

1942

1969



NMCB-8

## NEWSLETTER



– U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION EIGHT –

– February, 2024 – MCB-11 and MCB8 Reunion Branson, MO 9-23-24

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

RAY L WILLIAMS BUR2  
NMCB 8 3/13/67  
DIED CHU LAI VIETNAM

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

HARRY H MIDDAGH 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 BU1  
NMCB 8 10/30/69  
DIED DANANG VIETNAM



**I**T'S THAT TIME AGAIN. We hope to get ready for the next reunion with MCB11. (Everything will be on the website soon.). This time, it will be in Branson, Mo. The date will be September or October.

Again, we thank MCB 11 for allowing us to join them. We do not have the workforce or the numbers to put on all the festivities necessary to have a full agenda. We will have our own MCB 8 hospitality room at the hotel to set up our paraphernalia, drink beer, eat snacks, and play Chickenfoot during our off time. Also, keep an eye on all Seabee reunions. One is coming up in Port Hueneme, and one in Gulfport. It should be on the website and in various veteran magazines. We want to keep in contact with each other to see who is attending, and we may meet some of the eight crew members there. I will have both reunions listed on the website with all the necessary information as soon as we receive it.

On a sad note, we lost Frank Pecjak, one of our outstanding Seabees, during the all-Seabee reunion. We could always count on Frank to help whenever we asked him. He will be missed.

As time passes, we must realize we are all getting older, and it's essential to get together whenever possible.

Ron Sabbatis, my wife, Marilyn, and I had a great time visiting with Bill and Sally Boggs this

summer. We played a great game, Par 9.

Sally cooked some great meals. I made marinara sauce and meatballs. Sally even had me eating grits.

If we stayed longer, I would have lost my Boston accent! We also got to see Clemson University, where Sally became a nurse. We heard the story of how Billy and Sally met.

I want all of us to get together and stay in touch with one another. Let's get ready for the next reunion. Use the website to leave any notes or to pass on any information.

—Arnie Cicerone, President

## Dick Butkus

**NFL Hall Of Famer And Former Linebacker For The Chicago Bears**  
**December 9, 1942 – October 5, 2023**  
**(And Seabee Supporter)**



**By Dick Butkus:**  
"Strong. Tenacious. Unstoppable. These qualities typify a great linebacker: someone with a "Can Do" attitude who won't hold back from tackling the toughest opponents and the

toughest jobs.

These qualities also describe the U.S. Navy Seabees. As the Navy's construction force, they have a long and proud history of defending American values and protecting freedom.

Their "Can Do" attitude is one of the things I admire most about the Seabees. No job has ever been too difficult for them to tack-

*Cont. next page.*





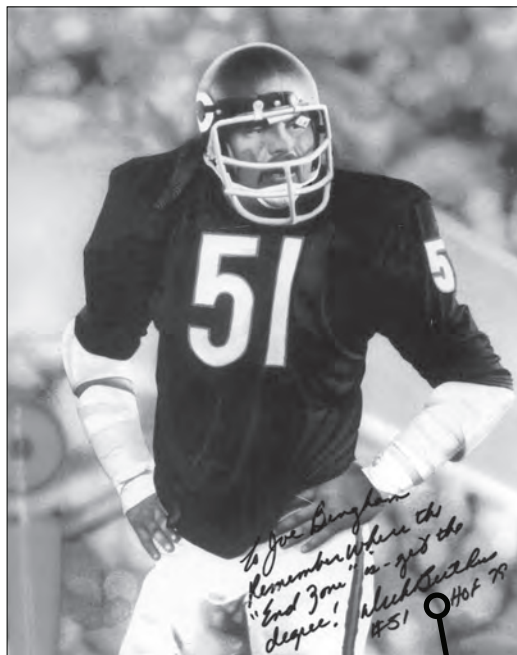
—Cont. from last page.

le. Seabee training and experience have shaped leaders and doers in every walk of life, with an impact spanning generations. Their determination, perseverance and strength of character are inspirational. As a former NFL linebacker myself, I appreciate these qualities, and that's why I support the Seabees.

My football days are long over. Golf is my game now, and it was on a golf course several years ago where I began my relationship with the Seabees. My good friend Steve Thomas, a former Seabee, asked if I'd consider joining a campaign to raise money for the U. S. Navy Seabee Museum in Port Hueneme, CA. This museum, a project of the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation, would honor and commemorate the extraordinary accomplishments of the Seabees."



Steve Thomas, MCB-4 Vietnam Vet, and NFL Legend, Dick Butkus. Good friends having a good time together. (Note: Steve Thomas is owner of BMW sales in Camarillo CA.)



Dick autographed this picture for my son Joe when he was in college. It reads:

"To Joe Bingham  
Remember where the 'End  
Zone' is—get that degree!  
#51...."



L-R; Dick Butkus, Ken Bingham (MCB8) and Steve Thomas (MCB4)  
(Note: I was there for an autograph only.  
We were not friends. ken b)



"Go out there and turn that antennae around and I'll yell out when the picture comes in better."



### First Two Congressional Medal Of Honor Recipients



Above: First Congressional Medal Of Honor was received by Army Private Jacob Parrot on March 25, 1863 for his actions behind lines disrupting rail and communication links.

Two months later the Navy awarded Signal Quarter Master Robert Williams the Medal Of Honor—posthumously. (No picture)

### —Vietnam—

Ben Buttler (Army) says: I know what you mean I was in the Duster Battalion in Dong Ha and one of our Duster positions was at the end of the runway where we lived in a bunker. Met some crazy Seabees the one good thing was those guys could get you anything and they eat very well.



## Chu Lai



### —Sniper This—

In November 2023, a sniper operating under the Ukrainian Security Service named Vyacheslav Kovalskiy set a new record for the world's longest kill shot when he fired a bullet that took out a Russian soldier almost two and a half miles from his position. (????)

