

December, 2018

-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN-

IAMES O MILLER UTP2 NMCB 8 2/6/67 DIED TAM KY VIETNAM

RAY L WILLIAMS BUR2 NMCB 6 3/13/67 DIED CHU LAI VIETNAM

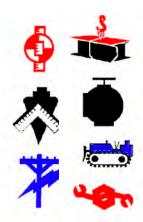
MICHAEL D ESTOK BUR3 NMCB 8 5/13/67 DIED CHU LAI VIETNAM

HARRY H MIDDAUGH UT NMCB 8 4/25/68 **DIED BUNG KAN THAILAND**

LOREN F STUDER SWF2 NMCB 8 5/31/68 **DIED TAN MY VIETNAM**

RUDY P KRISSMAN NMCB 8 7/10/68 DIED PHU BAI VIETNAM

WILLIAM C LEGAT BUT NMCB 8 10/30/69 **DIED DANANG VIETNAM**





can't thank all the people Seabee banquet) enough for their help in

efforts. I originally told Ron this reunion would be very easy for him as we have a lot of NMCB-8 mem-Boston to plan the festivities, and my brother Anthothe arrangements.

Ron, as usual, took charge and collaborated with my brother on the planning. They did a fantastic job working out the details. There was a tremendous amount of effort arranging for the hotel and planning the trip to Plymouth. Getting a bus was a top priority. We thought it would be easy until we realized it was fall foliage season in New England, which is peak time for tourists. We thought it would take one phone call Hueneme in 2020. The dates are not yet set. to arrange the bus, but in fact it took many phone calls bus lined up and the trip put together. It consisted of a visit to Plymouth Rock, Plymouth Museum, (oldest museum in America), a lunch stop at The Lobster Hut, which was great, and a barbecue picnic at the Plimoth Plantation. Everything went extremely well and on schedule in spite of the rain.

At our Banquet Thursday evening, we were very grateful to have an Honor Guard from the USS Constitution, IC2 Careccia, BM3 Delgado, SN Watson and SN Brown, along with our guest speaker, one of our own, Seabee Chief BUC Camara, who was on duty aboard the USS Constitution. (We kidded with the chief with the question: How does a Builder Chief get assigned to a US Navy ship? And he answered: "It's made of wood"!) A trip to Boston would not be complete without a visit from "Ben Franklin", who surprised and amazed the crowd at the banquet. J.T. Turner who performed Mr. Franklin is an award-win-

The 2018 NMCB-8 ning writer-actor-educator. He appears all over and proreunion held in Quincy, vided us with a wonderful show. He is with "Marci & MA at the Adams Inn was J.T., The Actors Company." Note: Billy Boggs filmed another huge success. I Ben. Please go to YouTube and type in: (Ben Franklin at

Again, putting together a reunion is a major task. It putting it together. But requires many hours of work planning all the activities, I do want to personally arranging hotels and staying on top of numerous misthank Ron Sabattis and my brother Anthony for their cellaneous activities. Thank you again to all who were involved.

With the help and coordination by Ken and Ron, bers in the Boston area. Unfortunately, I did not realize we will have our next reunion in combination with they all retired and went to Florida. Ron and I went to NMCB-3 a currently active Seabee battalion. Volunteers from both battalions will provide the necessary ny, who lives in Plymouth, was extremely helpful with personnel to address all requirements associated with conducting a reunion. We will have our own hospitality room at the reunion so we can set up all our NMCB-8 photos and paraphernalia. We are looking forward to the next reunion at the Desert Diamond Casino, Tucson AZ, October 3, thru October 7, 2019. If this venture turns out to be successful, we will probably continue combined reunions after 2020. Please note that as planned, we will be having an NMCB-8 reunion in Port

Finally, a special thanks to Ken Bingham. As you all and an inordinate amount time. Finally, Ron got the know, Ken has combined responsibilities as our treasurer and also editor of our newsletter at which he works long hours to put out an exceptional product several times a year. It's quite an endeavor and he is dedicated to it and to the battalion. There's a great amount of work to write and publish the newsletter. Along with that, Ken maintains our bank account, continually updates our membership list, corrects addresses and deals with all the bookkeeping involved in the organization. Thank you again Ken, from all the members of the association. You are truly a Can Do Seabee.





