Total Force Winter 1998

Beeline

Seabee Magazine

What's Buzzing?

Seabees: The model for the future

The Seabees are the right force, with the right capabilities at the right time. I am even more convinced of this now than ever as I witness the challenges we face during this period of unprecedented change. This is a period in which the Department of Defense and each service are developing new strategies and warfighting concepts to meet the diverse challenges and lean funding environment of the 21st century.

The Seabees of the Naval Construction Force are the model for the future. In the future, Seabee efficiency, full-capability, flexibility, maneuverability and self-sufficiency will be the key and essential capstone qualities needed to survive and meet the needs of our customers. The Seabees have always possessed these capabilities and have proven the criticality of these characteristics over time, most recently in Bosnia. Seabees have the capabilities to succeed in any environment and any mission. Whether they are supporting the Marine Corps, naval commander, or joint task force commander in a contingency, humanitarian or disaster relief role, the Seabees have always and will always prevail because of their tenacity, spirit and determination.

While there are a number of factors for the Seabees' success, I believe the key is flexibility, self-contained design, and, most importantly, determination and proven ability to always complete the task no matter how difficult the assignment. Add to these attributes Seabee forward presence, and you have the ultimate in responsiveness and capabilities.

The NCF leadership is committed to ensuring the Seabees are provided with the best equipment and training to perform the mission. Efforts to upgrade battalion automated information systems, tools, equipment and vehicles, development of new Seabee mission areas such as combat service support to the Navy's Special Operating Forces, and enhancing Seabee operational readiness by putting Seabee equipment pack-ups onboard Maritime Preposition Ships MPF(E) will ensure the Seabees remain relevant now and well into the next century.

Great things are now happening for the Seabees. I am proud to be at the helm during this time of change and I feel honored to have the opportunity to assist in charting the future course. I would like to thank each Seabee and their family for their sacrifices. You are truly the best. Keep Charging!

RADM D. J. NASH, CEC, USN

Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command

and Chief of Civil Engineers

Beeline
Total Force
Magazine For Seabees

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Light & shadow join a Seabee with her work. SW2 Donna Pearson ties rebar at a flammable storage project in Puerto Rico. Photo by PHC (AW/SW) David Kveilo.

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Beeline is published in accordance with Department of the Navy Publications and Printing Regulations, NAVSO P-35 (Rev. May 1979). Opinions expressed in Beeline are not necessarily those of the Department of the Navy.

Articles and photographs about Seabees and Naval Construction Force personnel may be submitted to: Editor, Beeline magazine, NAVFAC Code CP12A, 200 Stovall St., Alexandria, VA 22332. Website: http://www.navy.mil/homepages/navfac/ Telephone: 1-703-325-2119. FAX: 1-703-325-4453.

Basic Stinging

New Seabees learn about the combat side of their heritage

"What they learn here may save their lives in the field," said SW1 Kevin Benjamin, an instructor for the Basic Combat Skills Level One (BCS 1) Course at CBC Gulfport, Miss.

BCS 1 is a four-day introductory class covering 16 topics. Students get hands-on training in subjects ranging from field stripping an M-16 A3 to throwing hand grenades. All Seabees are required to attend the BCS 1 Course after completion of one of the "A" schools.

The course is designed for Seabees about to report to a battalion, according to BU1 Dixon Dreher, also a BCS 1 instructor. BCS 1 is required because of the deployment schedule of battalions.

"Some of these students will report to battalions already deployed and this will be their only combat training if the battalion were to redeploy to a hot spot around the world," said Dreher. "I want the students to remember they are an integral part of the battalion's success. Their performance affects the battalion's ability to complete its mission. The better their combat skills, the better they will perform."

Story and photos by JO3 Ardelle L. Purcell

The BCS 1 Curriculum

Combat Organization
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Defense
Organic Weapons
Interior Guard
Combat Communication
Military Map Reading
Military Navigation
Mines & Booby Traps
Patrols & Convoys
Code of Conduct
Laws of Armed Conflict
Basic First Aid
Grenades, Pyrotechnics & Claymore Mines
Field Sanitation & Hygiene
Civil Disturbance
Antiterrorism

BU1 Thomas Kleschka and SN Richard House install a lintel.

Carpenter Shop Extension

SWCN Alan Higgins installs a truss. Each truss is nailed into place, and then secured with a hurricane brace.

The carpenter shop at the Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic, Orlando, Fl., has a concrete block storage area — thanks in part to the efforts of members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 14, Det 0314, Orlando.

The Seabee unit helped by installing the stem-wall (which is placed underground and helps secure the building), laying the concrete walls and installing trusses which will support the roof.

The unit began the project last winter and worked for six months completing the task, according to BU2 Daryl Lichti, operations petty officer for the unit. The unit devoted approximately 300 hours to the project.

The extension will serve as a storage area, and will provide the carpenter shop with more room for routine operations.

In addition to providing the clinic with additional work space, the project gave the Seabee unit "hands on" training.

Story and photos by Lt. j.g. Jonathan Culver

SWCA Marc Calheta puts the finishing touches on concrete block mortar. He is using a striking tool to smooth out the joints between blocks.

NMCB 23 Seabees, CE2 Matt Jak, left, of Pittsburgh and BU2 Blake Nero of Aliquippa, Pa., lower a K-span into place.

Found at end of K-span rainbow $75,000

Nine reserve Seabees recently worked with Army and Air Force personnel to erect an arched steel building at Fort Story, Va. Known as a K-span, the 7,000-square-foot building will be used by Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 10 for boat and equipment storage.