### Author Steven King States:

"People think I'm this scary guy, but really I have the heart of a small boy—I keep it in a jar on my desk."



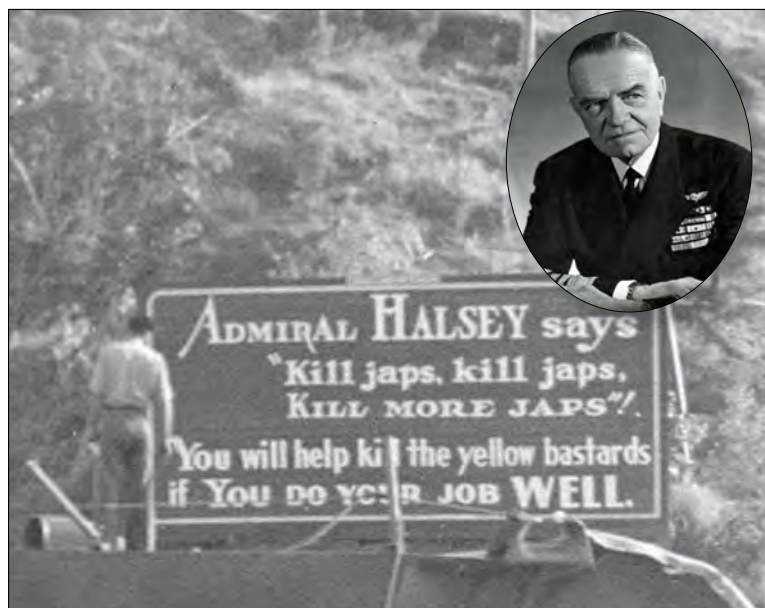
"Any seconds on cheese?"

WW II 8th NCB Cruisebook

## Dong Ha



MCB 8 had a detachment there.



Dear Ken Dingham

This is A. Gerald Lacy I served in CB 8 in Viet Nam 965-66 under Lt Riley.

The reason for this letter is I have several pictures of a Billy Joe King in Viet Nam. His family may want them and I have no way of connecting with them. They are pictures that I took. Could you help to locate his family. otherwise when I am gone the pictures will be gone also, as this younger generation cares nothing about the past.

Thank you  
Gerald Lacy  
gw1acy@pgfc.com

We rarely answer phone calls if we don't recognize the phone #.

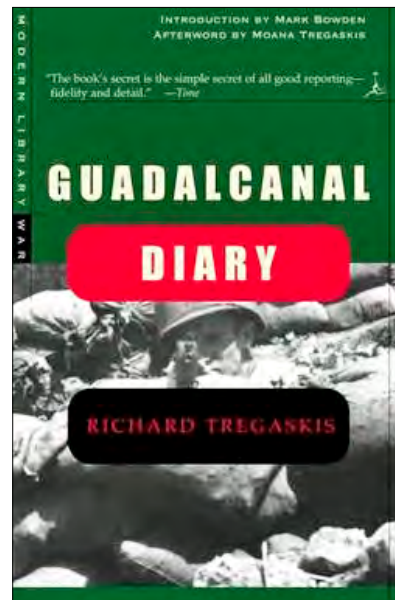
225 Pine meadow  
Farmington Ar 72730

← New address





**Richard and Moana in Vietnam**



**Moana Tregaski**  
**March 31st 1927—**  
**Dec. 28-2021**

Was a war correspondent and author.

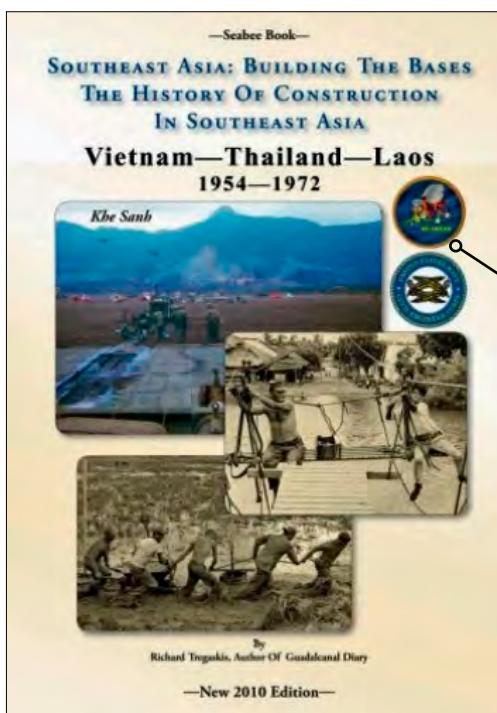
Moana was married to Richard Tregaskis, a noted journalist and author, who was a war correspondent himself.

Moana and Richard traveled together throughout Vietnam during the war, and her photographs are markedly different from her husband's.

Her training as an anthropologist is reflected in her subject selection. It is more scientific than journalistic. She went on to become an author specializing in Asia.



Seabees Working, Camp Hoover. CDR Tom C. Williams, Commanding Officer of NMCB 10, with Richard Tregaskis. Chap in the middle is LCDR Jerry Dunn, Operations Officer of battalion, January, 1967.



The book on the left, “**Southeast Asia Building The bases...**” is the results of Richard and Moana Tregaskis’ travels throughout Vietnam during the war. With Moana’s encouragement, I reprinted and published this book. Although we never met in person, we communicated over the phone several times. She enjoyed receiving our MCB-8 SeabeeNewsletter. —*Ken Bingham Vietnam, 1966-69*





## A 2010 Afterward for the book, "Building the Bases: The History of Construction in Southeast Asia"

By Moana Tregaskis March 31st 1927— Dec. 28-2021

WHEN RICHARD TREGASKIS BEGAN RE-SEARCH on the American building effort in Southeast Asia, he tackled a massive project with the renowned diligence that always was his way in reporting Americans in war. Lt.General Victor "Brute" Krulak, USMC (Ret), who first met Tregaskis when a young lieutenant and parachutist in the Battle of the Solomon Islands, got it right when he said: "A tireless researcher, a painstaking note taker, an uncompromising interrogator, Tregaskis sought, in addition, to share fully in the experiences of those whose actions he described."