Clockwise, Beverly Petrelli, Mary Lou Petrelli, Cliff Musella, Brenda Musella, Judy Sharland, Marilyn Cicerone.



Clockwise, Victor DeSousa, Denise DeSouza, Ken Bingham, Bonnie (*Bingham*) Dalton.



Clockwise, Barry Cote, Dennis Lyman, John Moose Malmos, Ashley Watson, Angela Carwllia, David Delgado, Zhane Brown, Ed Crowly, Dave Abatti, John Faramelli.



Clockwise, Eilene Albers, Jim Albers, Jennifer Albers, Jim Fowler, 2 Denise Maggs, Rusty Maggs.



Clockwise, Rick Reese, Annie Reese, Leslie Sabattis, Ron Sabatis, Sally Boggs, Billy Boggs, J.T. Turnel, Thomas Camara, Monica Camara



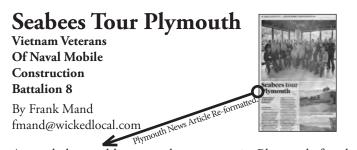
Clockwise—Mike Moroney, Kathy Moroney, Gina Fisher, Craig Fisher, Connie Mack Harrington, Mary Harrington, Pat Dautel, Skip Dautel.



Clockwise, Karl Holland, Triss Holland, Nancy Thede, Gary Thede, Paula Davis, Harry Davis, Anna Boothby, Richard Boothby.



Ron Sabattis doing behind the scenes work at our reunion. 98% of Ron's work for the reunion is behind the scenes—and we're all gratefull for what you have done for us Ron.



Around the world, across the country, in Plymouth for the day, Rocky Nook native Arnold Cicerone took time out from his hectic schedule Thursday to speak about the voyage he's been on and the comrades gathered around him at Plimoth Plantation that still care for each other nearly 50 years after their tours of duty in Vietnam.

Cicerone, who lives in Seal Beach, California, is the president of the NMCB-8 Association, which he explained is a group of 800 or so veterans of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 8 - whose members are known as "Seabees," specially trained units whose storied history goes back to World War II.

In brief, Naval Construction Battalions (CB = Seabees) replaced civilian construction companies working for the Navy when World War II began.

The Seabees were skilled workers trained to drop their tools if necessary and take up their weapons at a moment's notice. They were Marine Corps-trained battalions of construction tradesmen capable of building important infrastructure such as airfields under combat conditions.

The tours of duty of the Vietnam veterans of NMCB8 who toured Plymouth last Thursday ended over 50 years ago.

Cicerone, comrades and families were in Plymouth as part of a biannual gathering of Battalion 8 vets that moves from time zone to time zone and this year came to the east and Massachusetts.

Coincidentally that brought Cicerone back to

the place where he grew up—Rocky Nook in Kingston, just across the town line from Plymouth and a surprise reunion with his brother Tony, now a Plymouth resident, and two childhood friends, the DeFelice brothers.

They gathered at the DeFelice home on Rocky Nook, in the exact same spot where they had taken a picture together 67 years ago. "It's hardly changed," Cicerone said, looking at the black and white picture, though a new deck now covers the rock where they stood in1951, "but the world certainly has."

The 35 or so Seabees and family members that signed up for this year's gathering were based in Quincy, but spent Thursday in Plymouth, beginning with a tour of the waterfront, a visit to Plymouth Rock, a tour of Pilgrim Hall led by Executive Director Donna Curtin, lunch at the Lobster Hut and then the entire afternoon at Plimoth Plantation culminating with a burger and beans barbecue. That's a busy schedule for anyone, but when the barbecue commenced at 5 that evening the group - most of the veterans are now in their 70s - was still energetic.

That's not a surprise considering their service, which often required them to rapidly deploy to combat areas to replace bridges, repair roads, or outfit forward bases soon after they had been damaged by monsoons, floods or enemy fire.

A quick review of company newsletters - available on the group's website, NMCB8.com - from their deployments in the 1960s

shows how the 8th battalion was asked to repair bridges over the Perfume River after the Tet Offensive of 1968 had laid waste to the once beautiful city of Hue.

In many cases in Hue and other parts of Vietnam during the war bridges were built, destroyed, and then built again in the most adverse conditions.

The 8th also participated in many special projects to benefit the local people as well, the newsletter shows, including the design and construction of a compact hospital serving a city of 50,000.

