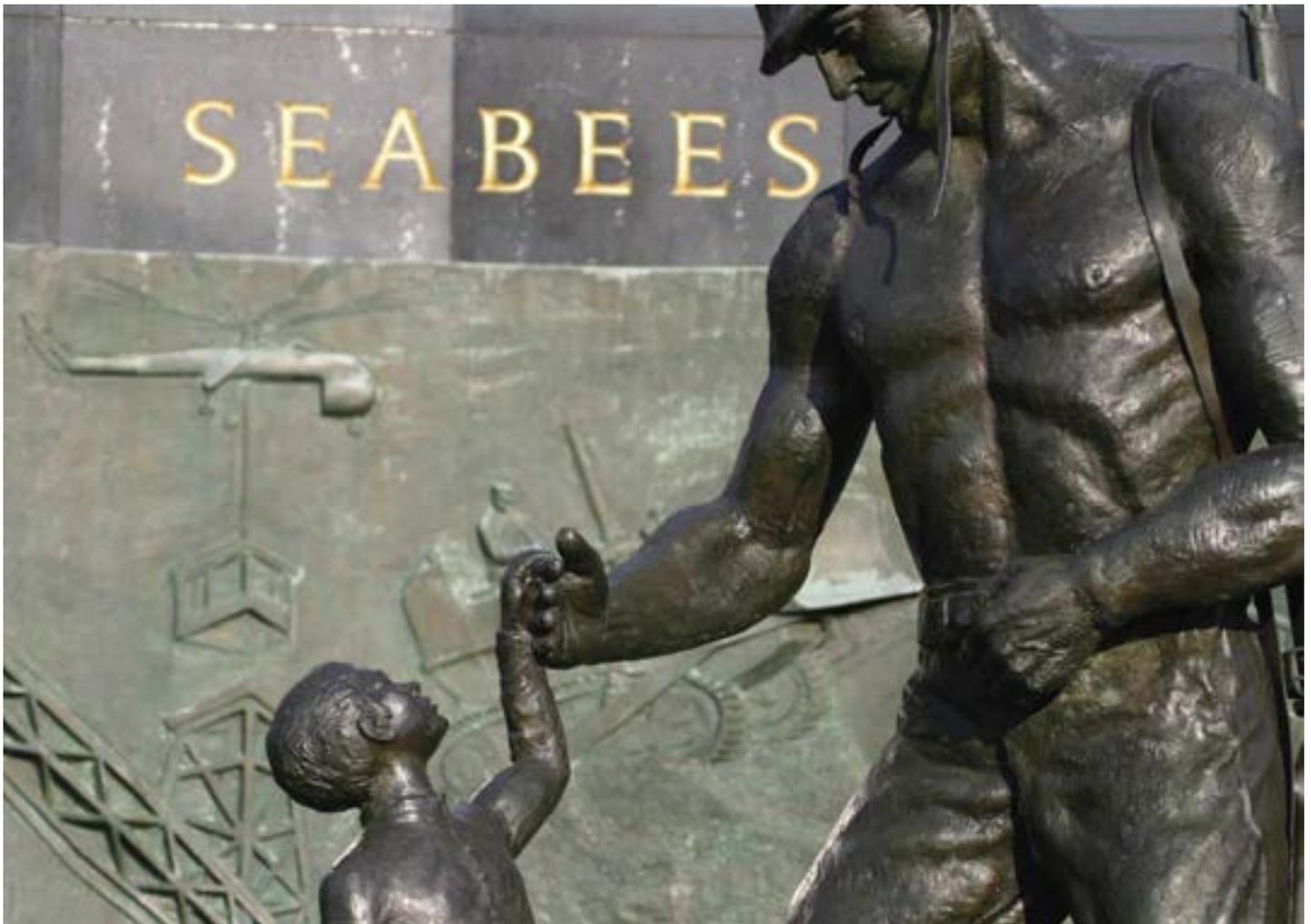
Medal of Honor and also the first Sailor to be so highly decorated for his actions in Vietnam. He died from his wounds while being rescued from Dong Xoai. In the intervening years the Shields story of has evolved into near legend.

Shields' Medal of Honor citation is a succinct summing up of his heroic and selfless actions.

*"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with*

*approximately three hours, at which time the Viet Cong launched a massive attack at close range with flamethrowers, hand grenades and small-arms fire.*

*Wounded a second time during this attack, Shields nevertheless assisted in carrying a more critically wounded man to safety, and then resumed firing at the enemy for four more hours. When the Commander, U.S. Army First Lieutenant (then 2d Lt.) Charles Q. Williams, asked for a volunteer to accompany him in an*



The highest honor of all, however, was given to both Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields and U.S. Army Special Forces 2nd Lieutenant Charles Williams. The Medal of Honor, awarded by the Congress and representing the United States' highest combat accolade for extreme courage and leadership, was awarded to the two for their heroic actions at Dong Xoai.

Mortally wounded during the battle, Shields was the first Seabee to receive the

*United States Navy Seabee Team 1104 at Dong Xoai, Republic of Vietnam, on 10 June 1965. Although wounded when the compound of Detachment A-342, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, came under intense fire from an estimated reinforced Viet Cong regiment employing machine gun, heavy weapons and small arms, Shields continued to resupply his fellow Americans with needed ammunition and to return the enemy fire for a period of*

*attempt to knock out an enemy machine gun emplacement which was endangering the lives of all personnel in the compound because of the accuracy of its fire, Shields unhesitatingly volunteered for this extremely hazardous mission.*

*Proceeding toward their objective with a 3.5-inch rocket launcher, they succeeded in destroying the enemy machine gun emplacement, thus undoubtedly saving the lives of many of their fellow servicemen in the compound. Shields was mortally*

wounded by hostile fire while returning to his defensive position. His heroic initiative and great personal valor in the face of intense enemy fire sustain and enhance the finest tradition of the United States Naval Service.”

During a spring 2004 visit from McCully and Peterlin to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 22’s drill weekend in Fort Worth, Texas, stories of heroism mixed with occasional humor punctuated a morning briefing on Seabee actions in Dong Xoai. The two heroes had been invited by the Seabee battalion to visit and give a brief as part of Seabee celebrations honoring the 62nd anniversary of the Seabees and 137th anniversary of the founding of the Navy Civil Engineer Corps.

### **Seabees go to Vietnam**

Seabees officially deployed to Vietnam as part of a humanitarian effort assisting refugees emigrating from the north. In 1954, a Geneva Convention agreement had recognized the communist government of Ho Chi Minh and split the country roughly in half at the 17th parallel. This gave the Vietnamese people a choice of whether to live in the north or the south.

In response, nearly 800,000 people migrated south from the Communist north. Seabees went to build a massive tent camp and water and power supply facilities at the mouth of the Saigon River.

Two years later, Seabees were sent to the newly established Republic of Vietnam (RVN) to conduct a survey of 1,800 miles of existing and proposed roads.

By the early ’60s, Seabee teams constructed small support camps for the U.S. Army Special Forces to assist Vietnamese civilians living in rural areas and to counter the threat of the National Liberation Army, called the Viet Cong (VC). Seabees built access roads, airstrips, trained local inhabitants in construction skills and provided medical care to villagers.

In May 1965, responding to increased hostilities from the VC, the first full battalion of Bees arrived to build an expeditionary airfield for the Marines at Chu Lai.

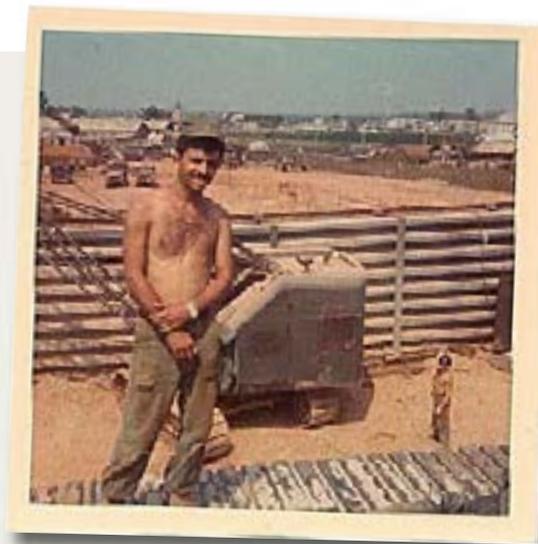
### **Prior to the assault**

Seabee Team 1104 arrived at Dong Xoai June 4, 1965, after finishing a construction assignment at Ben Soi, another Special Forces camp in Vietnam. Shaped roughly like a letter “L,” the Dong Xoai compound was split into two camps with the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) and Vietnamese Special Forces in the Ranger camp to the east and the district headquarters camp to the west.

The day after arriving, Seabees gathered or purchased supplies, hauling gravel from a nearby airfield and building up defensive positions, a latrine, a shower and a water purification system. The latrine was finished in two days.

“We actually built an American-style head for the special forces. That was one thing you wanted to do—keep those guys happy,” joked McCully. “When they went out on patrol, they’d take care of you.”

During the days that the Seabees were at Dong Xoai prior to the enemy assault, small arms fire was heard and an occasional mortar round had landed near the camp, but no casualties or significant damage occurred. The Seabees continued with their construction projects without interruption. >>



E03 Jimmy Piccotti, age 21, MCB 7 Danang, 1968

## **THE SEABEES IN VIETNAM**

STORY BY THE NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER

PRINCIPAL PERIOD PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIMMY PICCOTTI

**B**EGINNING IN 1964, the U.S. military buildup in South Vietnam interrupted the normal peacetime deployment pattern of the Naval Construction Force. The Seabees were slated to play an important and historic role in the growing Southeast Asian conflict. By autumn of ’68, when Vietnam requirements reached their peak, worldwide Seabee strength had grown to more than 26,000 people serving in 21 full-strength Naval Mobile Construction Battalions, two Construction Battalion Maintenance Units and two Amphibious Construction Battalions.

