



CONSTRUCTIMUS, BATUIMUS – “WE BUILD, WE FIGHT”

# NMCB-8

# NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2003



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## REUNION 2003 REPORT FROM PORT HUENEME

The first All-Seabee Reunion held at the Casa Sirena in Port Hueneme was a mixed success. Casa Sirena was selected by **Ed Kloster** to replace the Channel Islands Inn after several double-bookings, and failure to reserve the meeting rooms for us.

The Casa Sirena was a step up in the room accommodations, and they provided for all the Seabee rooms in one building so that everyone was pretty much in the same place. The restaurant was a two-block walk, and some of the meeting rooms were inconvenient, but generally those things will be ironed out as Ed gets to know the management.

Check-in was as chaotic as usual, as there are always those that show up before the advance party, and those that show up late, but the battalion was represented by approximately 60 attendees, from several eras. WWII, Korea, and Vietnam eras were represented, and someone was there from all the Vietnam detachments.

MCB-11 had a hospitality room in the restaurant this year, which was envied by the rest of us. Our hospitality was limited to inter-room visiting, and gathering at the bar in the restaurant as old friends showed up to “chew the fat”.

The usual tours were available, but you'd have to get reports from others, as this year your editor spent more time around the hotel, talking, than going to events. There was no structured golf party, because of the difficulty arranging things on base with the “terrorist watch”. Everything on base was monitored, and you had to be on proscribed buses, and Ed had to give the Security Force your social security numbers in advance. Take one look at us! Don't we look like the

average mad bomber?

An MCB-8 Association meeting was held with approximately 50 hands, and their spouses. Several items were discussed and adopted;

Next year's Reunion will be held in Gulfport with the All-Bee's reunion there, see outgoing President **Rick Reese's** column.

A donation will be made from the Association, in the name of **Father Jim Harris**, details forthcoming from **Rick Clark** who was nominated to explore several options.

A new President was asked for, and **Lou Beland** was selected in-abstentia, but phone calls failed to recruit him. At that, **Arnie Cicerone** volunteered, and was given the job by default, by the selection committee.

A long discussion was initiated by one member about “our mission” and where we were heading with the Association. That was tabled finally, without resolve. Anyone with thoughts on that one can write to the Editor.

Note's on the rest of the reunion;

My wife, **Janet**, collected almost \$800 for the museum for the cash “50%” draw. There was a raffle for a quilt, and Seabee motif photo albums, made by spouses of one the Bee's present. Altogether, almost \$2,000 was raised for the museum at the Friday night soiree at the Casa Sirena's and

Saturday night's dinner at Duke's which was a rousing success as usual. **Capt. Bob Quinn** joked his way through a bout of laryngitis and **Rick Clark** provided a video slide show with stirring patriotism.

## CHANGE OF COMMAND

Although I had anticipated stepping down as the NMCB-8 Association president this year, events could have slowed the change of leadership, but for one of our members who stepped forward and took the challenge. On 20 June 2003, the leadership of the association was passed to **Arnold Cicerone**. I know that he will continue building our association. He has my complete support.



Rick Reese-1967

As with any non-profit organization such as ours, we depend upon the work of volunteers to accomplish our tasks. I would like to thank all of you who volunteered over these past two years, giving your advice and support. I know that you will give our new president the same.

Where is our association now and where are we going? The first part is easy. We have selected Gulfport as our next reunion location. Gulfport has advised us that they are looking at a window of 30 Sept.-2 Oct. or 6 Oct. - 9 Oct. 2004. Let's make this an NMCB-8 blow out. I also want to invite spouses, family, and friends to attend the reunion and join in the fun. New Orleans is a great city to visit and its only about a 70 minute drive from the host hotel.

More good news, the association is in good financial shape under the supervision of our treasurer Ken Bingham. Ken has agreed to continue in that position.

