

UNITED STATES NAVY

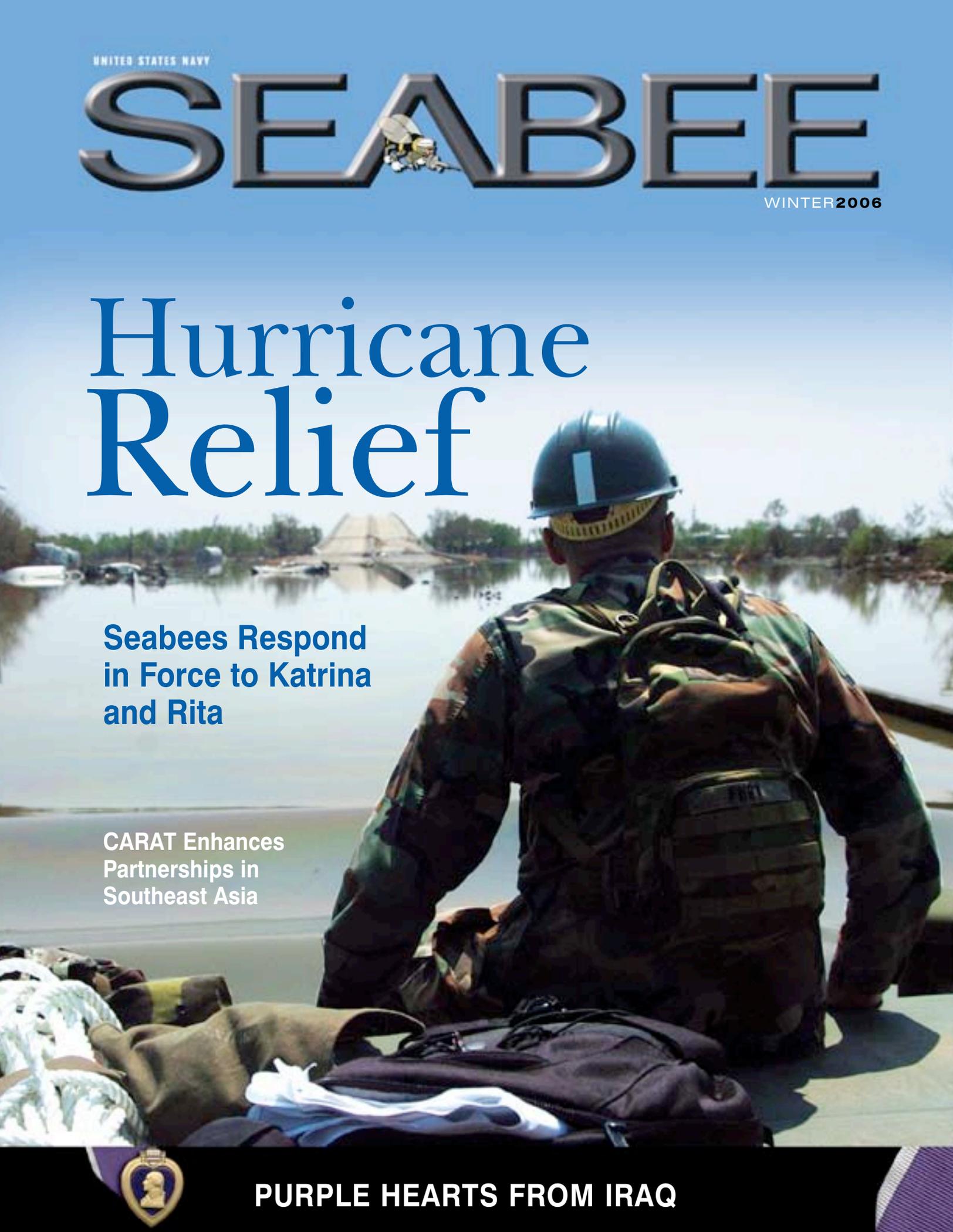
SEABEE

WINTER 2006

Hurricane Relief

**Seabees Respond
in Force to Katrina
and Rita**

**CARAT Enhances
Partnerships in
Southeast Asia**



PURPLE HEARTS FROM IRAQ

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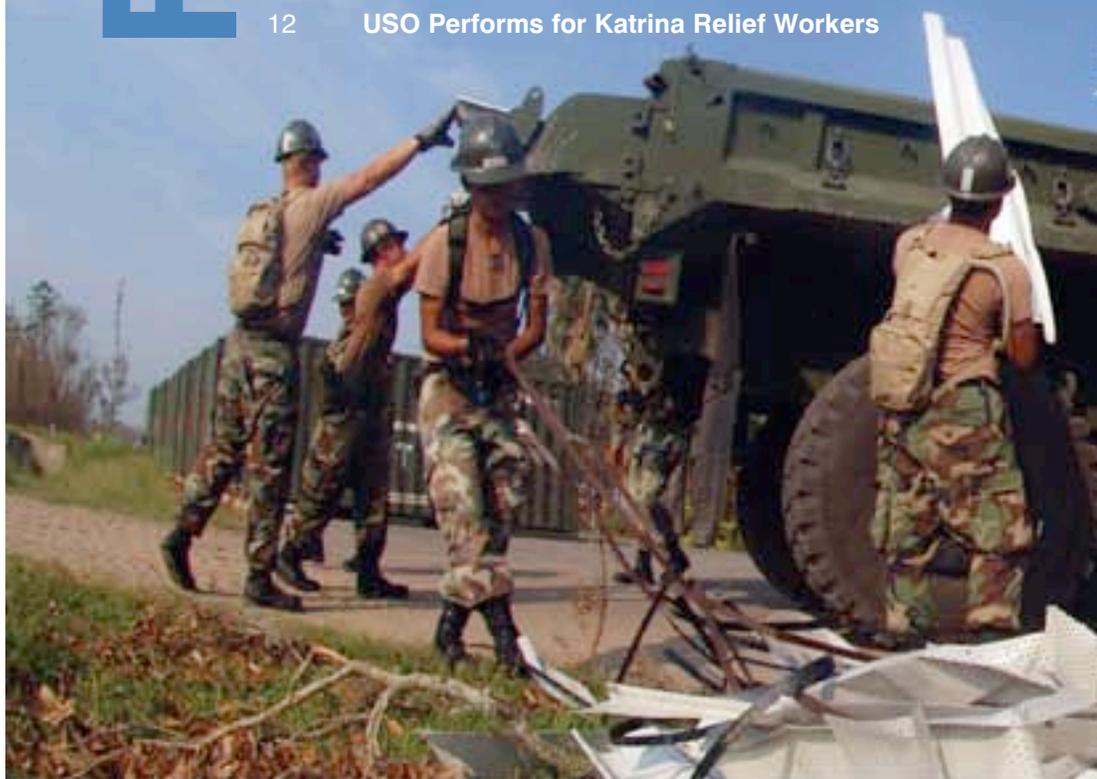
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and every Seabee everywhere, everyday.

