

NMCB-8 NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

FALL 2001



Inside this issue:

Meet Your New President	2
New Members List	2
2001 Reunion Memories	3
More Memories ...	4
Are We Good - Or What?	5
A New Seabee Memorial	5
Skippers Corner	6
Remember When ...	6
In Memoriam-Honor Roll	7
Voices From the Past	7
Enrollment/Roster Form	8

“SEABEE DAYS 2001” AT PORT HUENEME

Seabees of NMCB-8, along with their wives and friends, celebrated the largest and best All Seabees West Coast Reunion 19-21 July 2001.



More than 70 people attended the memorial service held on Saturday, the 20th of July.

From Your Editor

The third annual All Seabees West Coast Reunion is history. Over 260 Seabees, including friends and family, from WWII through the Vietnam years and even later, attended the three day gala event.

This year the reunion took place from 19-21 July to coincide with Seabee Days, an event hosted by the Naval Construction Battalion Center to showcase the Base and the Navy's Seabees to the general public.

The reunion kicked off with the advance party arriving on Thursday the 18th, to be hosted by Ed Kloster and his elite Seabee Team of cooks and bottle washers who put on another superb reunion. We were wined and dined continually from dawn to dusk for three days, culminating in a grand dinner Saturday evening at Duke's place. The dining room was packed to hear the Chief of Civil Engineers, Admiral Mike



“Pass in Review”

Johnson, deliver a talk on the state of the Corps and the Seabees as they go forward in the 21st century.

During the weekend many other events also took place, including a pass in review by NMCB-3 and a moving memorial service by Chaplain Swift in remembrance of our fallen comrades from all eras. Several Base tours, including a visit aboard a frigate plus a personal tour of the Seabee Museum, were also made available to those in attendance.

Of particular note this year, 33 WWII Seabees attended the reunion which was a significant increase from just two years ago.

As word spreads about the All Seabees West Coast Reunion future reunions will only get larger and better.

Next year in October, the reunion committee is planning a reunion aboard the Seabee Base in Gulfport, MS. Efforts are in the preliminary stage, and if Ed can get local worker-bees to help, it will make his efforts easier and allow him to concentrate on making the reunion a huge success.

Hope to see you there!

From Your President

Fellow mates and families of Eight! As I write this, we have transitioned the office of president for our Association, completed a great reunion, and selected Gulfport as the site for EIGHT's next deployment.

I would like to tell each of you how proud I am to lead your Association. Saying that, I want to thank **Ken Kerr** for his great effort as our past president and **Gordon Gilmore** for his vision to keep NMCB-8 alive, and not letting her fade from existence. Further, I would like to thank **Harry Davis** for the best newsletter out there, **Ken Bingham** for keeping the books, and **Jack Quinn Dennis** for our website. I send a personal thanks to my teammate **Ron Dougal** and his wife **Carol** for their help in locating former shipmates of EIGHT. This group has laid a great foundation that we will continue to build on, preserving the heritage of NMCB-8. As your new president, I pledge to continue this course and will call on members for their input and support to expand our association.

Before advising you of some of the goals and objectives I see as priorities for our Association, let me say to each of the Seabees from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam and all veterans of those Seabee units, which had EIGHT as their battalion number — WELCOME! Some of you attended our recent gathering in Hueneme and we are very glad that you did. We need you and we want you as a viable part of our Association.

Secondly, we were challenged by **ADM Montoya**, as were other battalions, to raise \$10,000 in pledges to rebuild and expand the Seabee Museum at Port Hueneme. EIGHT showed how anyone who knows us knows why we were, and still are, one outstanding battalion, surpassing all others with \$12,600 in pledges. If you have visited the museum, you know the condition of our battalion emblem that stood at Chu Lai. It is presently stored outside due to lack of available space in the museum. It needs to be brought inside and restored to its former condition. So if you can, please pledge a little more for EIGHT.

Now for some of the items and goals I will work for as Association president:

1. *Aggressively locate and recruit new members including those from the 8th NCB who desire to join with us.*
2. *Obtain a tax exempt status and ID number.*
3. *Pursue corporate sponsorship for our Association.*
4. *Continue and improve our website.*
5. *Incorporate the ships store in the website and newsletter.*
6. *Get Gulfport information packets out as soon as possible in early 2002 so all members can plan accordingly.*

These are a few of the goals that I want to complete prior to our reunion in Gulfport. I also want to acknowledge our families who make this event even better. I want your input and continued support.