As many of you know from your experience in other service clubs, fraternal groups, and the like, declining membership can become a reality when active members do not aggressively recruit new members. I challenge each of you to find one of our missing shipmates, and get them to join the association. We are in strong hands with Arnie at the helm, with our best days ahead of us. God bless each of you, your families, our troops, our country and our Navy.

### Rick Reese



Dear Fellow Seabees,

Once again EIGHT had a successful reunion at Port Hueneme in July of this year. And once again EIGHT led the way with the most Seabees present.

At the reunion, I was elected President of your Association. I would like to thank all the members, friends and families of our Association for giving me the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of **Rick Reese**, my predecessor, as President. Rick will truly be a tough act to follow.

I served with EIGHT on two tours of duty, first in Da Nang with Alpha Company in 1965-1966, and then in Chu Lai with Delta Company in 1966-1967. I left a few weeks early during my second deployment when I fell off one of the revetments at the Chu Lai airport and broke both of my heels and also fractured my back. I always said if this had to happen I wish it were during the first two weeks in Viet Nam not the last two! I will save the med-evac story for another time.

As those of you who attended the reunion know, it went well. It's always good to see the new faces and hear the old stories. I was also glad to meet some of our WWII vets from the Eighth Naval



Arnie Cicerone

Construction Battalion many of whom joined with our Association over the past two years. I must admit I also enjoyed visiting Port Hueneme and Oxnard as this was the first time since Viet Nam that I did not have to spend half the night trying to find a place that would serve me a drink. I did not have to explain that I was really 21 but my ID card had the wrong date!

A personal thanks goes out to **Rick Reese**, **Ron Dougal** and his wife **Carol**, **Jack Quinn Dennis** and his wife **Janet**, **Ken Bingham**, **Gordon Gilmore**, **Harry Davis**, and **Ken Kerr** for all the hard work you Seabees have done to make this organization as great as it is. I also want to let you know how much I will be counting on you to continue the good work! I am new at this, so if I left any one else out who deserves special recognition I am truly sorry! I know there have to be others out there in this wonderful country of ours who helped recruit new members, passed on names of lost EIGHT Seabees and also attended the past five reunions. A big thanks to all of you for your help and support.

I will be counting on our membership to continue to provide the help to keep the Association going and achieve the highest standards for our members. Our goals are simple, increase the membership, keep the communication going, and prepare for the next reunion in Gulfport in October 2004 (exact dates yet to be determined). **Rick Reese** has contacted Gulfport and has started the 2004 reunion process and we will provide better information as soon as possible.

**Harry Davis** will be sending out a new roster in a month or so. Please take time to review your data and send in corrections. I plan to personally contact our state representatives and keep the membership drive going. We also must not forget to continue to locate lost members of EIGHT.

Finally, on a personal note, I have a special project that will need the help of all of the Association members to fulfill. **Mike Estock** and I served in Delta Company together in the mountains of Chu Lai. We lived in the same tent for much of that tour. After I was sent home early due to my accident, Mike was killed in action. When I moved to California 19 years ago I attempted to locate Mike's parents. I found and visited his mother and learned his father had passed away. I gave her some pictures of Mike that she had never seen before.

What I would like to do is locate as many immediate family members as we can of NMCB 8 Seabees who were killed in action in Viet Nam, and invite them to a reunion. Some of us may have information stories and photos of their love ones taken during their Viet Nam tours that they have never heard or seen. I will be sending out a special note, in the near future, with more details as to what you can do to help me, and the Association, in this project.

I hope to see you all in Gulfport in 2004.

Seabees Can Do  
**Arnie**



## Skipper's Corner

**Bob Westberg** relieved **Jack O'Leary** at 1100 on 16 July 1968 at Phu Bai. After the Phu Bai deployment and six months in Port Hue-neme the Battalion returned to Vietnam, this time to Danang in March of 1969. After returning to Port Hueneme at the end of the Danang deployment, the Battalion was decommissioned on 20 December 1969. On retiring from the Navy in 1979, Bob and his wife moved to Trinidad, California. Bob still does some Engineering Consultation on a part time basis.