GULF COAST RELIEF: HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA

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(Cover) Builder 1st Class Charles Fury, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 (NMCB 40), sits atop a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) while transiting through flooded streets in Port Sulphur, La., to the Buras Levee.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class John P. Curtis

WINTER06

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Seabees assigned to NMCB 40 load metal debris left behind from Hurricane Katrina at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 1st Class Robert McRill

NEWSBREAK

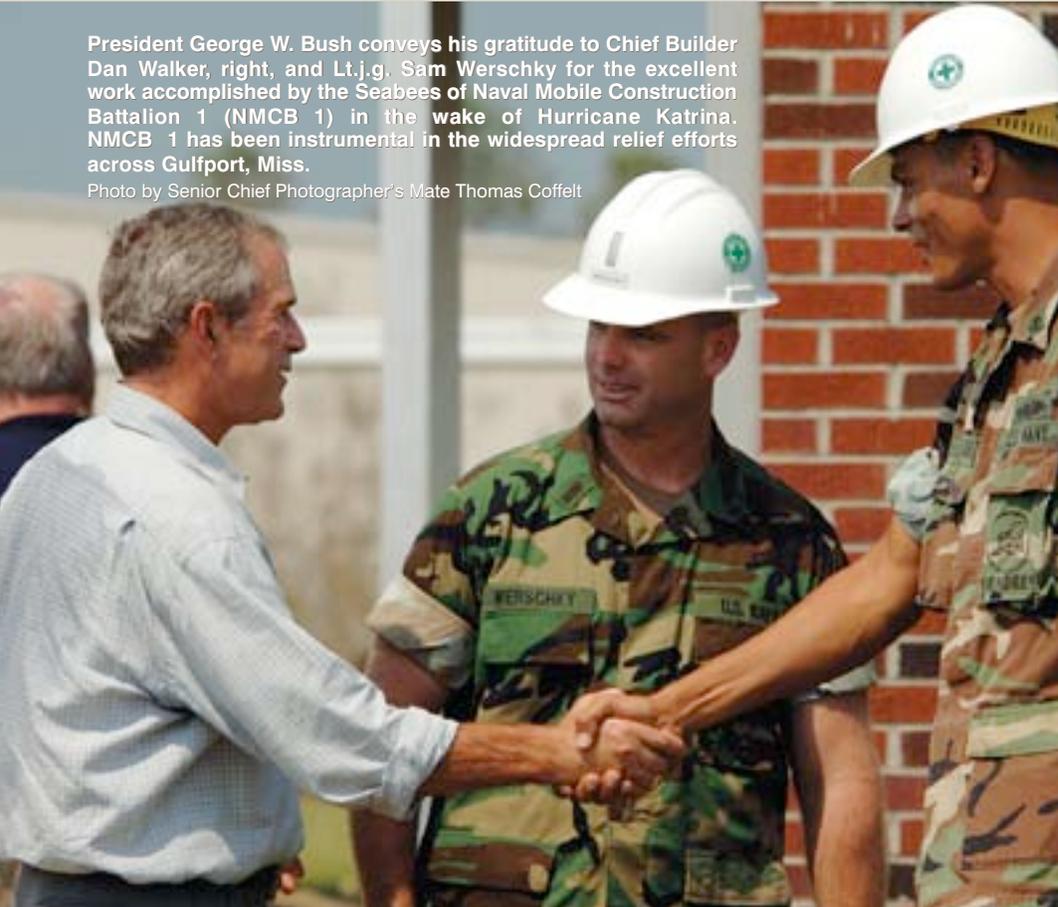
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- 25 "Seabees Make Me Proud"
Force Master Chief Harrell T. Richardson (Ret.)

President George W. Bush conveys his gratitude to Chief Builder Dan Walker, right, and Lt.j.g. Sam Werschky for the excellent work accomplished by the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 (NMCB 1) in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. NMCB 1 has been instrumental in the widespread relief efforts across Gulfport, Miss.

Photo by Senior Chief Photographer's Mate Thomas Coffelt



Winter 2006

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STAY NAVY. STAY SEABEE.



Hurricane Relief

(Below) Seabees assigned to Amphibious Construction Battalion 2 (ACB 2) construct a fuel bladder on the beach of Biloxi, Miss., in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Navy and Marine Corps involvement in the hurricane humanitarian assistance operations is led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in conjunction with the Department of Defense.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Michael Sandberg

The hurricane season of 2005 will go down in history as one of the most devastating on record. • Hurricane Katrina will likely be recorded as the worst U.S. natural disaster to date. The storm left catastrophic damage and thousands of casualties along the Gulf Coast and south Florida, after first touching down near Miami on August 25 and in Plaquemines Parish, La., four days later. • The Gulf Coast suffered a second blow when Hurricane Rita landed in Louisiana and Texas on September 24. Again leaving death and destruction in its wake, Rita hit many of Katrina's already-affected locales. • On the following pages, witness Seabees' heroic efforts to help reestablish the cities and towns, rebuild the property and renew the spirit of the people along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita...



Hurricane Relief

Seabees' Efforts in Response to Hurricanes: **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

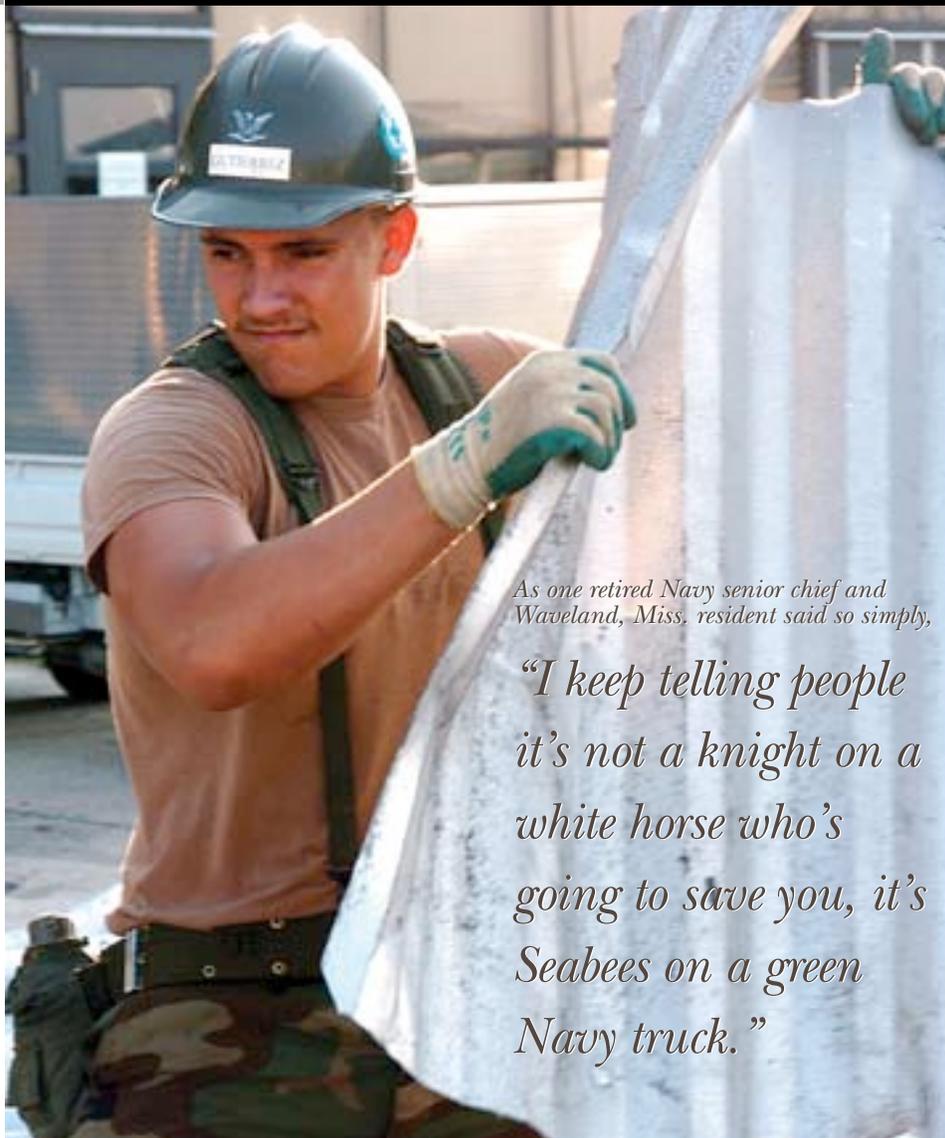
Seabees were quick to help bases along the Gulf Coast get back online and operational following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Today, Seabees continue to provide recovery and public works support, and have executed more than 700 missions on military bases and communities from Alabama to Louisiana.

Here's a snapshot of Seabee accomplishments to date...