Last, but not least, I want to thank the Reunion Committee for the outstanding effort they put forth in making this reunion the best of all so far. Each year, since **Ed Kloster** and his crew started the All Seabees West Coast Reunion, the number of Seabees coming from all over the country has significantly increased. This year over 260 people were in attendance.

Rick Reese



Rick Reese-1967

This year's reunion committee was expanded and included: **Ed & Harvest Kloster, Bob & Judy Quinn, Ed & Rene Evans, Pete Magoon, Tony Lopez, Jim Daniels, Jack & Janet Quinn Dennis, Chuck & Kay Hall, and Chaplain Charlie & Verna Swift.**

A special thanks goes to Eight's own **Chuck "C.B." Hall** who put together the graphic displays of Seabee history which surrounded the entire second floor dining room in the Channel Islands Inn & Suites. Memorabilia about the Seabees and the Navy in general was depicted covering over 60 years of Navy History. It was quite a show. Thanks Chuck!

In closing, please send me, or anyone of the officers, your ideas, suggestions, or thoughts on how we can make our Association work more efficiently for all of us. I was once asked how we did everything we were assigned and in the conditions which would have stopped other units from completing the task. My answer was simple; our motto is "Can Do" not "Can't Do".

Rick

WELCOME TO THE NMCB-8 ASSOCIATION

Once again, the list keeps growing. The 43 SEABEES listed below have joined the Association since the printing of the April 2001 edition of the Newsletter.

James Arthur, David Bartolazzi, Larry Beardslee, Al Black, Richard Breault, Mike Buckstahler, Morris Burnham, Stan Bustetter, Arnold Cicerone, Joe Connolly, Gayle Cornish, Ken Dalrymple, Rob Danilecki, Dan Dugal, Dan Epplert, Craig Fisher, Dennis Fitzpatrick, Thomas Grossman, Fern Gwin (WWII), Commie Harrington, Nevin Hawk (WWII), Dwight Hawkins, Gene Holladay, Carl Hughs, Michael Ingram, Bill Kenney (WWII), Monty Leinberger, Frank Lord, Dr. Cameron Lowe, Jerry Malott, Ralph Martin, Asa Morris, M. Wayne Niemuth, Steve Payton, Dan Robinson, Bill Sack, John Schaffhauser, Ed Smeltzer, Robert Solterbeck (WWII), Chaplain Charles Swift, Wm. J. Terrible (WWII), Mike Warfield, James Warren.

ATTENTION ON DECK! REUNION 2002 UPDATE

The All Seabees West Coast Reunion committee will host three reunions in 2002. Port Hueneme, 28 Feb.-3 March; July 2002 during Seabee days (dates yet to be determined) and Gulfport, MS either 26-29 September or 10-13 October, 2002. This is good news for many members of the NMCB-8 Association, especially those who live east of the Mississippi. Association emphasis next year will be on the Gulfport reunion and we encourage as many of you as possible to attend what will, I'm sure, be a "blast from the past." Watch future issues of the newsletter for details.

2001 REUNION MEMORIES IN PICTURES



MORE MEMORIES

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is an excerpt from the speech Rear Admiral Mike Johnson, CEC, USN, Commander NAVFAC, Chief of Civil Engineers, and "King Bee" gave at a pass in review on the "grinder" during Seabee Days on Saturday afternoon. He is quoting from a speech he heard at a change of command ceremony earlier this year. The quote, in its simplicity and truth, effected an emotional response from many of us present. Its message depicts the feelings that only someone who has served his country in wartime can truly understand.

"Rear Admiral David Brewer was the guest speaker and he delivered one of the finest speeches I have ever heard. He quoted Father Denis O'Brien, who captures the essence of members of the military ... past and present ... and why we do what we do.

Father O'Brien uses the word soldier, but what he says applies to all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. He said:

"It is the soldier, and not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, and not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, and not the campus organizer, who has given us the right to protest.

It is the soldier, who serves the flag, who salutes the flag, and whose body and coffin are draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag."

THE 8TH SEABEE BATTALION'S FINAL REUNION TO BE HELD IN NEBRASKA

After 49 reunions the original Eight Ball Battalion, the 8th Seabees of WWII, will hold their 50th and final reunion in Scottsbluff, Nebraska from October 4-6, 2001.