One of the more remarkable stories is found on the company newsletter for Sept., 1968, which describes a Yard Freight Utility boat that had broken free of its mooring and, swept by the wind and carried by flood waters, had moved well inland.

The Seabees called to the scene excavated roads, blew up obstructions and pushed and pulled this 220 ton ship over land—often with bullets whizzing by until it was back where it was supposed to be and not, as the newsletter said, "A permanent US monument on the land-locked side."

So it was not surprising that the rain that pelted the area did not deter the group from its tour of the town, including a slow perambulation of the exterior of the Plantation from the Wampanoag home site to the 1627 Pilgrim Village.

"It's a real pleasure to be with my comrades," Cicerone said, as he organized the group picture after dinner at the Plantation, "and very special for me to come back to the Plymouth area."



BEFORE: The Cicerone and DeFelice brothers in Rocky Nook, around 1951. [COURTESY PHOTO]



AFTER: Arnold and Tony Cicerone, and the DeFelice brothers, at the same spot, 67 years apart. Tony was in town for a reunion event of Vietnam Seabee veterans. [COURTESY PHOTO]

—continued from previous page



COURTESY NMCB8.COMI



Fred Klein, of Charlie Company, with two helpers. [COURTESY NMCB8.COM

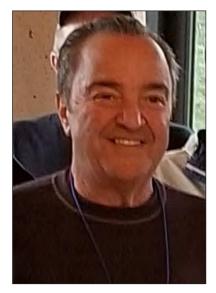


L-R-Paula Davis, Harry Davis, Gary Thede and Nancy Thede. Note: Paula was a reunion "double-dipper," whereby she also had her high school reunion at the same location during the same month.

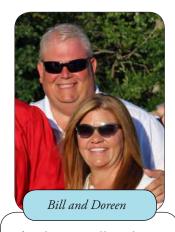




They built docks, bridges and, occasionally, movie theatres.



Our President, Arnie Cicerone, continues his good work and he too does many things to make the reunion and the Association work. Thank you Arnie.



Thank you Bill and Doreen Conley for your kind offer to use your summer home in Wakefield R.I. during the NMCB-8 Reunion. This offer was for NMCB-8 reunion members visiting the Rhode Island Seabee Museum. Some of us took up the offer. The new summer home mansion near the water was much more than we expected. It was beautiful. We Vietnam vets referred to it, affectionately, as "The Wakefield Hooch" (Ala-Vietnam lingo for housing)-an understatement extreme for sure. Thank you largely.



Our president, Arnie Cicerone, also arranged Ben Franklin to attend the reunion. Ben gave a very insightfull entertaining history of himself-which was terrific.



Row 2—K. Holland + T Holland + L. Sabbatis + S. Boggs + B. Boggs + A. Reese + M. Harrington + K. Morone + N. Thede + P. Davis + H. Davis + B. Cote + S. Dautel + J. Fowler ROW 1-E. Crowley + E. Albers + J Albers + P. Fowler + M. Cicerone + A. Cicerone + P. Dautel + J. Malmos







Rhode Island Davisville Seabee Museum volunteers, Bill & Betsy Tatlow, receives a 4-piece Seabee Memorial replica. The model was donated to the museum during NMCB8's reunion. The models were rendered through a 3D scan of the original Seabee memorial, at Arlington Cemetary, by the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation.



Left to Right—Ken Bingham, sister Bonnie (Bingham) Dalton, Bill Tatlow and Betsy Tatlow.



The four piece Seabee Memorial Model is for sale at the Seabee Museum Store at Port Hueneme CA, \$149.00 each. Call 805-382-2385

---Excerpt from Vietnam Magazine. WHEN NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS WEREN'T BUILDING BASES,

THEY WERE FIGHTING THE ENEMY.

On the morning of July 1, 1967, Chief Petty Officer Joseph Herrara of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11 was driving a truck near Da Nang Air Base when a lone Viet Cong soldier fired a poisonous dart that shattered a window and caused a deep gash in the chief's arm. Realizing he was under attack, Herrara switched off the engine and got out. As he ran toward the back of the truck, a bullet struck his belt loop. He drew his pistol and made his way to a ditch across the road. He spotted the Viet Cong and fired four rounds before chasing him. The Viet Cong threw a grenade, and Herrara hit the ground, waiting for an explosion that didn't come. He slowly rose and inspected the grenade; its safety pin was still partially in place. The Navy construction man had survived the sudden attack.