Road Assessments	2,695 miles
Roads Cleared	750 miles
Debris Removed	20,000 tons
Schools Repaired	100 (serving 40,000 students)
Public Buildings	30+
Water and Fuel Deliveries	237,000 gallons
Food Distribution.....	1,600 families per day
Utilities (water, sewer, electric).....	455 projects



Seabees observe firsthand the devastation from Hurricane Katrina as they travel along Route 90 in Gulfport, Miss.
U.S. Navy photo



As one retired Navy senior chief and Waveland, Miss. resident said so simply,

“I keep telling people it’s not a knight on a white horse who’s going to save you, it’s Seabees on a green Navy truck.”

Utilitiesman 3rd Class Samuel Gutierrez, assigned to NMCB 40, removes debris from the surrounding buildings on board Naval Air Station New Orleans near Belle Chasse, La.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class John P. Curtis



Seabees assigned to NMCB 1 help clear trees downed by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulfport area.

Photo by Photographer's Mate
3rd Class Ja'laon A. Rhinehart

“They just came over and asked if they could help.”

– Plaquemines Parish resident

Seabees Provide Vital Community Reconnaissance and Clean-up Support

By Journalist 2nd Class Barbara Silkwood, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 Public Affairs

Before Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 (NMCB 40) could begin Hurricane Katrina cleanup in Southern Louisiana, the Seabee Engineering Reconnaissance Team (SERT) toured New Orleans, consolidating parish priorities — road accessibility, school repair, etc. — and creating a plan of action.

With a concrete plan in hand, SERT and Bravo company loaded an MTVR (medium tactical vehicle replacement) with chain saws and clean-up equipment, and headed for Plaquemines Parish's highest priority, the Belle Chasse post office.

“First, we cleared the large fallen trees blocking postal trucks and removed downed power lines in the parking lot,” said Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Matt Klier, “so the post office could re-open as quickly as possible.

“Next, we found a historical landmark which

had been turned into a library,” Klier said. “There were about 12 trees down and roofing was scattered everywhere. Working together, we cut up the trees, stacked the wood and removed all excess debris from the area.”

Several miles up the road, a middle school had sustained severe roof damage, and trees and debris were scattered throughout the schoolyard. Before beginning school cleanup, the Seabee crew spotted a couple across the street who had just returned to their home. Fallen trees and debris littering the front and back yards made it impossible to reach the house. One by one, the Seabees made their way to the house, cutting and stacking enormous tree branches, clearing a path for the couple.

“They just came over and asked if they could help,” said local resident Theresa Wade. “We really appreciated it.”

Hurricane Relief



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Joshua Ross (left) helps a New Orleans Plaquemines Parish resident change a tire on his bulldozer.

Photo by Journalist 1st Class James Pinsky

Key West Seabee Maintenance Unit Repairs Armed Forces Retirement Home

By Cmdr. Meg Reed, 1st Naval Construction Division Public Affairs Office

Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 202 (CBMU 202), headquartered in Little Creek, Va., has a standing disaster recovery mission. The Key West detachment arrived at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Biloxi, Miss., with a 27-person team the day after Hurricane Katrina subsided.

The retirement facility, built in the 1800s and constructed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes, is home to more than 400 retired military personnel. It is a popular living arrangement for retirees, with a seven-month waiting list. The home is filled with military artifacts and souvenirs from all military services.

Unlike many of the buildings on Biloxi's coast, the retirement home remained standing after Katrina's onslaught. However, water pushed its way through the lower level and flooded the entire floor. Because of the extreme damage following the storm, residents were evacuated. The building is currently vacant except for staff working on plans to repair and rebuild.

CBMU 202's ongoing mission at the retirement home is to establish security of the facility, preserve salvageable items, and perform clean-up activities throughout the 11-story building and grounds. Several other buildings on the site were lost, including employee cottages, a church, ware-

houses, and tool shops. More than 250 cars were sprawled across parking lots and lawns.

Chief Warrant Officer Charles Heatherly of Hendersonville, N.C., Officer-in-Charge of the project, explained that the hurricane started to escalate during the evening meal so the residents were immediately moved to the upper floors. When the CBMU detachment arrived, several Seabees thought the scene looked as if time were standing still since many residents had left their unfinished dinners on the tables.

Heatherly says his Seabees will stay as long as required. "The detachment is glad to help out — it could be any of us living here someday," he added.

Construction Electrician 1st Class Antonio Murray of Chicago, Ill., used equipment in the Auto Hobby Shop for necessary electrical rebuilding tasks throughout the facility. "The home is a cherished place for all military retirees. The memorabilia in the building is a reminder of why we serve, and it must be saved," said Murray.

Equipment Operator Chief Doyle Bitgood of Canterbury, Conn., provided on-site operations oversight. He was inspired to visit the home seven years ago after learning about it, and is glad to be back to help with recovery efforts.

(Continued)

"The home is a cherished place for all military retirees. The memorabilia in the building is a reminder of why we serve, and it must be saved."

— Construction Electrician 1st Class Antonio Murray

(Continued from previous page)

Several retirees returned to the facility to gather their belongings. “They were extremely grateful to the Seabees and wanted to return the help in any way,” said Bitgood. “Regardless of Katrina’s devastation, they want to come back home.”

In addition to the Key West Seabees, 185 members of CBMU 202 from detachments in

Washington, D.C., King’s Bay, Ga., and Jacksonville, Fla., are working on recovery projects throughout the Mississippi area.

Editor’s Note: The Armed Forces Retirement Home in Biloxi, Miss., continues to work with the Department of Defense, Office of Management and Budget, and Congress for funding to support the reopening of this facility.



Kelly, an Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin displaced when Hurricane Katrina destroyed her home at the Marine Life Oceanarium in Gulfport, Miss., is carefully placed in a temporary saltwater pool facility at the NCBC Gulfport. The above-ground pool, along with other necessary filtration equipment needed to care for sea mammals, was provided by U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program personnel from San Diego, Calif.

Photo by Journalist 3rd Class Chris Gethings

Seabees Provide Home for Dolphins Displaced During Katrina

By Journalist 3rd Class Chris Gethings, U.S. Fleet Forces Command Public Affairs Detachment, Gulfport

Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport opened its doors in mid-September to Kelly, Toni, Jackie and Noah — four Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins displaced when a reported 40-foot storm surge from Hurricane Katrina destroyed their home at the Marine Life Oceanarium. They were soon joined by four other dolphins — Shelly, Jill, Eli and Tamara — who had been moved to NCBC Gulfport from the harbor.

The dolphins’ temporary home included three portable saltwater above-ground pools — one 22,000 gallons and two 10,000 gallons — filters, pumps and monitoring equipment from the U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program in San Diego, Calif. In addition to providing a safe shelter for the stranded shipmates, the dolphins received medical care for injuries sustained during the storm while at NCBC Gulfport.

“Our role is to provide and maintain a place for these animals to live comfortably,” said Bob Olds, project manager with U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program. “We were chosen for this task because we have all the experience, equipment and resources necessary for quickly setting up and maintaining an appropriate home for these displaced dolphins.”

Olds and other personnel with the U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program continuously monitored and maintained the filtration and temperature control equipment needed for the dolphins’ temporary home. NCBC personnel provided 24-hour security.

“This facility is outstanding,” said Tash Solangi, public relations representative for the Marine Life Oceanarium. “The Navy has given us everything we could ever need to keep our dolphins safe and on a fast-track to recovery.”

The dolphins were found in Gulfport Harbor on September 10 by Institute for Marine Mammal Studies (IMMS) personnel in a Harrison County Sheriff Department helicopter. IMMS trainers and veterinarians have monitored and cared for the dolphins since that time.

Ensign Michael Dabling, Public Works Operations Officer, said NCBC was extremely proud to provide shelter for the dolphins.

