



CONSTRUCTIMUS, BATUIMUS – “WE BUILD, WE FIGHT”

NMCB-8



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2005



Inside this issue:

President's Message	2
2005 Reunion News	2
2004 Reunion Pictures	3
The History of EIGHT	4
A Tribute to Pap Phelps	5
Skippers Corner	6
Remember When ...	6
In Memoriam-Honor Roll	7
Voices From the Past	7
Enrollment/ Roster Form	8

“ALL SEABEE REUNION” AT GULFPORT

NMCB-8 Seabees , along with Seabees from different units and eras came from all over the United States to celebrate at Gulfport, MS in October, 2004.

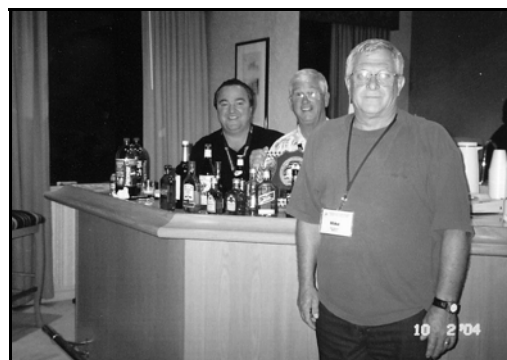


Gulfport Mississippi Reunion

The weather stayed in our favor as we just missed the Hurricanes. Our Seabee travelers from the surrounding areas told us about the damage they encountered driving to Gulfport. Fortunately, all the outside activities, especially the picnic, went well. The food was excellent and the picnic barbeque was outstanding. We need to bring the barbeque cook to Port Hueneme for our next Reunion. We had our own suite and provided refreshments. This worked great as people could relax and talk in a comfortable atmosphere. Throughout the reunion people came in and out and planned various excursions. Overall, a great time was had by all!



left to right: Sally Boggs, Ron Sabbatis, Leslie Sabbatis, Carol Dougal, Ron Dougal Arnie Cicerone & Billy Boggs



left to right: Arnie Cicerone, Billy Boggs & Mike Manely

From Your President

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year; especially our volunteer staff for providing the help necessary to keep our organization going. We had a few rough months with our newsletter, but Rick Reese has come through and we are off to a good start for 2005. The Reunion in Gulfport, Mississippi went very well. As usual, NMCB-8 took over the hotel facilities. We rented a suite on the top floor and Bill Boggs kept the bathtub full of ice cold "beverages". The room provided a great place for everyone to meet old friends, relax and tell sea stories. People kept coming and going all weekend with approximate fifty guests signing the register we set up in the room. This year we are looking forward to the 2005 All Seabee Reunion in Port Hueneme, CA from 12-15 May. Please see the enclosed reunion packet and make reservations ASAP as hotel rooms are expected to fill up quickly. I can't stress the importance of getting together as the years keep going by.

On a more somber note, last year we lost one of our battalion skippers, Pap Phelps, who passed away on December 20th. He was skipper of Eight from July 1965 to April 1967. He passed away peacefully surrounded by his family. A memorial service will be held for Pap at the Naval Academy on the morning of April 1st. The exact time is still to be determined.

As a 19 year old, Builder Third Class, Pap had a very big impact in my life. It was an honor to serve under him. He was a true Seabee. His kindness, caring and leadership qualities will remain with me the rest of my life. I was very fortunate to meet with, and talk to, Pap during one of our previous Seabee reunions, and to be able to say thank you to him for his leadership and dedication to the men of Eight when he was skipper.

In reviewing some old NMCB-8 newsletters, I would like to quote Pap from one of his letters in the Skipper's Corner. *"The satisfaction of seeing a building, a pier, a water tank an airfield or a bridge about which we can say "we built that" is the special reward for all builders. As we look back at pictures from our Seabee days, we can still enjoy that unique pleasure of the builder. No one of us built these things by ourselves, but each of us contributed our special skills that went into the accomplishment of the many facilities that we built".* As I read Pap's words, I realized the importance for keeping our Association alive. As president, I am asking you to call someone and invite them to the reunion. If they can't make it, invite them to join the Association and get involved.