Bridge Over Troubled Waters-by Monk

In the spring of 1965 there were 9,400 Seabees on active duty at various sea/shore locations and with the then existing ten Naval Mobile Construction Battalions. On 7 May, 1965, NMCB-10 deployed from Okinawa to Chu Lai, RVN, to mark the arrival of the first major Seabee unit in the combat zone. During late 1965, 1966, and early 1967 the Seabee commitment in Southeast Asia rapidly increased, necessitating, first, the transfer of Atlantic Fleet NMCBs to the Pacific (homeport change), then . the deployment to RVN of Atlantic Fleet NMCBs, and finally the actual commissioning of nine additional Battalions. This effort was culminated by the activation of two Reserve NMCBs in May of 1968, bringing the number of RVN deploying NMCBs to 21. In the same time period a requirement for Seabees to support in-country activities such as NSA DaNang, NSA Saigon, CBMU 301, CBMU 302, 30th NCR, 32nd NCR, and 3rd NCB rapidly increased (from 0 to approximately 2,500). To support these various requirements, the totalSeabee community grew from 9,400 in mid 1965 to 14,000 in mid 1966 to 20,000 in mid 1967 to its present level [Oct. 1969] of approximately 25,000.



The Vietnam Magazine has finally included stories about Seabees—*BOUT TIME.* The only other story, in Vietnam Magazine, that I'm aware of, was the Seabees' experience when the Danang Ammo Dump blew up in 1969. MCB-8 witnessed that event. It was amazing watching those shock waves one after the other. Rounds/bombs cooked off for three days. *Ken B.*





Mad as hell and I ain't taken it no more. *Gary Thede. Phu Bai RVN* 1968

-Note: First STAT Teams in Vietnam. 0501 and 0503 1963-

The following are excerpts from the 12 pages of orders for STAT (Seabee Team) 0501 & 0502 dated 15 Jan. 1963.

c. Security: (1) All STAT personnel Will have minimum somurity clearance of SECRET.

c. Upon arrival in South Viet Nam, STAT 0501 will report immediately to COMUSMACV for operational control and subsequent employment in support of the CIDG regram. Although preliminary plans have established the initial Moniflocations in the villages of HAM BON, B. ENAO and ARVN's new AROKOLO VALLEY camp, (approximaly 50 km. south of B. HEAO pear the village of LACH DEUNG.) final plans for suployment will be promulgited by COMUSMACV upon errival of STAT 0501 in South Viet Name

(4) STAT personnel are prohibited from receiving jump training and will not perticipate in operations requiring jump capability.

OAlways loved this part. *Ken B.*

Life Magazine Seabees—WWII



THE MINSTRELS PLAYED THEIR CHRISTMAS TUNE TO-NIGHT BENEATH MY COTTAGE-EAVES; WHILE, SMITTEN BY A LOFTY MOON, THE ENCIRCLING LAURELS, THICK WITH LEAVES, GAVE BACK A RICH AND DAZZLING SHEEN, THAT OVERPOWERED THEIR NATURAL GREEN.

Reconstruction and a second and a

THROUGH HILL AND VALLEY EVERY BREEZE HAD SUNK TO REST WITH FOLDED WINGS: KEEN WAS THE AIR, BUT COULD NOT FREEZE, NOR CHECK, THE MUSIC OF THE STRINGS; SO STOUT AND HARDY WERE THE BAND THAT SCRAPED THE CHORDS WITH STRENUOUS HAND.

AND WHO BUT LISTENED?—TILL WAS PAID RESPECT TO EVERY INMATE'S CLAIM, THE GREETING GIVEN, THE MUSIC PLAYED IN HONOUR OF EACH HOUSEHOLD NAME, DULY PRONOUNCED WITH LUSTY CALL, AND "MERRY CHRISTMAS" WISHED TO ALL.

8

-William Wordsworth

Like the Energizer Bunny, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer got his start as an advertising gimmick. A copywriter named Robert L. May first created the merry misfit in 1939 to lure shoppers into the Montgomery Ward department store.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year Compiled Ken Bingham

Ъ He was a civil servant who had helped set-up the new 'Public Record Office' (now called the Post Office), where he was an Assistant Keeper, and wondered how it could be used more THE CUSTOM OF SENDING CHRISTMAS CARDS WAS STARTED IN THE UK IN 1843 BY SIR HENRY COLE. BY ORDINARY PEOPLE. Б



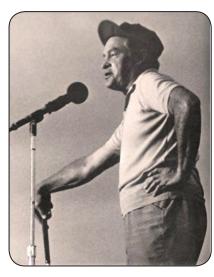
FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD-U.K. 1843.