While we see on the news a lot of information about our military forces being deployed all over the world, little is available about what the Seabees are doing. I was able to get some web sites from my son who is stationed at "Naval Base Ventura", which most of us remember as Port Hueneme and Point Mugu. The work the Battalions are doing brings back memories of what we worked on in Vietnam. Here are a few:

**Engineers Complete Longest Floating Project in Iraq.** It was a 762 foot long bridge across the Tigris River and took 11 days to complete. There were 200 people working on the job from NMCB 7, NMCB133, NCST 1, ACB1 and ACB2. The last time Seabees built this type of bridge is when they helped Patton over the Rhine River in 1944. I guess the ones we worked on in Vietnam weren't this long.

**NMCB 133 Rebuilds Village School.** Twenty Seabees from NMCB 133 were sent to a village nine miles away from the Iranian border to repair a half century old building. In nine days, the 20 Seabees almost fully repaired the school and restored the community's hope. One of the Seabees said, "This is the best place in Iraq and the best job we've had since we've been in Iraq"

**NMCB 7 Makes Schools Operational in An Nasiryah, Iraq.** "We're putting up lights and fans, running electrical wiring and changing

electrical panels." said a construction Electrician 3rd Class.

**Spanish President Thanks Seabees From NMCB 26 for Beach Project.** Seabees from NMCB 26 worked 7 weeks to clean up beaches along the southern coast of Spain after winter storms caused damage. It's an annual project provided by Seabees stationed at Camp Mitchell, the Seabee compound at Naval Station, Rota.

**Seabees, Royal Thai Teamwork Benefits School and Community in Rayong, Thailand.** NMCB 3 officer in charge said, "They (Thais) set the footers and erected the columns and we poured the slab and put on the roof. My job is pretty easy. I've got a really great crew." 14 Seabees worked with 26 Royal Thai Marines and several local Civilians to complete the project in 12 days.

**New Seabee Detachment Continues to Build.** NMCB Det 40 is at Naval Air Station, Atsugi, Japan working on several projects during their 6 month deployment. The rotation now is 6 months deployed and 10 months in home port.

It does not appear that the jobs of Seabees have changed much over the last 34 years since NMCB 8 completed its last deployment to Vietnam. When I review the above projects they remind me of the projects NMCB 8 completed while deployed to Hue, Phu Bai and Danang. I have been looking through the cruise books from those two deployments and I can assure you there is not enough room in this article to list all the projects that were "Better Built by Eight" during those two deployments. I am proud to say I was a member of NMCB 8 during that period and I am sure that today's Seabees are proud of their accomplishments.

**Bob Westberg**

**Next issue, the up-to-date, revised, and official membership roster...**

## State Representatives List

It was voted at the Association meeting at the reunion 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. Contact him. Let him know you can help.

### Committed Representatives

Alabama	Tom Burton
Arizona	Ron Dougal Sr.
California (North)	Jack Quinn Dennis
Colorado	Richard Berry
Connecticut	George Schuster
Indiana	Joseph Henley
Kentucky	F.M. Howard
Maine	Barry R. Cote
Maryland	Tim Fowler
Michigan	Eric Davis
Mississippi	Howell T. McCormick
Nebraska	Jim Glasgow
New Hampshire	John Reed Jr.
Ohio	Jerry A. Mallot
Oklahoma	Richard B. Swallow
Oregon	Robert J. Degon
Pennsylvania	Albert Black
South Dakota	John North
Tennessee	Troy Branch
Texas	Bill O'Ferrall
West Virginia	Frank Pecjak

All the rest are open. If you do not see your state on this list, **VOLUNTEER!** If anyone is interested in becoming a state representative please contact:

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

## Battalion Firefighter

Taken from the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association Hot Line dated August 18, 1969:

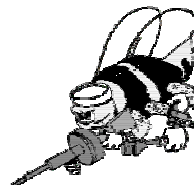
Fire Fighter, **Wendell DeFreitas**, who left his job with the Honolulu Fire Department to volunteer for active service as a Seabee in Vietnam has received high praise from his Battalion Commander for heroic fire fighting action during a conflagration involving dangerous live munitions.

