



NMCB-8 NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

REUNION 2008, PIGEON FORGE, TN - REGISTRATION FORMS INSIDE

FEBRUARY 2008



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REUNIONS, REUNIONS, REUNIONS!

From Your President



Two years ago at this time, Troy Branch was still working for the railroad and trying to put together a reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN for our Association. At times, he was worried as to whether it would all come together; but it did, and as many of you who attended can attest, it was the best reunion any of us have attended in the 8 years of our Association's existence. In fact, he had so much fun doing it, Troy volunteered to “do it again” this year. Now that he’s retired he can spend more time putting things together at a leisurely pace.

I recently talked to Troy and he said people aren’t signing up as quickly as he would like. Hopefully it will pick up, but don’t wait too long. If you plan to go to the reunion let Troy know soon. We want to have a good turnout again this year. If you haven’t done so yet, please get your reunion application in ASAP. The forms are included in this newsletter and can also be found on our Website at www.nmcb8.com. If you are in contact with shipmates who served in EIGHT, or with any Seabees you know regardless of affiliation, invite them to attend. We are looking forward to another great time in Pigeon Forge.

For those of you who may have time and the inclination, there is another reunion in June you might want to consider. I received an e-mail from Ed Kloster advertising the 10th annual All Seabee Reunion in Port Hueneme. It is planned to coincide with Seabee Days, a week long celebration aboard the Seabee Base in Port Hueneme, CA. The reunion will take place from 26-29 June 2008. I plan to be there. If you would like to get more information on this significant event, contact:

Ed Kloster
3815 Rio Hondo Avenue Rosemead, CA 91770
Tel: 626-280-9495
allseabees@charter.net

On another note, I want to personally thank our Association staff for contributing their time and effort in making this organization what it is today. I know we all have other commitments but still find time to keep our organization functioning

(See **REUNION**, page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

by providing the necessary communication between our leadership. I know that a great deal of work goes into our Newsletter and I want to thank Harry Davis for his dedication. The newsletter is vital to our organization. It is the glue that binds the Association. However, Harry can't do it all. He has several people who are contributors from time to time, but there are other stories out there and he would love to print your story. Remember, we're not getting any younger but most of us still "remember" what we did when we were in the "Bees". So if you would like to share a tale or two with your shipmates of your good times, or not so good times, in Vietnam, on the Ice, in GTMO, deployed to Port Layautey or any other place EIGHT went, please send your stories, articles and pictures to Harry. His address and email can be found on the last page of the newsletter at the bottom of the page.

Ken Bingham has been keeping good control of the finances. If you have any questions about dues, contact Ken. I talked to Ron Dougal and he has been busy trying to find lost members, along with working on the Pigeon Forge reunion with Troy Branch, Ron Sabattis, and Billy Boggs.

The new Seabee Museum should be opening in 2010 and if completed as tentatively scheduled, we are planning to hold a reunion in Port Hueneme that year. Stay tuned for future bits of information on the progress of the museum. We will monitor the schedule agent, and will pass information on as to the grand opening as it becomes available.

Arnie

YOU TOO CAN BE A RECRUITER

Many of our Association members were recruited by members like yourself. If anyone knows of a former EIGHT Seabee that is not currently on our rolls, give them your copy of the newsletter to read and encourage them to join. Anyone interested in joining should send a check for \$10 to our Treasurer Ken Bingham, 1773 Tamarin Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003. Make check or money order out to NMCB-8 Association. Please include with your check, your full name, address, tel. no., email address, rate/rank while serving in the Navy and the dates you served in EIGHT. Your name will be entered into our roster and also placed on the newsletter mailing list.

ATTENTION: MEMBERS ARE DYING OFF IN LARGE NUMBERS

I bet this headline got your attention. It's true you are dying off, but not from old age as much as from lack of attention to providing your forwarding address when you move.

In the past year, our membership has changed quite remarkably. Unfortunately, it has gone down, not up. While we have added a few new members, we have lost more than we have gained.

Every newsletter has "Address Service Requested" printed on it. If someone moves and leaves a forwarding address with the Post Office, the newsletter will be sent on and I will be notified of the new address. However, this service only lasts for one year and is not foolproof.