CONTINENTAL CHILDREN were not spared the horror of Christmas. When Santa Claus comes to town we sing that he is going

to "find out who's naughty and nice". In Europe during throughout the 19th and early 20th century, the holy St. Nicholas enlisted the devil to help with his deliveries. St. Nicholas gave out treats to well-behaved children, while the devil, who appeared in many guises, kidnapped the bad kids and beat them with a stick! Perhaps "Grub vom Krampus" (Greetings from Krampus) in Germanic Christmas tradition, served as a warning akin to "You better watch out! sented the spirit of good cheer at Christmas, but was not associated with either children of the bringing of gifts.

As I SIT DOWN TO WRITE THIS ARTICLE, the date is December 9, 2018. Sally and I have been readying our home and hearts with the spirit of Christmas. Last night we attended the local high school choral Christmas concert in the largest church in our area. The place was packed, and the church was decorated with red poinsettias. The program was over the top with beautiful music and song. As I sat there spell bound, it came to me that



FOR ALL SERVICEMEN deployed to the Republic of Vietnam during the holiday season, those fortunate to attend the Bob Hope Christmas Show formed memories that lasted a lifetime.

But one last holiday treat awaited a few fortunate Seabees: the Bob Hope Christmas Show. With his usual brand of self-deprecating humor and wit, Hope's shows to this day remain some of the most lasting Christmas memories for any serviceman fortunate

enough to be in the audience. At Da Nang and Chu Lai, Seabees of NMCBs 5, 10 and 40 constructed massive outdoor amphitheaters to host Hope, Les Brown and his Band of Renown, as well as other celebrities, dancers and vocalists who accompanied the traveling troupe. For some Christmas shows, Seabees joined Marines in providing the security for the shows, whose itineraries were often more tightly guarded than those of generals or visiting politicians. An honorary Seabee in his own right, Hope entertained countless thousands of American servicemen from 1965 to the end of the American involvement in the war in 1972, even stopping off at Diego Garcia to put on a show for the men of NMCB 62.

Years after the first Seabee battalions arrived in the Republic of Vietnam, memories of the war have faded for many Americans. What remains strong, however, are memories of those who worked and fought there, particularly of holidays spent away from home. This holiday season, take a moment to thank the Seabee or service member in your life. And, if you should find yourself traveling, stop and take a moment to wish any member in uniform a Merry Christmas, lest we forgot those who cannot be home to celebrate with family, friends and loved ones. As they give us the gift of freedom and security, the least we can do is ensure the gift of love and honor continues to be bestowed by a grateful nation.

I was experiencing one of the miracles of Christmas, one of the miracles of life. I am coming to know that we are living in a world of miracles and that we must choose to see them.

I know this writing will find you some time in 2019, and it is my hope that you will see the miracles that God performs all around us.

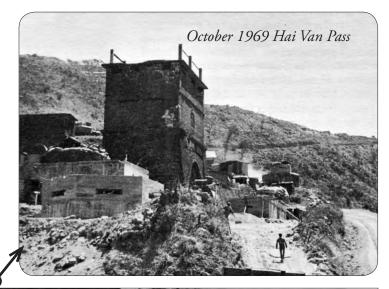
With the peace of Christ! —Billy



-Charlie Don't Surf-

Jerry Shine, a La Jolla surfer who became a Seabee, smuggled his surfboard into Vietnam in the hold of his ship. The captain discovered the board and told Jerry that having it was a court martial offense. However when Jerry subsequently used it to rescue four endangered swimmers in the South China Sea he was recommended for a lifesaving medal...Catch 22 for the captain!

Note: "Charlie Don't Surf" is taken from the movie Apocalypse Now."



LAAM battalion road, currently under construction by MCB-8, winds past old French fortifications north of Danang, RVN. Note: As of 1996 the French Forts were still there. Ken B.

—*Continued from last newsletter.*



Trying to get the "gears in my brain box" to mesh together correctly and trying to wrap my mind around my new circumstances, I'm confronted with the fact that I am now going from being a rope choker on board ship to a rifle packing ground pounder.

