CONSTRUCTIMUS, BATUIMUS - "WE BUILD, WE FIGHT"



NMCB-8 NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 5. ISSUE 1 SPRING 2004















Inside this issue:

MCB-8 helps MCB-5	1
Seabee Insignia	2
Memorial	3
State Reps	4
President's Column	4
I Was a Soldier	5
Viet-Nam Veterans	6
In Memoriam-Honor Roll	7
From the Editor	7
Enrollment/Roster Form	8

NMCB-5 benefits from generosity of NMCB-8 Association



Shown left to right; Senior Chief Chuck Zimmerman, NMCB-5 homeport liaison, Heidi Wright, President of Families of Five, Brynne and Thomas Cook, wife and son of Commander Richard Cook, Five's commanding officer, and Senior Chief (Retired) Jim Daniels,

The Naval Mobile Construction Battal- remembrance to Father ion (NMCB-8) Association decided to James make the Christmas season a little passed away in Decembrighter for some family members of ber 2002. Father Harris NMCB-5. Researching ways to contrib- served as NMCB-8's ute to a worthy cause, the NMCB-8 As- Chaplain sociation determined that NMCB-5 was Vietnam the only battalion to be deployed over 1966-68. Representing the holiday season, with the Seabees the NMCB-8 Association, Senior Chief sprang into action and provided a gen- to the "Families of FIVE". erous donation to the Families of FIVE to be used for the children of junior enlisted members. The Association acknowledged the donation as a special

during from Father James Harris era



deploying just a few weeks before (Retired) Jim Daniels presented a Christmas. The NMCB-8 Association check for \$2,000.00 on December 19th

> "The difficult we can do at once..... The impossible takes a little longer."



Working as a plan file clerk at the Naval
Air Station Quonset Point, Rhode Island.
Civilian and Naval engineers would come
in and out of my office to study naval installation
drawings. As they studied these drawings, Istudied
them and sketched their caricatures.

One day a Navy Lieutenant came in He was the officer-in-charge of some 250 recruits who had been brought in to the newly established Construction Battalions." This Lieutenant had heard of my cartooning, and asked me if I could produce a "Disney Type" Insignia that would identify and represent this new Battalion. These men would undergo military and construction training, and follow the marines ashore. They would not be an offensive group but could defend them.

A tirst thought of a beaver, the builder. But some research at the library told me that a beaver in trouble will turn tail and run. So the Beaver was out. Then I thought of a bee... the busy worker, who doesn't bother you... unless you bother him, at which point he comes back with a sharp sting. This was the way of the Construction Battalions.

After the idea was established, the rest came easy. I animated the bee: gave him a white hat to make him "Navy" tools to show his construction talents, and a tommy of gun to show his fighting ability. I made him third class petty officer with the appropriate insignia on each arm, such as

machinist's mate a carpenter's mate, and a gunner's mate. On each wrist, the C.E.C insignia showed that he was part of the Navy Civil Engineer's Corps. Finally, on the outer circle of the insignia, I put the letter of for Quonset.

Now what would this group be called? "Men of the Construction Battalions" was a little awkward. I already had the "bee" for these men who worked at sea. Putting the two ideas together, the name...

The insignia drawing took about three hours () on a Sunday afternoon. The next morning I showed it to the

officer in charge, who showed it to the Captain, who sent it off to Washington.

Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief, Bureau of Yards &

Docks, Chief of Civil Engineers was about to start a nationwide campaign and he sawin my sketch recruiting

appeal. He requested only one revision in the insignia: that the who be changed to a howser rope, for national recognition. And today, this is how we recognize that tough and talented group known as the SEABEEES

MEMORIAL TO MY FRIEND

The worst memory of my two tours of Vietnam in 1960 and 1969, was when I got the news in a letter from my wife, Nancy, that she had just heard my good friend Larry Bakke had been killed. I didn't want to believe but unfortunately it was confirmed a couple of days later when I got my copy of the "Blade". Larry's picture and the story covered the whole front page, and I cried like a baby. It was especially hard when I read that it happened only a mile from me at the Danang Air Base.