U.S. Navy and Seabee activity in Southeast Asia, however, long predated the Vietnam War. In fact, the first U.S. Navy involvement in Vietnam took place as early as May 1846. In that year, *USS Constitution* was on a world cruise and anchored in Danang Bay to take on water and foodstuffs. While there, CAPT John Percival, USN, *Constitution’s* skipper, received a request for assistance from Bishop Dominique Lefevre, who had been imprisoned and condemned to death by Thieu Tri, Emperor of Cochin China.

In response to the bishop’s plea for help, Percival led a rescue party of 80 Sailors and Marines ashore. After seizing three Mandarins as hostages, he quickly dispatched a letter to the Emperor demanding Lefevre’s release. The message either went unheeded or undelivered, because a reply was never received. Deciding on an alternative course of action, Percival released the Mandarins when they steadfastly promised that they would personally >>





### ***All hell breaks loose***

The first VC mortar round hit the Dong Xoai Ranger camp without warning at around 2345 on June 9. McCully was on duty and had just finished making rounds of the entire compound with a Cambodian guard. He'd stepped into the barracks in the Ranger camp and was drinking coffee with Army Sergeant 1st Class James Taylor, the Special Forces senior medic, when the first explosion rocked the camp.

Yelling for everyone to take defensive positions, McCully grabbed his M14 rifle, 300 rounds of ammunition and ran toward the northwest area berm surrounding the Ranger camp where Steelworker 2nd Class William Hoover, Utilitiesman Plumber 2nd Class Lawrence Eyman and Shields were returning fire.

Hoover was had been injured from shrapnel to an arm, leg and his back and Shields already had shrapnel wounds in his head.

Awakened by mortar blasts, Peterlin grabbed his ammunition, weapons and supplies and raced toward the northwest area berm where he became actively engaged in the fight.

Heavy mortar, machine-gun fire and

grenades pummeled both sides of the compound for nearly an hour. At a lull in the barrage, Shields sprinted to a burning shed to retrieve more ammunition.

During the fighting, McCully took a .50-caliber round through his shoulder but still managed to operate a 57mm recoilless rifle.

At this point in the briefing, NMCB 22's executive officer, Mark Bellis, prompted McCully to relate a humorous story about learning to shoot the howitzer-like rifle in the thick of battle.

"A fifty-seven recoilless rifle shoots fire out the back end 'bout just as far as it shoots the projectile out the front end, and old Hoover was diagonally behind me, back there in the berm," related McCully with a little laugh. "Hoover said, 'Turn that thing around! You're burning us back here!'"

An important thing to know is that Seabees were not specifically trained on the recoilless, the howitzers; yet during the battle they operated those pieces of equipment. They learned how to operate those weapons in the worst environment possible.

And literally at combat speed, one notes.

### ***Overwhelming odds***

At approximately 0245 on June 10, an intense mortar and recoilless rifle barrage supported by grenades and small arms fire again hammered the defenders. Rolling waves of VC accompanied by flamethrowers overran the west berm of the Ranger camp.

"The first flamethrower went over my head," McCully remembered. Peterlin shot and killed the man holding the flamethrower, but a grenade knocked McCully's rifle out of his hand and a second enemy flamethrower set it on fire, burning him. Despite his injuries, McCully quickly pulled himself over the berm and withdrew toward the east followed by two CIDG troops, leaving the VC attackers in his dust cloud.

"You don't want to be on the same side of the berm *that* guy's on," he emphasized.

Hundreds of enemy fighters poured over the west berm in human waves, overwhelming the defenders. Shields, Eyman and Taylor, Army Staff Sergeant Harold Crowe and Private 1st Class Michael Hand withdrew, sprinting through a 100-yard gauntlet of enemy fire to the district compound. Shields and

Taylor carried Army Capt. William Stokes III, detachment commanding officer, who was gravely injured during the first moments of battle and could not command, while Crowe carried the weapons.

Peterlin, Hoover and Army Special Forces Staff Sergeant Donald Dedmon were cut off from the rest of the group. The three began evasive maneuvers toward the east side of camp until an explosion knocked Peterlin to the ground and he was wounded in the foot by a bullet.

Unable to walk and separated from Hoover and Dedmon, Peterlin low-crawled through concertina wire, found a foxhole outside of camp and burrowed into it. He remained hidden away there through the rest of that day and the ensuing long night, until he was rescued early the following morning, June 11. Hoover and Dedmon never found their foxholes, and were later found to have been killed in action.

“At that point, the camp we were in was under VC control,” Peterlin remembered about his narrow escape. The danger didn’t derive only from the bad guys, either.

“Our planes bombed and strafed the *entire* area, so really, they assumed we were dead. Our worst danger we faced probably was the American planes and the South Vietnamese planes that were staging the bombing,” Peterlin remembered.

Also separated from the rest of the Americans defending the Ranger camp, McCully and two CIDG troops first withdrew toward the east, hoping to locate a buried cache of weapons and a radio outside the compound. Unfortunately, they couldn’t reach the desperately needed secret stash.

“I found about 500 VC sittin’ around down there and they were having breakfast and a good time,” McCully said.

With the extra weapons out of reach, McCully and the CIDG troops tried to move back to their original positions. Receiving heavy fire, they pulled back and crawled over a fence, hiding under a house in the nearby village. The CIDG troops had a rifle and a carbine, and fired on the enemy soldiers from under the house until they ran out of ammunition and the house caught fire.

McCully and the CIDG soldiers immediately commenced escape and evasion tactics, moving away from the house. Evading capture by first hiding in a pigpen, McCully and, by then, the one remaining CIDG trooper, met a civilian Vietnamese family who took them to a sawmill to hide. During the day, the combat area was being strafed and bombed, so McCully and the CIDG hid in the woods.

At one point, McCully passed out from his wounds and when he woke up, the other CIDG soldier was gone. “That scared the dickens out of me,” said McCully. “I knew the Viet Cong had the town, or I thought they still had it, because they had it the night before.”

Finally, on the morning of June 11, McCully emerged from the woods into the hands of friendly Vietnamese forces that helped rescue him.

Separate from the NMCB 22 visit by Peterlin and McCully, former BUH2 Douglas “Matt” Mattick pitched in some of his perspective of the battle by e-mail.

“The Seabees that were in the lower camp were Jim Wilson, CM1; Dale Bracken, BU1; Jim ‘Doc’ Keenan, HM2; and myself. Larry Eyman and Marvin Shields were the only Seabees to make it down to our camp. Larry >>



>> seek Lefevre’s release. Still later, after hearing no more from the Mandarins and fearing that he had been tricked, Percival set sail for Macao where, nine days later, he apprised the French authorities of Lefevre’s plight. A French warship was promptly dispatched and Bishop Lefevre was finally rescued.

Thus the story of the first United States intervention in Vietnam ended happily.

The second instance of significant of U.S. Naval activity in Vietnam took place 108 years later, and this time the Seabees were prominent participants. The 1954 Geneva agreements, which recognized the North Vietnamese communist government of Ho Chi Minh, also contained a provision which gave the Vietnamese populace an opportunity to choose whether they would live in the north or the south of a country newly divided roughly at the 17th parallel. Prior to May 18, 1955, the expiration date of this provision, nearly 800,000 Vietnamese emigrated from north to south. Their exodus, in which four nations participated, has since come to be known as the “Passage to Freedom.”



During the mass migration, the South Vietnamese government built reception centers and provided basic amenities, the French supplied ships and planes and the British provided an aircraft carrier. For its part, the U.S organized Navy Task Force 90, comprising more than 50 ships. Through the concerted effort of these four governments, 310,000 refugees were evacuated from North Vietnam and 68,857 tons of military equipment were retrieved—including 8,135 military vehicles that, furnished to France under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, were kept from North Vietnamese hands.

Amphibious Construction Battalions (ACB) 1 and 2 were members of Task Force 90. In Danang, where *Constitution* had stopped more than a century before, a detachment from ACB 1 built and operated a recreation facility for U.S. personnel involved in the ferrying operation. Another detachment from the same battalion constructed a refugee tent camp and accompanying water and power supply facilities at the mouth of the Saigon River. This Seabee-built camp served as a reserve living area for the overflow of refugees from Saigon.



Since the Geneva accord specifically prohibited the landing of foreign military units or the establishment of foreign military installations in French Indo-China, the Seabees of this detachment were required to wear civilian clothes and to remove all U.S. markings from their equipment. Nevertheless, as a result of their humanitarian efforts, the Seabees were awarded the Vietnamese Presidential Unit Citation.

Detachments from ACB 2 were originally scheduled to build a causeway across the beaches adjacent to the North Vietnamese city of Haiphong. Over this causeway military equipment and refugees were to be transferred to the many ships lying offshore. The plan, however, was soon abandoned because of French opposition and the later discovery that the previously selected beaches were unsuitable for such a causeway. Instead, all loading operations were carried out from the Haiphong waterfront, and the Seabees were diverted to the south to help their comrades with the construction of the massive refugee camp.

The Seabees labored for about a month in Vietnam before being relieved, and

Continued on page 33 >>

was seriously wounded during the escape to the lower camp.

“While I can tell you pieces of the story, memory is not what it used to be and it happened 40 years ago. As you are probably aware, I was the last American out of Dong Xoai. The evacuation was suppose to go like this. Three choppers were coming in to take us out. Four of us were carrying Marv on a poncho and we were to load Marv in the first chopper and then fall back and get on the second chopper. In this process, after we loaded Marv on the chopper, the way we broke for the second chopper, I was Tail-End Charlie.

“We got to the second chopper and by the time I got to the door, I was waved off because they had a full load. No biggie, I turned the corner and headed for the third chopper. That was when the problems started. As you can imagine in the tranquil, peaceful times of combat, things do not always go as planned—that third chopper was rising (or is it up, up and away, or whatever those flyboys say).

“Doc looks out the chopper door and sees me on the ground. He asks the door gunner to go back and get me and is told they are already overloaded and there is no way they can get another American on. The pilot saw what was going on and told the gunner they would get someone back for the guy on the ground. They were already about 1000 feet up at this time.