In South Vietnam and Thailand I saw first-hand those same qualities, undimmed, consistently curious, witnessing Seabees driving enormous machines, talking at length with engineers amid the dust and noise, taking meticulous notes, always asking, always writing. From his previous works-"Guadalcanal Diary", "Stronger Than Fear", "Vietnam Diary",

"Warrior King", plus other books-two generations of warriors knew Tregaskis had one primary concern: the fortunes of fearless grunts, sailors, airmen and Marines—the people who made things happen. I saw this every day while photographing in field and jungle, in mess halls, aboard helicopters, riding in a jeep or truck, in a temporary headquarters, and in cities.

When military construction in South Vietnam began in the mid 1960s, it was destined to become the most dense project in history up to that time, even greater than the World War II build-up to D-Day in France. Aid to South Vietnam was an enormous commitment and the Seabees pioneered the building of expeditionary force bases. Naval Mobile

Construction Battalions (NMCBs) were at work from top to bottom in South Vietnam, from Nam Canh in the south to Con Thien at the northern frontier near the Ben Hai River demarking the border between South and North Vietnam. A Seabee is not only a construction man, he's a fighting man as well and there were many times construction teams built bases and airfields, often fighting at the same time, even out near the western border at Phu Quoc. Other building forces contributed to the overall effort: Marine Combat Engineers, Army Engineers, and Air Force Red Horse squadrons.

For me, to observe all this was a privilege. Tregaskis was greatly aware of the 13-man Seabee teams, construction men who spoke local languages, and taught the Vietnamese and Thai how to use advanced equipment to build on their own, helping bring undeveloped areas into the modern world. Many times I saw how effortlessly-or it appeared so-he talked with team members at work, scribbling their information all the while.

"Building the Bases: The History of Construction in Southeast Asia" was a book destined from the onset to be the definitive story of a mighty American effort. It has become exactly that. The actual writing of the book continued the massive effort. I am very fortunate to have talked with Seabees at work at many sites across South Vietnam and Thailand, and to have been a part of the making of this legendary history.

—Moana Tregaskis—Honolulu, September 2010

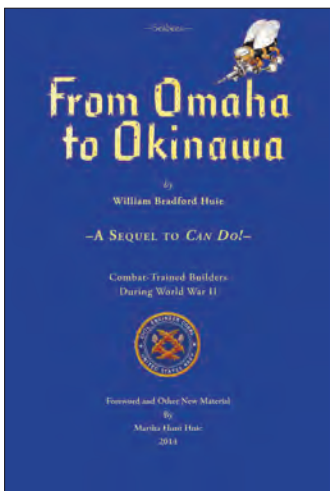


Tregaskis with  
Viet Cong



PHOTOGRAPH BY MOANA TREGASKIS  
Seabees from the 19th NCB. Could be a few Marine Engineers mixed in. CAPE GLOUCESTER. (Note: This is known as a Corduroy Road)

"Building a road through a swamp." (Official USMC photograph)  
—Submitted by John Ratowski, son of WW II 6th Special Seabee.



## Martha Huie, 1931-2014

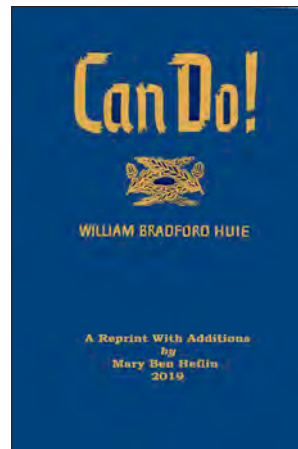
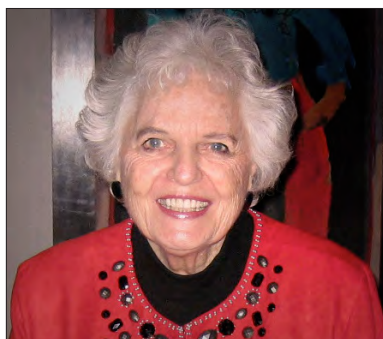
When my husband Bill Huie died in 1986, the most memorable (and prompt) message that came to me was in a letter from someone I did not even know and have not been in contact with since. He was a Seabees WWII veteran representing a Seabees Reunion group, and I am sorry to say that I do not recall his name nor the name of the group, although both will be noted inside the William Bradford

Huie Collection at the Ohio State University Library among the many WBH papers and other archival materials I donated there in 1988. The letter-writer said that at their Reunion Prayer Breakfast they would especially mention Bill Huie with gratitude for all his work in writing about the Seabees. He said they never forgot him. I have never been more touched and never been prouder. And, in tum, I have never forgotten them either. It's these things that count.

In "FROM OMAHA TO OK.INAWA," the book you hold in your hands as you read this, there are dozens and dozens of Seabees living in history, as well as on the pages of CAN DO! STORY OF THE SEABEES, even when we can no longer be with them in life. And I believe they are represented as they really were: remarkable patriots and genuine heroes who never willingly wanted to be pointed out as such; who were doing their jobs magnificently and living life to the fullest at the same time. If that means some of these tales are bawdy, wild, or "politically incorrect" now, so be it. This was a time testing our souls, and these are our fellow Americans doing their best, the ones that Tom Browkaw later calls our "Greatest Generation."

I like to imagine the possibility of these men's children (old now like me) and/or younger descendants discovering a loved one's picture here -- and what that would mean at this point in time, when things are so changed.

**Dear Reader: read on! —  
Martha Huie, April, 2013.  
—1931-2014—**



Bill Huie—author of the first Seabee Book, "Can Do."



Bill Huie with J.F.K. on T.V.