The Seabees are from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23, based at Fort Belvoir, Va. They took on the two-week project as a training opportunity, since K-spans are often needed during wartime or other contingencies. Seabees built numerous K-spans during the Persian Gulf War and recent contingencies such as *Operation Sea Signal* in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. During the Fort Story project, Seabees worked alongside Army members of the 159th and 119th Transportation Divisions and Air Force members of the 203rd Redhorse to erect the building.

Seabees guide a K-span section into place.

The project was truly a joint effort, with the Army supplying the crane, the Air Force providing the K-span machine, and the Seabees providing the bulk of the labor. It would have cost the government about $75,000 more to have civilian contractors do the work.

"It couldn't have been done without this group effort of the Army, Navy and Air Force working together," said Chief Warrant Officer (CWO3) Michael Ball, Executive Officer of EODMU 10.

He explained that the project was initiated because the aging building his unit is presently using for storage is scheduled to be demolished. The Seabees wanted to build a K-span for training, and the Public Works Center was able to get the K-span machine from the Air Force. "This (K-span) gives us a lot of bang for the buck. We're really satisfied with the project," CWO3 Ball said.

Story and photos by Daryl Smith,
Public Affairs Officer, 2nd Naval Construction Brigade

Bearing Duel

Reserve Seabees put their defensive training to the test against active-duty Marines

Naval Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 25, headquartered at Fort McCoy, Wis., performed its 1997 two-week annual training exercise at Ft. Hunter Liggett, Calif. The exercise, designated Operation *Bearing Duel*, was Phase II of a rigorous, three-year military training cycle which began in fiscal year 1996.

The 31st Naval Construction Regiment, Port Hueneme, Calif., provided instructors for nearly 400 reservists who came from several Midwestern states. Round-robin training conducted by companies included building and defending a defensive position, patrolling, convoy transportation, field communication, and Chemical, Biological, and Radiological warfare.

Military training included classes on the employment of Crew Served Weapons. Weapons used in the exercise were the M-16 A3 automatic rifle, M-203 autorifle/grenade launcher, MK-19 grenade launcher, the M-2 .50 caliber machine gun, the M-60 machine gun and the 60 mm mortar.

After classes, the Seabees put their initial training to the test performing various defensive measures against the 31st NCR active-duty Marine and Seabee "aggressors." Overall, the exercise provided valuable training essential to improving the readiness of NMCB 25.

Top: An unidentified Seabee from NMCB 25 trains on the M-60 machine gun. Above: BU3 Robert Chilson practices field communication. Right: The 31st NCR provided CBR training.

Story by JO2 Ron Flesvig
Photos by CE2 Dennis Rice

NMCB 7 Seabees are all smiles after the completion of the new Kauai bridge.

The New Kauai Bridge

At a savings of thousands of dollars, Seabees completed in three days what would have taken other workers months

Navy Seabees helped bridge a gap between the nearest town and families living in a remote area along Kaui's northern coast, after the sudden collapse of a vital transportation link on that island.

During the first week of July, the Seabees completed in three days what would have taken state and county workers months, saving thousands of dollars at the same time.

The Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7, from Gulfport, Miss., were working on another project on the island when they volunteered to design and rebuild a bridge that had collapsed under the weight of a 15-ton truck.

"These Seabees really pulled through for the community," said Robert Mullins, administrative assistant to the mayor of Kauai. "Our original solution was to borrow a Bailey bridge (a temporary folding bridge from the Army at Oahu's Fort Shafter). Of course, that entailed helicopter support from Oahu to here and provided a temporary answer to our permanent problem. We reviewed project proposals from several local contractors but found their bids to be pretty costly. Meanwhile, residents needed a bridge."

NMCB 7 was constructing a building at the nearby Pacific Missile Range Facility.

"When Mr. Mullins called me for Seabee support, I called our brigade at Pearl Harbor, Commander, Third Naval Construction Brigade (COMTHIRDNCB)," explained LT Steve Fitzgerald, public works officer at the missile range.

"COMTHIRD NCB sent an evaluation team and between both units, we decided to build the bridge ourselves, thereby offering a more permanent solution," Fitzgerald said. The county and state provided funds for project materials, and the Seabees went to work.

According to Steelworker First Class Allen Bonham, the Seabees were eager to help the five families inconvenienced by the collapsed bridge.

"When my crew heard about the bridge, they were excited," Bonham said. Our team completed about five projects this summer, and I think this one was most important because of its urgency. It's different when we're building something for the Navy; that's our job. But when it's for the community, we feel a greater sense of fulfillment. When you can help someone else with their problem it always makes you feel good."

Mullins, a retired Navy captain and former commander of the missile range, said the community was thankful for the Seabee's contribution.

"I'm proud of the way these young men and women stepped up to the challenge and led the way," Mullins said. "They've certainly left their mark on our community."

The Seabees completed the job for about one-sixth the cost of local estimates. "The Navy accomplished for roughly $8,000 what would have cost us about $52,000," Mullins said.

"People here have a good feeling for the Navy and its Seabees as the result of the countless hours they worked to help restore our island after Hurricane Iniki (which devastated Kauai in September 1992)," Mullins said. "This time, our community not only got a better bridge, but a sense of security in knowing that the Seabees are not far away when we need them."

Story and photos by JO2 (SW) Michelle Tuggle
COMTHIRDNCB & CINCPACFLT PAO

Brig. Gen. Scheffer operates a D8N bulldozer.