“That’s what good friends are for.”

### **Lessons learned**

“Dong Xoai was one of the first times Seabees were involved it that level of intensity of battle in Vietnam. The Seabees did extremely well as fighters,” NMCB 22 executive officer Mark Bellis said. He emphasized that training was the foundation for survival of the Seabees at Dong Xoai; specifically, the use of small-unit leadership tactics and splitting equipment to survive an attack when individuals or groups are separated from the main body of defenders.

McCully agreed that his Seabee training was the most important factor in his ability to escape capture and remain alive to fight again. He said that even though he’d trained in hip-deep snow prior to deploying to Vietnam, the skills he learned helped him survive in the jungle.

Peterlin credited the training he’d received for saving his life. “Outstanding, realistic training that pushed the limits—there is no substitute and that was the key to my survival,” he said. 🌐





## *A New Barracks at Great Lakes Boot Camp is Dedicated to a Seabee Hero*

April 16, 2004, was a great day for celebrating Seabee heritage with a packed dedication ceremony for the USS Marvin Shields Recruit Barracks at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes.

The ceremony included guest speaker RADM Michael K. Loose, Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) and Chief of Civil Engineers; Frank Peterlin, former officer in charge of Seabee Team 1104 and, later, the retired NAVFAC senior executive civilian for military construction; four members of Seabee Team 1104, including Johnny McCully, Jack Allen, John Klepfer and Douglas Mattick; Pete Forster, CEO of builder Clark Construction; Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees Harrell T. Richardson; and Seabee-sponsored Recruit Division 193.

Loose's father graduated from Great Lakes boot camp in 1944 and served with the Seabees in World War II, and his brother was a recruit company commander. This meant the dedication remarks were more personal for him.

"It's a great personal and special honor for us to be able to further recognize Marvin Shields' extraordinary spirit and courage with the dedication of this barracks in his name," Loose remarked. To Seabee Recruit Division 193, he said, "For each of you, I know you will get strength and inspiration from the Seabee fighting spirit as you train here."

Shields was the fourth brand-new recruit barracks completed under the \$800 million Recruit Training Command Recapitalization initiative. It's a superb facility that will directly contribute to the recruit training mission. Though referred to as a recruit "barracks," it is truly an integrated training facility.

The building was completed eight days ahead of the original contract completion date with the highest quality, thanks to the work ethic of the NAVFAC Midwest project team and its contractor partners Clark/Blinderman/Knight.

The \$35 million project included design and construction phases of a modern recruit barracks totaling 172,000 sq ft. The facility includes berthing, classrooms, learning resource centers, galley and a quarterdeck. The Shields barracks can accommodate 12 recruit divisions of 1056 recruits, with a contingency surge capacity to 18 recruit divisions of 1512 recruits.

With assistance from the CEC/Seabee Museum, the USS Marvin Shields Recruit Barracks has significant original memorabilia honoring Shields' namesake *USS Marvin Shields* (FF-1066), the original Seabee Team 1104 and the Seabee Nation.

— CAPT Tom Bersson



Top: Ceremonial ribbon cutting Seabee-style by BU2 Johnithon J. Corey (center) and (from left) CAPT Tom Bersson, former CO of NAVFAC Midwest; RADM Mike Loose, Commander NAVFAC and Chief of Civil Engineers; CDR Jim Knapp, XO of RTC Great Lakes; Frank Peterlin of Seabee Team 1104; and Peter Forster, CEO of project builder Clark Construction. Below: The brand-new USS Marvin Shields barracks quarterdeck area.



## Who was CM3 Marvin Shields?

From: Joan Shields Bennett  
Sent: Sunday, November 21, 2004 11:03 PM  
To: Ross, Daniel JOC SEABEE Mag  
Subject: SEABEE Magazine Shields Cover Story

Dear Chief Ross:

My daughter forwarded your e-mail to me. Yes, I am very much alive, although much older than all the pictures you may have seen of me.

My current husband, retired Captain Richard A. Bennett, USN, and I now live in Gardiner, Wash., where I grew up. It's only six miles from where Marvin lived during his youth. The cemetery where Marvin is buried is located here in Gardiner and the local Seabees just spent a few days doing some work for us up there.



The community is very grateful for the Seabees' continued support and assistance in maintaining our little cemetery. Last week

for Veteran's Day, over 100 Seabees converged at Marvin's grave site for a ceremony. I am usually in attendance, but my father's recent death required us to be in California.

Marvin was born in Port Townsend, Wash., in 1939 and lived his whole life in Discovery Bay until he joined the Navy in 1962. His father was in the Army and subsequently retired as a Master Sergeant. Marvin's early years were not easy. He learned early on that life was hard but you made the best of it. He has a younger brother who was his best friend. The two of them learned to hunt and fish to provide food for the family.

Even though there were many chores at home, Marvin found time to play football during his high school years and even received the Football Inspirational Award his senior year of school. I suspect he received it because the coaches realized that he often walked home or "thumbed" a ride after practice. It was a distance of 10 miles. Playing football was that important to him. He also held down jobs on local farms, and in the winter months dug clams at night on the beach in front of their home.

Though his life was full of responsibilities, he did know how to have fun. He loved people and enjoyed being with them. We often attended (almost every weekend) the local dances, where he played the guitar when he wasn't on the floor doing the latest dance fad.

After high school graduation in 1958, he went to S.E. Alaska during the summer months to work for a small mining company. He bought a small house there and spent his spare time fixing it up. He was very proud of that house and looked forward to showing it to me after we were married. He never got that chance. Actually, it was 1992 before I was able to see it for the first time.

During the winter months, he worked at a lumber mill. If you drive through Discovery >>

>> they made an important contribution to the success of the historic Passage to Freedom. Seabees were to visit Vietnam one more time before the broader conflict of the 1960s.



During the summer of 1956, a team from a Seabee construction battalion was sent to the newly established Republic of Vietnam to conduct a survey of some 1,800 miles of existing and proposed roads. Two solid months of seven-day-a-week labor in extremely rough territory

yielded valuable results. When the Seabees returned almost 10 years later, these results helped them build many of the roads that were then crucial to the conduct of the war.

As tension continued to mount in Southeast Asia during the '60s, the Seabees first returned in the form of 13-man Seabee Teams capable of performing a great variety of tasks. Although small in size, they were huge in capabilities. These units possessed unique skill sets never before packaged in such compact but highly effective and versatile units.



In 1963, Seabee Teams were sent to Thailand to assist in the Royal Thai Government's Accelerated Rural Development Program. In the northern provinces these diversified units taught and advised Thais in an effort to help them form the cadre of essential rural public works organizations. Three years of diligent work in this region was finally concluded in May 1966.

In early November '66, the Seabee Team program in Thailand shifted from rural development to the Thai Border Patrol Police Program for the development of remote area security. The program's underlying aim was to win village support for the government in regions continually plagued by communist insurgency. Before the termination of all Seabee Team efforts in Thailand in '69, these highly skilled units had made significant progress.

But back in '63, two years before the first full Seabee battalion arrived, Seabee Teams already were laboring in South Vietnam. They constructed small support points throughout the interior of South Vietnam to counter Viet Cong (VC) political influence in the villages and built U.S. Army Special Forces (ASF) camps, performed civic



action tasks, and conducted military engineering projects under the Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Program.

Seabee Team activity in South Vietnam continued to grow. Generally working in remote areas away from large population centers, the Seabees served throughout 22 provinces scattered from the Mekong Delta to the Cambodian border and the Central highlands to the North Vietnamese border. In the early years, only two teams at a time were employed in these regions, but by '69 the number of teams in-country had grown to 17.

Beginning in 1970, Seabee Teams departed from South Vietnam without relief, a phase-down program that corresponded to U.S. troop withdrawals then. On April 18, 1972, the last Seabee Team site, located in Ham Tan, Binh Tuy Province, was closed. Although these matchless units were physically moved out, the common people of Vietnam continued to reap the benefits of their many civic action projects.

Although Seabee Teams had been active in the Republic of Vietnam since >>



To help commemorate their Medal of Honor-recipient shipmate and the brand-new USS Marvin G. Shields Recruit Training Command barracks dedicated in his name, some of the surviving members of Seabee Team 1104 journeyed to Great Lakes, where they were received as heroes. While there, they witnessed the moving Capping Ceremony during which the Navy's newest members make the transition from Seaman Recruit to Sailor. Under a particularly appropriate display of another Medal of Honor recipient is former BUH2 Matt Mattick and Jane Mattick.



Retired former EQCM Johnny R. McCully points his youthful self out to BUC John Woolston, a Seabee and RTC Recruit Division Commander.

The building, the heroes and their spouses:  
 From left, Lillian Allen and former EO2 Jack L. Allen; Jane Mattick and former BUH2 Matt Mattick; retired EQCM Johnny G. McCully and Nina McCully; Elena Peterlin and former LT Frank A. Peterlin; and former EO2 John C. Klepfer.



Joan Shields Bennett with NSVA shipmates at the Shields gravesite in November 2004.



Bay today on Highway 101, you will see that mill, as it is falling down right across from the Snug Harbor Café.

Marvin joined the Navy in January 1962, going to boot camp in San Diego. Even though boot camp can be difficult, he enjoyed the challenge and meeting new people. His first duty station was in Brunswick, GA at Glynco Naval Air Station, working for public works. I still communicate with a former Seabee we met there so many years ago. Needless to say, I hated having him so far away. We were married in November of 1962 in the little church in Gardiner, which is still there today, not far from the cemetery where Marvin is now buried.

After six more months in Georgia, he was transferred to Port Hueneme for training before going to Okinawa. He was on a ship on his way there when President Kennedy was shot in November 1963. While he was in Okinawa, our only child, Barbara, was born in Port Angeles, Wash. Upon his return, we were again sent to Port Hueneme, where he became part of Seabee Team 1104.

Marvin left for Vietnam in January 1965. He was returned after being killed in the battle of Dong Xoai in June of that year. He was 25 years old and I was a widow at 21. Marvin gave his life trying to save the other members of his team. This did not come as a surprise to me.