**Note: I communicated with Martha just before she died. She told me: "It's different when it's your turn." Poignant . I'll remember it when it's my turn. —Ken Bingham**





### —To my fellow Seabees—

I WAS SORRY TO READ IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER of Ron Dougal's passing. I remember serving with him and sharing many stories at our reunions. His passing is my motivation for sharing my recent medical challenges and more importantly the insurance calamity associated therewith.

I was recently diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma specifically, Mantle Cell Lymphoma. This was unexpected as I had no indications and have been quite active (house remodeling, tennis and etc.). I did the appropriate due diligence and decided on MD Anderson or Mayo Clinic for my treatments only to be advised that neither will accept any company's Advantage Plan (even if it's a PPO). So I offered to pay cash and turn my paid bills into my PPO accordingly for reimbursement. I was then informed by the Hospital's previously mentioned "if we don't accept your insurance we won't accept your cash".

Next, I went to the Jacksonville FL VA and discussed my

prognosis and requested the possibility of VA outsourcing my care to MD Anderson or Mayo. I was then informed that I would need to stay in the VA network. It was worth a shot! The VA would not be able to get me in for 3-4 weeks. Needless to say commuting time to Gainesville, FL and time to get admitted was unacceptable.

Ultimately, I moved forward with Cancer Specialist of North Florida who is in my PPO coverage (although I would be responsible for co-pay amounts until the in network cap is reached).

To my pleasant surprise, they (Cancer Specialist of North Florida) recognized that I'm a veteran and contacted the VA directly whereupon they advised that my treatment was an emergency and needed to be commenced forthwith immediately. The VA acquiesced and provided approval (therefore no co-pays) for all treatments.

Within three weeks I had all preliminary testing completed including my first two chemo treatments by Cancer Specialist of North Florida.

This is a rare and aggressive form of cancer which may have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange and it was caught early. It was detected from my colonoscopy.

I encourage you all to keep after your health and get your colonoscopy as needed. Also, I found that many major hospitals are no longer accepting Advantage Plans but will accept Medicare with supplemental insurance by a major provider. Consider your insurance coverage carefully as hospital and doctors acceptance of plans is dynamically changing.

I will be on monthly chemo treatments for six months and I'm hoping for some level of remission. Our Lord and Savior are in my corner. God bless you all and I hope to see you at our future reunions. —Regards, Bill Clerke



**MCB-8** Navy Seabees, Vietnam War Navy Seabee James Rand Agnew, son of US Vice President Spiro Agnew, repairing a bridge damaged during fighting in Hue, South Vietnam, 10th August 1968. Better known as the Navy Seabees, the United States Naval Construction Battalions form the United States Naval Construction Force (NCF). (Photo by Bettmann.)

## Legion Of Merit Medal Awarded Officer Who's Happy To See Gyrenes

47TH ISLAND X -(CBN)- The Seabees officer who coined the audacious and now-famous phrase -- "The Seabees are always happy to welcome the Marines" -- was presented the Legion of Merit Medal recently under leaden Pacific skies as members of the 47th CB looked on.

He is Lt. Comdr. Robert L. Ryan (CEC) USNR, 50 years old the day he received the award. His oft-quoted remark was a greeting to Lt. Col. Michael Currin and his Marine Raiders who landed on a beach to drive out the Japs and found Seabees instead.

Lt. Comdr. Ryan was a member of the original reconnaissance group which landed while Japanese ground forces were still in control," the citation reads.

A valuable air strip, it goes on, was completed in a remarkably short time "despite frequent enemy bombing and strafing attacks, the ever-present danger from Japanese ground forces, incessant rain and lack of coral for grading."

## From Vietnam Marine Roger McDowell

I was up on the hill over looking the bridge at 2/5's outpost (Phu Loc), Dec 1966 (A Christmas to remember). Then I was on the hill at another 2/5 outpost (My Loc2) just down the road from Phu Loc6 during Jan 1967 for Operation Tuscaloosa. 2/5 officially took over the An Hoa Combat base and its large area of responsibility from the 9th Marines on Dec 9, 1966. I reported to 2/5 there at An Hoa on Dec 8, 1966. The road from Liberty Bridge to An Hoa was a never ending death trap. We always had some Seabees with us at An Hoa and they were a very hard working great bunch of men. Always building or repairing something, our runway with metal matts [Marston Matting], building wood sleeping huts. They also built us a mess hall at An Hoa, if you were lucky enough to eat at it. I believe that may have been around maybe April 1967. Semper Fi

## —Chaplin's Corner—

By Billy Boggs

Dec. 6, 2023

As I sit to write this in the first week of December, I realize that when you will be reading this, Christmas of '23 will be a distant memory. Possibly several local and world events will have happened. The secular world with all our ability to communicate is changing faster than we can possibly keep up.

The season of Christmas and its meaning is a constant that we as believers can rely on. Advent, celebrating the coming of the Christ Child, is highlighted with Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.

Even though the season of Christmas may have passed, it is up to us to keep and demonstrate Hope, Love, Joy and Peace to the world around us. It starts with us. We are the ones, not someone else, to be the hands and feet of Christ.

The world changes, but our God does not.

—Belated Merry Christmas, —Billy



Sent in by Jim Miller: Completion of the Liberty Bridge, 1967, An Hoa, Vietnam.

Al Berg, Dorsey, J.R. Miller, Paul Sommers, Bill Scarpati, Bruce Montgomery...MCB 4.

[MCB-8 worked on this bridge also but at a different time.]





ASP1 April 27, 1969  
It Went BOOM x Several days. kb

On April 27, 1969 ASP-1(Ammo Dump) suffered a devastating series of explosions, resulting in severe damage in wide areas surrounding the ASP. Within a few days, MCB8 Found itself shifting crews to the Third Military Police Battalion Cantonment, west of ASP-1, to repair and rebuild a portion of that camp which was leveled by the blasts. From there, many of these same crews were assigned to the reconstruction of the Freedom Hill Exchange. also severely damaged by the explosions. —kb



From the U.S. Border Patrol 2024.