A former tank commander visits NMCB 4 to learn what they do and how they do it

Dozer Trek

Brigadier General Wilfried Scheffer, Commander, German Armed Forces Command for the United States and Canada, toured Camp Moscrip, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico recently. Camp Moscrip was the main-body deployment site for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 during their Caribbean Deployment.

The general, who was in Puerto Rico to learn more about the U.S. Armed Forces, visited the camp to get a better understanding of what the Navy's Seabees do and how they do it.

Following an introductory brief given by CDR Dennis R. Plockmeyer, Commanding Officer, NMCB 4, Scheffer spent an hour and a half touring the camp. The general visited the Camp Moscrip Armory, where the battalion stores its communications gear and the weapons used to defend its projects.

From there the tour moved to the supply warehouses, where Plockmeyer explained what happens when a battalion receives a mount out order. The group made their way around camp and finally to the Alfa Company yard. There, Scheffer was shown the heavy equipment the Seabees use to construct projects and was offered the chance to drive a bulldozer.

"He was pretty adept at driving the bulldozer," said LCDR David F. Kelley, executive officer, NMCB 4, who explained the general had been a former tank commander. "He obviously, from his tank experience, had been there before. Tracked vehicles were not a challenge for him. It's pretty impressive to see a general hop in a dozer and trek around."

RM1 Trina A. Sabo, left, explains the operation of a TA-1 Field Phone to BGEN Scheffer, right, as CDR Plockmeyer, NMCB 4 CO looks on.

Story by JO1 Michael Murdock Photos by PH1 Julie Espy

Sharp Wedge '97

Seabees test ability to work effectively with deployed Marines

Scenario: Violent factional fighting is tearing apart what used to be the tranquil country of Carolina. Heavily armed militia factions loyal to Carolinians for a United Virginia and Virginia Military Forces have joined forces to overthrow a government that's rapidly falling apart. Responding to the crisis, a Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) is directed to stabilize the situation. Supporting the Marines' rapidly evolving construction support requirements are Navy Seabee battalions.

Exercise *Sharp Wedge* '97, held at Camp Lejeune, N.C., provided the means for nearly 600 reserve and active duty Seabees to gain essential combat, construction, and command-and-control skills. The exercise gave real-world training and tested Seabees' ability to operate with a deployed MEF.

"The teamwork relationship shared between Seabees and Marines has always been solid. What's changing is how we are working toward better integrating our command and control capabilities to ensure we can respond quickly when tasked to provide construction support," said CDR William S. Duffy, operations officer for the Second Naval Construction Brigade.

The Marines provided Seabees with a wide range of intensive training in defensive combat skills, heavy weapons and use of perimeter security tactics within a field environment.

"With so much regional instability today we need the realism and the sense of urgency that exercises like Sharp Wedge '97 provide. We also get valuable face-time with our Marine customers which strengthens and builds confidence in the Navy and Marine Corps Team," said Chief Personnelman Penny Demers of NMCB 27.

Story and photos by Lt. Kevin Aandahl, USNR

Opposite, left: Seabees receive training on 50-caliber crew-served weapons. Opposite, right: Seabees perform Disaster Recovery Team training. Above: Seabees practice firing the AT-4 rocket launcher. Left: Seabees from NMCB 26 and 27 practice water well drilling.

On The Waterfront

Seabee efforts cheer Maine fishing village

Story and photos by Daryl Smith, Public Affairs Officer, 2nd Naval Construction Brigade

When Seabee heavy equipment rumbled across the Cathance River bridge and into Bowdoinham last summer, residents of this tiny Maine community watched with anticipation.

Reserve Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 27, based at the Brunswick Naval Air Station, renovated Bowdoinham's public boat launch area through the Civil-Military Readiness Training program, which allows the military to work on public construction projects for communities as part of military training.

The project involved regrading the boat ramp and about 1,000 feet of shoreline and covering the banks with erosion control fabric and large stones. A boat mooring dock was relocated and a parking lot with handicapped-accessible spaces was built.

Seabee labor saved the town about $72,000. The town provided materials to replace an old wooden bulkhead that had deteriorated badly and posed a safety hazard. Water had eroded the river bank behind the bulkhead, leaving deep holes.

The boat ramp was too steep and boats could not be launched at low tide. Seabees regraded the ramp to make it wider, longer and to give it a more gradual slope.

Because the river is a favorite fishing ground for striped bass, the Bowdoinham ramp is used by many recreational fishermen to launch their vessels and is an important part of the town's livelihood. "People will be able to launch a boat at any time now," said Leslie Verrill, chairman of the town's waterfront committee. "That will be the biggest benefit to the community."

The tides presented the Seabees their biggest challenge. Seabees had to adjust their schedules to work when the tide was low. They started work as early as 3 a.m. and worked as late as 9 p.m.

"This is a project with a lot of heart," said Lt. Jessie Mills, Continental U.S. Projects Officer at the Second Naval Construction Brigade. "It addresses the spirit of what the Civil-Military Program stands for, which is bringing people together, military and civilian, to meet a common goal."

Bowdoinham's shipbuilding history began well before the Revolutionary War. By the 1850s, the town was the foremost builder of wooden ships in Maine. But a decade later, the town's fortunes began to decline as shippers turned toward large clipper ships and steamers, which were too big to be built in Bowdoinham. Its last ship was launched in 1912.

Like the rising and receding tides of the Cathance River, the town of Bowdoinham has seen its fortunes ebb and flow. With the arrival of the Seabees and the construction of the new waterfront area, residents hope the tide has turned for the better.