Each time we mail out the newsletters, quarterly or thereabouts, I get several back that can't be forwarded for various reasons. The biggest ones are "moved, left no address" or "time expired unable to forward".

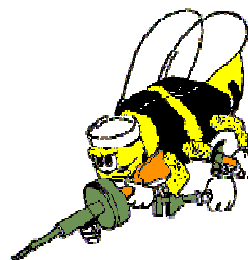
In addition, "Address Service Requested" is not free. Each time I get a notification it costs between \$.50 and \$.90 depending on the reason for the return.

The bottom line is, if we don't have your correct address and are unable to find one for you through our state reps or by using the internet (and we do try) your name will, regrettably, be removed from the active roster and from future newsletter mailing lists.

So if you want to continue to receive the newsletter and stay on the active roster, either tell the postmaster of your forwarding address or please take time to fill out the form on the back of the newsletter with any change of address, telephone number or e-mail if you have it.

You can also email me the information at **nmcb_8@msn.com**.

Harry Davis
Newsletter Editor



**NMCB-8 REUNION 2008
REGISTRATION FORM
September 24 – September 28, 2008**

(Please print all information)

Member name: _____
(List name as you wish it to be on ID badge)

Guest name (s): _____

Home address: _____
Address City State Zip

E-mail address: _____

Emergency contact: _____
Name Phone Number

Planned arrival: _____ **Planned departure:** _____
Day/date Day/date

Date(s) served in NMCB-8 _____ **Craft** _____

PLEASE READ AND SIGN THE FOLLOWING:

I understand that the 2008 reunion is a non-alcoholic sponsored event. Any alcoholic drinks that I purchase during the four-day event from the hotels, caterers or other sources will be at my own discretion. I agree to hold harmless the NMCB-8 2008 Reunion; its directors, officers, reunion planners, and membership for any and all acts, or consequences from my conduct or the conduct of my guests. I also authorize the release of all photos of the event for future publication by the association. I further understand that all meals other than the Dixie Stampede and the NMCB-8 Banquet are at my expense.

Signature

Date

Deadline for registration is August 15, 2008.

Mail completed forms and payment to:

Make checks payable to:
"NMCB-8 2008 Reunion"

Troy F. Branch
454 Indian Gap Road
Sevierville, TN 37876
Phone 865-428-2390

NMCB 8 REUNION 2008
REGISTRATION FORM (cont)
September 24 – September 28, 2008

(Please print all information)

Registration Fee	\$ 20.00 per member	\$ 20.00	
Events	Cost Per Person	# of Persons	Total
Steak Cookout	\$ 10.00		
Comedy Barn	Adult	\$ 20.00	
	Child 11 & under	\$ 6.00	
	Child in Lap	Free	
NMCB – 8 Banquet	\$ 33.00		
Merchandise			
T-Shirt w/Pocket	Small	\$ 15.00	
	Medium	\$ 15.00	
	Large	\$ 15.00	
	X-Large	\$ 15.00	
	XX-Large	\$ 15.00	
	XXX-Large	\$ 15.00	
NMCB-8 Ball Cap	\$10.00		
Total			

Note, if you have special dietary needs: _____

Mail completed forms and payment to:

Troy F. Branch
454 Indian Gap Road
Seiverville, TN 37876
Phone 865-428-2390

Deadline for registration is August 15, 2008.

NMCB 8 REUNION 2008 ITINERARY

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Reunion check-in (Advanced Party)	Ramada Inn Hospitality Room	12:00 PM – 10:00 PM
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Thursday, September 25, 2008

Reunion check-in (Main Body)	Ramada Inn Hospitality Room	8:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Comedy Barn "Side Splitting Family Fun"		7:30 PM – 10:15 PM

Friday, September 26, 2008

Steak Cookout at Patriot Park, Pigeon Forge	3:00 PM – 6:00 PM
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Saturday, September 27, 2008

NMCB – 8 Banquet	7:00 PM – Midnight
Photos Smoky Mountain Convention Center at the Ramada Inn	

The Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, Sevierville, Tennessee areas are loaded with many choices for free time activities. The ladies will enjoy spending time at any of the three outlet malls. There are specialty shops galore. Putt-putt golf, bumper boats, and bungee rides are available. Cave tours, hiking trails, and beautiful scenic drives await the nature lover. There are several restaurants within walking distance of the hotel.