### Excerpt from an article sent by John Ratonski

.....“That was our first [second] tour, which was Chu Lai, Vietnam,” he said. Perez worked the 12-hour night shift in the mechanic shop. His first tour lasted six months. Then he returned to Port Hueneme, California, for three months of military training with the Marines.

“At the Marine camp, we learned how to fire the .45, the M60, the grenade launcher and also how to throw the hand grenade,” he said.

Perez says his second tour to Hue-Phu Bai was much more intense than his first. Detachments from his battalion crushed rock and made cement for runways and heliports.

“Our battalion, which was a Seabee battalion, it consisted of equipment operators, mechanics, electricians, plumbers. So, we were basically a self-supported unit,” he said.

They built their own camp, installed generators for power, and basically constructed a small town. They even built a small church on the base. Zone of his battalion’s biggest responsibilities was maintaining the main highway, Highway 1, so supplies could get through.

“A lot of our casualties happened on the roads because they would plant tank mines, and all of us had to go out and service the heavy equipment because they couldn’t bring it all in every time it needed service. So, we had to go out there, and if needed, replace batteries or needed oil changes or fan belts or something like that,” Perez said.

Perez says his battalion wasn’t a combat unit, but they were definitely in a combat zone.

“I do have eight guys on the (Vietnam Memorial) wall. During the honor tour, I was able to find all their names on the wall,” he said.

Soon after he returned from Vietnam in 1968, Perez married his bride, Rebecca. The couple have been together for 55 years.

He also went back to work for Brookover Feed Yard in Garden City and retired from there after 46-and-a-half years.

Perez still believes the Seabees are the best outfit in the U.S. Navy.

### More about Perez:

WICHITA, Kan. (KSNW) — Navy Veteran Alfred Perez recently went on his first Kansas Honor Flight.

Perez served two tours in Vietnam with the Navy. He was a third-class construction mechanic for heavy equipment with the Seabees.

“I basically took care of the equipment that the equipment operators would tear up,” said Perez.

Perez said it was a pretty emotional experience and that everywhere they went, they were treated with respect.

Child & Family Eyecare donating eye exams to those without vision or medical insurance

The most memorable part of the Kansas Honor Flight for Perez was the Vietnam Wall.

“I have eight fellow Seabees on that wall, so it kind of, you know, that kind of hits you right there,” said Perez as he tapped his chest over his heart.



## From Bill Clerke:

My days with NMCB 8 started with my orders from Davisville, RI to Port Hueneme, CA. At that time there was a short airlines strike and myself and several other Seabees only travel option was to cross country by train. It was a scenic but long ride with one short stop in Chicago.

It was great to arrive in sunny CA and report in for duty. Before you know it we started training and preparations for our deployment to Chu Lai. During this time I went back to my home town in MA, married and returned with my wife to establish residence in off base housing. Soon we departed in the C141 for that long trip across the pond. I had been assigned to a D Company hootch with Arnie "Bugs" Cicerone. He was then and still is outgoing and has a personality to match. Always fun to be around. After just 11 days in country a number of us (about 20) were sent out on a detachment in the classic six by transport vehicle during monsoon season.

Roads were muddy with deep ruts when we hit an IED. We evacuated the vehicle quickly and formed a hasty defense. I remember my whole body being numb from the concussion and had to physically inspect myself and others for injuries. Additional forces arrived, the two individuals in the cab were transported by medivac and the balance of us did a search and seizure of the local village to no avail. As a Builder many varied projects were completed with satisfaction for being well done.

Like everyone we counted the days until our return to the states while surviving occasional nightly rocket attacks on base. How many times did I make the quick exit to our nearest bunker. All of these experiences collectively gave us a new appreciation for life, health and our creator and the Vietnamese life style.

How fortunate we are in the US. It goes without saying it was great to return to the States and resume normal life with my wife and new daughter that I saw for the first time

at six months old.

During our six months back at base we had some time for R&R to visit with family and friends, time went by quickly and soon we were back in schools for training and preparation for our next deployment to Phu-Bai. I fired 3.5 rocket launcher at camp Pendelton, M-60, 45 cal pistol, M-14 and M-16.

Soon we departed for Phu-Bai (just outside of Hue) and arrived during the Tet offensive. I remember getting incoming rockets at morning muster, working our daily routines and being on the lines at night. I was assigned an M-60 as a small part of our defensive effort. I know we all felt some relief when the 101st moved in adjacent to us but that 105mm [155mm] was near, noisy and a lot of firing was ongoing on a regular basis.

After four months I received orders to return to the states for separation from active duty. To my pleasant surprise I was offered a field promotion and a sign on bonus to extend which I declined after much consideration.

With my orders in hand Terrill "Herbie" Herbert and myself went down to the nearby Helicopter base and persuaded a pilot to take us to Da Nang. The three of us were on our way when we were hit with enemy fire. We returned to base safely (thank heavens), got in another Huey and were back on our way. Herbie and I left Vietnam and arrived in Okinawa. Since NMCB 8 had a detachment there we decided to go and visit with them before our return to the states. It was a great two day visit and a lot of drinking and stories were exchanged.

I made many cherished relationships. John (Jack) Reed of D Company and I later went into business together for ten years. He changed my daughters diapers before I did. We share a lot of great memories to this day and I wouldn't trade any of them for the world. That Can Do spirit changed a lot of boys to men myself included.