Opposite, top: EA2 Jeff Gray looks through a transit to determine the slope of the boat ramp. Opposite, bottom: EO1 Carl Buckley smoothes out the parking lot area with a roller. Left: EO1 John Kleppe digs a trench near the boat ramp to uncover a drainage pipe. Below: EO1 Jimmie Stevens of NMCB 27 digs out the boat ramp with a 31-ton excavator. The Seabees made the ramp deeper, wider and longer and gave it a more gradual slope.

Ride The Sky

CBMU 202 Seabees conduct helicopter training with the Army National Guard

A loud thumping cuts through sky at sunrise. The sound is distinct: helicopters. "Hueys," to be exact, the workhorses of Vietnam and countless other campaigns,1 still in service today.

As the helicopters land, hatches slide open and combat-ready Seabees rush out to establish a defensive perimeter in the hostile area. The choppers return to the air just as quickly, leaving behind a cloud of dust. The They are on a mission to find and save their fellow Seabees, recently attacked by aggressor forces.

More than 50 New York and New England Naval Reserve Seabees of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 202, headquartered at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, Conn., conducted helicopter operations training with the Rhode Island Army National Guard during a weekend field exercise (FEX) at Quonset Point, R.I.

In preparation for a weekend of intensive training, Seabees were issued everything they needed to survive the mission: Kevlar helmets and flak vests, parts of the Personnel Armor System for Ground Troops (PASGT), other field gear and MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat). Because the Seabees were flying in helicopters, they traveled light.

At the Air National Guard Base, Quonset Point, Seabees were given M-16 rifles and M-60 machine guns, flight safety training and began their UH-1H helicopter commute to the Stone Ranch Military Reservation in Niantic, Conn.

Upon arrival, under the mentoring eye of Marine 1st Sgt. Ernest G. Diaz, CBMU 202's military advisor, the Seabees quickly moved on to their mission: a tactical patrol of the woods to find their shipmates.

"It was a good training experience carrying wounded in a combat area," said BU3 Chris Casucci. "I didn't realize how difficult it could be, especially when the aggressors are shooting at you."

At the end of the exercise, battle-weary Seabees cleaned weapons, turned in field gear, and were debriefed on lessons learned. The weekend provided valuable military training, enhancing their building and fighting skills.

Story and photos by JO2 T. Scott Cregan

Opposite, top: UH-1H "Huey" helicopters approach the landing zone at Stone Ranch Military Reservation, Niantic, Conn. Opposite, bottom: Marine 1st Sgt. E. Diaz signals the Seabees to secure the landing zone. Top, left: BU3 Chris Casucci looks out for aggressors. Above: Seabees prepare "wounded" BU2 Jeffrey Butwell for medical evacuation. Left: BU1 Larry Conklin teaches BU3 Casucci how to tie knots in a rappelling line in order to hoist an M-16 rifle.

Short Bursts

Second NCB awarded MUC in Gulfport ceremony

The Second Naval Construction Brigade (NCB) was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for performance from May 1, 1994 to Aug 30, 1996. RADM David J. Nash, Commander Naval Facilities Engineering Command, presented the award last summer in a ceremony at Gulfport, Miss., to RADM Michael W. Shelton, the Second NCB's Commander.

Located at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Norfolk, Va., the command oversees operations of about 9,000 active and reserve Seabees in the Atlantic Fleet, providing support for a wide range of military and humanitarian missions.

During this period the Second NCB led construction support to operations *Sea Signal* and *Able Vigil*, providing $80 million worth of construction work to house 45,000 Cuban and Haitian migrants at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In the European area, the Second Brigade orchestrated Seabee support for Operation Joint Endeavor, including berthing facilities for 4,200 Army personnel in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The command also planned and executed more than 35 JCS-sponsored exercises and deployments-for-training. The tangible results of these exercises included construction of 23 schoolhouses, three medical clinics, four piers, 26 water wells and 10 miles of roads.

While responding to contingencies and exercises, the staff also managed a work load of more than 265 construction projects at 42 overseas and U.S sites, resulting in a cost avoidance of more than $400 million.

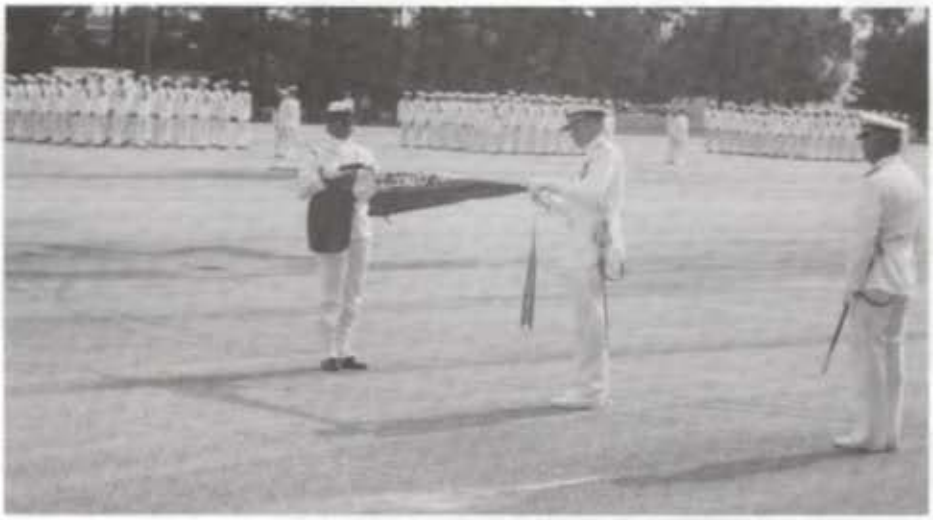
Story and photo by Daryl C. Smith,
COMSECONDNCB Public Affairs Officer

RADM Shelton elected ASCE Fellow

RADM Michael W. Shelton, CEC, USN, was elected a Fellow by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) in 1997. Election as a Fellow of ASCE is considered one of the highest professional recognitions civil engineers can receive. It is awarded to those who have made significant achievements and contributions to the profession.