As a Boatswains Mate Third Class assigned to the Security Platoon of Mobile Construction Battalion EIGHT for me was a most interesting experience to say the very least. This was a whole new life experience with a whole new training program. Instead of General Quarters involving training in gun mounts, ammunition loading and safety, Damage Control Drills, Man-Over-Board-Drills, other shipboard drills, Standing Boatswains Mate of the Watch and other assigned duties, I'm now a squad leader in a Security Platoon.

Once the Security Platoon had formed-up we were assembled and given our basic orders, instructions and Military Training Plan. After one of these sessions we were marched around our barracks to the Battalion's Armory Trailer. In formation at the rear of the trailer each member of the Security Platoon was called in alphabetical order by the Armorer a Gunnersmate First Class. At the tail gate of the trailer each person was given a serialized buff colored custody card to sign along with a white wallet sized matching serial numbered Weapons Permit and then was issued a long plain box. The box was approximately 40+" long, by about 8" high by around 16" wide. The only thing that stood out on the box, the only color that is, was the red letters: "Winchester". This was truly great! Everyone in the Security Platoon was issued a brand-new-in-the-box

Winchester M-14! Opening the box was like an extra special Christmas with the sight and oily smell of a brand M-14 new rifle.





Being the first owner of an untouched, unblemished and straight out of the *Winchester* factory M-14 was nothing short of spectacular. Also, in that plain brown box there was not only a rifle, but a *Winchester* rifle in 7.62 mm; with four 20 round magazines; brand new bayonet and scabbard; automatic selector switch; heavy olive drab braided cotton sling; cleaning kit with oiler, grease pot and pouch; multiwrench tool; and bi-pod all laid out in their separate compartments in one plain wrapper box! What a great issue, so, I guess being in

a Seabee Battalion may not be all that bad especially since they're issuing brand new equipment. The next issue we received was called 782 Gear which included packs, magazine pouches, web belts and all sorts of other Military gear ground pounder's need in "the field." Boatswains Mates are sometimes easy to win over with "bright shiny things."

—Continued next page.

Part of the new to me training schedule for the Security Platoon was Military Training which included basic combat training locations near Port Hueneme for squad and platoon maneuvers. This training period included setting up out posts and platoon perimeters including M-60 machine gun fields of fire and defensive positions.

Next round of training for the Security Platoon was Temporary Additional Duty (TAD) to U.S. Marine Corps Camp Pendleton for Infantry Regimental Training. At Camp Pendleton the USMC instructors were, of course, no nonsense and with the wide range of Military Training the Marine Drill Instructors taught each and everyone in the Security Platoon how to shoot. I'm personally proud of the fact, with the high level of training I received from the USMC Drill Instructors, on the final day and final round of M-14 qualifications from the 500 yard line, I scored 10 out of 10 shots in the "10-Ring." The "10-Ring" is 10 inches in diameter. The training at USMC Camp Pendleton was a great experience.

The various training programs and combined Battalion maneuvers resulted in understanding and participating in all the responsibilities I would be assigned "In-Country." These duties for me included being a Squad Leader; Sergeant of the Guard for the Battalion's main "In-Country" compound for a 24 hour watch cycle; and Squad Leader of a Marine Corps style 4 Fire Team Squad, but in this case made up of Seamen and Firemen soon to be deployed to guard the Battalion's main compound and outlying "In-Country" projects.

About as ready as we'll ever be the Security Platoon with all our personal and assigned gear boarded buses heading for the Naval Air Station, Point Mugu. The buses followed our flatbed truck with its cargo load and headed for a C-141 Starlifter which we were scheduled to board.

Kon Tum

Pleiku

Suon Ma Thuot

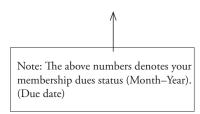
Why does it seem that the departure day is always "dark and gloomy"?

-Continued in next newsletter.

BALL LI

NMCB-8 Seabees' Association 1773 Tamarin Ave, Ventura Ca. 93003 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

To:



-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:

Ken Bingham, 1773 Tamarin Ave., Ventura Ca. 93003. If you have e-mail and want to make your update electronically, please do so. Send updates by e-mail to; jorden2323@msn.com.

Thanks for your support!