Larry and I had lost touch like so many of our friends at that time, who were serving all over the world, and many of us in Vietnam. We were all drafted around the same time, and Larry and I went our own ways when he joined the Air Force and I the Navy. Our thinking was to serve our country but at the same time in a field that could help us when we got out. So Larry became a personnel man and I a construction electrician with the Seabees. We had written to each other during our first years but when my unit was sent to Vietnam, it became impossible to find time for all of our family and friends, so I had little idea who was where.

Then came the bad news and I felt even worse because had I known we were stationed so close, we could have visited each other at least; I remember the night of June 7, 1969, when the sirens went off to signal incoming fire, and everyone in the Danang area took cover. I guess one of the first rockets hit the building Larry was working in. We could hear the explosions in the distance and knew we were fairly safe, and it wasn't until the next morning when I learned that the target had been the airbase. Ironically, I had just been working at the air base building rocket proof plane shelters. I'm just sorry that Larry could not have been in one of them, because they did their job of protecting the multi-million dollar aircraft, and my friends life was worth much more than that.

Just recently over Easter vacation, I had the honor and privilege of paying tribute to my friend, when my family visited Washington D.C. and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It was on a beautiful night when my gracious cousin Marilyn Crane (formerly of Pigeon) gave us a grand tour of D.C. I had been anticipating, and in a way fearing, this visit to the memorial since its dedication in 1982. It is a heart wrenching experience when you look upon the almost 58,200 Dates on the black granite wall, and the realism hits you. I went right to panel 23 west where I knew Larry's name would be. This was the second time I cried, and I was unable to find his name until my son Dean counted down the 95 rows and we finally did find it. Later, after I gathered myself partially, I played taps for my friends on my harmonica. They tell me it gathered some attention of other visitors to the Memorial that night, of which I was oblivious to. It was something that 1 had been planning to do, and I pray that Larry and the others heard me., and know that they will never be forgotten. He, and the others who made the ultimate sacrifice, will be forever honored through their inscription on that beautifully solemn monument. I made a second visit, along with my son the next morning, to bid farewell and to take some pictures. I also did a tracing of Larry's name on a piece of stationary and left some flowers that my cousin Marilyn had given me.

That visit, I think, will finally put my Vietnam experience to rest and I would recommend that all Vets, family, and friends who lost loved ones visit it. It is a deeply moving and heart warming experience to know that our service and their sacrifice for our country and a cause we believe was just, will forever be enshrined in that wall.

This cause was brought to light again by the recent and very similar war in the Persian Gulf, to liberate and protect an oppressed people and their country. I still believe that our cause was also just and righteous, only this one was handled the right way with the maximum support of the American people. Somehow through this, many of us Vietnam veterans have reunited with our country with a strange sort of "we knew we could do it" vengeance. Thank you to all those involved! I also think most Americans believe, "that any life given in the defense of a persecuted people and to preserve freedom is not in vain, and all should be honored, remembered and appreciated, during these Memorial Day Observances and always."

God bless these brave men and women and bring peace and comfort to their families.

Gary Thede

Mini Reunion

I was a member of MCB-8 from 1951 through 1954. Several buddies and I are contemplating a reunion in May of 2004. We are very interested in locating fellow 'Bees, who served in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Port Lyautey, Africa. and Newfoundland, especially from A company.

My e-mail address is w1b2m3@bis.midco.net, mailing address is Bernie Weisz 1513 N 19th St, Bismarck ND 58501, Telephone number is 701-255-0390.

Please forward any information such as names, addresses, telephone numbers, that you can.

Thank you, Bernie Weisz

State Representatives List

It was voted at the Association meeting, during the June 2003 reunion in Port Huneme, to keep this list of State Representatives in the newsletter, so that you could contact your State Rep anytime you needed him. This list is maintained by **Ron Dougal Sr.**, and he still needs volunteers for some states not listed. Contact him. Let him know you can help.