In a personal letter of appreciation, **R. J. Westberg**, Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Eight, describes the action which occurred in Danang, Vietnam:

"At approximately 1130 hours on Sunday 27 April, 1969, you, as a member of the NMCB EIGHT fire crew, were dispatched to provide fire fighting assistance at the ASP-1 conflagration. Upon arrival at the scene you willingly, without hesitation, and without regard to your own personal safety entered the burning area spewed with dangerous live munitions. Although forced back from firefighting efforts by the gigantic explosions, you nevertheless managed to retrieve from a perilous location three exposed personnel from NMCB FIVE and transport them to a safe position."

"Early the following morning you again returned to the scene of the fire and were redirected to fight secondary fires, the most significant of which included the POL depot. Although this location was also covered with unexploded munitions in addition to the burning stockpiles of petroleum products, you again, with little regard for your own personal safety, commenced to put this burning holocaust under control."

Well done Wendell....



## THIRD ANNUAL ALL SEABEE REUNION:

Seabees of all eras and battalions are invited to attend the Annual Summer Reunion being held at Gulfport, MS in October of 2004. No actual date has been set, but we are reassured by Master Chief Girard that the event will take place similar to the First, and Second Annual events which took place on time!! MCB-8 will conduct it's reunion in conjunction with this event.

*Contributed by Jack O'Leary from an e-mail:*

## "AMERICA, MY HOME!"

I sat in my seat of the Boeing 767 waiting for everyone to hurry and stow their carry ons and grab a seat so we could start what I was sure to be a long and uneventful flight home. With the huge capacity and slow-moving people taking their time to stuff luggage far too big for the overhead and never paying much attention to holding up the growing line behind them, I simply shook my head knowing that this flight was not starting out very well and although I had a great bunch of meetings while conducting business on this trip, it was quickly becoming tarnished with these delays in my getting home to my loved one whom I had not seen in several days.

The meetings, although fruitful were long and I had not slept well, not to mention those blasted new dress shoes that rubbed a blister on my heel. I was pretty focused on "my" issues and just felt like standing up and yelling for some of these clowns to get their act together and focus on taking their seats. Knowing I couldn't say anything that would really help, I just thumbed through the sky mall widget magazine from the seat pocket in front of me. You know it's really getting rough when you resort to the over priced and mostly useless sky mall crap to break the monotony and inconvenience of the trouble I was going through.

With everyone finally on board and seated, we just sat there with the cabin door open and seemingly no one in any hurry to get us going even though we were well past our scheduled take off time. The paperwork had not yet come in to the flight deck, the attendants just stood around talking. No wonder the airline industry is in trouble I told myself. Don't they realize we have some place we are supposed to be? We should be treated with more importance, after all we are the customers, right? Just then, the attendant came on the intercom to inform us all that we were being delayed... as she paused, the entire plane let out a collective groan.

She resumed her announcement, "We are holding the aircraft for some very special people who are on their way to the plane and that the delay should not be more than five more minutes. Their connecting flight has traveled a long way and we will get under way just as soon as possible."

Now, I have had this happen to me before and more often than not, I had to catch the next flight or even go to another carrier to get to my destination. Still, I was grateful for the times when they waited for me, so I thought that I would go back to my sky mall pages and try to forget just how much I was being inconvenienced. An attendant scrambling down the connecting tunnel to the main cabin door brought word. I thought that maybe she had some information that would let us know why we had been sitting there for over 30 minutes!!