“Our Seabees have been out in town since the hurricane, helping local residents recover,” explained Dabling. “This is just another prime example of the willingness and capabilities our base can, and will, provide.”

Hurricane Relief



Seabees assigned to NMCB 133 tear through a plywood floor as they help restore and rebuild Hope Haven, a children's abuse shelter in Waveland, Miss., destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. Hope Haven provides safe refuge for abused and neglected children in Mississippi.

Photo by Photographer's Mate
2nd Class Michael Sandberg

Recent Seabee Graduates Receive Navy Achievement Medals

By Corey Schultz, Navy Public Affairs

Before they became full-fledged Seabees, a group of pre-graduation "A" Schoolers and Construction Inspectors had a trial by fire as they jumped into Hurricane Katrina relief work in Gulfport, Miss.

The students had completed courses at Naval Construction Training Center (NCTC) and were preparing to graduate when the storm hit. Without hesitation, they immediately transitioned to disaster relief clearing local property strewn with fallen trees, and distributing food, water and clothing in the Gaston Point area.

For their dedication and hard work, 27 Navy Achievement Medals were awarded to graduating students for supporting hurricane relief efforts.

"It's unusual for someone to earn a medal so early in his Navy career," said Chief Warrant Officer Tom Neely, Operations Officer for NCTC. "But I think the true gratification comes from knowing that they were able to help people recover from the hurricane."

During relief work, Seabee students cleared trees and debris from two local schools, Gaston Point and West Elementary. Both schools participate in an NCTC partnership program, *Reading to Succeed*. Through the program, Seabees encourage students to enjoy reading for pleasure, as well as for education. Other relief efforts included supporting shelters in town, cleaning the housing area in Ladd Circle, and conducting the

initial cleaning of trees and debris from major base roads.

Builder Constructionman James Pace led crews to clean vital areas on base so that emergency crews could launch rescue efforts. "It felt great to clear the way," said Pace. "We could see what was needed and what we had to do to help. Even though we weren't official Seabees yet, we were determined to help our community."

Steelworker Constructionman Recruit Matthew Long worked at the warehouse providing support to people seeking shelter from the hurricane. "It felt great to see how each job we did made a difference," said Long. "Keeping a smile on our face while helping someone who lost everything was challenging, but satisfying."

"I also enjoyed helping out our veterans from the Armed Forces Retirement Home as they came in and tried to make the best of it," Long said.

The A School students graduated with two different ratings: Builders and Steelworkers.

NCTC also teaches Advanced Builder, Construction Electrician, Advanced Construction Mechanic, Advanced Planning and Estimating, and Advanced Equipment Operating.



Reserve Seabees Actively Support Hurricane Recovery Efforts

By Cmdr. Meg Reed, 1st Naval Construction Division Public Affairs Office

Reserve Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 18 (NMCB 18), headquartered in Washington state, worked side-by-side with their active-duty counterparts during hurricane relief efforts in Gulfport, Miss.

“Our heart goes out to the people affected by this horrific event, and our unit is proud to be among the first responders during desperate times,” said Cmdr. Bradley Posadas, NMCB 18’s commanding officer. “I’m very proud that reserve personnel from both Helena, Mont., and Central Point, Ore., detachments were there with other Seabee brethren from NMCB 1 to lend a helping hand.”

NMCB 18 began its work at Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss., where 1,000 evacuees from the Gulfport area were transferred to an on-base shelter. Reserve Seabees manned the shelter’s welcome center, working side-by-side with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Red Cross.

In addition to welcome center duty, NMCB 18 personnel cleared massive amounts of debris on the base and surrounding roads, and in other community areas. In their spare time, Seabees assisted fellow Navy personnel and community members in cleaning up yards and other areas. Without the Seabees’ assistance, some of the debris removal projects would have taken many months.

NMCB 18 members took pride in being able to serve with their fellow Seabees and provide relief to local citizens. Construction Mechanic 1st Class Dale Miller, a maintenance mechanic/millwright from Medford, Ore., said he was glad for the opportunity to assist.

“People have been extremely welcoming,” said Miller. “We came to help them, but they tried to help us.”

Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Ben Sandu of Portland, Ore., is a firefighter and independent contractor, but wanted to help. “They asked for volunteers, and that’s what I signed up for when I joined the Navy.”

James Sollee, Equipment Operator 2nd Class of Central Point, Ore., a public works water crew worker, agreed. “It’s our turn, our duty,” he said. “Others have been called to Iraq, and we’ve been called here.”

After four days in Meridian, the detachment traveled back to the Gulfport area to support NMCB 1 by contributing diverse and specialized construction and engineering skills to complement their active-duty counterparts.

NMCB 18 is headquartered in Ft. Lewis, Wash., and maintains 14 detachments within seven states: Alaska, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.



Builder Constructionman Lisseth Briceno, NMCB 40, cuts wood for a National Guard “tent city” on board Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.
Photo by Chief Journalist Kevin Elliott

Hurricane Relief



An NMCB 7 equipment operator clears debris in Jones Park, Gulfport, Miss. The clean-up effort was performed in conjunction with support from the U.S. Coast Guard, Fish and Wildlife Commission, and Sheriff's Department.

Photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Paul Williams

Gulfport Seabees Receive International Military Support

By Journalist 3rd Class Chris Gethings, U.S. Fleet Forces Command Public Affairs Detachment, Gulfport

Just outside of Biloxi, Miss., an elementary school was the first stop in an international humanitarian effort in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Marines from Camp Pendleton, Calif., Mexican marines from amphibious warship ARM Papaloapan (A 411), Sailors on board *USS Bataan* (LPD 5) and Dutch sailors on board HMS Van Amstel (F 831) came together to convert the ravaged D'Iberville Elementary School into a food and water distribution center.

"We're only a small percentage of the manpower helping to clean up this location, but I think everyone is making quite a difference," said Dutch Lt. Cmdr. Bas Van Den Akker, supply officer on board Van Amstel. "All of my sailors are just glad to be here helping out our fellow man," added the Amsterdam, Netherlands, native.

Seabees, Sailors and Marines cleared fallen trees, removed hanging debris and cleaned areas adjacent to the school where tin roofing and other materials had landed. Dutch sailors spent an additional two days at a Baptist church distributing supplies directly to local residents.

"Despite their great loss, the people and other organizations involved in the relief

effort have been absolutely wonderful to us," said Akker. "They all made us feel our help was appreciated 100 percent."

The four commands from three different countries worked together and had little trouble developing common ground for communication, despite language barriers.

"I speak Spanish, so I've been talking to the Mexican marines to help them communicate with other Sailors and Marines," said Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Anthony Perez Vasquez, of

USS Bataan. "It doesn't even matter that a lot of our guys aren't multilingual; we're all working like machines to get this school cleaned up for the kids. We all agree that's the important thing."

"Everyone's getting along great — it's unlike anything I've ever seen," said Marine Lance Cpl. Ricardo Ruiz, with Marine Expeditionary Unit 11, based out of Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"All of us have the same goal out here, helping the people who need it most. I think it's absolutely wonderful that foreign military is here with the exact same motivation we have toward this humanitarian relief effort," added Ruiz.

"We're only a small percentage of the manpower helping to clean up this location, but I think everyone is making quite a difference."

— Dutch Lt. Cmdr. Bas Van Den Akker, supply officer on board Van Amstel

U.S., Mexican Navies Join Forces in School Repair

By Journalist 2nd Class Lynn Iron, USS Whidbey Island Public Affairs

Crewmembers from USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41), Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7 (NMCB 7) and the Mexican amphibious ship MS Papaloapan (P 411) combined efforts to clean up local schools in the Biloxi school district following the hurricane devastation.

“We are trying to get the kids back in school as quickly as possible, and help return their lives to as close to normal as possible,” said Biloxi School District Plant Supervisor Roanie Bogard.

Interior Communications Specialist 2nd Class Mario Zetino, father of two children, was especially happy to help.