Accommodations

Ramada Inn, 4010 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee 37863. Call for reservation 1-800-523-3919. Check out their webpage at www.smokymountainresorts.com

Sunday – Thursday	\$ 46.94 (tax included)
Friday – Saturday	\$ 77.11 (tax included)

When making room for reservations, be sure to say you are with the "NMCB – 8 Reunion" to get the special rate.

We have 122 rooms reserved at the Ramada. Try and make your reservations early. If the Ramada Inn fills up you may be housed in one of the sister hotels nearby for the same rate. Come early if you like. These special rates are available all week long.

There are great campground choices in the area. For those planning to come by land yacht, we will receive a special rate at the Twin Mountain Outdoor Resort. It is just a few minutes from the reunion hotel and offers full hookups from \$ 32.00 to \$ 36.00 a night tax included. To make a reservation call 1-800-848-9097. Make sure you mention you are with the NMCB – 8 Association reunion.

There are also many major timeshare accommodations throughout the region.

Local transportation is on your own.

Fun Time Trolley – Schedule: daily 8:30 AM – Midnight, 25¢ each time you board. There are over 100 stops throughout Pigeon Forge. You can also go to Gatlinburg, Splash Country, or Dollywood. Handicap Van available with reservation.

Airport destinations

Knoxville	approximate driving time	45 – 60 Minutes
Ashville, NC	approximate driving time	1.5 - 2 Hours
Nashville	approximate driving time	3 Hours
Chattanooga	approximate driving time	3 Hours

Traveling I-40, take Exit 407 to Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, and Sevierville.

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.



There's something I have been waiting for the right moment to say and I have decided that this is the right moment. As I look back on my life, it's evident that I have really been blessed with some great jobs. In the Navy, it was as the Navy rep for the air transportable PM-3A nuclear power plant for the Antarctic; a resident officer for the construction of Torrejon Air Force Base outside of Madrid, Spain; and staff civil engineer for Naval Forces Southern Command where I traveled all over Central and South America, to name a few.

Later, with Bechtel Corporation it was as Project Manager for major nuclear power plants; Manager of Procurement; Manager of Contracts and Risk Manager. But the best damn job I ever had was as C.O. of NMCB-8.

And why? Certainly not because I spent the better part of two tours in beautiful Vietnam. It was because of those of you with whom I was privileged to serve. I have never been more proud of a group that it was my good fortune to lead. Thank you all for your individual contribution to this great memory. You're one helluva fine bunch and I will never forget you.

Once again, Emily and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at our next reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN.

May God bless you all.

Jack



AND NOW YOU KNOW....

Editors Note: Rich Berry is a frequent contributor to the newsletter. He was in MCB-8 when it was commissioned in 1951 and served with the Battalion until 1955. He's a world traveler having visited over 40 countries. He and his wife Doris live in Lakewood, CO.

While on a trip in Verona, Italy, our guide showed us a hole in the pavement that went down about 4 feet to the old Roman Road from Rome to Verona.

He went on to say, that when Roman troops ended a days march, the general or centurion in charge would point to a spot on the ground. Then a quartermaster would stick a pole in the ground on that spot. He then drew a line north to south from the pole and one east to west to make four quarters.

In one quarter the general and staff stayed. This area was called headquarters. The next area was assigned to Company A, the next to Company B and the last quarter to the cooks, supplies, livestock, camp followers and slaves.

The order to dismiss the troops was "Go to your quarters", and everyone knew exactly where they would sleep that night.

Rich Berry, BU-2

Plank Owner MCB-8

A WORD ABOUT DUES

Please note the mailing label attached to the back of your newsletter. Next to your name, you will see a date (month & year) denoting when your membership should have been renewed. The word "LIFE" next to your name denotes a life member and no renewal of membership is necessary. If your membership has expired but you would like to renew it in order to continue receiving the newsletter and keep up on the latest reunion information and other news, please submit payment by check to **NMCB-8 ASSOCIATION**. Send checks to **Ken Bingham, 1773 Tamarin Ave, Ventura, CA 93003**. Please do not send checks to me.