To be eligible for elevation to Fellow, an ASCE member must be a registered engineer or land surveyor; have responsibility spanning over 10 years of important work in engineering or land surveying; and be qualified to direct, plan or design engineering works.

RADM Shelton is commander of the Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and the Second Naval Construction Brigade. (John Peters, LANTDIV PAO)



RADM Nash attaches the Meritorious Unit Commendation streamer to the Second NCB flag. RADM Michael Shelton, the Brigade's commander, right, was an enthusiastic participant in the ceremony.

CB-Vet skills handbooks go CD-ROM

Construction Basic Veteran (CB-Vet) Skills Equivalency Handbooks have been available since last year and may be found on CD-ROM at your reserve center.

The distribution of the handbooks effectively eliminates the two to three month lag time between the date a CB-Vet comes onboard and the date the member actually receives the booklet.

If you require additional information, phone LT Steve McGrey at 703-325-9132, or you may send him e-mail at mcgreysj@hq.navfac.navy.mil.

CARIBBEAN DREAMS

Hard work is nothing new to the Seabees. They have worked hard for 56 years. Seabees have made sacrifices and endured countless hours of tiresome labor, often working in extreme conditions, to improve the lives of others. It's what they do.

It's exactly what the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74 did during their Caribbean deployment at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. The "Does More" battalion also sent detachments to Guantanamo Bay, Haiti, Panama, Key West, Belize, Vieques, and Norfolk. For seven months, the battalion committed itself to furthering the legend of the world renowned Seabees.

Reflecting on the accomplishments of NMCB 74, CDR Richard Marrs, the battalion's commanding officer, summed up the work of his troops. "We have exceeded all of my expectations. More importantly, we have exceeded the expectations of our customers," he said. "We set out to do the work safely, do it with good quality, and do it in a timely manner," he added.

The battalion prepared for its seven-month deployment with extensive homeport training. Because of the training schedule, NMCB 74 arrived in the Caribbean with the expertise needed to accomplish each of its tasks.

Center: CM1 David Manuel loads a hopper in Vieques. Below: BU1 Hjalmer Moilanen on patrol at Roosevelt Roads. Right: CE3 Jeremy Johnson checks lighting at Camp Moscrip, Puerto Rico. Bottom, left: Keeping the fill pile full in Haiti.

Story by JO2 Michael Blankenship **Photos by PHC (AW/SW) David Kvello**

'... we have exceeded the expectations of our customers'

From The ArcHive

Mitsy & Smitty: 'Canine Can Do'

Not your ordinary Seabee!

Left: Rat Catcher First Class Mitsy Smith with her ribbons, battle stars and sidearm. Below: EM2 Wood "Smitty" Smith reads Mitsy's honorable discharge.

Story and photos submitted by SK3 Don Anderson NMCB 28, Det 1428

In 1958, RC1 Mitsy Smith of Cleveland, Miss., passed away quietly in her sleep. Only a few of her former shipmates knew of and mourned the loss of the World War II South Pacific veteran awarded three battle stars. Rat Catcher First Class Mitsy Smith's parents were of fox terrier descent and both loyal Americans. As a result, they allowed Mitsy to be adopted by EM2 Wood "Smitty" Smith. Smitty was a member of the 47th Seabees.

Smitty smuggled the young puppy aboard the ship *USS Dashing Wave*. The ship was several days out of Port Hueneme, Calif., before Mitsy was discovered. Luckily for Mitsy, none of the officers had the heart to throw her overboard. Mitsy accompanied the 47th to the islands of New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Russell and New Georgia.

Mitsy was popular with the whole battalion. One of her assets was her ability to act as an early warning system. Mitsy could hear Japanese bombers long before the attacking planes were heard by anyone else. Mitsy would bark, turn flips and run about until every man was in a fox hole. She usually nipped at the heels of the last man to reach cover.

One day, Petty Officer W. T. Thomas hesitated when an incoming Japanese bomber was descending on the camp. Mitsy barked at him frantically. The next thing W. T. knew, he was on the ground looking at the sky instead of the ceiling of his tent. As he dove into a fox hole, Mitsy was close on his heels.

Mitsy was also popular with the Solomon Island natives. Mitsy's reputation had spread throughout the islands. The natives marveled at her tricks, so Mitsy and Smitty were taken along for negotiations. When posed a question, the native chief would look at Smitty and ask, "What he say?"

As the war wound down, Smitty received orders to return to the States. The Bees began to wonder how they were going to sneak Mitsy home. The problem was finally solved. They built a wooden suitcase. When painted, it looked like the real thing. Holes drilled in the bottom allowed Mitsy to get air. Smitty taught Mitsy to lie "doggo" upon command. At the many stops along the way, Smitty would give the command and Mitsy wouldn't make a sound.