Committed Representatives		
ALABAMA		
ARIZONA		
ARKANSAS		
CALIFORNIA (southern)	RICK REESE	
CALIFORNIA (northern)	JACK QUINN DENNIS	
COLORADO		
CONNECTICUT	GEORGE SCHUSTER	
FLORIDA	BILL CLERKE	
ILLINOIS	JIM WASSON	
INDIANA	JOSEPH L. HENLEY	
IOWA	WAYNE SAHL	
KENTUCKY	F. M. HOWARD	
MAINE	BARRY R. COTE	
MARYLAND	TIM FOWLER	
MASSACHUSETTS	BILL SMART	
MICHIGAN	ERIC DAVIS	
MINNESOTA	ROGER MECHELS	
MISSISSIPPI	HOWELL McCORMICK	
NEBRASKA	JIM GLASGOW	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	JOHN REED JR.	
OHIO	JERRY MALOTT	
OKLAHOMA	RICHARD SWALLOW	
OREGON		
PENNSYLVANIA		
SOUTH CAROLINA		
SOUTH DAKOTA	JOHN NORTH	
TENNESSEE		
TEXAS	BILL O'FERRALL	
WASHINGTON		
WEST VIRGINIA	FRANK PECJAK	
WISCONSIN	MARK KNAPP	

The remaining 20 States are not on this list. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Ronald W.Dougal Sr. 6225 E. DesMoines St. Mesa, Arizona 85205, PH# 480-807-3016 Email: dougalsr@aol.com

NOW HEAR THIS

The next NMCB-8 reunion will be held in Gulfport, MS from 30 Sep to 3 Oct 2004. The reunion hotel is the Imperial Palace in Gulfport.

Reunion packets will be ready for mailing NLT the first of April. When you get your packet, make your reservation as early as possible as there may be a limited number of rooms at the special reunion price.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, I want to wish each of you a happy new year. Second, I want to personally thank the state representatives, our staff and other members of our NMCB-8 Association for contributing their time and effort in making this organization what it is. Even though we all have various projects underway and time tables to meet, everyone seems to find just a little more time to provide help for our Association.



Arnie Cicerone

This year we are off to a good start, thanks to our great staff. We put together, and sent out a master mailing list of all Seabees who ever served in NMCB-8 whether they were Association menbers or not. This list will continue to be sent out yearly, in October. The purpose for the mailing is to increase Association membership, correct addresses, remind members of their yearly dues and develop new relations with lost buddies. We have received good response with numerable address corrections. Please let us know when you move.

As you saw on the front page of the newsletter, Jim Daniels represented your Association and delivered a \$2000 check for the NMCB-5 Families of FIVE Christmas fund in memory of Father James Harris, EIGHT's Chaplain in Vietnam from 1966 to 1968.

Make plans for our next reunion in Gulfport later this year. Dates are September 30th to October 2nd. Reunion packets will be mailed about the first of April. Let's all get our mailing lists out and make some phone calls to some friends who might otherwise not go to the reunion without some encouragement. Invite the ones you want to see, and some you want to meet. We want a good showing this year in Gulfport...

If any of our WWII and Korea Seabees plan on going to the reunion, please contact me or Rick Reese and let us know where you are staying. We want you seated with us.

I also want to remind everyone that we have started albums for each NMCB-8 Seabee who lost his life in Viet Nam. We intend to present these albums, signed with pictures and other memorabilia, to family members whom we are presently trying to locate.

Arnie



Do any of our Association members who served with the 8th NCB during WWII know the history behind your logo? If you do please contact your Editor.

I WAS A SOLDIER

I was a Soldier: That's the way it is, that's what we were...are. We put it simply, without any swagger, without any brag, in those four plain words. We speak them softly, just to ourselves. Others may have forgotten.

They are a manifesto to mankind; speak those four words anywhere in the world -- yes, anywhere -- and many who hear will recognize their meaning.

They are a pledge. A pledge that stems from a document which said: "I solemnly Swear", "to protect and defend" and goes on from there, and from a Flag called "Old Glory".

Listen, and you can hear the voices echoing through them, words that sprang white-hot from bloody lips, shouts of "medic", whispers of "Oh God!", forceful words of "Follow Me". If you can't hear them, you weren't, if you can you were.

"Don't give up the ship! Fight her till she dies... Damn the torpedoes! Go ahead! . . . Do you want to live forever? . . . Don't cheer, boys; the poor devils are dying."

Laughing words from Willie & Joe, and words cold as January ice, words that when spoken, were meant, .. "Wait till you see the whites of their eyes". The echo's of I was a Soldier.