Dues are \$10/year or \$100 for a life membership. To bring your membership up to date, submitting a check for \$10 will be sufficient.

Harry Davis
Newsletter Editor



IWO JIMA REVISITED

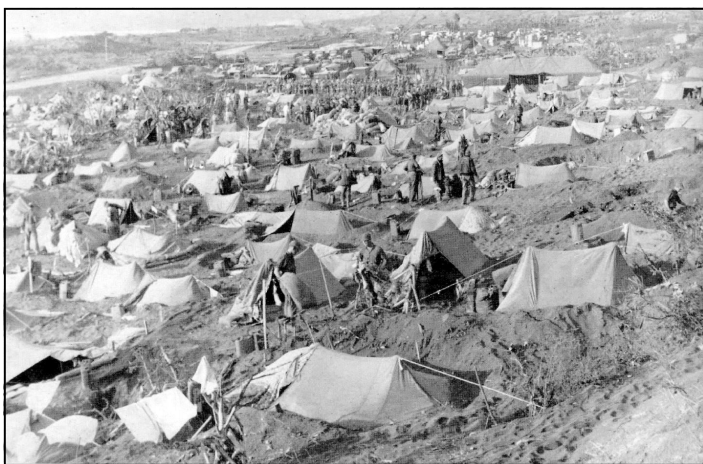
EDITORS NOTE: *On occasion, when I need a story to finish up the newsletter, I go to the series of seven cruise books containing the history of EIGHT that I have on DVD. Last fall's newsletter showed a picture from the 8th NCB's WWII cruise book "Pieces of Eight". The Seabees of the 8th NCB landed on Iwo Jima 12 days after the first wave of Marines went ashore. The picture selected of EIGHT's camp was a vivid reminder of the tough conditions those brave men endured during the battle for Iwo Jima.*

Shortly after I sent out the newsletter, I received an email from Lewis Unger, a member of the 8th NCB who landed with the battalion on Iwo Jima. He asked where I got the picture of the battalion encampment. He said he thought he took that picture. He also sent me an article of his recollection of "life on the rock" during the two months he spent there.

A series of pictures he sent are also published on the next three pages. Some of them he took, others, such as the raising of the flag on Mt. Suribachi were taken by others.

Dear Harry,

As a member of the WWII U. S. 8th. NCB, I enjoy your NMBC-8 Newsletter. I was very surprised to see a photo of the initial 8th. NCB bivouac area, which appears to be pretty much identical to a photo that I took. (See attachment) I also took many other photos on Iwo Jima.



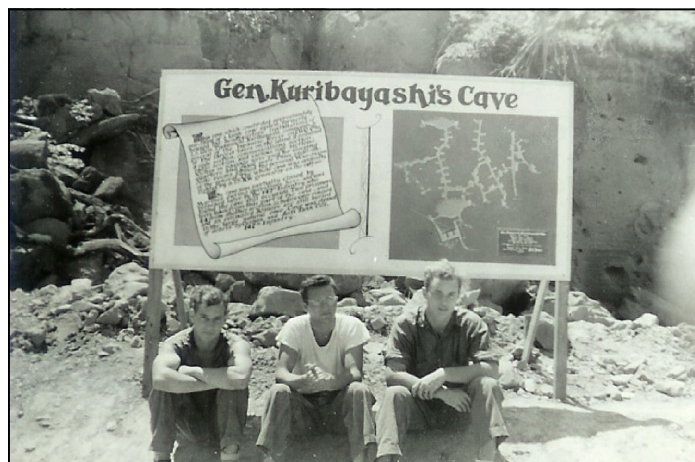
The initial 8th Battalion bivouac area on Iwo Jima.