“I have two daughters and would really appreciate this kind of help for my kids’ education if we were in this type of situation,” said Zetino. “There is no better feeling than knowing you are helping a child reach the stars as fast as they can.”

Although the school system is mostly concerned about the children’s education, they also have the parents in mind.

“Once we get the children back in a safe environment, it will be one less thing for their parents and guardians to worry about,” Bogard said.

While the multi-national crew of Sailors and Marines cleared the school area of debris as part of their relief efforts, many of them did not fully realize the impact their actions were having in the Biloxi school district.

“We have approximately nine schools in the district,” said Bogard. “Two of them were flooded with more than six feet of water. Everyone who has been helping restore the schools has saved us approximately \$50,000 in manpower and equipment alone. We are very appreciative of their hard work and dedication.”

Sailors assigned to the amphibious assault ship *USS Bataan* (LHD 5), with the help of Mexican Marines, remove debris at D’Iberville Elementary School during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The school served as a shelter, providing food and medicine to the evacuees.

Photo by Photographer’s Mate 2nd Class Michael Sandberg



Seabee Efforts Prevent Hurricane Rita Flooding

By Yeoman 2nd Class Donna Lou Morgan, Joint Forces Maritime Component Command Public Affairs

Post-Hurricane Katrina, Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40 (NMCB 40) were called into action when Plaquemines Parish, located in southeastern Louisiana, experienced rising water from Hurricane Rita, threatening the integrity of the Jesuit Bend levee.

Working alongside Plaquemines Parish residents and the Air National Guard, Seabees filled and placed sandbags at the base of the levee break originally caused by Hurricane Katrina. The 150-foot long sandbag wall was completed in time to beat high tide, protecting the community from any further flood damage.

“As the line of sandbags grew,” explained Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Adams, NMCB 40 Operations Officer, “the large push of water against the levee

was slowing and beginning to recede. Miles away, water was also subsiding in other sections of the levee — a good sign.”

“The Seabees were mass-producing sandbags and dumptruck loads of fill material for the local folks to place on the emergency levee,” said Capt. Kelly Schmader, Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC) Logistics Engineer. “It was an impressive display of teamwork between 100+ highly motivated Seabees and members of the local parish.”

Adams said he was proud to work alongside the fine people of Plaquemines Parish to see them through that trying time, providing support and comfort wherever they could.

Hurricane Relief



Builder Constructionman Joseph Godfrey, NMCB 40, clears debris at Saint Rosalie School in New Orleans, La.
Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class John P. Curtis

Mobile Utilities Team Brings Power, Comfort After Hurricane Hits Land

By Navy Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center Public Affairs

Just hours after Hurricane Katrina cleared the Gulf Coast region, the Navy's Mobile Utilities Support Equipment (MUSE) team in Port Hueneme, Calif., received a "911" call from the Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., requesting power restoration manpower and equipment support. MUSE is the Naval Facilities Engineering Command's (NAVFAC) resident power expert and often the first responder to utility emergencies around the world.

"Within four hours of the request, two 800-kilowatt generators and one 2500-kilovolt-amp substation were packaged for immediate shipment to Gulfport. Within 12 hours of the request, MUSE techs were en route to NCBC Gulfport," said Senior Chief Construction Mechanic Kevin Hughes, MUSE Program Manager. "Responding to emergencies is our business."

At NCBC Gulfport, the MUSE team took care of all priorities for the Emergency Operations Center using smaller tactical generators ranging from 30 to 200 kilowatts. Techs restored power to the NCBC main galley, which served more than 1,700 plates per meal. In addition, MUSE powered seven buildings including a converted warehouse used to house more than 2,000 personnel from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) doctors and nurses. MUSE technicians installed and repaired generators, moving sewage to the local wastewater treatment plant and averting a potential disease outbreak within the communities of Gulfport.

At Naval Station Pascagoula, three MUSE generators and two substations brought base power back on line. The New Orleans MUSE Det set up a 1.5-megawatt power plant at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, La., supporting the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Joint Task Force Operations Center. The New Orleans Det went on to Naval Support Activity West Bank to supply power to naval facilities and more than 2,500 incoming troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne and 1st Cavalry, and Navy personnel. Naval Support Activity East Bank also received power restoration via MUSE techs, escorted by Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40's (NMCB 40's) SERT (Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Team).

Soldiers from the 41st Brigade out of Portland, Ore., welcomed having lights on again. As one commented, "It's the small things you take for granted."

USO Performs for Katrina Relief Workers

By Journalist 3rd Class Chris Gethings, U.S. Fleet Forces Command Public Affairs Detachment, Gulfport

Thousands of Hurricane Katrina relief workers from all branches of the U.S. military received some much-needed rest and relaxation when the United Service Organizations (USO) put on a special show at Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss. Since August, more than 3,000 Seabees have worked at disaster sites along the battered coastline.

The USO show featured comedian Jeffrey Ross, country music star Neil McCoy and performer Wayne Newton.

"We had an amazing turnout," said NCBC Executive Officer Cmdr. John Rice, "especially since these folks get up early in the morning to continue disaster relief work all along the coast everyday. They work very hard and have truly made a difference in the community."

"The show was awesome," said Builder Constructionman Colleen Evans with Naval Mobile

Construction Battalion 133 (NMCB 133). "This is definitely a great opportunity for all of us to get a little break and have some fun."

"I thought the comedians were absolutely hilarious," said Marine Staff Sgt. Victor Benson, an Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) mechanic with 2nd Amphibious Assault Battalion, 2nd Marine Division. "None of us has had much of a chance for entertainment lately, so this is a great opportunity for everyone."

The USO mission is to provide morale, welfare and recreational services to military men and women, entertaining servicemembers across the globe since before World War II.

"It's really just a huge ego boost for me," said comedian Ross, who has performed for many military men and women over the years. "They're really the best crowds!"

Purple Hearts Iraq



“Freedom and liberty are not innate rights. They are precious, they are priceless, and they are great gifts that have to be earned, protected and defended at all costs.”

*– Rear Adm. Michael K. Loose
Commander, Chief of Civil Engineers*

The oldest military decoration in the world today, the Purple Heart was the first American award made available to the common soldier.

Originally created and designed by General George Washington, today’s award is made in the shape of a rich purple heart bordered in gold, with a bust of our nation’s first president in the center and the Washington coat-of-arms at the top. The latter is believed to have been the source of the stars and stripes on the American Flag.

The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action. It is specifically a combat decoration.



Purple Hearts

Iraq

PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS*

The following Seabees were **killed in action** while mobilized to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom...

BU2 Michael Anderson	02 May 04
BUC Joel Baldwin	21 Dec 04
CS1 Regina Clark	23 Jun 05
EO3 Christopher Dickerson	30 Apr 04
EO2 Trace Dossett	02 May 04
SW2 Jason Dwelley	30 Apr 04
SW3 Ronald Ginther	02 May 04
BU2 Robert Jenkins	02 May 04
SW3 Eric Knott	04 Sept 04
CM3 Scott McHugh	02 May 04

* At time of publication

The following Seabees were **wounded in action** while mobilized to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom...