You can hear the slow cadences at Gettysburg, or Arlington honoring not a man, but a Soldier, perhaps forgotten by his nation...Oh! Those Broken Promises.

You can hear those echoes as you have a beer at the "Post", walk in a parade, go to The Wall, visit a VA hospital, hear the mournful sounds of tap, or gaze upon the white crosses, row upon row.

But they aren't just words; they're a way of life, a pattern of living, or a way of dying.

They made the evening, with another day's work done; supper with the wife and kids; and no Gestapo snooping at the door and threatening to kick your teeth in.

They gave you the right to choose who shall run our government for us, the right to a secret vote that counts just as much as the next fellow's in the final tally; and the obligation to use that right, and guard it and keep it clean

They prove the right to hope, to dream, to pray; the obligation to serve. These are some of the meanings of those four words, meanings we don't often stop to tally up or even list.

Only in the stillness of a moonless night, or in the quiet of a Sunday afternoon, or in the thin dawn of a new day, when our world is close about us, do they rise up in our memories and stir in our sentient hearts.

And we are remembering Wake Island, and Bataan, Inchon, and Chu Lai, Knox and Benning, Great Lakes and Paris Island, Travis and Chanute, and many other places long forgotten by our civilian friends. They're plain words, those four. Simple words.

You could grave them on stone; you could carve them on the mountain ranges.

You could sing them, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle."

But you needn't. You needn't do any of those things, for those words are graven in the hearts of Veterans, they are familiar to 24,000,000 tongues, every sound and every syllable. If you must write them, put them on my Stone.

But when you speak them, speak them softly, proudly, I will hear you, for I too, I was a Soldier.

Colonel Daniel K. Cedusky Jun 5, 2003

WHERE IS HE NOW

Well in July of '63 I got on a bus in Anderson SC and headed for Columbia to join up. Now it was on that $3\frac{1}{2}$ hr. bus ride that this old boy came up on his first encounter with a homosexual. Up until that time, I didn't know such a thing existed. Well, there's another story for another time.

I was ofF to The Great Lakes Naval Training Center, and my first plane ride, I saw Chicago at night and it staggered my imagination to see all those lights. On the bus ride from the air field to the training center, I sat next to a guy that had brought his bowling ball and tennis racket and he began to explained to me what the Navy was all about. Well, when we got to the depot and the drill instructor explained to the bowler what boot camp was about, I wondered what the hell I'd gotten into.

Worked in the Commissary at Port Hueneme cutting up chickens until "A" School started. Joined MCB 8 in Feb. 64. They were just coming back from a deployment at the Antarctic. Now this was at Davisville, RI, and I soon realized that this was one rough and roundly bunch of boy,; so I adapted. What a great bunch of guys.

In May of '64 I went to Atheena, Greece with a detachment of about 75 men to build an antenna station. What a time that was, How about the time Jim Boxtoller unloaded his D8 during a brawl with a bunch of fleet boys. Well, there's another story.

I think it was around September of '65 and I was off with the advance party to DaNang down near Monkey Mountain to build a base camp for the battalion. All sorts of stuff happened, Then off with a detachment up to Hue near the DMZ. This is where we first enjoyed the monsoons. How about the time Scottie Spates jumped off the ridgepole of a hardback we were framing and his hammer followed him down, There's another story. Back to the main body for more fun and games. Then back to the Real World.

Probably about Oct. 66 I was off with the advance party to Chu Lai. That's the time I explained to the Ensign the importance of citrus acid in a cold joint, Well that's another story. Lots of stuff happened on this deployment too, like the episode "Rock Fish Delta Harry McCray" and then of course the Tam Key Detachment. Discharged in Sept '67.

Got a job with Southern Bell as a lineman. For the next 15 years I worked as a service tech. In 1983 I left Bell and started a little company of my own. Now that's another story.

In July of '73 I married Sally, the love of my life, and she has put up with me to raise four fine but sometimes rowdy boys. Shane is a fireman in our town and a welder, Adam is a computer guru and works with a local network group, Paul is working with me, and Ben is a sophomore in high school.

Jan. '90 I became Scout Master of a troop in our community and I'm still at it.