There was a road and airstrip up the slope to the right of the photo. The 2-man pup-tents covered excavations in the black volcanic ash. Many had filled sandbags with the black volcanic ash to support the sides prior to covering the excavations with the tents. When the monsoons came, the water from the adjacent landing strip and roadway came down the slope like a river. It flooded and completely filled all of the



A view of the beach where the 8th NCB landed

excavations, completely ruining all clothing, bedding, and personal belongings. I guess that I'm the only one that wasn't affected. I was a MM 2/C-EO (Equipment operator) and some of our equipment included a few extra-heavy-duty utility type trailers approx. 6' x 9' in size with about 18" high sides.

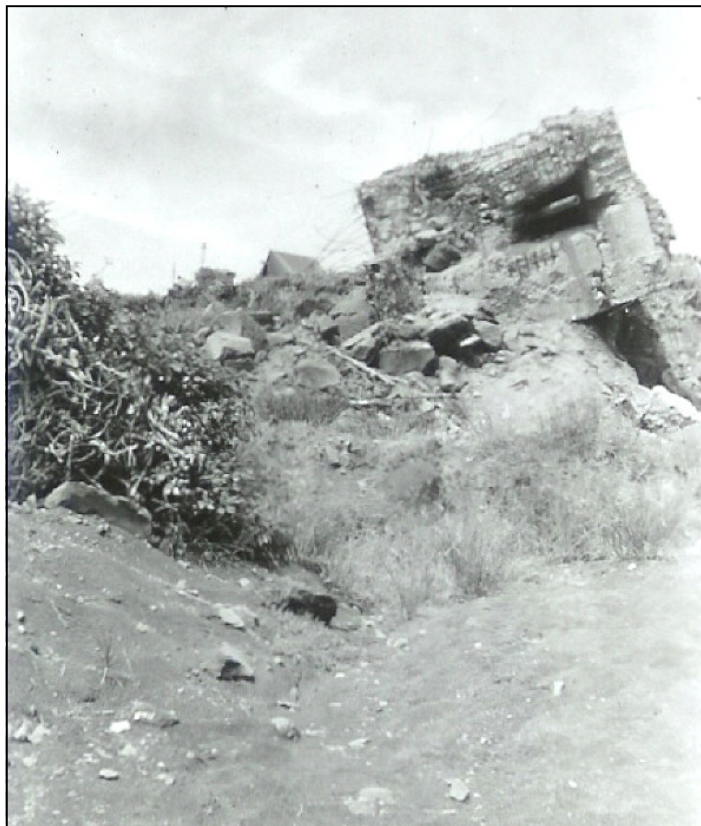


General Kuribayashi's Cave system throughout the island

Each one had kits with extra heavy tarpaulins that could be assembled to resemble conestoga wagons. I

(Continued on page 8)

assembled one in the center of the equipment compound, which was located to the far top and center of the photo, beyond the large tent, and I slept in it every night. I even ran an underground electrical wire and spliced into the shallow buried electrical line going to the mess tent and I had an electric light. With the heavy tarp and the ends lashed tight, one couldn't see the light from outside. After the flood, Walter Gill, from NYC, moved one of the other trailers to the rear of mine and we had a double length covered trailer or wagon. That was my home for the first 2 months on



A destroyed Japanese fortification

Iwo Jima. The Mess Hall or tent was the large tent in the upper right as shown in the bivouac photo. There were long tables, but no benches. We stood up to eat until we finally moved to our permanent campsite and erected sleeping quarters and a more suitable mess hall. At night, dump trucks with sand bags around the insides of the beds and a 50 Cal. machine gun manned by 2 sentries on 4 hour shifts were strategically positioned around the perimeter of the area. As the Japanese approached carrying Molotov cocktails during the night, they would be mowed down and their flammable incinerators would ignite and their corpses would be charred by morning. Attached are a few photos that I took, but I have many more.

Lewis Unger

8th. NCB - WW II

ADDITIONAL PICTURES OF IWO JIMA



Reinforced fortifications and cave entranceways



Lewis Unger standing by an A-11 truck



A B-29 on an airstrip repaired and fortified by Seabees



A superfortress that didn't make it to the airfield

THE TWO IWO JIMA FLAG RAISINGS

Copies provided by Lewis Unger



Raising the first flag on Iwo Jima,
by Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery, Leatherneck Magazine.