EO1	Douglas Alvarez
HM2	Hernal Beaumont
EO2	Todd Brannon
CNCR	William Briscoe
EA1	David Cliff
EO1	Frank Coffey Jr.
CE1	Marvin Craig III
LT	Kyle Croce
EO2	Henry Delvalle
GM1	Michael Douberly
CM2	George Edwards
EO1	Aaron Felthousen
EO2	Frederick Frank
CM1	Lewis Haynes
CM2	Brian Hunt
CM2	Albert Johnson
GM2	Thomas Johnson
CE2	Barry Klose
EO2	Matthew Kreamalmyer
CMC	Jerry Lawrence
PO2	Thomas Lyons
EO3	Steven Mangrum
UTC	Randall McGhee
HMC	Anthony Muller
EO2	James Nappier
BU3	George Parsons
EO1	Ronald Philpot
SW3	Michael Rambo
CM3	Odis Reyes
EO3	Kenneth Reynolds
BU2	William Rightsell Jr.
SW2	Gregory Risner
CE3	Christopher Ritchie
EO2	William Snodgrass
UT3	Clifton Springer
CM1	Mark Steffener
CM2	Robert Strickland
EO3	Matthew Terrick
CM2	David Vernaza
EO2	Michael Vorburger
BUC	Robert Westover
EO1	Bryan Williams
EOC	Philip Winslett
CM1	Randolph Woodward

In Memoriam

Djibouti, Africa

Builder 3rd Class Fabricio Moreno's rifle, Kevlar, boots and dog tags are assembled in accordance to military tradition during a memorial ceremony held in his honor in Djibouti. Petty Officer Moreno was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 (NMCB 3), Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. He died on October 14, 2005, in a single-vehicle accident in Manda Bay, Africa. Moreno was a member of a Seabee crew working to restore and maintain facilities on the forward operating base in that location.

Air Force photo by Stacy L. Pearsall



Seabee Father, Son Reunite



Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Dean O. Joyce Sr. and Army Sgt. Dean O. Joyce Jr., both High Point, N.C. natives, are reunited in Taqaddum in September.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Wayne Edmiston

Former Navy Quarterback Serves in Iraq

By Journalist 1st Class Chad V. Pritt

Each year, thousands of high school students across America apply to attend the U.S. Naval Academy. Some attend this prestigious military institution for deeply felt patriotic reasons; some for the top-notch education; and some for the coveted stepping stone to military service. For others, it's all of the above — plus football.

Lt.j.g. Brian Madden, 2002 graduate of the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., attended the institution as the starting quarterback for the Midshipmen. Madden led his team as quarterback from his sophomore year through the 2001 season. He is

currently deployed to Iraq with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 (NMCB 1).

Playing for the Academy was an experience of both individual and team accomplishment.

“My sophomore year, I led the nation in rushing among QBs,” said Madden, a Lawton, Okla., native. “I rushed for 987 yards my sophomore year, and 1,100 my senior year. Unfortunately, I missed my junior year due to an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) tear.”

Solid teamwork was behind the Midshipmen's near victory during a match-

up with Notre Dame his first year on the squad.

“That was my first start, against a team that has beaten the Academy close to 40 consecutive years,” said Madden, NMCB 1's assistant supply officer. “But we went there, in that highly competitive environment, and pulled together as one team against the powerhouse Notre Dame.”

“We were up 24–21 with 30 seconds to play, and somehow the magic of Notre Dame beat us,” he said. “However, it was one of our better experiences. We were able to walk in there and almost pull off a big upset.”

on Sands of Taqaddum

By Lance Cpl. Wayne Edmiston

A father and son share many things — looks, habits, talents or simply a last name. But for a father and son who were reunited in Iraq, their bond was a commitment to their nation and to each other.

Master Chief Petty Officer Dean O. Joyce Sr., assistant officer in charge of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 (NMCB 3) aboard Camp Taqaddum, and Army Sgt. Dean O. Joyce Jr., a multiple rocket launch system crewman with 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, both High Point, N.C. natives, reunited as Sgt. Joyce's convoy rolled into Taqaddum.

Their reunion was something both say they will never forget.

"It is a great experience to share being away from home and serving our countries together," Sgt. Joyce said.

Master Chief Joyce experienced firsthand how his military life influenced his son's career when meeting him in Iraq. And, seeing his father everyday in uniform serving in the military influenced Sgt. Joyce in his decision to serve.

"Ever since he was old enough to understand what I did for a living, he always wanted to be in the military," Master Chief Joyce said.

Moreover, the two believe that it was fate that

brought them to this reunion. On the way to Taqaddum, Sgt. Joyce's convoy encountered two improvised explosive devices. All members of the convoy escaped unharmed.

"I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason," said Master Chief Joyce. "God understands the love between a father and son, and brought us together."

Being able to trade stories and share experiences when they get home is something they both look forward to, Sgt. Joyce added.

"It's great to know we are in country together chewing the same dirt and having the same experiences," Master Chief Joyce said.

Even though fate brought them together, the seasoned Navy Master Chief still cannot hide his fatherly instincts when they are separated.

"These few moments together are times when I am not worrying about him," Master Chief Joyce said.

One thing they both share more than anything else is their pride in what each other does.

"You're already proud to be a father, but serving your country with your son is something that makes you very proud," Master Chief Joyce said. "Life doesn't get any better than that."



desert bees

"I think that it will go down as one of the Academy's best football moments, because no one expected anything from us and we almost won," Madden said. "Plus, it was a great way to begin my collegiate football career."

Madden, who has played football since he was 10 years old, graduated from the Academy with a bachelor of science degree in economics.

"I had no idea that I'd go to the Naval Academy," said Madden, who was approached by an Academy scout his senior year in high school. "I grew up in Oklahoma and Sooners football has always been big.

"As a senior, the Naval Academy looked like the best option," he said. "The Midshipmen were coming off a great season and graduating their quarterback. So, I thought there might be a good chance I could start.

"Not only did I have the opportunity to start, I received a great education and a great job as a Naval officer," Madden added. "And, I've certainly met a lot of great people through the military."

The game of football, with the largest fan base among college teams, features some of the most intense rivalries, Navy vs. Army being one of the oldest and most intense over the course of 115 years.

"Obviously Army-Navy is a huge rivalry," Madden said. "Each year, there are millions of people rooting for it one way or the other.

"Even with the rivalry, we're one team in our war effort in Iraq," he said. "It presents such an invaluable opportunity for young leaders to step up and learn to manage in a very challenging environment."

Madden and NMCB 1 are currently deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, providing engineering support throughout Al Anbar Province.

Editor's note: This season's football match-up saw the Mids lay claim to the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy for the third straight year... Navy 42, Army 23.

INLS



Navy's New Lighterage System Revolutionizes



By Raina T. Williams, Editor-in-Chief, Seabee Magazine

The Navy is currently testing a new and improved lighterage system that can be assembled into causeways, docks or ferries, providing the Navy and Marine Corps with a safer, more versatile way to deliver vehicles and critical supplies from ship to shore during war or peacetime operations.

"The new system will enhance the Navy's Logistics Over the Shore capabilities and replace the Navy's existing lighterage system," said Charlie Blum, an engineer with Naval Facilities Engineering Command's (NAVFAC's) Sealift Support Program Office, which manages the new lighterage program.

Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific and Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 (ACB 1) are currently testing the new system at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif. The testing, through spring 2006, will demonstrate whether the system can operate in higher sea states, at faster speeds and with better maneuverability.

"The old system was limited to operating in a sea state two," said Blum. "The current system is capable of operating in a sea state of three and is expected to be survivable at a sea state of five. It is also designed and built with enhanced technology and is truly a quantum leap over the previous system."

The new lighterage system comes in sections that lock together like building blocks to create a variety of floating structures. These structures allow Navy ships to transport heavy equipment, such as tanks and trucks, to shore, and cargo, such as food, water and equipment parts, between ships and from ship to shore when moorings have been damaged or are unavailable.

"We're very confident in these craft because we pretested them for five months before bringing them here," said Blum. "The Navy and Marinette Marine have worked closely to get this done. We feel it's a superb product and will exceed everyone's expectations."

Marinette Marine Corporation, Marinette, Wis., was awarded a multi-year contract in 2003 to manufacture 29 INLS modules. The total contract is valued at more than

\$404 million. Full-rate production modules are slated for delivery to the Navy's Amphibious Construction Battalions and to all three Maritime Prepositioning Force squadrons through 2010.

(Opposite Top and Bottom) The Improved Navy Lighterage System (INLS) is tested by Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific and ACB 1. The new system enhances the ability for the Navy and Marine Corps to deliver vehicles and supplies during wartime or peacetime operations.