After returning from the South Pacific, Smitty and Mitsy went to the Naval Support Activity in New Orleans, La. Mitsy always lined up for muster. When "Smith-Mitsy" was called, she would yelp loudly to indicate her presence. While in New Orleans, she was given a liberty pass and awarded a shellback certificate which acknowledged that she had crossed the equator. She was also awarded an honorable discharge, along with her shipmate Smitty. Mitsy became a celebrity in print and on the radio. She allowed Smitty to go with her on interviews.

Mitsy was the perfect sailor. She never complained, never missed a watch, and she lived to serve her shipmates. Mitsy epitomized the "Can Do" spirit. Well done Petty Officer Mitsy. You will be remembered.

New NEX For Pascagoula NAVSTA

Budget constraints made the project a wise use of Seabee labor

A detail of 23 Seabees from NMCB 4 improved the quality of life for personnel at Naval Station Pascagoula, Miss., by building a new Navy Exchange there.

The base previously had only a small exchange with limited service located in a Bachelor Quarters suite, which was too small to support the base's 2,765 active-duty personnel.

"The Pascagoula base is in a very remote location... so it is especially important for people to have a place to go and shop and have things available to them," said Ghada Bitar, Project Manager for NEXCOM's Facilities Division in Norfolk, Va. The base is at the end of a 2.8 mile causeway with no public transportation into town. Because of budget constraints, the project could not have been done without Seabee labor.

The new Exchange covers about 4,000 square feet and includes a barbershop, an ATM machine, a walk-in refrigerator, office spaces, a restroom and a changing room.

Construction Electricians installed fluorescent and spot lighting in the drop ceiling, floor receptacles in the concrete slab and several other outlets and switches. They also installed the ATM machine, including a security camera, three separate electrical circuits and an emergency phone line.

Utilitiesmen installed three air handling units and the plumbing and natural gas lines. Builders installed the walls, drywall, floor tile, an acoustical drop ceiling and a split face, concrete block knee wall.

Steelworkers erected the frame of the 80-by 50-foot structure and completed a unique standing seam metal roof.

The 23-person detail was formed specifically for the Exchange project and began work in the spring of last year. They completed the work prior to rejoining their battalion at homeport in Port Hueneme, Calif., in November.

Because the site is located on land created by dredging spoil, Seabees had to dig down about three feet and replace the earth with select fill before pouring the concrete pad.

The detail also performed a number of smaller projects for the base, such as building a sidewalk and jogging trail and installing fencing.

Story and photos by Daryl C. Smith, COMSECONDNCB Public Affairs Officer

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NMCB 4 Seabees take measurements at the Navy Exchange in Pascagoula, Miss. The 23-person detail was formed specifically for the Exchange project and began work in the spring of 1997.

Quals at Camp Maxie

Seabees must learn to defend themselves and the units attached to their construction battalion

Story by LTJG Ina Tyler
Photos by ENS Corey Barker

Commands echo across the firing range: "Ready on the left, ready on the right ... commence firing!" At Camp Maxie, a National Guard base outside Paris, Texas, Construction Battalion Hospital Unit (CBHU) 21 members take aim to qualify on the Navy's primary assault rifle, the M-16.

At the shooting range, the Seabees were given special instructions on the proper use of the rifle. Key training issues included the importance of maintaining safety on the range, proper stances for holding an M-16, setting sights for the target range, and loading ammunition.

According to CM2 James Finley, because CBHU 21 is a combat unit, they are required to qualify on the M-16 once a year. "To stay qualified, you need to stay up on your training," Finley said.

EO1 Bill Hartman also qualified with the unit. Hartman, a former machinist's mate, said his reserve role has changed since transferring to the Seabees. "Seabees are more active. We're involved in more projects. It is a hands-on role," commented Hartman. "We go in as a team. This greatly enhances my training for the outside world."

CBHU 21's Commanding Officer, LCDR R.N. Denison, served as an instructor and a safety monitor. "As the primary Seabee unit attached to Fleet Hospital 21, CBHU 21 must maintain a fully qualified group of individuals," Denison said. "We are a combat unit, attached to a fleet hospital supporting the Marine Corps operations. We come in and set up camp. We build the temporary quarters for the fleet hospital, and provide the plumbing and electricity when they are transported overseas.

"They look to us whenever they need power, water or heat for the barracks. It's our job to maintain the relationship between them and the Public Works department."

When one thinks of the Seabees, a construction battalion comes to mind. However, the Seabees also have another role to fulfill: to defend themselves and the units attached to their construction battalion. M-16 qualification is an important mobilization training requirement for Seabees. "After all, you never know when you're going to get called up," said Finley.

Top,left: UT3 Randy Porter sights targets during M-16 qualifications. Above: UT3 Randy Porter instructs UT3 Ken Aldridge on the proper standing firing position.

'Seabee in the Community'

NMCB 4 First Class Association volunteers in Naguabo, Puerto Rico

Naguabo is a quiet community in southwest Puerto Rico. Children play along the shady streets and small lizards scurry through tree branches in search of a meal.

Last summer, the quiet of Naguabo was broken one Saturday morning by the roar of diesel engines as more than 30 members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 converged on a lot belonging to Centro Cultural de Naguabo, the Naguabo Cultural Center. The lot was a tangle of brush, tall grass and vines. In its midst was an abandoned three room concrete building.

The staff of the Naguabo Cultural Center had a vision: They pictured an urban forest in which visitors could stroll down paths shaded by more than 400 native trees while viewing replicas of ancient petroglyphs found in the nearby El Yunque rain forest. The abandoned building could be used to teach arts and crafts and a love of nature to local school children.