Raising the second Flag on Iwo Jima, by Joe Rosenthal, Associated Press.

A FALLEN HERO IS HONORED

On Veteran's Day 2007, a fallen hero was honored by his fellow Seabees, family members and members of the public at a ceremony in Gardiner, WA. On that day, tribute was paid to a home town boy who grew up around Port Townsend, WA, a small Victorian port tucked away in the northwest corner of Washington State. His name is well known to all who have served in the Seabees since the Vietnam days. Marvin Shields, at the age of 25, gave his life on 10 June 1965 to save others in a battle at Dong Xoai, Republic of Vietnam. He was the first, and remains

by President Lyndon Baines Johnson at a ceremony at the White House on 13 September 1967. His wife Joan, was present to accept the Medal.

My wife and I live in Port Ludlow, WA, about 15 miles from Gardiner. We were out of town on Veteran's day last year, otherwise, we would have gone to the ceremony. I've had occasion to visit his grave site. The Gardiner cemetery is small and well maintained. All grave markers are set flush to the ground with the exception of Marvin's stone. It's made of polished black marble and stands above ground on a knoll. Shown below, it is a fitting tribute to a fallen hero from small town America.

Harry Davis

Newsletter Editor



Joan Shields Bennett, widow of Medal of Honor recipient Marvin G. Shields, speaks at the 2007 Veterans Day ceremony at Gardiner Cemetery. At left is Jerry Landcastle, Northwest District commander of the Navy Seabee Veterans of America. **Port Townsend Leader**

the only Seabee to receive the Medal of Honor. He was also the first United States Navy sailor to receive the Medal of Honor for action in Vietnam.

For his unselfish gallantry above and beyond the call of duty, he was awarded the Medal of honor, posthumously,



A U.S. Navy color guard was part of a Veterans Day ceremony Monday at Gardiner Cemetery to honor Marvin G. Shields, the only Navy Seabee to receive the Medal of Honor. The 1958 graduate of Port Townsend High School died in Vietnam in 1965. **Port Townsend Leader**

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Although wounded when the compound of Detachment A342, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, came under intense fire from an estimated reinforced Viet Cong regiment employing machine guns, heavy weapons and small arms, Shields continued to resupply his fellow Americans who needed ammunition and to return the enemy fire for a period of approximately 3 hours, at which time the Viet Cong launched a massive attack at close range with flame throwers, 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 4 more hours. When the commander asked for a volunteer to accompany him in an 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 traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.



Construction Mechanic 3rd Class
Marvin G. Shields
1939-1965

Seabee Memorial, Washington, D.C.



IN MEMORIAM

In remembrance of those who served with us.

Ron Dougal advised us that Norris Shippee passed away on December 18, 2007 in Mesa, Arizona. He was in EIGHT from 1960 to 1964 in B Company. Mac McCormick advised that Mark Clark of Great Falls, MT, passed away on November 13, 2007.

THE BINNICALE LIST

We received word that Harold McCrea, SWC (Ret) is battling cancer. He indicated he would like to hear from some of his old buddies who served with him in the battalion.

Phone #: 951-302-9786; Email: nevanmac@verizon.net

PICTURES FROM THE PAST



Richard Swallow with langosta, (Spanish lobsters) in GITMO 1964. He said, "I ate them all!"



A diorama recruitment trailer at a recruitment stop is pictured during WWII. Navy recruiters traveled around the country passing out brochures and enlisting trained construction professionals into the Seabees.

SEABEES "CAN DO"

NMCB-8 SEABEES' ASSOCIATION

241 Windrose Drive
Port Ludlow, WA 98365

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

Web Page: <http://www.nmcb8.com>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



SEABEES "CAN DO"



NMCB-8 ASSOCIATION ROSTER UPDATE

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone & E-mail: _____

The mailing list and roster for the NMCB-8 Association needs to be continually updated. Only through a current roster can we ensure your receipt of the newsletter and information of current and future reunions. If you have had a change of address within the past year, you can update this information by filling out the above form. 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 updates by e-mail to **nmcb_8@msn.com**. **Thanks for your support !**