U.S. Navy Photos

SHIP-TO-SHORE TRANSPORT

"Military equipment has become bigger and heavier," said Blum. "The amount of time it takes to unload utilizing the current system has become longer, too. The Navy and Marine Corps want to get ashore in the minimum amount of time and that's what this new [system] provides."

The Improved Navy Lighterage System (INLS) is a redesign of the existing Navy Lighter (NL) system that has been around for almost 50 years, developed for use in World War II and used consistently throughout the years. Now, nearing the end of its useful life, the NL system with less cargo capacity and power is not as efficient and reliable especially in turbulent seas. INLS's flexibility and stability make it more resilient under such conditions.

CARAT Philippines Phase



The Annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise series ended in August with the closing of the Philippines phase in Puerto Princesa City. CARAT is an annual series of bilateral military training exercises designed to enhance cooperative working partnerships with several Southeast Asian nations. Ensuring freedom of the seas by increasing maritime security efforts in the region is a primary focus of the CARAT series.

Capt. Buzz Little, commander of Destroyer Squadron 1 and the CARAT task group, and members of his staff and officers from three CARAT task group ships went ashore in late summer to close out the exercise at the Philippine Navy's Headquarters Naval Forces West.

"The CARAT Philippine phase was successful because both of our military forces cooperated on many levels at sea and ashore," Little said during his closing ceremony remarks.

Rear Adm. Kevin M. Quinn is responsible for overall CARAT coordination for U.S. participants in his executive agent role as commander, Task Force 712.

Communication and Teamwork: Key to CARAT Success

A hallmark of the CARAT Philippine phase is how the U.S. and Philippine armed forces work together on behalf of the host communities. As a matter of fact, the United States and the Philippines are the only two navies in the world that have Seabees.

The Philippines phase of the 11th annual exercise series was marked by many milestones, including the first-time operational employment of the U.S. Navy's Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange

(Top Left) Damage Controlman 1st Class Dean Marzano, left, assigned to *USS Safeguard* (ARS 50), shares a tool with a member of the Philippine Navy during a gazebo-building community service project in Olongapo, Philippines.

(Top Right) Fire Controlman 2nd Class Dean Crawford explains his security team leader role to Philippine Navy Sailors during training exercises aboard the guided missile frigate *USS Rodney M. Davis* (FFG 60).

Photos by Chief Journalist Melinda Larson

Succeeds at Sea & Ashore

By Chief Journalist Melinda Larson, Commander
Destroyer Squadron 1 Public Affairs

(Right) Constructionman Aaron M. McNett, NMCB 5, removes scaffolding from a two-room schoolhouse built by his unit and construction personnel from the Philippine Navy for Doce Martires Elementary School in San Narciso.

Photo by Journalist 2nd Class Brian P. Biller



System (CENTRIXS), a real-time communications capability providing commanders with a comprehensive tactical picture.

"It takes a little adjusting for a Filipino to understand the words spoken by an American and vice versa," said Philippine Vice Adm. Ruben Domingo, commander, Western Command. "The exercise gave everyone the opportunity to get accustomed to each other's way of communicating verbally or through the use of codes and signals using modern communication equipment."

CENTRIXS was installed at the Philippine Navy's (PN) CARAT headquarters ashore in Manila, providing exercise 'Orange' and 'Blue' force commanders with a new communications capability.

"This ability to communicate with each other, combined with our ability to plan and execute complex maritime security and warfare scenarios at sea, highlight our CARAT achievements

and, most importantly, burnish our mutual respect and ability to depend upon our navies in the years to come," Little said.

Strong Alliances Mean Greater Security

Building strong alliances is key when combating transnational criminals who increasingly use vital sea lanes in the area to commit acts of piracy or to transport illegal caches of weapons and drugs.

"Terrorists do not recognize national boundaries, nor do they discriminate on their targets," Domingo said. "We have come to realize that collective effort is needed to effectively fight terrorism. This brings us back to one good reason why the conduct of the CARAT exercise should be performed seriously, so that we can enhance our interoperability to fight terrorists wherever they are."

Strengthening skill sets together is vital to combined forces, especially in the maritime interdiction arena. By learning each other's visit, board, search

and seizure (VBSS) tactics, the teams build confidence.

U.S. Navy P-3 Orion and PN Islander aircraft patrolled the skies in a first-ever search and rescue (SAR) event. The goal of the patrol aircraft was to locate personnel from a simulated mid-air collision scenario occurring between two military F/A-18 aircraft. Three kapok lifejackets and a barrel were used to represent the survivors and the aircraft, all of which were safely recovered in the exercise.

Philippine Navy BO-105 helicopters completed deck landing qualifications aboard *USS Rodney M. Davis* (FFG 60). More than 150 Philippine marines embarked *USS Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49) for a beach landing exercise. Five waves of two landing craft air cushion (LCAC) took the marines ashore at San Miguel Beach. While others in the task group were at sea for the underway phase, *USS Safeguard* (ARS 50) conducted numerous interactive diving and salvage events at Subic Bay.

(Continued)



Seabees assigned to NMCB 5, along with construction personnel from the Philippine Navy, put the finishing touches on a new addition to Doce Martires Elementary School

Photo by Journalist 2nd Class Brian P. Biller

CARAT Enhances Community Relations: U.S., Philippine Seabees Build Schoolhouse Addition

By Journalist 2nd Class (SW) Brian P. Biller
USS Harpers Ferry Public Affairs

Construction experts from the U.S. Seabees Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 (NMCB 5) and Republic of Philippines Marine Engineers — better known as the ‘Blue-Green Team’ — put together their collective experience and brick and mortar in San Narciso to construct an addition to Doce Martires Elementary School in late summer.

The project’s speedy completion in just 26 days was due to a solid team effort between U.S. and Philippine Seabees. Capt. Buzz Little, commander of Destroyer Squadron 1 and the CARAT task group, had much praise for the Seabees. “‘Well done’ to both crews for what will provide a better learning environment for one of our greatest resources, our young people,” Little said.

NMCB 5 members also had tons of praise for their Philippine counterparts. “They’re extremely hard workers. It’s been a good experience for our navies,” said NMCB 5’s CARAT detachment Assistant Officer in Charge, Senior Chief Builder (SCW) Dave Regenereau.

U.S. Seabees said they were also able to take away several construction lessons from their Philippine counterparts. “It’s a great experience; they showed us several different strategies of how to set up a building,” said Steelworker Constructionman Shanta Crayton.

He said the Philippine Seabees showed them how to rely less on equipment, gadgets and other high-tech gear. “We learned a lot from them, just like they learned a lot from us,” Crayton added.

NMCB 5’s CARAT detachment Officer in Charge Lt. Wernher Heyres pointed out that the U.S. and the Philippines are the only two navies in the world that have Seabees. Consequently, the teamwork and training gained from the project was vital to future productivity.

“It’s a valuable training evolution,” said Heyres.

Another community relations project took 12 U.S. and six PN sailors to a home for deaf and blind children where rice and mattresses had been donated. The kids and sailors also entertained each other.

“It was inspiring to see a blind child playing the piano and a sailor dancing and singing to the music,” said Middleton. “The kids also taught us how to write our names in Braille.”

In addition to the schoolhouse, which will serve the community for years to come, the community relations project generated approximately \$25,000 for the local economy through materials purchase and equipment rental.

CARAT Covers All Bases

The CARAT 2005 task group included the dock landing ship Harpers Ferry, the guided-missile destroyer Paul Hamilton, the frigate Rodney M. Davis, and the rescue and salvage ship Safeguard. Other elements included P-3C Orion and SH-60 Seahawk aircraft, the Seabees, a Coast Guard training team, Army veterinarians and a variety of support commands.