The Center's staff contacted Naval Station, Roosevelt Roads, for help. The Naval Station, in turn, contacted NMCB 4's, "Seabee in the Community" program coordinator, LTJG Scott R. King, and he agreed to take on the project.

NMCB 4's First Class Association volunteered to install a new roof on the building, while members from throughout the battalion helped clear the lot. After a front end loader cleared brush, a truck equipped with a 24-inch auger began digging holes for the trees which had been donated for the project.

While waiting for materials to arrive, members of the First Class Association started preparing the building for its new roof. Several members took turns using a hacksaw to cut away excess reinforcing steel bar from the top of the concrete walls, while others cleared debris from around the building.

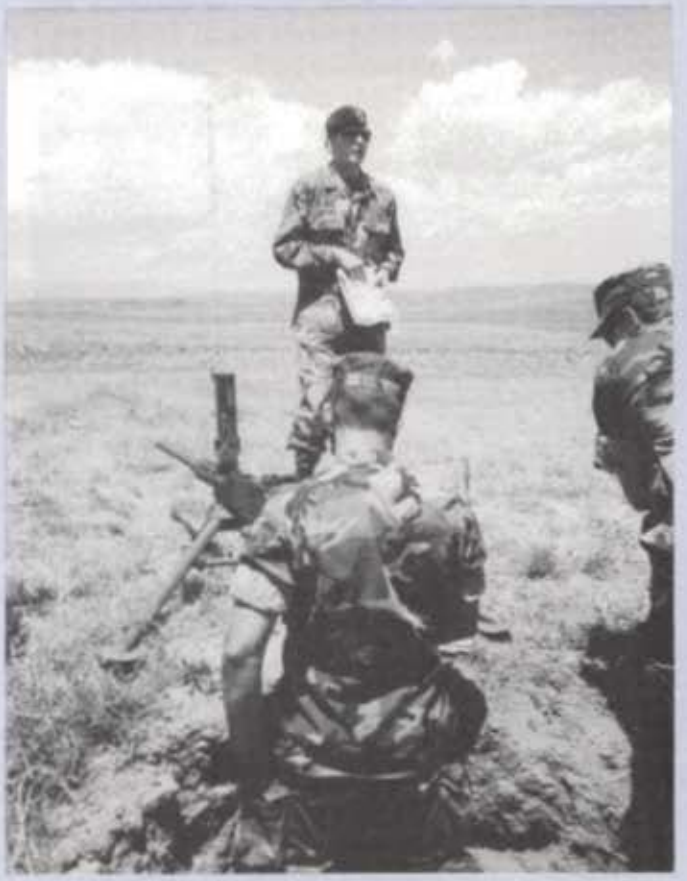
Despite the support of heavy equipment and more than 40 volunteers, the crew wasn't able to finish the work the first day, and they returned a second day.

The "Seabee in the Community" program is designed to promote good will in local communities. A secondary goal is to improve battalion morale by giving battalion members the chance to participate in command-organized community service projects.

"Words cannot express our gratitude," said Nilda Arocho, president of the Naguabo Cultural Center. "This will be a project that is not forgotten."

Story by JO1 Michael B. Murdock
Photos by PH1 Julie A. Espy

Mountain Bee Ops



NMCB 17 completed Operation *Mountain Bee* '97 in Fort Carson, Colo. with improved preparation for real combat conditions. Approximately 400 Seabees from five states took part in the annual Naval Reserve Force exercise.
Far left: Fifty-caliber machine gun instruction by U.S. Army's 10th special forces. Above: NMCB 17 personnel mount up on C-141 for Operation *Mountain Bee*. Left: 60mm mortar hands-on familiarization training.

Photos provided by Joint Combat Camera Center

Green Stinger conducted during Operation *Medstar*

The 'Stinger' exercise improves Seabee experience in Air Det Ops

The air detachment of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 at Ft. Belvoir, Va., participated in Operation *Medstar* with units from the Air Force Reserve and the Marine Corps.

On the first day, the air detachment set up a mount out control center at Ft. Belvoir. Then heavy equipment, including a 15-ton tractor trailer, 15-ton cargo truck, blazer, field service truck, motor grader and a commercial van, were convoyed to Andrews Air Force Base for loading into and transport by a C-141.

The next day, the air detachment convoyed back to Andrews Air Force Base where they loaded and transported three pieces of CESE and 55 Seabees in two separate sorties.

A loadmaster and load team from the 459th Military Airlift Wing provided guidance to the Seabees in loading and placement of the equipment on the aircraft. Loading the motor grader was especially challenging because of its size.

At the conclusion of the exercise, the air detachment convoyed back to Ft. Belvoir for retrograde of weapons, CESE and pallets, and operational debriefs.

Story and photos by LT Meg Reed, NMCB 23 Public Affairs Officer

Top: Members of NMCB 23's Air Det in full 782 gear draw weapons during Green Stinger '97. Above: EO2 Andrew Baroncelli drives NMCB 23's motor grader onto a C-141 during Operation *Medstar*.

Career Corner

What do you know about the CB-VET Program?

CBVET Program Background

In FY1997, the Navy established the Construction Basic Veteran (CBVET) program to help relieve long-standing vacancies in selected reserve Naval Construction Force non-rated and junior petty officer billets.

The CBVET program was designed to enlist veterans from any service with little or no construction skill, who have completed Initial Active Duty Training (IADT), have a qualifying reenlistment code and a qualifying ASVAB score.