Sally and I looking forward to seeing and telling stories at Gulf Port with some of the greatest guys who ever served this Great Land of ours.

Billy Boggs 1964-67 Vietnam veterans are men and women. We are dead or alive, whole or maimed, sane or haunted. We grew from our experiences or we were destroyed by them or we struggle to find some place in between. We lived through hell or we had a pleasant, if scary, adventure. We were Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Red Cross, and civilians of all sorts. Some of

Veterans

us enlisted to fight for God and Country, and some were drafted. Some were gung-ho, and some went kicking and screaming.

Like veterans of all wars, we lived a tad bit--or a great bit-closer to death than most people like to think about. If Vietnam vets differ from others, perhaps it is primarily in the fact that many of us never saw the enemy or recognized him or her. We heard gunfire and mortar fire but rarely looked into enemy eyes. Those who did, like folks who encounter close combat anywhere and anytime, are often haunted for life by those eyes, those sounds, those electric fears that ran between ourselves, our enemies, and the likelihood of death for one of us. Or we get hard, callused, tough. All in a day's work. Life's a bitch then you die. But most of us remember and get twitchy, worried, sad.

We are crazies dressed in cammies, wide-eyed, wary, homeless, and drunk. We are Brooks Brothers suit wearers, doing deals downtown. We are housewives, grandmothers, and church deacons. We are college professors engaged in the rational pursuit of the truth about the history or politics or culture of the Vietnam experience. And we are sleepless. Often sleepless. We pushed paper; we pushed shovels. We drove jeeps, operated bulldozers, built bridges; we toted machine guns through dense brush, deep paddies, and thorn scrub. We lived on buffalo milk, fish heads and rice. Or C-rations. Or steaks and Budweiser. We did our time in high mountains drenched by endless monsoon rains or on the dry plains or on muddy rivers or at the most beautiful beaches in the world.

We wore berets, bandanna's, flop hats, and steel pots. Flak jackets, canvas, rash and rot. We ate cloro-quinine and got malaria anyway. We got shots constantly but have diseases nobody can diagnose. We spent our nights on cots or shivering in foxholes filled with waist-high water or lying still on cold wet ground, our eyes imagining Charlie behind every bamboo blade. Or we slept in hotel beds in Saigon or barracks in Thailand or in cramped ships' berths at sea.

We feared we would die or we feared we would kill. We simply feared, and often we still do. We hate the war or believe it was the best thing that ever happened to us. We blame Uncle Sam or Uncle Ho and their minions and secretaries and apologists for every wart or cough or tic of an eye. We wonder if Agent Orange got us.

Mostly--and this I believe with all my heart--mostly, we wish we had not been so alone. Some of us went with units; but many, probably most of us, were civilians one day, jerked up out of "the world," shaved, barked at, insulted, humiliated, deegoized and taught to kill, to fix radios, to drive trucks. We

went, put in our time, and were equally ungraciously plucked out of the morass and placed back in the real world. But now we smoked dope, shot skag, or drank heavily. Our wives or husbands seemed distant and strange. Our friends wanted to know if we shot anybody. And life went on, had been going on, as if we hadn't been there, as if Vietnam was a

topic of political conversation or college protest or news copy, not a matter of life and death for tens of thousands.

Vietnam veterans are white, black, beige and shades of gray. Our ancestors came from Africa, from Europe, and China. Or they crossed the Bering Sea Land Bridge in the last Ice Age and formed the nations of American Indians, built pyramids in Mexico, or farmed acres of corn on the banks of Chesapeake Bay. We had names like Rodriguez and Stein and Smith and Kowalski. We were Americans, Australians, Canadians, and Koreans; most Vietnam veterans are Vietnamese.

We were farmers, students, mechanics, steelworkers, nurses, and priests when the call came that changed us all forever. We had dreams and plans, and they all had to change...or wait. We were daughters and sons, lovers and poets, beatniks and philosophers, convicts and lawyers. We were rich and poor but mostly poor. We were educated or not, mostly not. We grew up in slums, in shacks, in duplexes, and bungalows and houseboats and hooch's and ranchers. We were cowards and heroes. Sometimes we were cowards one moment and heroes the next.