As I indicated above, we have had a difficult time putting out the newsletter recently. If anyone wants to step up and volunteer to help out in any way possible, I would be most grateful. Let's keep the NMCB-8 Association alive and strong. One way to do this is by communicating through the newsletter.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the May 2005 All West Coast Seabee Reunion in Port Hueneme.

Arnie Cicerone



Arnie Cicerone

West Coast Reunion 2005

With the 2004 Gulf reunion behind us it is time to look forward to 2005. The decision to hold the '05 reunion on May 12th thru the 15th is an economic one. The best hotel rates are at this time of year as well as having Seabee days cancelled (after 911 base security became difficult to maintain with the base open to the public).

The reunion motel is the Country Inn and Suites 805-986-5353. Mention that you're with the All Seabee Reunion Group #521ALLS. There are only 90 rooms available at the special rate of \$92.00 a night (which includes a full breakfast each morning and two free beverages of choice per guest). The special rate is good for one week starting May 9th thru the 16th. Remember there are only 90 rooms at the \$92.00 rate so book early.

For information on what to do in Oxnard a good website is www.oxnardtourism.com/touevents5.html. A month by month list of all the local events is listed. Enclosed in this newsletter are registration form which can also be obtained online at www.allseabees.com.

2005 is also an election year for MCB-8 officers and staff. A hospitality suite (Room #232) has been reserved for NMCB-8. The suite will be available for meetings and a gathering place. SEE YOU THERE!

ATTENTION ON DECK!

ITEMS STILL IN THE BATTALION STORE

Battalion Patches:

1967-Bee on the Eight Ball \$10.00

1950's to 1967 Shovel on the Eight Ball \$ 10.00

Tee Shirts with Bee on the Eight Ball

We still have some for \$20.00 in assorted sizes

Add 2.00 for a pocket.

S&H—\$3.00 for patches & shirts.

Make checks or MO payable to NMCB-8

c/o Rick Reese 5363 Via Apolina

Yorba Linda, Ca 92886

From Your Editor

Harry Davis

"I'm back". After an absence of a couple of years, I have agreed to once again take over the editorship (is that a word?) of your newsletter. I promise you will receive three newsletters a year for as long as I am able to create it. Hopefully, that will be for quite a while.

One of the reasons I gave up the job, was because I was a one man show; i.e., from writing articles, to publishing, assembling, mailing and keeping track of the mailing list and Association roster. It was overwhelming. But now we have several others involved in publishing and distribution which has evened out the workload and will make my job more fun and less hectic.

I know there are still stories out there that still need to be told. While I was editor, many of you sent in articles and pictures. I could still use more of them. So if you are inclined, please send in what you would like to "show and tell."

Arnie

2004 REUNION MEMORIES IN PICTURES



THE HERITAGE OF A BATTALION NAMED EIGHT

From Iwo Jima to Morocco, from Guantanamo Bay to Dutch Harbor, to the Republic of Vietnam, 1942 to the present, this is the story of Navy Construction Battalions named EIGHT.

It is a story of men, both builders and fighters, their accomplishments and their proving grounds; but primarily it is a testimony to something called spirit, "Can Do" Spirit, for which the Seabees are known. A Battalion named EIGHT has had a part in building this spirit, upholding it, and now re-establishing and preserving it. After commissioning on 23 May 1942, with 1079 enlisted men and 32 officers, the Eighth Naval Construction Battalion left Norfolk on 19 June for Seattle. The battalion then embarked for Dutch Harbor, Alaska on 19 July. The Eighth worked 78 separately listed projects in the Amaknak Dutch Harbor region. Extending from Cold Bay on the east to Adak on the west, to all outposts jobs except one, the Eighth landed on undeveloped rugged beaches. The landings were made under extreme conditions, where no shelter or housing existed.