His letters during the six months he was there were filled with stories of his teammates and the native people. His diary talks about helping the local people and playing with the children. He cared about all people. He didn't really care where they were from or what color their skin was. He was in Vietnam because it was his job and he believed in what his country was trying to do.

Marvin was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor Sept. 16, 1966. Marvin would have been embarrassed and humbled by the recognition he has received.

The Navy, the Seabees and others have honored him by naming a Navy destroyer escort in his memory; there is Camp Shields in Okinawa; Shields Hall at the Puget Sound Naval Station; the Society of American Military Engineers' Shields Medal, a new recruit barracks was named for him at Great Lakes, and much more.

Marvin's medal is on permanent loan to the CEC/Seabee Museum at Port Hueneme. 🌐

>> 1963, it wasn't until '65 that larger Seabee units were deployed to aid in the Vietnamese struggle. Not since the Second World War had the need for Seabees been so great—and not since Korea had Seabees worked under enemy fire. The first full Seabee battalion arrived in Vietnam on May 7, 1965, to build an expeditionary airfield for the Marines at Chu Lai. Others soon followed. From 1965-69 the Seabee commitment in Southeast Asia rapidly increased, necessitating first the transfer of Atlantic Fleet battalions to the Pacific through a change of homeport, then the deployment to Vietnam of Atlantic Fleet battalions and, later, the reestablishment of nine additional battalions.

This ramp-up culminated in the recall to active duty of two Reserve Seabee battalions in May 1968, bringing to 21 the number of battalions rotating to Vietnam at one time or another, plus two ACBs to lend support. During the same time period, to meet a requirement for Seabees to support such installations as the Naval Support Activities at Danang and Saigon, the two Construction Battalion Maintenance Units, the two deployed Naval Construction Regiments and the deployed Third Naval Construction Brigade rapidly increased their size.

During the war, the total Seabee community grew from 9,400 in mid-1965; to 14,000 in '66; to 20,000 in '67 and, finally, to more than 26,000 in 1968-69. To help meet the great need for personnel, the Navy recruited skilled construction workers at advanced pay grades. The Direct Procurement Petty Officer Program, reminiscent of early World War II recruiting efforts, proved highly effective both in terms of total numbers recruited (more than 13,000) and quality of input.

**Seabee accomplishments in Vietnam** were impressive. They built roads, airfields, cantonments, warehouses, hospitals, storage facilities, bunkers and other facilities that were critically needed to support the combatant forces. The mobile "search and destroy" strategy adopted by the U.S. during the first years of the war shaped the two-fold mission of the Seabees in Vietnam. In addition to the many Seabee Team activities in remote locations, construction battalions built large coastal strongholds in the I Corps Tactical Zone which embraced the northernmost provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang In and Quang Ngai.

At Danang, the Seabees built three badly needed cantonments. Temporary facilities, which included strongback tents, mess halls, shops, sheds, bathroom facilities and a water distribution system, were the first to be completed. In addition, Seabees repaired the important Danang River Bridge, rendered technical aid to South Vietnamese troops who were building ramps for tank landing ships and small boats, and constructed warehouses and petroleum storage tanks.

Fortification of the cantonments was also essential because of frequent enemy attacks. Despite Seabee-built machine gun positions and bunkers for perimeter defense, one such attack succeeded in destroying the newly built advance base hospital, killing two Seabees and wounding more than 90.

In true Seabee tradition, the men rapidly rebuilt the entire hospital complex.

At Phu Bai, near the ancient imperial capital of Hue, the Seabees developed yet another coastal point into an advance base. There, the construction men built a fleet logistic support unit cantonment. Besides camp construction, the project entailed raising, widening and surfacing a low peninsula which jutted 1,500 ft out into the South China Sea. The causeway served as an unloading ramp for cargo-laden landing ships. In addition, the Seabees built a large antenna field which substantially modernized communication systems in the war-torn northern provinces. Two smaller cantonments, one for a medical >>





## LEST WE FORGET: Reserve Seabee Unit and NSVA Each Year Remember Our Medal of Honor Recipient on Veteran's Day

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY YN2(AW) KATHRYN BILLINGTON

On Nov. 11, 2004, Seabees Active and Reserve and retired, plus honored guests and past shipmates from around the Pacific Northwest, gathered at Gardiner Cemetery in Gardiner, Wash., as they do each year on Veterans Day. They gathered for a ceremony honoring all veterans, but especially Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields, the Vietnam-era hero and Medal of Honor recipient known to Seabees past and present.

The cemetery is maintained through a Grange co-operative, and many local citizens and veterans also volunteer to keep it in shape. Still, the burial ground was in need of additional repair beyond the capabilities of these dedicated volunteers. Enter the Seabees of Construction Battalion Unit (CBU) 418.

"A few months back I received a call from CAPT Tex Lewis, a retired Civil Engineer Corps officer, informing me the cemetery was in dire need of some drainage improvements. We were well aware that this was the resting place of our only Medal of Honor recipient," explained LT Jeff Bartlett, officer in charge at CBU 418. "We had participated in numerous Veterans Day ceremonies at the cemetery

and done work at the Marvin G. Shields American Legion post in Port Townsend. It was the least we could do to lend a helping hand in getting the drainage issue resolved."

The cemetery is very small and the county resources to maintain the site

are limited. "We provided the labor and equipment, the co-op was able to scrape enough money together to purchase all the needed materials," Bartlett said.

The Veterans Day ceremony included a wreath-laying in honor of Shield's sacrifice and loyal service, presented by Navy Seabee Veterans of America (NSVA) Department of Washington Commander and retired Master Chief Don Egelus with NSVA Island X-2 Secretary and Assistant Northwest retired Commander Chief Richard Morey. The solemn event featured a reading of "The Watch."

"I was impressed with the presentation of the ceremony and felt honored to show my respect for a fellow Seabee," said CBU 418 Utilitiesman 3rd Class Andrew J. Mystic.

A special guest in attendance was Wayne Gibson, a former shipmate of Shields' in MCB 11. "Marvin and I didn't drink or smoke, so we naturally gravitated to one another in the battalion. We sang in the choir together, hung out, and Marvin, being seven years older than I, was a real father figure, always looking out for the younger Seabees," Gibson said. "Marvin and I both volunteered for the Seabee Special Technical Assistance Teams (STAT). It was as a part of that team that Marvin was deployed to Dong Xoai. "Marvin and I trained together for the STAT in Port Hueneme and Camp Pendleton, but I lost track of him after he left for Vietnam."

Following the ceremony, veterans and family members of all services gathered at the Shields American Legion Hall to enjoy food provided by the NSVA, and to recall and tell sea stories about their service, past, present and future. 🌐



>> battalion, were also constructed.

As U.S. Marines based at Danang pushed search and destroy operations into the interior of the I Corps Area, the need arose for increased air cover, and thus for an additional air strike facility. It was decided that the Seabees would build a 3,500-foot expeditionary airfield at Chu Lai, 50 miles south of Danang. Since the VC controlled the surrounding mountains and there were no nearby port facilities, the Seabees landed on



the beaches of Chu Lai in the first major U.S. Navy amphibious operation since the Lebanon crisis of 1958. Matching the feats of their fabled Second World War predecessors, the Vietnam-era Seabees laid the last aluminum plank on the airfield only 23 days after coming ashore. The very next day, planes began operations against the Viet Cong from the new airstrip.

The Seabees continued their work at Chu Lai by adding a parallel taxiway, four cross taxiways and parking aprons. Before their task was completed, the Seabees had erected two cantonments, warehouses, hangars and a host of other vital facilities at withering speed.

By the end of 1965, Seabees had pioneered and laid the groundwork for three major advance bases in the northern provinces of the RVN. From these bases, combatant forces received the critical support necessary for increasing attacks into the interior. In the words of Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze, the Seabees had "contributed mightily to constructing the vast infrastructure necessary for a major war in a primitive, remote area." The bastions built on the upper coast of South Vietnam demonstrated their worth in 1966-67 when Allied forces, supplied from these points, crushed major North Vietnamese offensives through the Demilitarized Zone and Laos.

During 1966 the Seabees continued to build at Danang, Phu Bai and Chu Lai, expanding these bases and erecting more permanent structures for the people and equipment assigned to them. At the same time, Seabees

entered the troubled, northern-most province of Quang Tri to build a hilltop fort of concrete bunkers at Lang Vei. This vital outpost overlooked a feeder line of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They also built facilities at the Marine base at Dong Ha and the Army artillery post at Comm To.

Among the numerous construction projects completed in '67 was an alternate airfield at Dong Ha and the famed Liberty Bridge, 80 miles southwest of Danang. Even though the northeast monsoon season had begun, the new airstrip was completed in only 38 days. The Liberty Bridge, which spanned the Thu Bon River, was one of the most impressive undertakings to be conducted during the war. Built to ably withstand the incredible expansion of the river during the monsoon season, the completed bridge was 2,040 feet long and towered 32 feet above the low water

level. While construction

of such a bridge would have been difficult under normal circumstances, the Seabees were required to work in a remote area of Vietnam known to contain large concentrations of enemy forces. Despite tremendous difficulties, the bridge was finished in only five months.

During the bitter struggle of the Tet Offensive in February '68, Seabees built and fought in direct support of the Marine Corps and Army. While the battle for Hue raged at fever pitch, Seabees from Phu Bai were summoned to rebuild and repair two vitally needed concrete bridges.

When enemy snipers drove the Seabees from their work, they organized their own combat teams that silenced the snipers and completed their important task. In the spring, the Seabees went to work on the Danang-to-Hue railroad and put it quickly back into service. Constant enemy harassment had suspended service on this line since '65.

Naval Construction Force strength reached its peak shortly after the beginning of the '68 Tet Offensive. During that and the following year more than 11,000 Seabees were serving in South Vietnam. Although the Navy's construction men continued to labor in the northern provinces, building city-like cantonments and upgrading previously constructed facilities, the priorities of the war also began to demand more and more of their skills in the south.