Over the past year, 10 members of the 8th Battalion have elected to join ranks with the NMCB-8 Association after they received an open invitation last year from Association Past President, **Ken Kerr**.

In a gesture of kind friendship, all active members of the NMCB-8 Association have been invited to attend their reunion in Scottsbluff for free. The 8th Seabees will pay for the dinner and a tour for any EIGHT Association member and spouse desiring to attend. You have to pay your transportation and lodging at the Inn.

If anyone desires to attend, call the **Scottsbluff Inn** to make a room reservation at **800-597-3111**. Cost of the room is \$55 per night. Please contact **Bob Solterbeck**, who extended the invitation, at **308-787-1022** or at solterbeck@scottsbluff.com or at **108 Jeffers Ave., Lyman, NE 69352** and let him know you are going to attend.



Admiral Mike Johnson, the "King Bee", reviews the troops from NMCB-3 during Seabee Days, Saturday, 21 July 2001.



Men of EIGHT gathered around the NMCB-8 de-commissioning plaque after the Seabee Days pass in review.



Laurie Figueroa and her son made a surprise visit during the reunion dinner at Duke's Place. Shown here are Jack O'Leary, Laurie and her son, Harry Davis, and Gordon Gilmore. Laurie lives in Port Huemene, and is the granddaughter of Leo Ferron, BUCS, USN (Ret) who is presently living in Bradenton, FL.

ARE WE GOOD — OR WHAT?

The CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation is spearheading a drive to raise \$7,000,000 to build a new museum, worthy of the Seabee heritage dating back to WWII, to replace the present one at Port Hueneme. For those of you who have visited the museum lately, you have seen how crowded it is and how much Seabee history is there in desperate need of better preservation in the years to come. Numerous artifacts are stored outside in the weather. Many of the stories about the Seabees over the years cannot be displayed due to lack of adequate space. Also, older exhibits dating from WWII are starting to show their age and if not properly preserved, will deteriorate over the years to the point where we will lose much of our Seabee heritage to the elements.

At the 2000 reunion last year, **Admiral Montoya** challenged EIGHT to pledge \$10,000 over 5 years to support the effort to rebuild and modernize the museum. Little did he know that EIGHT would enthusiastically take up the challenge and, after only one year, surpass the amount he asked us to pledge. At the present time you and your fellow Seabees of NMCB-8 have pledged over **\$12,600**. Below are the names and the amount each person sent and or pledged.

Dean Babb, \$10; Richard Benson, \$200; Ken Bingham, \$500; Skip Dautel, \$50; Eric Davis, \$100; Harry Davis, \$500; Robert Degon, \$100; P. D. Dukes, \$50; Leo Ferron, \$100; Craig Fisher, \$100; Charles Frash, \$25; Gordon Gilmore, \$1,000; George Hawkey, \$100; Keith Hetzel, \$10; John Hoogendoorn, \$200; Ken Kerr, \$1,000; NMCB-8 Ass'n \$100; Roger Mechels, \$20; Jack O'Leary, \$100; Pap Phelps, \$100; Harry Potter, \$500; Dr. Richard Price, \$50; Jack Quinn Dennis \$1,000; Rick Reese \$5,000; George Schuster \$100; Lon Slocum, \$500; Bill Smart, \$500; Miguel Soliz III, \$100; John Teichman, \$500; Mike Warfield, \$50.

If any of you out there are interested in contributing to the Museum rebuild effort, send your check, made out to the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation, to Association Treasurer, **Ken Bingham** at his address listed below.

LAST CHANCE TO GET CRUISE BOOKS ON CD ROM FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION

As the saying goes..."All good things must come to an end." This is the last opportunity for Association members to purchase cruise books on CD. We have sold over 110 copies of these treasured memories of EIGHT's deployments over the years.