Major projects included South Amaknak housing, a submarine base, a PT boat base and a joint command post. After 13 months they returned to the U.S. In Feb 1945 they deployed to Iwo Jima, landing with the Marines on 3 March 1945. They remained there supporting marine operations until the end of the war and then deployed to Hiroshima Japan to aid Naval forces. In January 1946, after almost four years of service, the Eighth Naval Construction Battalion was decommissioned.

During the Korean conflict, a need for Seabees again arose, and MCB EIGHT was commissioned in September 1950.

EIGHT then became the first Naval Construction Battalion to man a vessel as a part of the Atlantic Fleet. Upon commissioning of the APL-48, the Seabees of EIGHT boarded and took her to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The APL-48 became their home during the five month deployment, while construction work was accomplished on the big Guantanamo Bay Naval Base.

During this period of EIGHT's history, the Battalion deployed to Morocco, Bermuda, and Argentina, Newfoundland. After four short years of service, MCB EIGHT was again decommissioned in 1955.

In 1960 the Battalion's services were again needed, and EIGHT was re-commissioned in November of that year. During this period, MCB EIGHT distinguished itself during deployments to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Antarctic, while participating in Operation Deep Freeze,

and Rota, Spain as a part of Operation Steel Pike. While in Spain, several details were set to Marathon, Greece, and Karamarshel, Turkey. In 1965, NMCB EIGHT became the first Battalion to change homeports from Davisville, Rhode Island, to Port Hueneme, California. Shortly after arriving in Port Hueneme, EIGHT deployed to Danang East, Republic of Vietnam, where it constructed an LCU/LCM waterfront facility for Naval Support Activity, Danang exemplifying the highest traditions of the Seabees in construction and defense.

After a highly successful homeport training period, NMCB EIGHT again deployed to the Republic of Vietnam in December, 1966. Stationed at Chu Lai, EIGHT again continued to uphold the tradition and reputation willed by the Seabees' 25 years of service.

While in Chu Lai, EIGHT employed approximately 716,000 man-hours of direct labor to pour 10,302 cubic yards of concrete, move 825,000 cubic yards of sand and fill, and put 2.9 million dollars worth of material into place. Among the many facilities constructed by EIGHT were the First Hospital Company complex, a dairy plant, and an ice plant. Two aircraft hangers, six Butler buildings, and a mile of revetments were constructed for Marine Air Group 12.

In addition, a chapel, fire station, Sea Anchor communications complex and numerous other facilities were constructed for the Naval Support Activity Detachment. Two cantonments were constructed at Tam Ky for ROK and ARVN forces. EIGHT constructed three bridges, and upgraded and constantly maintained a segment of Route One, the main artery for civilian and military traffic in I Corps.

Through the efforts of EIGHT's Medical Civic Action Team, the 6000 people of Ky Xuan Island were supplied with the means to win their personal war against sickness and disease. As a part of the extensive Civic Action Program at Chu Lai, EIGHT formed a Sunday Civic Action Team, wherein the men of the Battalion gave their only free time, Sunday afternoons, to help speed construction of the school in the village of Sam Hai. The school was completed in three months, well ahead of the twelve-month schedule..

Upon returning to Homeport in early August, 1967 a rigorous training schedule was initiated. Following military training and a holiday leave period, EIGHT packed up its gear and headed for Phu Bai, Republic of Vietnam.

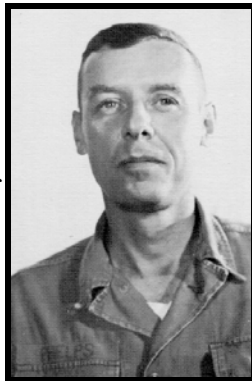
The next issue of the Newsletter will contain the final chapter of a Battalion named EIGHT

**Pharo A. (Pap) Phelps,
CAPT, CEC, USN (Ret)
1928-2004**

As this is written, the deployment is half over, and though moving about the world is much of the attraction of the Navy, I am truly sorry to leave MCB Eight. The officers and men of the Battalion have been magnificent, as has been the work they have done. There is no doubt that, whatever the rest of the deployment brings, the Battalion will continue to earn its accustomed well-done's. The combination of spirit and ability found in Eight is unbeatable, and I can only say with the greatest sincerity that the privilege of serving as your Commanding Officer has left a mark in me of highest pride which I shall carry always.