After responsibility for conducting the war was turned over to the South Vietnamese

and American military operations in the north were significantly reduced, the Seabees labored to prepare the Vietnamese for the ultimate withdrawal of all American combatant troops. In the Mekong Delta they built a string of coastal bases and radar sites that would allow the Vietnamese Navy to completely take over coastal surveillance in this region of "brown water" warfare. As thousands of American troops went back home, Seabees continued to build. Now, however, they built hospitals at Danang, Chu Lai, Phu Bai, Quang Tri and many other towns and villages throughout the country.

When Seabee activity drew to a close in 1970 and the withdrawal of the last units commenced, the Navy's builder-fighters had made a lasting contribution to the people of South Vietnam. Seabee construction skills and medical assistance proved powerful weapons in the "civic action" war. The recitation of events and statistics fail to reveal the true nature of the Seabees' involvement during the Vietnam years.

They famously supported the Marines at Chu Lai and Khe Sanh, reopened the railroad line between Hue and Danang, struggled with the logistics problems of the Mekong Delta, constructed a new naval base on a sand pad floating on rice paddy mud, and built staggering quantities of warehouses, aircraft support facilities, roads,



and bridges.

But they also hauled and dumped untold tons of rock and paving on roads that provided access to farms and markets. They supplied fresh water to countless numbers of Vietnamese through hundreds of Seabee-dug wells, provided medical treatment to thousands of villagers and brought hope for generations to come through Seabee-built schools, hospitals, utilities systems, roads and other community facilities. 🌐

**We can fix that ...**







## Success Taught Here

*Seabees are teaching Iraqis how to place concrete, swing hammers—and rebuild their war-torn nation.*

STORY BY LT CHRIS NEISH  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PH2(AW) MICHAEL D. HECKMAN  
AND BU2 JEROME KIRKLAND

**W**ithin days of arriving in the Al Anbar Province, Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 from Port Hueneme assumed management responsibility for the successful Iraqi Civilian Apprentice Program (ICAP).

Think of it as a sandy new version of the TV show “Home Improvement,” but with people who can actually use the tools.

With the ICAP program, basic construction skills have the real potential to evolve into a larger source of inspiration—and a source of community pride. ICAP was created to increase the number of skilled construction workers in Iraq, help reduce unemployment and provide a new way for Iraqi youth to enter an emerging workforce with a foundation of skill to rebuild Iraq. Seabees provide the classroom and hands-on training for Iraqi men ages 14 to 25.

“I have a sense of excitement,” Builder 3rd Class Robbie Moore of Scroggins, Texas, said of his new assignment. “I’m interested in teaching them what we know and building from there.”

The work at ICAP begins each day with a convoy brief that starts long before sunrise. Shortly thereafter, a necessarily heavily armed and well-defended convoy takes to the streets to get to the ICAP worksite. When the Bees enter the site, always visible everywhere are a large number of Marines providing ample force protection. Feeling safe, the ICAP students can concentrate on their roles—as students learning essential

construction skills.

Within an hour, more than 38 ICAP students arrive in the classroom, don their construction clothes, safety boots and hardhats. Fifteen of these students had just graduated the first phase of the program the day prior and now make up the primary workforce providing direct labor to construct their projects.

During the morning hours, 23 newer students received some classroom training on construction fundamentals and then entered the construction site to practice their basic construction skills.

Seeing two recent ICAP grads teaching new students surprised some of the Seabee ICAP crew. Moore remarked that it demonstrated how ICAP was successfully imparting critical skills.

“I am very pleased to see this leadership from within. It shows a strong sense of character and willingness to take charge,” Moore said. “These two are natural leaders who lead by example and possess strong work ethic. Every day, they listen to the interpreters and then direct students and other graduates on what to do,” said another Seabee instructor. “They demonstrate how to use a hammer, a square, tape measure, generator, circular saw and acetylene torch. Within minutes, the new students repeat the same processes they learned from their Iraqi instructors.”

The two hard-charging Iraqi men now serving as teachers had been the most distinguished ICAP graduates of the class



that graduated the day before. It didn’t take long for their new apprentices to cycle through the round-robin training and start learning basic construction skills critical to developing a solid foundation for consistent, quality construction practices.

The result of these evolutionary steps in the ICAP program is that Iraqis are



The Seabee-led ICAP construction skills school is churning out numbers of Iraqis who can help rebuild their own nation (left). CDR Willington Lin, CO of NMCB 23, officiated at a graduation ceremony marking matriculation of 17 more trained students (below). "Iraqis rebuilding Iraq begins with each one of you; I wish you luck as construction tradesmen." Lin presented each graduate with a completion certificate and a large, donated tool kit.



rebuild Iraq so we can be great again."

It's easy to see by their enthusiasm that Iraqi construction students are proud of their work and are gaining confidence as they learn. Many of these students have fostered friendships with classmates that extend outside of ICAP.

To facilitate outplacement of ICAP graduates into the Iraqi construction force, Iraqi Ministries of Labor are maintaining a list of former ICAP students so contractors can hire graduates who have known construction skill sets. Additional measures to place graduates into jobs is promoted by writing clauses into work contracts that give Iraqi contractors incentives for hiring ICAP graduates.

Further, Iraqi contractors conducting new business with the local officer in charge of construction contracts are given a short brief about ICAP. They are able to conduct on-site job interviews with ICAP graduates.

The ICAP students have identified many positive results directly attributable to their construction training. Day-to-day contact with them confirms that graduates have earned respect within their communities and experience a sense of ownership and pride by rebuilding their own country.

One of the older students summed it up succinctly.

"I take what I learn here and have used

it to make my home better" the student said with a smile. Soon many local communities will see benefits from increased stabilization because of this program.

An American volunteer group called "Spirit of America" (SoA) has helped provide the tools and resources to support the ICAP program—including impressive tool kits that are awarded at graduation. The kits are maintained at the ICAP site for six weeks or until graduates earn work elsewhere. Experience has demonstrated that students develop additional confidence and a sense of ownership by using their own tools.

Former First Naval Construction Division Commanding Officer RADM Charles R. Kubic told the SoA organizers, "The ICAP students have been very pleased to receive the tool belts. One student said he had never seen such high-quality tools and another has placed his tools on display at his home so his family and friends can see the impressive set of tools.

"The Spirit of America tool kits have provided an additional and tangible incentive for these brave young Iraqi ICAP students to resist pressures to join anti-Iraqi forces bent on the destruction of their emerging free society. This has made these tool kits instrumental to the success of ICAP and therefore to the success of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*."

As the successes of ICAP continue to grow, the seeds of Iraq's peaceful future are planted. 🌍

helping other Iraqis teach how to rebuild their own country. Through an Iraqi translator, one student said, "I am earning decent money for my family while I learn valuable construction skills. My family can provide more for meals because of the extra money I bring home weekly."

"I am respected in my family and village because of the job I have," another student said through a translator. Another student added, "Although some of us must be careful about security concerns, it is important we learn how to build. We must

# Saving Pensacola

Within hours of a weather catastrophe at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Seabees from NMCB 1 were rolling to beat back damage from the hurricane that came to be known as 'Ivan the Terrible' **Story and photographs by Journalist 1st Class (SW) Dennis J. Herring**

**A**lmost before the storm surge had withdrawn, a power team of Seabees had departed Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Miss., at 1 a.m. Sept. 17 headed for Naval Air Station Pensacola—in the actual wake of Hurricane Ivan. The storm made landfall Sept. 16 in Gulf Shores, Ala., with winds measuring more than 130 miles per hour, and it left behind a wide swath of destruction on the historic home of Naval aviation training.

Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1 spent the night of Sept. 16 loading trucks with communications gear, tools and equipment needed to establish an operations command center and to begin initial recovery operations.

“Our Seabees completed the preparations in record time,” said battalion operations officer LCDR Scot Sanders. Battalion officials received the order to deploy at 5 p.m. on Sept. 16, and fewer than eight hours later, the strike team of more than 40 Seabees headed to Pensacola.

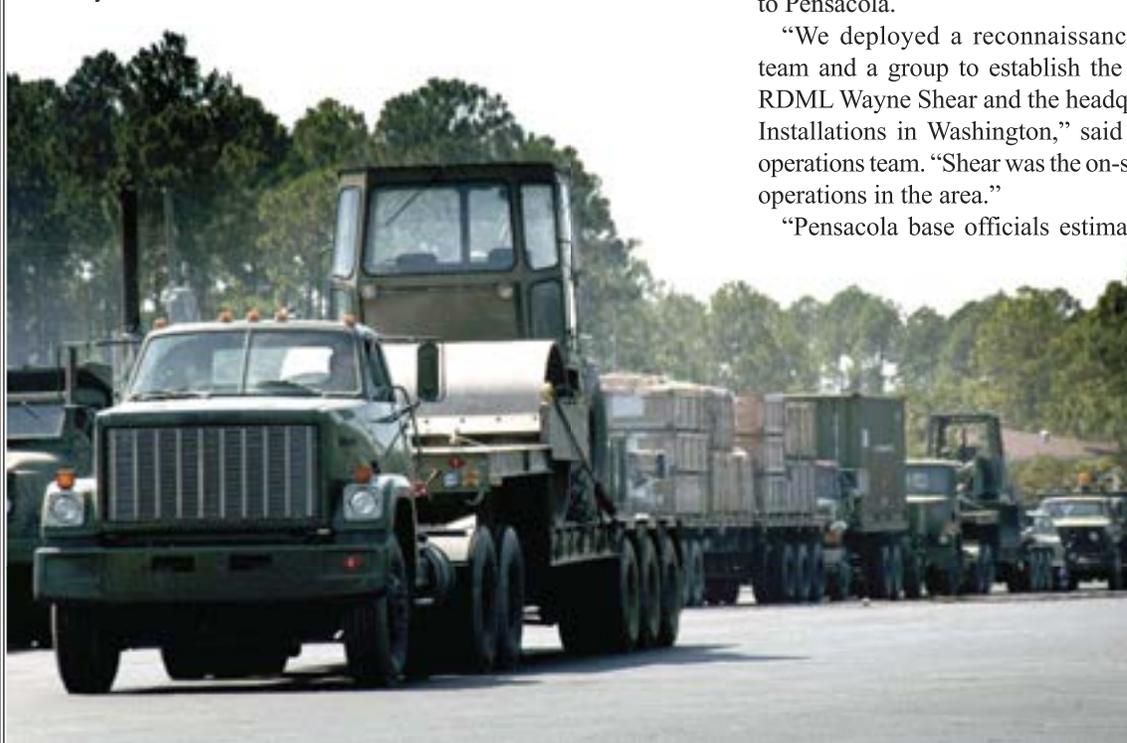
***“We had to move a Taco Bell sign just to get the convoy through.”***

“We deployed a reconnaissance team, a disaster recovery team and a group to establish the on-scene command post for RDML Wayne Shear and the headquarters of Commander, Navy Installations in Washington,” said LTJG Ryan Carey from the operations team. “Shear was the on-scene commander for recovery operations in the area.”