Had someone finally given word that after waiting six times as long as we were first promised that I was finally going to be on my way? Why the hoopla over these folks? Just get their butts in a seat and let's hit the gas, I thought. After a few minutes we were all "locked on" when the attendant came back on the speaker. We were expecting some celebrity or sport figure to be announced as the reason the aircraft was delayed so long. I thought. "Who cares? Let's go!!"

She announced in a loud and excited voice that we were being joined by several United States Marines returning home from Iraq!!!! Just as they walked onboard, the entire plane erupted into applause. The men were a bit taken by the surprise of the 340+ people cheering for them as they searched for their seats. It didn't stop - they were having their hands shook and touched by almost everyone who was within an arm's distance of them as they tried to push through the aisles. Whistles, cheering, an occasional "oorrahh", one elderly woman kissed the hand of one of the Marines as he passed by her, and the applause didn't stop for a long time as they continued toward the back of the aircraft. When we finally got airborne, I am sure I was not the only civilian checking his conscience, thinking of the delays in getting home from my "hard business meetings", finding my easy chair and remote, a cold beverage, and tending to my blister. In fact I felt pretty stupid as I am sure many did.

After what these men had done for all of us, and I had been complaining silently about "me" and "my issues"? It sure made me realize that as much as I told myself that I didn't take for granted some of the everyday freedoms I enjoy, and the conveniences of the American way of life and that it sometimes seems like a personal attack on one of us when things don't go exactly right... and I was doing exactly that. I was taking it for granted. I took it for granted when others who had really paid the price for my ability to moan and complain (even if it was just to myself) - let alone a few minutes delay - so that those HEROES could go home to their loved ones.

I attempted to get my selfish outlook back in order, and minutes before we landed I suggested to the attendant that she announced over the speaker a request for everyone to remain in their seats until our heroes were allowed to gather their things and be first off the plane. The cheers and applause continued until the last Marine stepped off. We all rose. I felt proud of them. I felt it an honor and a privilege to be among the first to welcome them home and say thank you for a job well done. I vowed that I will never forget that flight nor the lesson learned.

I have said it before but I can't say it enough, THANK YOU to those VETERANS and ACTIVE SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN who may read this, and a prayer everyday for those who cannot because they are no longer with us.

**GOD BLESS AMERICA.**



# 2003 REUNION MEMORIES IN PICTURES





## IN MEMORIAM

*In remembrance of those who served with us.*

No news here to report

## THE BINNICALE LIST

**Pappy Phelps** is fighting a battle with the medics right now in chemotherapy. No visitors, but cards I'm sure would be welcome. **John North** is facing eye surgery, dealing with the effects of his MS. Cards would be welcome.

### From the Editor:

We've had some growing pains in the last year. Several people are working on contacting old friends, other Bee's who've been missing from our ranks. Most notably are **Ron Dougal**, **Rick Reese**, and **John North**. These guys are the ones responsible for most of the names and addresses we have today.



We've endeavored to put together a list of all those known, all those contacted, and all those who've replied. That list is the one **Arnie** talks about being issued in the coming months. It was put together by Ron Dougal. If you don't see your friends, your buddies, on the list, be sure to submit their names to one of the above so we can begin looking for them...

John North is also working on a Bravo Company reunion somewhere in the Mid-west during the coming year. He's promised not to conflict with the Gulfport reunion. So far, he has about 20-30 commitments.

And **Harry Davis** and I have been conferring on the newsletter. Hoping to get it out in a timely manner, and with the content looked for by you, the Association. To that end, I would appreciate letters to the editor, contributions to the stories, pictures that don't exist in the archives, and, in general, some working feedback so that I can continue to do the job you want on the newsletter.

**Jack**

*"The difficult we can do at once.....  
The impossible takes a little longer."*  
Seabee Slogan



C/o Harry Davis  
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Web Page Editor ..... Jack Quinn Dennis

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

**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 yearly or \$100 for lifetime**) which will maintain my membership in good standing.

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 Davis**

**Harry Davis**  
4720 NW Terrace View Drive, Bremerton, WA. 98312