**Cdr P. A. Phelps, CEC, USN
Commanding Officer, 1965-1967**

Pharo Alfred Phelps, "PAP", died at home surrounded by his family on December 20, 2004 of cancer at the age of 76. Pharo was born in Biggs, California on August 24, 1928, and attended Sacramento High School where he met his lifelong sweetheart, Lois May Higgs. Married 54 years, he created a family of unbreakable bonds and helped each of his children find and grow their own passions.



Pap graduated from the Naval Academy in 1950, completed a Civil Engineering degree at RPI in 1953, and a doctorate at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA in 1963. He taught physics at the Naval Academy, a subject he followed, like a religion, through the last days of his life. His other lifelong passions were literature, music, the arts and later, tracing his ancestors, who came to America in 1630 on the ship Mary and John.

Pharo's career as a leader, engineer, builder, military officer and scientist included tours in the Antarctic, Guam, Vietnam, England, Spain, Kuwait and Turkey. He was both revered and loved as Commander of NMCB 8 (Seabees), and he retired from the Navy as a Captain in 1974. Pharo worked for Bechtel, San Francisco; Phelps Associates, his engineering consulting firm; and was CEO of FMC-Nurol in Ankara, Turkey, where he built a major defense manufacturing facility that was dedicated by President Ozal of Turkey.

Pharo was in his element either flying his Mooney N1164G or being in the ocean. He earned his commercial, instrument and glider ratings in addition to qualifications

in aerobatics and scuba diving. He found ways to include flying in any event -- most satisfying were the volunteer medical transport flights with Lois, touching many people at difficult hours in their lives. His charisma, humor and sharp wit charmed both friends and strangers.

Mr. Phelps was a registered professional engineer, a former Director and Fellow of the Society of American Military Engineers, a Fellow of the Society of Civil Engineers, a member of American Physical Society, Sigma Xi, Tau Beta Pi, and Chi Epsilon. He flew with Bay Area Soaring Associates, Mt. Diablo Pilots Association, and volunteered for Airlifeline and The Wellness Community of Walnut Creek.

Pap is survived by his wife, Lois, 3 children and their spouses: Andrew and Barbara of London, John and Rachel of Munich, and Jennifer and Frank of Maryland, along with 9 grandchildren: Marina, Edward, Michael, Sonnet, Hannah, Isabella, Olivia, Sebastian and Pharo. He was predeceased by his eldest son, Pharo Thomas. Pap's life is an inspiration, always exploring new interests and vocations -- he frequently remarked that he did not know what he wanted to be when he grew up.

The family will hold a memorial service in Annapolis, MD, and suggests memorial contributions be made in his name to The Wellness Community, a charitable concern providing help and comfort to those affected by cancer. Donations may be sent to 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94597.

EIGHT LEADS THE WAY AGAIN

As has been the case in the past, EIGHT once again had a good showing at the 2005 All Seabee Reunion in Gulfport, MS last October. Below are the names of NMCB-8 Seabees who attended the reunion. They came from all over the united States. Many of them brought their wives and friends to help celebrate what is continuing to be an ongoing EIGHT tradition.

Bill Boggs, Seneca, SC; Eric Davis, Lexington, MI; Ron Sabbatis, Capitola, CA; Arnie Cicerone, Seal Beach, CA; Dallas Brooks, Auburn, AL; James Daniels, Port Hueneme, CA; Ron Dougal, Mesa, AZ; Frank Pecjak, Morgantown, WV; Larry Hansel, Oregon City, OR; Fred Malone, Hodges, SC; Mike Manley, Opelika, AL; Bill O'Ferrall, San Angelo, TX; Bill Hamilton, Bridgeport, TX; Jack Schafer, Goose Creek, SC; Troy Branch, Sevierville, TN; Clarence Foster, Biloxi, MS; John McCully, Alexandria, VA; Fred Bowser, Grantsville, MD; George Schuster, Goshen, CT; Tom Grossman, Slippery Rock, PA; Cap Jennerett, Gulfport, MS; John Baubaker, Tempe, AZ; Jim Barnes, Benton, AR; John Luney, Louisville, KY; Jim Moriarty, Bantam, CT.