“Pensacola base officials estimated the damage on the three



CM3 Nicholas Reid and CM3 Ralph Vanoverberghe (top) loaded chainsaws and other supplies onto a truck headed to Pensacola to assist with disaster recovery following Hurricane Ivan. The storm caused major damage with winds of 130 mph. Dozens of Bees swarmed the aviation training base and helped re-open roadways and clear debris that remained after the storm.



Seabees from NMCB 1 start their convoy (left) from Construction Battalion Center Gulfport with supplies headed to NAS Pensacola. The battalion deployed more than 150 Seabees to assist with disaster recovery after Hurricane Ivan caused major damage on the three bases in the area.

military bases in the area at more than \$100 million,” Carey said. “We were told that more than 20 percent of the windows on base were blown out, and all of the roofs were damaged. There was also severe flooding. Health and safety issues were the major concerns in the beginning.”

Arriving at Pensacola in the early morning hours, the first team found major damage when they entered the base. “We arrived in Pensacola at 4 a.m. and literally had to weave our way through the town,” said Chief Utilitiesman (SCW) John Grant. “There were power lines and even roofs in the road. We had to move a Taco Bell sign just to get the convoy through.”

The Seabees’ mission started with debris cleanup and opening congested roads. Just getting to the base proved to be tough enough, and once on the base, the Bees immediately got to the task of clearing the major installation throughways.

“Clearing roads was the first thing we did,” Builder 3rd Class Marco Attisano said. “The most important thing early on was to



make the base mobile again.” After taking a day to clear off the base’s major roads, the teams moved on to general debris cleanup, another monumental undertaking.

In addition to removing downed trees and other debris, one group of Seabees rebuilt a portion of road that was washed away by the storm surge. “There was damage everywhere,” Attisano said. “Pretty much every tree on base was uprooted and every building had sustained some damage. We were looking at a lot of work.”

A second team of 96 Seabees from NMCB 1 departed Gulfport Sept. 18 and worked through most of the following week. The first group of Seabees returned to Gulfport Sept. 22.

“When I left, there was a world of difference from when we showed up,” Grant said, who was one of about 60 members to leave the area on that rotation. “I’d say about a third of the base was back on shore power by then. The IT guys were working on getting Internet access back in one building. It’s coming back together, but it’s going to be a long process. You’ll know that a hurricane has hit there for a long time.”

The Seabees weren’t called in to extensively rebuild the training base—they were brought in because of their ability to move quickly and make emergency repairs.

“The long-term repairs will be turned over to a private contractor,” said CDR Lou Cariello, commander of NMCB 1. “As far as Seabee

skills go, this mission was easy enough for us. The combined teamwork of the Twenty Second Naval Construction Regiment, the 20th Seabee Readiness Group and NMCB 1 ensured that the Seabees were able to respond in very short order to make a difference.”



**Shortly after Hurricane Ivan moved away from NAS Pensacola,**

two airdets from NMCBs 1 and 74 and an element of the Twenty Second Naval Construction Regiment arrived to provide initial disaster recovery efforts. Four Seabees from the Port Hueneme-based Mobile Utilities Support Equipment (MUSE) division were called in to provide expert technical assistance for the installation of portable generators and transformers helping to restore power to mission critical facilities. Aviation and other students needed to be back in their classrooms as soon as possible in order to keep the flow to the fleet at the level expected. MUSE Seabees helped that occur

sooner by installing a 1500-kilowatt generator to provide reliable emergency electric power.



Whether it was the SPAWAR Computer Center, NAS headquarters building, an ad hoc Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society center or an ATC “A” school barracks, MUSE Seabees were there to provide timely and effective electricity. “Every day that personnel are displaced from their berthing or live out in town impacts the training schedule, affects fleet readiness—and costs the Navy thousands of dollars,” said Chief Construction Electrician Larry Hurt, the MUSE team leader. The MUSE team played a big role in re-establishing training pipelines and helping bring some quality of life back to facilities devastated by “Ivan the Terrible.”

— UT1 Walter Urtz



## THE NIGHT TRAIN

Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23's Tactical Movement Team move into position to simulate removing an enemy that has attacked their convoy. They were engaged last August in an evening exercise at Port Hueneme, Calif., as part of their training for the Reserve battalion's deployment in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY JO2 LESLIE A. SHIVELY



# Letter from Bosnia:

## At SFOR, Seabees and CEC officers are still pitching in for good

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED BY CUCM ROBERT KIDD

As I write this, I'm a Navy Reservist on 9-month recall. I run the general construction and maintenance workshop for the Public Works Dept. at Camp Butmir, Sarajevo. We maintain the entire base facilities and do some limited new construction with seven carpenters, five plumbers and three equipment operators.

We also provide maintenance support to other NATO installations in Bosnia and Croatia. I have traveled to Mostar, Bosnia and Zagreb, Croatia several times to work. Sarajevo is the headquarters for Stabilization Force (SFOR) and *Operation Joint Forge*, part of the peacekeeping and rebuilding of the Balkans. There are some 20 NATO countries supporting operations here.

Most of our work is typical public works-type maintenance, including service order repairs, routine scheduled maintenance, emergency repairs, utility work and more. A lot of our new work is setting up and joining standard container units to be used as offices,

bathrooms and storage facilities. Nothing too exotic, mostly routine Seabee work.

I've had the opportunity to work with many soldiers from other countries. The real challenge is working in the multinational environment, which we do very successfully. All my workers are Bosnian, the director of public works is a British civilian, my counterparts in the generator/welder and electrical/HVAC shops are civilians and the headquarters Commandant is an Army colonel. On any given day we may be required to work in a space occupied by any of the score of countries represented here.

Communication is the biggest test. NATO troops are required to be able to speak English, but many only have a limited vocabulary. Some efforts have to be made daily to determine exactly what is needed to be done, especially for new construction.

Mine has been a rewarding tour. I had opportunity to help organize and work with volunteers on a home building project for a

remote family that had their home destroyed in the war.

The Beha family is a nine-member family, with seven children and two parents. They have no income, no food and no running water available. Their new home will be built on top of the foundation from the previous unheated shack (below) that we took down.

The Beha family's new home has been financed by the Hope and Homes Foundation and the building plans were designed by SFOR engineers.

During their time there, the volunteers completed the site preparation (inset below) for the foundation and took some time to discuss the family's current situation with the father, Galib. He was shown how to do different tasks that should serve to increase his employability. There is still a lot of war damage in the area, but the rebuilding is ongoing. Galib's new skills can help him.

As Seabees, we keep doing what we can to help. 🌐



# 'We Build, We Play!'

## Seabees Brought Christmas in August to Japanese Orphans

STORY BY JOSN MATTHEW SCHWARZ

**S**eabees responded to the needs of some special children at the Chusin Orphanage near Sagamihara, Japan, Aug. 21.

The Seabees' simple motto, "We Build, We Fight," was unofficially changed to "We Build, We Play" during a "Christmas in August" visit to the local Chusin orphan's home.

"We came here to make kids happy," said Utilitiesman 1st Class Ramon Concepcion, who was barely heard over the energized screams of nearly 50 children playing with the volunteers. "We want to spend quality time with the orphans. Being Seabees, it's a tradition to do civic action. We like to find somewhere we can go to use our skills to help the community."

Toward that end this time out, the Seabees and other visitors from NAF Atsugi barbecued, played games such as basketball and ping pong, watched movies and presented gifts that had been collected on the base for nearly eight months.

"You've seen the boxes around base—toys, food and clothes were donated," said Concepcion, who helped organize the community relations trip.

The warm and sunny day made it possible for the kids to play musical chairs outdoors to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O" and "How much is that little doggy in the window?" while hamburgers and hot dogs were grilled.

Some of the older children played basketball and others rode around on bicycles, some of which were repaired by Seabees and other volunteers.

The Seabees also performed building upkeep, such as patching holes in the interior walls, tightening banisters and cleaning up the landscape.

Many of the volunteers hope this trip will further relations between the base and the children, but according to Sachio Soga, the Chusin vice president, the interaction is already positive.

"The relationship between the base and the orphanage has been established for 20 to 30 years," said Soga, who has been with the home for 16 years. "Now, since base members have been coming more than once a year, the kids look forward to seeing you guys."

But Concepcion wants to up the ante for the Seabees. "We plan to visit every quarter, and sometimes during special occasions," he said.

Thirteen-year-old Masahiro Kitamura, a 10-year resident of the home, hopes that is true.

"We want them to come back," he said, gripping a volunteer's hand. "They are so nice and they play with us! I wish they could come once a month."

The little boy is likely to get his wish. 🌐



# SECNAV, Arriving ...

The Secretary of the Navy visited *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and NMCB 4 to say thanks and present awards to hard-working Desert Bees

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
PH2(AW) PHILIP FORREST

At Camp Fallujah, Iraq, Nov. 26, 2004, Secretary of the Navy the Honorable Gordon R. England visited with Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 and Marines of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF).