**"UNHAPPINESS IS THE HUNGER TO GET.  
HAPPINESS IS THE HUNGER TO GIVE."**

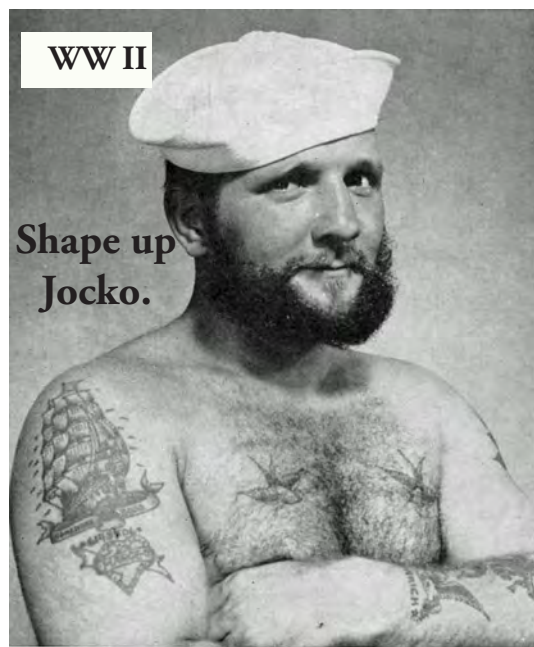
*Majesty of Calmness by William George Jordan 1898*





—From Vietnam Marine Bill Ready—

Ok I swear the Seabees that were building or making liberty road were the first people to shoot at me. They were across the paddies from us and we were sweeping the road at dusk and one thing led to another and we were shooting at each other. When our LT found out who they were we cursed each other out. Semper Fi



**WW II**—Danny (Jocko) Lowry, who is probably the saltiest Seabee in the Fourth Battalion. Danny encouraged this growth of hedge while we were stationed in Hawaii, and looks like a cross between Robinson Crusoe and the Smith Brother on this end. Danny picked up the phrase, "Shape up, Jocko," very likely in some harbor hangout, began using it, and it swept the battalion like wild-fire.

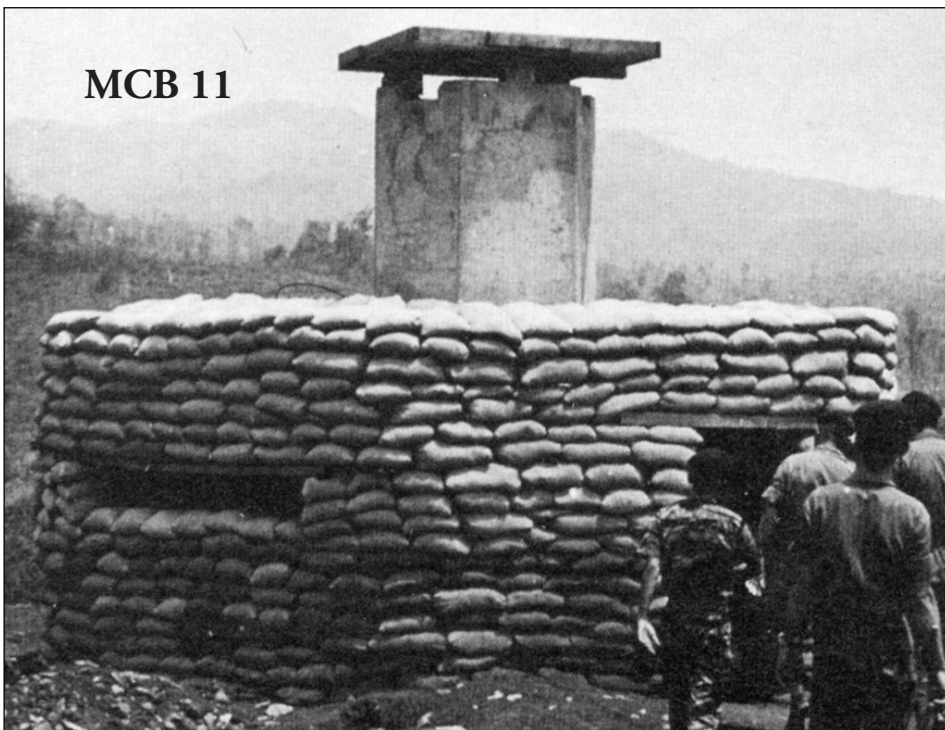


The U.S. Navy has decided to name its newest Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer after World War II hero Charles Jackson French. French's remarkable act of heroism saved 15 of his fellow sailors from certain death during a perilous situation.

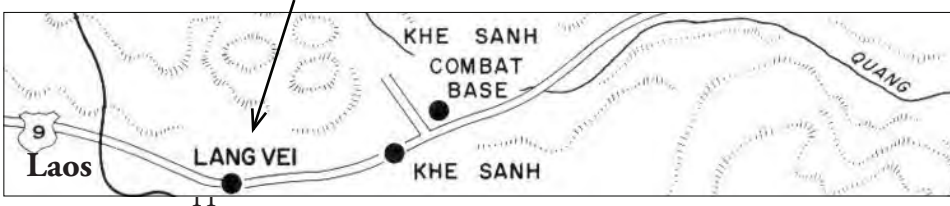
**HERE'S THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF CHARLES JACKSON FRENCH:**  
On September 5, 1942, during an enemy attack that sank the USS Gregory, French demonstrated daring strength and endurance. He swam to his shipmates' aid, towing their life raft with a line tied around his waist. French's courageous efforts earned him the nickname "The Human Tugboat" and "Hero of the Solomons."

## Marines At Bougainville "Damn Glad" For Bees

"To the Seabees that go with us, we are damn glad you are on our side!"  
Those were the stirring words of Lieut. Col. Alan Shapley, Marine Corps veteran of the attack on Pearl Harbor, to the Seabee detachment with the Marine landing team enroute to spearhead the Allied attack on Bougainville Island. He was speaking over the loud-speaker system of the ship carrying invading Americans toward the Jap-held island.



Seabee built bunker Lang Vei Special Forces Camp 1968. The upgrading of work by MCB-11 helped save the Green Berets when they were over-run by the NVA—which included Russian light tanks.