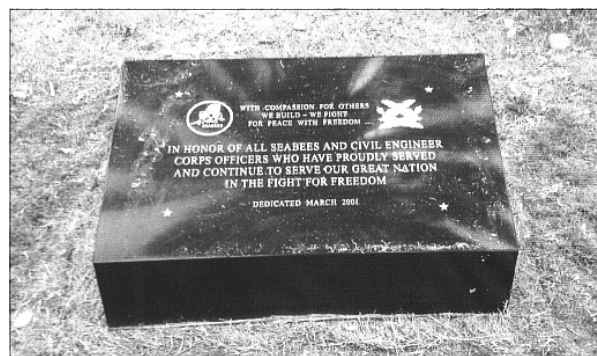
- CD-A NCB-8 WW II (1942-45)
- CD-B MCB-8 GTMO (1960-62)
- CD-C NMCB-8 Danang (1965-66)
- CD-D NMCB-8 Chu Lai (1966-67)
- CD-E NMCB-8 Phu Bai (1968)
- CD-F NMCB-8 Danang (1969)
- CD-G Operation Deepfreeze (1962-64)

To order digital copies of the cruise books, send a check or money order to the NMCB-8 Association for \$10 each or \$50 for the whole set. Make checks out to **NMCB-8 Association** and mail to : **Ken Bingham, Treasurer, 1773 Tamarin Ave. Ventura, CA 93003.**

SEABEES BUILD THEMSELVES A MEMORIAL IN HAWAII

Last year on Memorial Day, Kenneth Rainey called his son, Petty Officer Clint Rainey, and asked him why there was no plaque honoring Seabees at the National Memorial in the Punchbowl Cemetery on Oahu. "He challenged me to get something built," said Clint Rainey, a Seabee assigned to CBU-413 at Pearl Harbor.

Almost a year later, with more than \$8,000 in donations from 100 active, reserve, and retired Seabees, a black granite plaque inscribed with gold lettering was unveiled on March 17, 2001 at the cemetery to honor all Seabees who have served their country since 1942 in the fight for freedom. Shortly before the memorial service dedicating the plaque, PO Rainey called his father and gave him the news — "Mission Accomplished."



**"In honor of all Seabees and Civil Engineer Corps officers who have proudly served and continue to serve our great nation in the fight for freedom."
DEDICATED MARCH 2001**

Chaplain's Corner

EDITOR'S NOTE: Fr. Jim Harris, EIGHT's Chaplain in 1966-68 could not make this year's reunion. He sent a note to Ken Kerr which contained a poem he had written while in-country with the battalion. Portions of his note, the poem, and the circumstances under which it was written follows:

....Please give my kind regards to all: prayers and blessing for a successful reunion. All of you are in my thoughts and prayers. If I can be of service to any of the Seabees, please give them my address and email: **Fr. Jim Harris, 78 Farragut Drive, Palm Coast, FL 32137; 386-445-1476; mjharris@bestnetpc.com.**

Enclosed, please find a memorial poem I wrote at least 30 years ago when one of our Seabees was hit with shrapnel in our compound in Phu Bai. This Seabee was dressed to go home that day, and I wrote after anointing him.

SQUARED AWAY

Starched greens, spit shined boots,
I traced an oil cross on his warm forehead,
I felt his thoughts of mom and dad, his home, the girl he loved.
Time ran out.
He was dead, but squared away.

My choicest blessing to all of you. Respectfully, **Fr. Harris**

Skipper's Corner

Jack O'Leary was EIGHT's Skipper from 1967 to 1969. He relieved Pap Phelps in Chu Lai on April 2, 1967. He then accompanied the battalion from Port Hueneme to Phu Bai and returned to Port Hueneme after an eight month deployment. He was relieved by Bob Westberg in 1969. He and his wife Emily are retired and live in Mill Valley, CA.



Another year and another great reunion. Every year some new faces and many repeaters, some for the third time. I know I speak for all of you when I say "well done!" to the men and women who put in such a tremendous effort each year to make this event the great success it is. I would also like to congratulate the men of EIGHT who continue to turn out in such great numbers.

While there were many aspects of the reunion that deserve mention, I'd like to relate two of them that really made an impression on me.

The first was the surprise visit during our dinner on Saturday night of Senior Chief Leo Ferron's granddaughter and little grandson. What a pleasure it was to meet them and what a credit they are to Leo. Harry Davis, Gordon Gilmore and I signed an EIGHT ball cap for her to give Leo in the hope that it will entice him to come to the next reunion which will be held in Gulfport in October '02. Leo is living in Florida so perhaps some of you from that area can give him a hand in getting there...although it wouldn't surprise me to see him steaming down Interstate 10 in his wheelchair. Can do, Leo?

The second relates to a challenge that ADM Ben Montoya threw at last year's reunion, namely; that EIGHT come up with \$10,000 towards the much needed repair and upgrading of the Seabee museum at Port Hueneme. I'm happy to report that, with a little bit of arm twisting by Gordon Gilmore and Harry Davis, we went over the top during the cocktail hour on Saturday (What were you putting in those drinks Gordon?) and became not only the first battalion to go over \$10,000 but the first one to go over \$12,000. Are we great or what? Again, a very well deserved "Well done."