"I came out to personally thank everyone. Thank you for your service, for wearing the cloth of our great nation, for the sacrifice you and your families make," England said.



The Navy Secretary also thanked the Seabees for performing clean-up work in Fallujah, repairing main supply routes and bridges, as well their

roles in operating the Iraqi Construction Apprentice Program. All of these projects are performed by Seabees in IMEF's Task Force Echo, a unit comprised of active Seabees from NMCB 4 and Navy Reserve Seabees from NMCB 23.

"The training programs are teaching people the construction skills needed to rebuild their schools and instill local pride," England said. "It helps create a community of civilians who will resist insurgents from coming back in. Thank you for being here, and a 'thank you' goes out to your families for their sacrifice as well, because this is a family affair. It is a privilege and honor to serve with you."

The Navy Secretary presented Equipment Operator 3rd Class Steven Davis and Utilitiesman 2nd Class Thomas Oberlies with the Seabee Combat Warfare qualification pin and awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" to Machinery Repairman 3rd Class Joshua Wright.

CDR John Korka, the commanding officer of NMCB 4, presented England with a command coin and a Christmas ornament hand-crafted by Engineering Aide 3rd Class Jill Ramdeen. 🌐



The Secretary presented the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" to MR3 Joshua Wright (above) and UT2 Thomas Oberlies (below) with the Seabee Combat Warfare qualification pin. Left, CDR Korka and RDML Ray Alexander (center), I MEF commander, welcome the Secretary.





Left, RMDL Ray Alexander and EAC Al Veenstra assess the new faux hearth. Above, a CE2 Jose Trevino shows off decorations. Left to right below, Seabees attached to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 enjoy Thanksgiving at a Camp Fallujah dining facility, including CM2 Marc Bernier; CE3 Joe Tank; BUCN Patrick Stoker; EO3 Michael Urcelay; USMC GySgt Andrew Goulding; CS3 Jessica Beale; and UT3 Jessica Mudgett.

Eat more Beef: Back row BU1 Timothy Lynch, CM2 Christopher Thurber, CM2 Richard Blake; front ET1 Robert Fraulino, SW1 Patrick Way, BU3 Matthew Fisher, CS2 Guiseppe Scire-Cirneco.



## Holidays With the DESERT BEES

STORY BY JOC(AW) SUZANNE SPEIGHT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOC(AW) SUZANNE SPEIGHT & LT CHRIS NEISH

Seabees attached to the I Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF) Engineer Group (IMEG) offered a little American tradition and holiday spirit to deployed Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and civilians at Camp Fallujah, Iraq during the 2004 holiday season. The outcome of a request by food service staff to build some “model” ships representing the Mayflower to display at the base galley facilities on Thanksgiving Day, the Seabees went above and beyond in usual *Can Do!* spirit.

“We wanted to build something special, something that really captured the spirit of Thanksgiving,” said Builder 3rd Class Matthew Fisher. “I think if we can offer a little reminder of home, it makes it seem like not just another day.”

The Seabees built three large, 10-ft long Mayflower replica wooden ships,

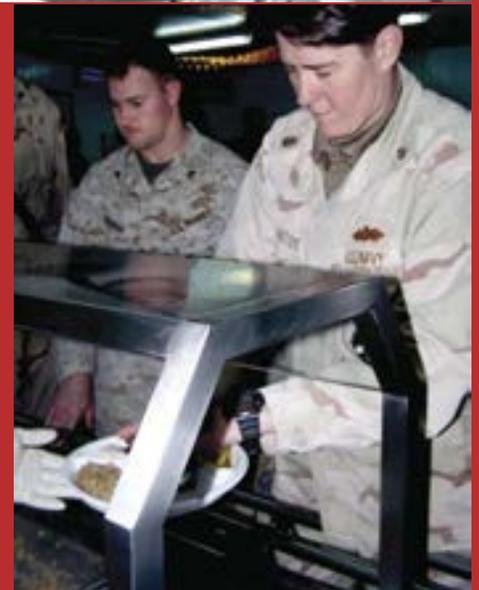


complete with pilgrims, Indians, and turkeys. Each became a centerpiece and dinner display at Camp Fallujah dining facilities.

Marine Staff Sgt. Izra Ali is the Camp Fallujah food service manager. “We asked for some ships, and I was thinking some small *model* ships,” Ali said. “When I saw they had built the outstanding large-scale ships, I think we were all surprised.”

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Guiseppe Scire-Cirneco was part of the Seabee project crew and suggested they might create a similar display for Christmas—resulting in a faux wooden fireplace, complete with a hearth for hanging Seabee stockings.

“I’m proud of the work we did,” he said. “I think it added a special touch of Seabee craftsmanship to the season.” 🌐



NMCB 4’s UTC Jamye Rainwater (R) in line at a Camp Fallujah dining facility for Thanksgiving.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY JO1(SCW) KATE ROBERTS

**S**eabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 are far from home again. The main body is deployed to Southwest Asia in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, while another large detail is deployed to Camp Mitchell in Rota, Spain. Several more NMCB 4 dets are sprinkled elsewhere across the globe, from Andros Island and Guantanamo Bay to Cuba and Albania, from Sigonella, Sicily to Souda Bay, Crete.

No matter where Seabees are, they typically will take steps to make the holiday season special and festive. Toward that end, Construction Electrician 2nd Class Thiago DeToledo and Construction Electrician Apprentice James Mason, both from Four's Bravo Company in Rota, picked up the daunting assignment of decorating the large Bee figure located on Camp Mitchell.

"The biggest challenge was figuring out how best to secure the lights to the Bee.

## ON BEEING CHRISTMAS IN SPAIN



After that, it was fairly easy," DeToledo said. He spent a full day winding 260 ft of Christmas lights around the Bee statue.

Master Chief Constructionman (SCW) Cory Haines, officer-in-charge of the First Naval Construction Division Detachment Europe, said, "I've been trying to get Seabees to decorate that Bee for four years. I'm glad that NMCB 4 was up to the task."

"This is my third consecutive Christmas away from home," DeToledo sighed. "But decorating this Bee has kind of put me in the holiday spirit."

The structure stood a Seabee's watch every night, all aglow just outside the Bachelor Officer's Quarters, where Seabees and Naval Station Rota personnel also could admire it.

"I enjoyed the view from the top of the Bee," chuckled CE2 DeToledo. "I just hope we don't have to take the lights down, too." 🌐



## >RADM R.L. PHILLIPS

On Nov. 5, 2004, I assumed command of the First Naval Construction Division and Naval Construction Forces Command, and it is indeed a privilege for me to be with the Seabees once again. I am extremely proud of all that you have done in recent years and look forward to our continued success in the years to come. Since every leader has a slightly different view of things, I feel that it is important for me to lay out my expectations and what is planned for the way ahead.

Over the past two years, the NCF has made significant operational contributions to the Global War on Terrorism, including the war in Iraq, and we should all be very proud of this record of success. As we move forward, however, not only must we build and fight better than any other combat construction force in the world, but we must also create and maintain a culture that strives for cost-wise readiness, striking a careful balance between combat effectiveness and business-like efficiency.

### **Expectations**

We may go to war at a moment's notice, so it is very important for every member of the NCF to remain physically fit, ensure all required medical and dental care is complete, keep personal affairs in order, and stay proficient in our technical and military skills. This is a personal and chain-of-command responsibility.

We must create and maintain a working environment that ensures the personal and professional development of each man and woman on board, and where people are proud to serve.

We must be accountable for our personal and professional life; think and act safely in everything we do; take ownership of our equipment, people, tools, jobs and workspaces; and try our

best to do it right the first time.

I trust you and will accept the risk of passing authority down the line. I expect leaders at each level to similarly accept risk by pushing responsibility and authority down as far as practicable. I encourage risk and bold decision-making; it is okay to make a mistake. That said, I expect full compliance with the law and Navy regulations; the prudent use of government funds; and full compliance with safety requirements. We will never assume undue risk when it comes to safety.

Leaders must lead from the front. From Petty Officers to Commodores, I expect leaders to get out from behind their desks—visit work centers, job sites and classrooms as part of your regular routine. Good leaders receive as well as transmit—listen to your seniors, peers and subordinates.

Senior leaders are responsible for recruiting, retention and attrition. This goes hand-in-hand with a solid sponsor and indoctrination program, as well as a positive command climate. Recognition of performance (both good and bad) is also a key factor in retention and attrition, as well as in personal and professional growth.

Solid internal and external communications are a must. From the deckplate up to the top of the chain of command, there must be a firm understanding of what we are doing—no surprises. Loyalty goes hand-in-hand with communications.

Solid military bearing and behavior is a given. Errors in military bearing and behavior will be corrected without hesitation and with pride.

Balance and perspective at work and at home are expected, as they are essential to peak performance. Proper balance at work among work/tasks, self-improvement and productivity improvement by all hands will go a long way to ensuring the NCF maintains its edge as the very best combat/contingency construction force in the world. In addition to balance at work, all hands must achieve a balance between work and personal/family time. A total focus on the job at the expense

of rest and personal relationships is unhealthy and counterproductive. It is not enough to expect individuals to work toward these balances; leaders must encourage balance in their subordinates' lives through counseling and personal example.

### **The Way Ahead**

In today's world, simply maintaining the status quo is unacceptable. We will build and maintain an organization that is on the leading edge of transformation while providing the CNO, Fleet Commanders and Combatant Commanders a force that can rapidly respond to combat/contingency construction needs worldwide. Sound business principles must be applied to provide cost-wise readiness. We will incorporate these principles into our decision-making processes at all levels of the chain of command in order to optimize effectiveness and efficiency. POM 06 mitigations will return more than 1,400 billets and approximately \$23 million per year to the Navy enterprise at minimal risk. I believe we will find opportunities for further enterprise savings within the realm of acceptable risk. As a starting point for our transformation, here are some things we need to take on now as a priority:

**Force Structure.** We will conduct a bottom-up analysis of the NCF. This task will be undertaken with no preconceived ideas; however, it may be possible for the NCF to get leaner and eliminate certain practices with little impact to readiness and output.