Philippine CARAT assets included the patrol ships Rizal and Emelio Jacinto. Fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, two Naval Special Operations Groups, and the 1st Marine Battalion were also involved with the exercise.

CARAT began in 1995, combining a number of existing exercises to be conducted sequentially by a single U.S. Navy task group. CARAT Singapore was conducted in May and June, while CARAT Thailand took place in June. CARAT Malaysia and CARAT Indonesia phases were both completed in July. In August, CARAT Brunei took place followed by the CARAT Task Group ships’ arrival in the Philippines for the final phase of the series.

FCPOA LENDS A HAND AT OKINAWA SCHOOL

By Journalist 1st Class (SW)
Rob Wesselman,
NMCB 74 Public Affairs

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 (NMCB 74) First Class Petty Officers Association (FCPOA)

volunteers finished a sidewalk project in late summer at Okinawa Christian School International (OSCI).

The community relations project, completed over the course of two off-duty Saturdays, provided much-needed improvements to the school, according to Superintendent Randall Hadley.

"This project alone will save us more than \$6,000 since we only had to pay for materials," Hadley said. "That helps us keep the cost of run-



Construction Equipmentman 1st Class Michael Copponi drives in a support stake for the sidewalk frame during a community relations project sponsored by NMCB 74 First Class Petty Officer Association (FCPOA).

U.S. Navy Photo

ning the school down so more students can attend."

During their time at the school, FCPOA volunteers finished laying

and securing the wooden frame for the concrete, leveled and compacted the fill gravel, and reinforced the foundation for the steps and exterior concrete slab.

"We were also on hand to assist in the concrete pour and complete the finishing work associated with the job," said Builder 1st Class Diane Paddock, FCPOA President and project volunteer.

While most OCSI community relations projects have been limited to painting, cleaning and minor landscaping, the military is also able to handle larger projects.

"Back in 1996, military personnel helped us move from our old buildings to the current location," Hadley said. "That project took two days and required more than 65 truckloads of

material and equipment to be transferred to this complex."

OCSI is a multinational school with 400 students from 15 countries, including the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea and Japan.

"We also have several students who are children of military families," Hadley said. "If the DoDDS (Department of Defense Dependent Schools) cannot meet a military family's needs, we are definitely an alternative source for their children's education.

"We have had a long-standing relationship with the American military here in Okinawa and are grateful for everything they've done for us," Hadley added. "Every time we've needed help, they've come through."

NASCAR GREAT VISITS SEABEES

By Daryl Smith, First Naval Construction Division Public Affairs Officer

NASCAR driver Geoff Bodine visited Seabees at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in late July to thank them for their service to our country.

Members of Underwater Construction Team 1 (UCT 1) and Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 202 (CBMU 202) welcomed Bodine, who was in the area for a race at Langley Speedway. He is also part owner of a company

in Virginia Beach that manufactures his own brand of car wax.

"On behalf of everyone at NASCAR, thanks for what you do in support of our country. If we didn't have our military out there defending us, we at NASCAR wouldn't be able to do what we do best," he said.

Bodine brought along a bobsled he designed for the 2006 Winter Olympics. In 2002, the U.S. women's team won gold medals and the men's team won bronze in Bodine-built bobsleds. The Seabees, in turn, showed him some

of their specialized diving and construction equipment. Bodine even swapped his racing helmet for a diving helmet.

The visit was filmed for NASCAR Nation on the Speed Channel.



NASCAR driver Geoff Bodine shares design pointers for his self-made Olympic racing sled to Seabees of UCT 1 and CBMU 202 at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek.

Photo by Daryl Smith
First Naval Construction Division Public Affairs Officer

SEABEES AID PAKISTANI EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 (NMCB 74) participated in a multi-national assistance and support effort led by the Pakistani government to bring aid to victims of a devastating earthquake that shook the region in October 2005.



(Top) Thuri Park Tent Village in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, housed families displaced following the region's earthquake. Seabees built and installed latrines for the affected people in the tent village.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Eric S. Powell

(Above) Seabees unload plywood from a truck in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, to be used in the rebuilding process.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Barry Loo

(Left) Seabees even out the bottom of a trench for facility installation at Thuri Park Tent Village.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Eric S. Powell

OPERATION BEARING DUEL TESTS SEABEE SKILLS

Bearing Duel, an operational exercise to evaluate Seabee skills for potential future deployments, was recently conducted for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 (NMCB 3) based at Port Hueneme, California. This ongoing exercise includes testing related to force protection, rapid runway repair, bridge building and water purification.



Equipment Operator 2nd Class Rod Workman, NMCB, stands guard at the main entrance of the Logistics Support Area (LSA) during the Bearing Duel exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, California.

Photo by Photographer's Mate 1st Class (AW/NAC) Michael Moriatis

By Harrell T. Richardson
Force Master Chief Petty Officer (SCW), Seabees (Ret.)

SEABEES MAKE ME PROUD. I'm proud to see your work in Operation Iraqi Freedom — rebuilding roads and schools, and escorting armed convoys of vital materials for our troops. I'm proud of your blood relationship with our Marines Corps brothers and sisters. Proud to see you jump into humanitarian relief in other nations, as well as our own.

I'm proud to have seen Seabees join the multi-national force that swarmed into Pakistan to help push back the devastation of the earthquake there. I'm proud of the many Seabees — students and instructors alike — who ripped lumber, hammered nails, dug trenches, ran plumbing and attacked debris to help their shipmates and local citizens whose homes were destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

I'm proud of the unflagging energy and commitment displayed by our Seabee Reserve component. Seabee Reserve battalions are rotating through Operation Iraqi Freedom to help relieve the burden on Active component 'Bees, as well as Iraqis. These Seabees, ably led by Navy Civil Engineer Corps officers, never hesitate to put their shoulders to the wheel when the need exists. A significant portion of Seabee capability resides in the Reserve, and we deploy them with the same confidence in their skills and dedication that we have in our active duty 'Bees.

I'm proud of the way Seabees have undertaken every possible task they've been given — sometimes with nearly no time at all to prepare.

I'm proud of the enlisted Seabee leadership that has nurtured troops, built upon and enhanced our famous *esprit de corps*, and embraced family members. Know that you have been among the very best aspects of this job, and that you are instrumental in making the Seabees the remarkable force we are today.

And I'm as proud as I am sad at the news of our lost and wounded Seabee shipmates, who continue their sacrifice in Iraq, Africa and countries all over the world.

I will have retired by the time you read this and passed the office along to your new Force Master Chief (SCW) James D. Fairbanks, USN. When I enlisted in 1976 and became a Steelworker, like every new Seabee before me and after who has done the same thing, who knew where my Navy career would take me? But take me it did. From Steelworker "A" School in Port Hueneme to the island of Palau, to Moscow and many other fascinating places in between. I had no idea my career would go as it has, and I'm extremely grateful for the men and women who helped and taught me along the way.

The men and women of the Seabees are and will always remain close to my heart. You have exemplified the letter and spirit of our famous slogan, "We Build, We Fight!" You have eased pain, rebuilt lives and provided much hope to so many people that you can never be adequately rewarded or even thanked. But if you think like me, and I believe you do, you know the work itself and the relief on a smiling child's face is all the reward we ever need.

Around the block, around the clock and around the world, enlisted and officer, Active and Reserve, you continue to demonstrate the dedication, zeal and professionalism that make United States Navy Seabees among the most essential, most respected and most welcome units in the U.S. military.

After a career spanning almost 30 years, I'm proud to have served with you, proud to have led you and proud to have known you.



U.S. Navy Photo

Construimus Batuimus.



Seabees assigned to NMCB 1, based out of Gulfport, Miss., organize bottled water to distribute to displaced families at First Baptist Church Biloxi following Hurricane Katrina in August. Working closely with the Seabees, the American Red Cross used the church as a distribution point for food, water and supplies.

Photo by Journalist Seaman Joanne De Vera



NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
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