Veterans enter the Seabees as E-3s or E-4s, without going through an 'A' school or boot camp. This saves the Navy a substantial "up-front" training outlay, estimated at approximately $7 million in the first few program years.

CBVETs have two years to complete a rating equivalency skills program developed for each individual rating. The skills program, which is equivalent to 'A' school, is similar to PARS, but must be completed in addition to all current military requirements for 'A' school graduates. They have three years to complete all other CBVET requirements, including the Seabee Combat Handbook, PARS, basic military requirements and the professional requirements correspondence course for PO3&2 in their chosen ratings.

Six-month waivers to the rating equivalency skills program's two-year time requirement may be granted, on a case-by-case basis, at the unit CO's discretion, but only for those CBVETs who were unable to receive necessary training in FY1997.

The rating skills equivalency is accomplished through completion of a qualification standards booklet for the BU, SW, CE, UT, EO and CM ratings. Each CBVET receives a personal copy of the booklet, which is printed at the Reserve Center or RSS from master CD-ROM copies held at those activities. NAVFAC is currently redistributing the CD-ROMs at the unit and detachment level, and expects to have them available on the web site in the near future.

The two-year time clock for completion of the qualification standards booklet begins when the member reports aboard the gaining command and signs a Page 13 entry acknowledging entry into the program.

CBVETs are generally assigned to billets in Naval Construction Battalions. They gain valuable construction training during their weekend drills and annual training periods as they complete their booklet.

Any individual may sign or validate completion of any booklet section, provided he or she is a vocational trade instructor, a civilian construction foreman, a CBVET instructor, or a company chief petty officer.

However, the RSS site supervisor or CBVET coordinator retain the responsibility for validating the skills signed off by any outside sources and ensuring their legitimacy.

Because the success of the program rests on CBVETs actually gaining construction knowledge and skills during their training, command attention in ensuring the accuracy of the "sign-off" process and validating the legitimacy of any skills obtained through outside training is imperative.

Identifying Skills and Schools

CBVET Coordinators are required to conduct a skills inventory for each incoming CBVET and develop an Individual Training Plan (ITP) based on the results of that inventory.

Once ITPs are established, the coordinator is also responsible for obtaining quotas for CBVETs to attend formal training, if necessary. When requesting billet quotas, the coordinator should balance skill deficiencies of the member against the availability of classes which can correct the deficiency.

The point of contact for obtaining formal training quotas is UT1 Jim Green, at the 20th Naval Construction Regiment (NCR), Naval Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Miss.

UT1 Green can be reached at (601) 871-2876, FAX (601) 871-2129. He does not currently have a working e-mail. UT1 Green should be identified as the point of contact on all AT order requests for CBVET school quotas.

Training and Advancement Requirements

CBVETS should achieve permanent conversion to their respective construction ratings within 36 months from the date of enlistment or affiliation. To successfully complete the program, each CBVET must:

- Sign a Page 13 entry acknowledging entry into the CBVET program (and starting the time in which requirements must be completed).
- Receive a qualification standards booklet at the time of the Page 13 entry. All Reserve Centers and RSSs should have received a CD-ROM disk with all six booklets included, and a "hard copy" of each booklet.
- Be assigned a "sea daddy" — a senior enlisted mentor — to help provide an initial skills assessment and recommend an appropriate training strategy.
- Complete the qualifications standards booklet during weekend drill or AT, OJT, vocational schools, work experience or CBVET courses, within two years of affiliation; COs may extend this by six months in certain circumstances.
- Complete the Seabee Combat Handbook within three years of affiliation.
- Complete basic military requirements within three years.
- For CBVETs entering as E-4s, complete both military requirements for PO3 and professional requirements for PO3&2 in his or her chosen rating within three years of affiliation.
- E-4s must also complete PARS for PO3 within three years of affiliation, successfully pass the Navywide advancement examination for the new OF-13 rating, and attend a petty officer indoctrination course.

Direct and personal involvement of both the CBVET Coordinator and the unit CO is particularly important this year. A modification to the RSTARS-MP module is planned for mid-1998 which will permit tracking of CBVET training accomplishment through RSTARS. However, until this module is fully in place, it is necessary to manually track and review each CBVET's progress.

From The Master Chief

I recently attended a retirement ceremony for two Seabee Master Chiefs who during their combined 60-plus years of service contributed enormously to the Naval Construction Force.

We often refer to these senior Seabees as Old Salts. For you hardcore country music fans, there's a song by George Jones called "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?" As these prominent Master Chiefs were being piped over, I wondered who would replace this wealth of knowledge, strength of character and integrity? None of us are indispensable, so the senior enlisted community must make sure there are trained, eager replacements capable of filling our places as we leave.

Today's typical Seabee is smarter, more educated and more sophisticated than ever. With the Quadrennial Defense Review comes greater potential for continued force reductions. As resources diminish our successors must be smarter and more resourceful. The senior enlisted community must prepare them to meet some of the greatest management challenges in modern times. Diminishing resources make it even more important that we make the "One Force" concept work. Our survival as Seabees depends on its success.

We can do this by sharing our successes and visions, as well as failures. We must organize to efficiently meet our customers' needs. Future tasking will be more demanding than ever. The Good Old Boy network no longer works. We must be proficient in the effective use of new technologies available to us.

As we Old Salts leave and make room for the modern day Seabee, let's make sure they are prepared to carry on the "Can Do" Seabee legacy.

EQCM (SCW) Harvard L. Harris
20th NCR (Reserve Augment)

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