Skipper's Corner

Bob Westburg relieved Jack O'Leary as CO of NMCB-8 at 1100 hours on the 16th of July, 1968 at our camp in Phu Bai, RVN. He remained CO until NMCB-8 was decommissioned in December of 1969.



The current media has more Vietnam stories than I have heard in a long time. Most of the are negative, which is completely different from our experience in MCB8. I pulled out some of my old documents from 1968-1969, for example the Cruise book and the monthly paper called the "Hard Hat". These reminded me of the many projects we worked on, the Civic Action Programs and most important the extremely competent and productive Seabees in the Battalion. All this was done in extreme heat and long days of work. Then there was the typhoon of September 5, 1968, which brought 14 inches of rain.

One of the major projects was Col Co road which ran from Hue to the Port of Tan My. It was constructed in 1968 during the Phu Bai deployment. It withstood the September typhoon and is probably still in use to transport cargo from the Port to Hue. Also there was 22 miles of Paving north of Hue, the construction of 45 Aircraft Shelters and large housing facilities called Cantonments. All of these projects proved the MCB8 motto of "Better **Built** by Eight".

All of us can be proud of the contributions we made in Vietnam and some most likely still remain in use. Also the impact on the families and children from our civic action is remembered by the people who we served. I hope most Vietnam Veterans are proud of their service and are not taken in by the negative statements of a few.

Bob

Remembering Pap

Editor's Note: *I am sure all of us can remember something memorable, on the serious side or just plain funny about Pap Phelps when he was our C.O. If you do and want to share it with your old shipmates, please let me know and I will put your story in the next newsletter.*

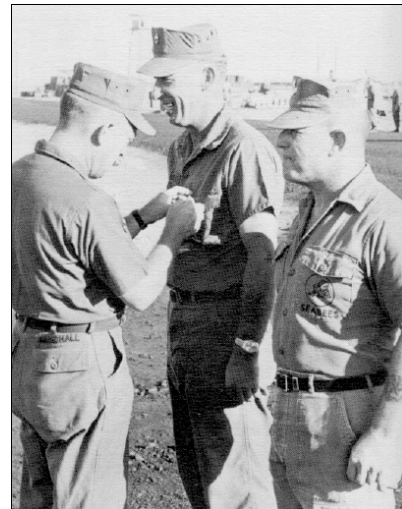
I got to know Pap Phelps fairly well while we were both in NMCB-8. He was very intelligent and personable and had a humorous side. I can remember one incident in Danang where we had a marine tank mounted on our perimeter for extra security. It was positioned such that it had a good view of the river valley below our camp. Pap had issued instructions to the duty officer to let him know before the tank fired because his hut was quite close to where the tank was located. I had the duty one evening when the tank called up and said they saw movement along the river and wanted permission to fire their 90 mm gun. I told them to wait until I could notify the skipper. Just as I was dialing the CO, there was a loud blam!! Pap responded by diving out the side of his hut, through the wire mesh, into his foxhole. It took me awhile to explain that one.

Gordon Gilmore

REMEMBER WHEN....



First Sergeant W. A. Todd, EIGHT's Security Advisor, receives a Purple Heart award from Brig. Gen. E. W. Stiles for wounds received as a result of a booby trap incident Dec. 13, 1966

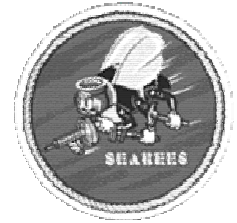


On Sunday, July 9, 1967 Eight's Chu Lai cantonment was named Camp Miller after James O. Miller who died in a mortar attack at Tam Ky on February 6th. During the dedication ceremony, the Bronze Star was awarded to EOC R. R. Baldwin, and the Secretary of the Navy Commendation for Achievement was presented to BU1 S. Rosenswig.