"Well, it was great to see you all. Let's now train our sights on Gulfport in October '02 and see if we can't get an even better turn-out in gumbo land!"

With warm regards,

Jack

NOW HEAR THIS!

The 15th annual TET reunion will be held Feb. 1-3, 2002, in Hampton, VA. Information concerning this reunion can be found on the Web at www.tet68.org

REMEMBER WHEN



A view of Camp Wilkinson 1968. Courtesy of Skip Dautel.



Seabee Team 0807 on deployment in Nha Trang in 1967. Front (L/R) ENS Lathan, HC2 Semon, EO3 Duffy, BU2 Newman, CM3 Palmeri, BUC Roberts. Rear (L/R) EO1 Misner, CE2 Hart, UT2 Pruitt, SW2 Kirkland, EO1 Proffitt, EA2 De Loach.



At GTMO an EIGHT platoon from "D" Company is guniting and staging telephone poles, to be used as piling for a dock to be constructed by a follow-on battalion. Courtesy of Dick Berry.



Ongoing construction at Leeway Point in GTMO Cuba in 1954. Courtesy of John Laner.

Seabee Memorial, Washington, D.C.



IN MEMORIAM

In remembrance of those who served with us.

We received word from the wife of **Robert Tenholder** that he passed away on January 23, 1972. **Adalene Jones** informed us that her husband **Donald** died on May 27, 2000. He served in the 8th NCB for almost three and a half years during WWII. **Norm Coffenberry's** wife sent word that Norm passed away on May 27, 1999. **Dan Epplert** said that **William Wilson** who served in B Company died last year.

THE BINNICALE LIST

Word has been received that **John North** who has muscular dystrophy, recently was hospitalized for heart surgery. **Gene Reilly** is hospitalized in a VA hospital in Maine recovering from a stroke. **Chuck "CB" Hall** has returned home and is doing well after recently undergoing another round of intensive chemotherapy.

VOICES FROM THE PAST

So great to receive your mailing, and to learn that there is

I cannot help but wonder what those brave Americans who gave their lives protecting our Flag and the values it stands for must think when they see Americans showing disrespect for the symbol of Freedom, Peace, Justice, and Love."

I am not sure if it is age or just a better appreciation for what all veterans have done to make what you and I do possible. Again the newsletter is very professional and most of all informative. Keep up the good work. Yes, please feel free to reprint my flag essay as it would be a nice thing to share with others. I originally started writing at a time when college students were burning the flag. After visiting the Vietnam memorial it really struck me as to how much meaning our flag really has in and of itself.

Donald C. Frohm

I do remember the hurricane that hit Rhode Island in 1954. We were one day ahead of it when we left GTMO. The ship, USS *Duel*, went aground. I remember we were all sent to town to help clean up what we could. We went with 6x6's and heavy equipment and worked for about a week. Also, the trip to Port Lyautey was really rough, most of us got seasick. When we docked at Casablanca it was great. Then we traveled up the Wadi Sebou river to Port Lyautey on a LST and stayed for the next eight months.

Ralph Laner

NMCB-8 SEABEES' ASSOCIATION

4720 NW Terrace View Drive
Bremerton, WA 98312

President Rick Reese
Treasurer Ken Bingham
Recruiting Rick Reese & Ron Dougal
Newsletter Editor Harry Davis
Web Page Editor Jack Quinn Dennis

Web Page: <http://mcb-8.org>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



SEABEES "CAN DO"

ATTENTION: Anyone interested in submitting articles to the newsletter should send them directly to Harry Davis at his e-mail nmcb8@home.com; or home address 4720 NW Terrace View Drive, Bremerton, WA 98312.

F

NMCB-8 ASSOCIATION ENROLLMENT AND ROSTER UPDATE FORM

F

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone & Email: _____

Dates served with EIGHT _____

In order to receive the **NMCB-8 Association Newsletter** I understand I must join the **Association**. Enclosed are my dues of \$10 which will maintain my membership in good standing until **6/30/2002**.

*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.*

This issue of the Newsletter includes a roster of members of the NMCB-8 Association. The roster 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 Davis, 4720 NW Terrace View Dr.
Bremerton, WA 98312 or; nmcb8@home.com**