RADM Katherine Gregory

Rear Admiral Katherine Gregory assumed duties as Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers on Oct. 26, 2012. Previously, Gregory served as Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific and the Pacific Fleet Civil Engineer. Past assignments include tours in Yokosuka, Japan; Naples, Italy; San Francisco; Adak, Alaska; and Pearl Harbor. She has also had staff tours in Washington, D.C., serving as the Seabee action officer and Chief of Naval Operations Overseas Bases planning and action officer. Within the Naval Construction Force (Seabees), she has served with Amphibious Construction Battalion One; Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) One; as Commanding Officer of NMCB 133; Commander of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment; and Chief of Staff for the First Naval Construction Division. Throughout her Seabee tours, she deployed to the Western Pacific, Mediterranean, Iraq and Haiti. She is a registered professional engineer in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a qualified military parachutist and Seabee Combat Warfare Officer and is the first female Commanding Officer of various Seabee and NAVFAC units.

ENS Lawrence S. Karnowski

It is not widely known, but there were Civil Engineer Corps officers among the very first men to go ashore at Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944. These officers commanded Naval Combat Demolition Units which had the extremely hazardous mission of going ashore before the assault troops and blowing gaps in enemy beach obstacles. Failure to neutralize these beach obstacles would have turned the Normandy invasion into a disaster. The demolition units did their work under heavy enemy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire and consequently they suffered very heavy casualties. One of the Civil Engineer Corps officers who went ashore on that cold, wet morning of 6 June was ENS Lawrence S. Karnowski, the Officer in Charge of Naval Combat Demolition Unit 45. His performance that day went far beyond anything that could be expected of a man in combat and earned him the Navy's second highest award, the Navy Cross, “for extraordinary heroism.”

Captain John N. Laycock

Captain John Laycock made a contribution to the war effort that was of the greatest significance; he developed the naval Landing pontoon and pontoon fastening system. In addition to pontoon assembly development, CAPT Laycock participated in the development of other advance base equipment such as Quonset huts, portable refrigerators powered by both electricity or gas, portable pumping systems, trailer-carried fire pumps, self-contained power plants, oil fog generators for producing protective smoke screens, and collective protectors to remove lethal gases from air furnished to bomb shelters.

S2c Lawrence Meyer

The name “Guadalcanal” conjures up reverence and deference for those persons privy to this small island’s place in American military history. From August 1942 to February 1943, the American and Imperial Japanese military forces savagely engaged each other on land, sea and air in the Solomon Islands for control of Guadalcanal. Here the Seabees, particularly the 6th Naval Construction Battalion (NCB), first found themselves under direct enemy attack, testing the skill and fortitude of the youngest member of the Navy family. One member of the 6th NCB, Seaman Second Class (S2c) Lawrence Christefor “Bucky” Meyer, distinguished himself above and beyond the call of duty at Guadalcanal, garnering the first Silver Star awarded to a member of the Naval Construction Force (NCF). Meyer’s actions to this day hold legendary status in the Seabee community, but few know the particulars of either the man or his actions.
ADM Ben Moreell, CEC

Admiral Ben Moreell is the single most important Civil Engineer Corps officer in the history of the Corps. He was Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks during the most challenging period in the history of the Navy and Civil Engineer Corps -- World War II. Through his personal initiative, an effective naval construction force, the Seabees, was created and the power to command this force was given to Civil Engineer Corps officers.

CMA3 Marvin G. Shields

On 9 June 1965, LTJG Frank A. Peterlin, CEC, USNR, and his Seabee Technical Assistance Team 1104 were in the process of constructing and improving the facilities of a Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp (CIDG) adjacent to the village of Dong Xoai, 55 miles north of Saigon, Republic of Vietnam. Just before midnight, elements of the Viet Cong 9th Division, later estimated to be a reinforced regiment of approximately 2,000 men, launched an attack on the camp. CMA3 Marvin G. Shields, USN, was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his courageous actions on 9 and 10 June 1965. He became the first Seabee to be awarded the nation's highest decoration.

SW2(DV) Robert D. Stethem

Stethem joined the Navy in December 1980 and after recruit training became a Seabee with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 62; he served with that unit until 1984. After additional training, Stethem became a diver with Underwater Construction Team 1, based at Norfolk, Virginia, in September 1984. On 15 June 1985, following completion of a routine repair project at a base in Greece, Stethem and four other members of his unit were returning to the U.S. aboard TWA Flight 847 when Shiite Muslim terrorists hijacked the flight and diverted it to Beirut, Lebanon.

MM1c Aurelio Tassone

Aurelio Tassone is a native of New York City, New York. On November 28, 1943, during the landing on Treasury Island in the Solomons, Machinist’s Mate 1st Class Aurelio Tassone, USNR, of the 97th Naval Construction Battalion used his bulldozer to assist in the battle. During the incident, Tassone did not have a designated rate and is often referred to as Fireman 1st Class (F1c). For this act Tassone was awarded the Silver Star.

Below is a list of words you should look up. Knowing the meaning of these words will help as you conduct research. Vocabulary words:

- D-Day (Operation Neptune)
- Mortar
- Naval Landing Pontoon
- Normandy
- Guadalcanal
- Viet Cong
- Beach Obstacles
- Solomon Islands
- Shiite Muslim
- Artillery
- Quonset Huts