We came home and marched in protest marches, sucked in tear gas, and shrieked our anger and horror for all to hear. Or we sat alone in small rooms, in VA hospital wards, in places where only the crazy ever go. We are Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, and Confucians and Buddhists and Atheiststhough as usually is the case, even the atheists among us sometimes prayed to get out of there alive.

We are hungry, and we are sated, full of life or clinging to death. We are injured, and we are curers, despairing and hopeful, loved or lost. We got too old too quickly, but some of us have never grown up. We want, desperately, to go back, to heal wounds, revisit the sites of our horror.

Or we want never to see that place again, to bury it, its memories, its meaning. We want to forget, and we wish we could remember.

Despite our differences, we have so much in common. There are few of us who don't know how to cry, though we often do it alone when nobody will ask, "What's wrong?" We're afraid we might have to answer.

...if you want to know what a Vietnam veteran is, get in your car or cage a friend with a car to drive you. Go to Washington. Go to the Wall. It's Come touch the Wall with us. Rejoice a bit. Cry a bit. No, cry a lot. I will. I'm a Vietnam Veteran; and, after 30 years, I think I am beginning to understand what that means.







IN MEMORIAM

In remembrance of those who served with us.

Flovd (Ohl) A. Olson, passed away Feb 24th, 2003 of service-connected disabilities. Joseph Novotny, WWII Seabee, passed away on Feb 20th, 2003. Chester Lepley, mail returned as deceased. Ron Laime died in October 2000, he was a Lt. JG in NMCB-8 from 1967-70.

THE BINNICALE LIST

Don Hess, suffered a stroke and canceled his around the world sail boat trip. Seems to be doing OK now.

From the Editor:

I'm into my third year as your editor and I've had a great time working with a wonderful bunch of guys publishing the newsletter.

When I took over as editor from Harry Davis, he told me it would take constant work to get people to submit articles, and it has. During this time it's been a real job trying to get guys to submit stories of interest to the rest of us.

We have a mix of people in the Association served during



Jack Dennis - 1967

WWII, the Korean days, the early 60's, as well as the Vietnam era. Some of you have submitted fine articles and we all thank you all greatly. But there are a lot more of you out there that have stories and we would like to hear from vou too.

Many of you served in detachment in different countries as well as on Seabee Teams at remote locations. If you have "tall tales", articles, pictures or just want to honor a fellow Seabee with a sea story or tribute, I will publish them if you send them to me either by email or snail mail.

As you can see in this issue, several of your shipmates sent in articles. But like every periodic publication, your newsletter needs a continual supply of fresh "stuff" in order to keep it viable and interesting over time.

It doesn't have to long or elaborate. Just a comment or two is all it takes to get your name in print for all of your friends to see where you are, where you've been and what you are doing now.

Again, thanks for your support.

Jack.

Guys, any additional ideas on how your Association can show support for our Seabees (NMCB-4, UCT's etc.) in Iraq, besides letter writing? Contact the **EDITOR**...

NMCB-8 SEABEES' ASSOCIATION

C/o Harry Davis 4720 NW Terrace View Drive Bremerton, Wa. 98312

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SEABEES "CAN DO"

ATTENTION: Anyone interested in submitting articles to the newsletter should send them directly to Jack Quinn Dennis at his e-mail jqteach@yahoo.com; or home address P.O. Box 311 Pittsburg, Ca. 94565.

NMCB-8 ASSOCIATION ENROLLMENT AND DOSTED UDDATE FORM

ame:	
ldress:	-
none & Email:	-
ates served with EIGHT	_
order to receive the NMCB-8 Association Newsletter I understand I must join the Association. Enclosed are es of (\$10 yearly or \$100 for lifetime) which will maintain my membership in good standing.	e my

Detach form at dotted line and return, along with dues to: **Ken Bingham Treasurer**, 1773 **Tamarin Avenue**, **Ventura**, **CA 93003**. Make check or money order out to **NMCB-8 Association**. Please do not send cash.

A roster of members of the NMCB-8 Association will be reprinted yearly and mailed to all members in good standing. It is to your advantage to ensure that roster information is correct and up to date. Use this form to submit desired changes to:

Harry Dayis

4720 NW Terrace View Drive, Bremerton, WA. 98312