From John Ratonski



Rendova, July 1943. Showing 24th Construction Battalion men sawing coconut logs into proper lengths for corduroy log road construction. —From: Lest We Forget, Seabee Museum

## OinC Storms Pillbox, Kills Jap In Gilberts

*From Seabee News Service*

The first Seabee ashore on Betio Island, Commander L. E. Tull (CEC) USNR, personally accounted for at least one Jap when, after a pillbox had been dynamited open, he and Frank R. Hearn, CM3c, tore into the wreckage and destroyed the lone enemy soldier who had survived the blast.

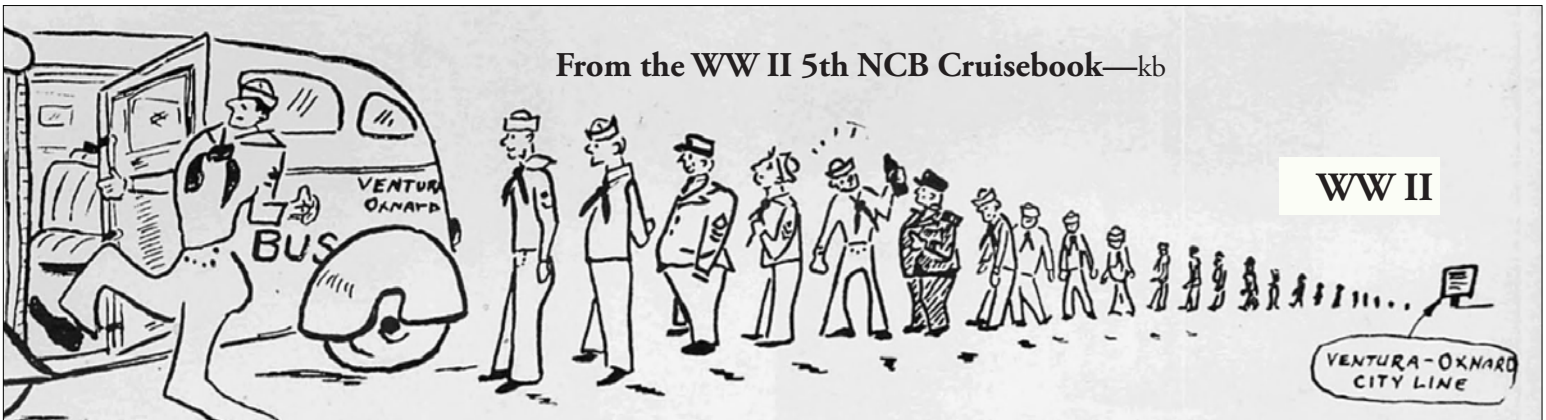
Commander Tull and Carl L. Catt, CM1c, made three attempts to land on Betio on 21 November, the first day of the invasion but were driven back by enemy fire. They succeeded in getting ashore the following morning, and, on 22 November, made a reconnaissance of the landing strip while it was still under sniper fire.



—From WW II 5th NCB Cruise Book—

“Slapsy Maxie” piqued my curiosity so I did some research.

Slapsy Maxie was a champion boxer with a restaurant named for him in LA.



From the WW II 5th NCB Cruisebook—kb



... tears in the gas chamber ... drill, drill, drill ... morning exercises ... the rifle range ... band rehearsals and songs by Betty Lou Perry and Ed Berg during the noon hour ... "Lemme see your I. D. card, Mac!" ... "Ya can't bring that crate inside the gate without a special pass, bub!" ... drill, drill, drill ... long hikes to the military training area ... thumbing rides to and from Los Angeles on week-ends ... the boxing exhibition by Michelli at the Theatre B dance ... that "party to end all parties" at Bard's Barn ... the beach at Hueneme ... trips through the studios in Hollywood ... "Black Outs of 1944" ... Slapsie Maxie's ... The Brown Derby ... The Hollywood Bowl! ... Mexican Beer, 50c a bottle ... the Oyster Loaf Cafe ... try and get a seat! ... Embarkation Leaves ... midnight mass and Christmas Day





# MCB 11 & NMCB 8

## 2024 Reunion

### Branson, MO

## September 23 - 26, 2024



Join us this year in Branson, one of the most military-friendly towns you will visit.

This year members of the NMCB 8 Association will again be joining us. We will share both the hospitality and banquet rooms. Each Battalion will have its own room for their business meeting.

The reunion will officially start with registration at 3:00 PM on Monday afternoon, September 23, followed by a welcome reception and lite meal.

On Tuesday, we will tour the College of the Ozarks, with lunch on site at The Keeter Center, followed with a tram tour of Dogwood Canyon.

Wednesday will start with a business meeting at 9 AM, with each Battalion in a separate room. After the business meeting, you will have free time until 4 PM, when we start taking couples' pictures. A joint banquet will follow.

For additional information about Branson, MO  
<http://www.mcb11.com/Reunion2024/frame.htm>

### Hotel Information

We will be staying at Stone Castle Hotel & Conference Center, 3050 Green Mountain Drive, Branson, MO 65616.

To make reservations call 417-335-4700. Tell them you are with the "**Seabee Reunion**" when making your reservation. The weekday rate is \$99++/night, hot buffet breakfast included. The cut-off date for these rates is **Friday, August 25, 2024**. Requests received after that date will be considered on a space availability basis.



# MCB 11 & MCB 8 - 2024 Reunion Registration Form

**REGISTRATION:** Received on or before 8/22/2024 - \$285 each x \_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_ .00  
Late registration received after 8/21/2024 - \$305 each x \_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_ .00

If **Cancelled** on or before 8/22/2024 = Full refund  
after 8/22/2024 = Full refund minus any prepaid deposits

**TOTAL COST** \$ \_\_\_\_ .00

**If you cancel, don't forget to call the hotel and cancel your room reservation.**

## **Registration Covers:**

- ✓ **Monday** evening Welcome Reception with lite meal
- ✓ **Tuesday** Tour of College of the Ozarks, Lunch & Dogwood Canyon tour.
- ✓ **Wednesday** Business Meeting and evening Banquet
- ✓ **Thursday** Check-Out
- ✓ All associated taxes and gratuities, excluding hotel room charges.