This initiative will be conducted under the umbrella of guiding documents, including Defense Planning Guidance, Sea Power 21 and the Fleet Forces Command (FFC) Commander's Intent. The team will execute the review balanced on four key pillars:

- *balancing of the overall force against the current global demand signals;*
- *analysis of the shape, size, and cost drivers of each of our units;*
- *analysis of the Table of Allowance required to support the force;*
- *analysis of the impact of force structure changes on the NCF's*

*support structure*

**Doctrine.** NCF written doctrine is based on the old Naval Construction Brigade structure. Current doctrine does not recognize the Naval Construction Division concept, or the Combined Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Engineer Group (MEG) concept as employed in the major OPLANs.

Seabee doctrine will be reviewed and revised consonant with current employment plans and recent developments in employment practices, as well as ongoing transformational actions.

**Headquarters Roles and Responsibilities.** We will clearly define and implement the roles and responsibilities of the personnel who comprise the Division and NCF, and the relationships between 1NCD/NCFC and the operational regiments and Seabee Readiness Groups. There will be a clear and distinct emphasis at the Echelon III level on Type Commander roles and responsibilities, and a shift of certain operational roles and responsibilities to the Echelon IV level.

In consonance with the Chief of Civil Engineers' Human Capital Strategy for the Civil Engineer Corps and enlisted Seabees, we will develop a 1NCD Human Capital Strategy that encompasses our officers, enlisted, civilian and contractor personnel. This strategy will guide our efforts to ensure the personal and professional development of each man and woman in the NCF.

**Training.** We will look for opportunities to leverage NCF tactical training with other TYCOMs and commands serving ashore in combat and contingency areas. We will continue to incorporate best practices to eliminate unnecessary redundancies across our training continuum; we will analyze our current training platforms and courses to ensure that we maximize effective training at the best value to the Navy; and we will incorporate current and emerging computer and simulation technologies and techniques into our training continuum.

**Tactical Tasks.** We continue to work



## >CMDM K.C. TIMMONS

through two POM 06 initiatives that require significant effort and that must remain clear in our sight picture:

*Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) Alignment.* We are now in the execution phase of converting the 17 active Construction Battalion Units and two reserve CBMUs into two leaner, active duty CBMU command element headquarters (one homeported on the East Coast and one on the West Coast) with Active and Reserve Component detachments geographically dispersed across CONUS.

*Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) Alignment.* We are working on the details of aligning the two ACBs under 1NCD beginning in FY 06.

The Division Chief of Staff, Assistant Chiefs of Staff and other staff will provide necessary support within their respective programs, along with subordinate unit Commanders as directed, to accomplish the stated tasks and achieve the end state. I will continue to utilize the NCF Requirements and Policy Council and existing inter-command working groups to support these initiatives, as appropriate.

I will also implement new governance strategies, such as quarterly decision-making meetings with NCR and SRG Commodores and Command Master Chiefs, and Echelon IV command visits to evaluate performance.

We will challenge assumptions, focus on generating efficiencies and make cost-conscious decisions as we continue to provide the world's premiere combat construction force. Recognizing that we must assume some risk to balance readiness with fiscal prudence, our end state will be a more effective and efficient engineer force.

You have my commitment that I am here to serve you by giving you a clear vision, by leading you—and by putting the right resources in your hands to build a better tomorrow. I'm confident that you're up to this challenge. 🌐

While our Seabees are putting their lives on the line in places like Iraq, it's very encouraging to see the tremendous outpouring of support from folks back home. These efforts have taken many forms and have come from various types of organizations.

Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation has provided exercise machines, weight equipment, computers, games and gifts; the Seabee Veterans of America and the New York Building and Construction Trades Council have provided pre-paid phone cards; and the World War II veterans of the 31st Naval Construction Battalion have also sent "care packages."

There are countless other efforts around the country to provide comfort to America's military forces overseas.

What these efforts have in common is that they come from the heart and are deeply appreciated by our deployed troops.

For one example, in the case of the pre-paid phone cards, I don't have to tell you what that 10-minute phone call home means to a deployed Seabee. It is a distinct reminder of what they are fighting for and what awaits them when they return home. And the knowledge that someone you don't even know thought enough to give you that gift is another reminder of what a truly generous people our fellow Americans are.

Nationwide, there are countless efforts underway to support U.S. service members deployed around the world.

The Department of Defense recently launched a new website called "America Supports You" that can be located at the Web address [www.americasupportsyou.mil](http://www.americasupportsyou.mil). It showcases America's support for the men and women of the armed forces and the myriad ways the country is expressing that support. It also gives Americans who want to support the troops, but don't know how, a way to show their appreciation.

The "America Supports You" Web site is designed to gather and present in one place information about the many activities and programs Americans have launched to show support for the troops—and most importantly, to ensure the troops and their families know about it.

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, Americans have come together as never before, united in their resolve against their terrorist enemies. In the three years since those attacks, throughout our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere around the world, the American people have stood solidly behind our military personnel.

That support spans every segment of society, from individuals and families to schools to local communities and major, multinational corporations.

But despite the outpouring of support, service members aren't always aware of it. The "America Supports You" program will ensure service members know about America's many acts of gratitude, including activities conducted at the local level.

The program encourages people to visit a Web site and share details about their local support projects or activity. In doing so, supporters can sign up to receive a military-style dog tag with the "America Supports You" logo that provides a tangible symbol of appreciation for the support.

There is a wide array of efforts that show the imagination and dedication of Americans wishing to show their support.

Brittany and Robbie Bergquist, a brother-sister team in Massachusetts, have used their "Cell Phones for Soldiers" program to buy prepaid calling cards so deployed service members can call home.

Another organization was formed to build or renovate homes for disabled veterans returning home from Southwest Asia.

Other groups have set up programs so that children of deployed troops could listen to or watch their Mom or

Dad read bedtime stories to them.

Home Depot has donated tools and materials so families could repair and maintain their homes during their loved ones' deployment.

Starbucks has donated coffee to give troops in Southwest Asia a taste of home.

VFW posts nationwide are involved in sending "care packages" and needed personal supplies to troops overseas, and they are helping families on the home front through a program that helps pay for essentials such as groceries or emergency appliance repairs.

Operation USO Care Package has sent more than 400,000 "care packages" to give deployed troops a taste of home, and the USO sponsors other programs and services for service members and their families.

And finally, there are folks whose support is most important of all. Those are the families of our deployed members. The Seabee families have been absolutely amazing in their strength and support for their loved ones and each other.

To all of the families of deployed Seabees, I offer a sincere thank you. 🌐





## Hey—what are *you* doing here?

Two South Carolina cousins who had not seen each other in nearly 16 years reunited in a chance meeting while standing in a chow hall line at a Coalition Forces camp in Iraq, 70 miles west of Baghdad.

Navy Reserve Seabee Construction Mechanic 1st Class James Gibson, 34, of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23 and Army Supply Sgt. Maureen Gibson, 21, of the 44th Engineering Battalion were standing in line at the Al Asad Air Base dining facility one afternoon.

“I saw this woman with the same last name and a familiar smile, so I walked up to her and said ‘Are you my cousin, Maureen?’” Gibson said.

Among some 500 other service members looking on, happy greetings were exchanged, questions asked, and the Carolina first cousins enjoyed lunch and a happy reunion.

“When we realized we were both from Manning, it didn’t take long to make the connection,” said James. “My

father James Sr., and her father Alonzo, are brothers.”

Although they both grew up in Manning, with a 14-year age gap between them and each with many other cousins their own age, they never spent much time together. The Navy’s Gibson left Manning to enlist in 1989; the Army’s Gibson enlisted in 2001.

The duration of their deployment in Iraq is yet to be determined, but they promised to make time for visits during the holiday season and any other chances along the way. In any case, the deployed cousins will have months to visit and catch up on family matters when they can put together the same few minutes of spare time.

“I think meeting up with someone from my family brings a sense of family here to Iraq,” said Maureen. “We can talk and rekindle some common family friendships, and I think our families back home appreciate knowing their children have some family commonality in an uncommon place.”

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY PH2(AW) MICHAEL D. HECKMAN

**GETTING OUT?**

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THE LIGHT AT THE END  
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Thinking about your future? Know what you're going to do yet? There has never been a better time to *Stay Navy* and *Stay Seabee*. But if you have decided to leave active duty, see your Career Counselor about great options for putting your hard-won skills and experience to work in a U.S. Naval Reserve Seabee unit. You earned those skills, so think about putting them to work one weekend per month and two weeks per year. And you'll enjoy many of the great benefits you enjoyed on active duty, such as camaraderie, good pay, Commissary and Exchange privileges. Don't leave your career on the beach. Point your Web browser to [www.navyreserve.com](http://www.navyreserve.com) for details.

**Seabee Service Matters — More than ever. *Stay Navy. Stay Seabee.***

# Outtake: 'Can Do!' Seabees Said 'I Do!' Before Bugging Out To OIF

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
PH2(AW) MICHAEL D. HECKMAN

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 had new readiness procedures demonstrated—and new additions to its extended family—on Friday morning of Labor Day weekend 2004. Battalion Chaplain (LCDR) David Oravec officiated over the double wedding ceremony of Construction Electrician 1st Class Bradley S. Swanson (above right) to Clara Ann Dolce of Jamestown, N.Y., and Construction Electrician 3rd Class Matthew P. Miller to Pamela Lynn Snyder of Harrisburg, Pa.

The weddings took place at the Seabee Memorial Park at Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme, Calif., as the Navy Reserve Seabee battalion mobilized and trained to deploy to *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

The ceremony was attended by senior battalion leadership and a formidable complement of battalion members and family from East Coast home fronts. The combined group captured the unique family-style camaraderie of U.S. Navy Seabees.

In Iraq, Swanson and Miller perform construction and force protection tasking for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group. 🌐



## LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF ALL WHO THREATEN IT.