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 have received word of the passing of several shipmates: **Fredrick Beake** (FL), June 03; **James L. Gibson** (FL), Aug 98; **Robert K Goudy**, (IL) Dec. 03; **William Halford** (FL), Feb 03; **Marritt Haff** (OH), Jan 04; **Olin Kessler**, (date & state unknown); **Walter E. Lenning** (CA), 1985; **William Sack** (NE), Nov 03; **Pap Phelps**, (CA), Dec 04; **Hal Schoolcraft** (CA), Dec 03; **Robert D. Scott** (AZ), Oct 00; **Daniel J. Slosser** (RI), Nov 03.

THE BINNICALE LIST

Keith McGee is still recovering from his motorcycle accident and is hoping to be going home soon. **Maryann** said Keith has a lot of work ahead and asked to keep the prayers coming. CAN DO!!

Billy Boggs is recovering from a mishap and needs our support to get back and well.

Jack O'Leary has not been feeling 4.0. Our thoughts and prayers go out to our skipper to get better and join us at the next reunion. If you know any of our shipmates, who are sick or recovering from a medical problem or illness or need a card or phone call from us, please let one of your association officers or state reps know.

VOICES FROM THE PAST

I thought you might be interested in knowing that my late husband, Capt. Earl M. Kelly, was one of the first Commanders of the "Eight Ball" Battalion. He was with that Battalion in the Aleutian Islands.

In going through some of his old photographs, I have found some pictures of the 8th Battalion at Adak and Dutch Harbor which I thought might be of interest to you in your search for information about this Battalion in World War II. If you have any interest in these photographs, please let me know at the above address. Unfortunately, I do not have a computer so you can't E-mail me.

Mary Alice Kelly

I was in NMCB-8 from 1965-69, in Charlie Company. I deployed to Danang with the battalion in '65 and was a member of the detachment to Phu Bai. Also deployed to Chu Lai in '66. I was a 2nd class diver with EIGHT and a member of Seabee

Team 0808. When the team got back from Thailand I was TAD to the Regiment as a military training instructor. I was discharged in Feb. '69. I would like to hear from anyone that served with me. My e-mail address is sryogi@aol.com. **John R. Scheffhauser**

I have often wondered if others remember their days with the Battalion as I do. I have not kept in touch with anyone from my days with the Battalion but perhaps now I will see someone's name in the newsletter that I know. Good luck and keep up the good work. **Dick Petshhauer**

EDITORS NOTE: These "Voices From the Past" are previously received, but not published, notes from people who wanted to share their thoughts and memories of battalion life. If you have any thoughts or remembrances you want to pass on, please send it to me at the return address noted on the back of the newsletter.

NMCB-8 SEABEES' ASSOCIATION

241 Windrose Drive
Port Ludlow, WA 98365

President	Arnie Cicerone
Treasurer	Ken Bingham
Past Presidents	Gordon Gilmore
	Ken Kerr
	Rick Reese
Recruiting	Ron Dougal
Newsletter Editor	Harry Davis

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



SEABEES "CAN DO"



NMCB-8 ASSOCIATION ROSTER UPDATE

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone & Email: _____

Over the past two years, the mailing list and roster for the NMCB-8 Association has become outdated. In order to ensure that we have your updated information, please fill out the above form with the requested information. Only through a current roster can we ensure your receipt of the newsletter and information of current and future reunions. Please include your e-mail address if you have one. Detach the form at the dotted line and return to: **Harry Davis, 241 Windrose Drive, Port Ludlow, WA 98365.** If you have e-mail and want to make your update electronically, please do so. Send e-mail updates to ***nmcb_8@msn.com***. Thank you.