**Please complete and return ASAP with your check or money order.**

**Provide the name of each person attending.**

1. Name: (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_

**First Name(s) you want printed on ID badge.** 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact\*:** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

(\*Someone who **will not** be at the reunion with you.)

**SPECIAL NEED(s) – Dietary, Transportation or other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check or money order payable to MCB 11 Association**

Mail to: MCB 11 Reunion Committee  
P.O. Box 4647  
Lago Vista, TX 78645

Check these web sites for updates

MCB 11 - <http://www.mcb11.com>

MCB 8 - <https://www.nmcb8.com/>



## Post Reunion "Swarm"

At present, four of us have acquired tickets, 7th row (G 51 - 54) from stage, to attend the Sight and Sound Theater show Thursday afternoon. Others are welcome to join and included is a layout and online information.

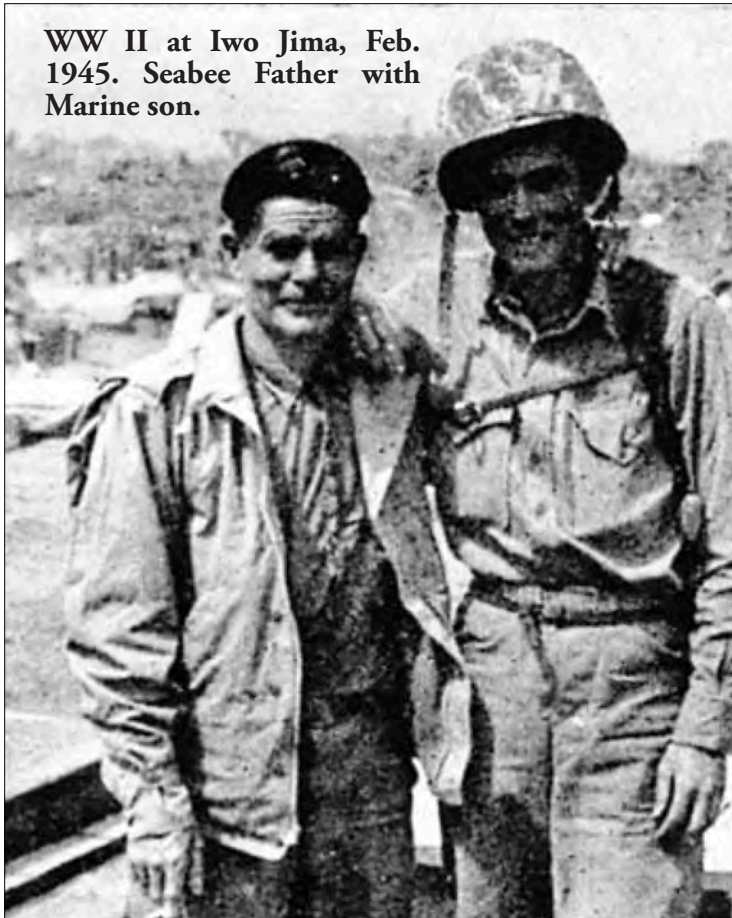
NOTE: if you are going to join, you might want to extend your stay one more night at the hotel. Go ahead and reserve that extra night when you book your reservation in order to get the reunion rate discount. The hotel does not have to honor the room discounted price after the registration deadline is past!

Website: [https://sight-sound.com/ticketing/shows/title?location=BRANSON\\_MO](https://sight-sound.com/ticketing/shows/title?location=BRANSON_MO)

Phone: (800) 377-1277

Seating Chart:

Scan the following QR Code for the "Sight and Sound Website" →



WW II at Iwo Jima, Feb. 1945. Seabee Father with Marine son.

Pictured here, Seabee John M. Smith (left) with his son, John Jr. of the Fifth Marine Division. This picture captures the only known father and son meeting on Iwo Jima. John Jr. was killed in action a few days later.



## Marine General Lauds Builders

Lieutenant General A. A. Vandegrift, veteran commander of the Marines that spearheaded the successful offensive operations at Guadalcanal and newly appointed commandant of the U. S. Marine Corps, praised the Seabees as fighters, as well as builders, in a speech broadcast during the National (Blue) Broadcasting Chain's "Meet Your Navy" program recently. The General's speech included:

"Navy and Marine fighter squadrons are the pride of all our fighting men in the Pacific. Those fliers have proved themselves superior to the Japanese in every way. And I could not close without paying tribute to the Seabees, who are soon to observe their second anniversary. I can testify, as an eye witness that those men not only build, but fight, with great courage and skill."

**ALL MY  
PASSWORDS ARE  
PROTECTED BY  
AMNESIA**



# NMCB-8 Seabees' Association

7657 Lemur St. Ventura Ca. 93003

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

To:



Brings a tear to my eye, and I mean  
it from the heart of my bottom! -kb



A U.S. Navy Seabee uses a level as he and a Cambodian construction worker align bricks while constructing a new bathroom facility during the Navy unit's 2014 Pacific deployment in Cambodia, March 3, 2014. The Seabees are assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1.

Send address changes and stories to:

Ken Bingham NMCB8 7657 Lemur St. Ventura CA 93003

## Marines, Bees Trade Bouquets

Seabees and Marines on Bougainville Island appear to have formed a mutual admiration society, according to AP dispatches.

They state that a Marine raider battalion erected a big banner at an intersection of Seabee built roads which read:

"When we reach the Isle of Japan, with our caps at a jaunty tilt; we will enter the city of Tokyo on roads the Seabees built."

The Fighting Builders reciprocated with a billboard along one of their new roads reading:

"To our very good friends and able protectors, the fighting Marines, we dedicate this highway."

Payoff of the Gaston-Alphonse attitude between the two service branches was this bouquet by Marine Lieutenant Robert McDonough:

"The Seabees are the first heroes in the Marine Corps history. We were usually too busy peddling our own praise, but this time we take off our hats to them."

From John Ratomski