

**MEET THE NEXT FORCE MASTER CHIEF OF THE SEABEES! >>**

UNITED STATES NAVY

# SEABEE

CONSTRUIMUS BATUIMUS

ISSUE NO. 1, 2005

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## OPERATION UNIFIED ASSISTANCE

Bees & Marines go all out for disaster relief in tsunami-ravaged Southeast Asia



★  
**The Unknown  
'Bee-29s'  
of  
World  
War II**



★  
**True  
Tales  
of the  
'Seabee  
Cold Case  
Unit'**



★  
**Desert  
Bees  
Help  
Secure  
Iraqi  
Elections**



Members of New Horizons Task Force and local Haitians take down a tent that housed 35 boys at an orphanage to replace it with a larger and ventilated shelter. U.S. Navy Seabees and other military services deployed to Haiti as part of *Exercise New Horizons*, a joint task force deployed to conducted humanitarian and civic assistance. *New Horizons* Haiti provides U.S. medical and engineering units a great opportunity to refine skills while making daily life better for Haitians. u.s. navy photogr aph by Lt Lt cohen



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The Tsunami’s Song

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# F O R E W O R D



**HARRELL T. RICHARDSON**  
FORCE MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER (SCW) OF THE SEABEES

I HAVE BEEN A SEABEE for most of my adult life. As most readers of this magazine know (whether Active or Reserve, Veteran, Retiree or their family members), being a Seabee isn't just something you do. It is something you become, and then it remains a part of you for the rest of your life.

That certainly describes my Seabee Experience. From my personal knowledge of many of you out there, it describes your Seabee Experience as well.

That means I will always be a Seabee, even when I no longer serve as your Force Master Chief—an aspect of my long career that is approaching this year.

RADM Loose announced that my relief would be CMDCM James D. Fairbanks [See the lead Newsbreak item on page 12. —Ed.]. He will be the second FORCM of the Seabees and will come into the job from the Twenty Second Naval Construction Regiment this fall when I rotate out to my next assignment.

I'm here to tell you that our group of Master Chief candidates was as high-rpm as they come. RADM Loose and I agree: At all levels of rank and achievement, it is honestly amazing to see the talent pool in our Seabee community. Please join me in welcoming Master Chief Fairbanks to the most rewarding, most fulfilling and probably one of the most challenging jobs he's ever going to have. I know he will love this job as much as I have.

Such remarkable achievement, of course, as we have often reported in these pages, is not confined solely to the Active Component. On page 20, see the story of the Seabee Reservist who was selected from 50,000 candidates to be the 2005 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year. Bravo Zulu to Utilitiesman 1st Class (SS) Tom Mock from

Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center (NMCRC) Phoenix. Warm congratulations as well to Engineering Aid 1st Class (SS) Stephen Harmon, from NMCRC Houston, who was among the five finalists.

At the same time, we must honor two Seabees who have given their lives in the line of duty. Our best wishes go out to the families and friends of Chief Builder Joel Egan Baldwin, 37, from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7, who was killed in an explosive attack on a Mosul, Iraq, dining facility last December. Underwater Construction Team 1 diver Builder 1st Class (SCW/DV) Alec Frank Masur, 35, died March 9 in an accident while assigned to Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. The entire Seabee Nation honors their memory and mourns their untimely loss.

Supporting others in need, obviously, is what Seabees do best. That's why our Bees were among the first responders to the devastating tsunamis that struck Indonesia, Thailand and many parts of Southeast Asia. We tell that tale in this issue's cover story on *Operation Unified Assistance*.

Seabees also joined in Task Force New Horizons, the mission to impoverished Haiti. They built schools, drilled water wells and much more. In Iraq, Seabees put on their body armor and joined the Provisional Support Battalion to help protect polling places on Iraq's historic first election day.

And while it isn't a Seabee evolution, strictly speaking, here at NAVFAC we were proud to be selected to build the test facilities for the exciting new fleet of Presidential helicopters coming to Naval Air Station Patuxent River.

This is an exciting time to be a member of our profession—but can you think of a time when it was not? Keep charging. ☎

## SEABEE



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and every Seabee everywhere, everyday.



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SEABEE Magazine is the official publication of the United States Navy Seabees, Active Duty and Reserve, celebrating 63 years of proud Seabee service.

## F.O.B.



As the I MEG was disestablished in Iraq, its commander, RADM(s) Raymond K. Alexander (top and far right), transferred authority to 30NCR commanding officer CAPT Michael L. Blount.

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq—As one Seabee unit prepared to go home and another stepped in to stand the watch, a new chapter in the Global War on Terrorism was written.

The I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group (I MEG) officially stood down March 11, relieved by the 30th Naval Construction Regiment (30NCR) in a transfer of authority ceremony held at a coalition forces base in western Iraq.

“Our ‘Can Do!’ is now ‘is done’,” said I MEG Commander RADM(s) Raymond K. Alexander. “It has been my distinct privilege and honor to command the men and women of the I MEG during this historic time.”

During their six-month deployment, I MEG Seabees and Navy Civil Engineer Corps officers of the officer in charge of construction detachment made significant contributions to U.S. efforts in Iraq.

Working alongside Marines from the 4th Civil Affairs Group, Seabees built relationships with the people of Al Anbar while supporting efforts to improve their quality of life in the war-torn city.

Only days after some of the fiercest urban combat since Vietnam, I MEG engineering assessment teams were in the city of Fallujah assessing infrastructure

## I MEG relinquishes authority to 30NCR, and the work to aid Iraqi citizens goes on

STORY BY JOC SUZANNE SPEIGHT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PH1 DONNY M. FORBES



U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PH2(AW) MICHAEL D. HECKMAN

damage and restoring critical services, such as water and power.

Additionally, I MEG task forces participated in construction of polling places and the establishment of the I MEF Provisional Security Battalion, manned with more than 300 I MEG personnel supporting the historic Iraq elections.

I MEG forces also led the Iraqi Construction Apprentice Program and completed more than \$30 million worth of projects throughout the province.

CAPT Michael Blount heads the 30NCR detachment. He said his Seabees are ready for the challenge of their Iraq deployment.

Reconstruction efforts will be a priority for the unit, with Seabees working alongside the new Iraqi government on infrastructure and quality-of-life improvement projects.

There are 77 reconstruction projects in progress as this is written, many funded with up to \$66 million in the city of Fallujah. Another 52 projects have been identified and are under consideration. ☎

Here are just two more reasons why Seabees in Iraq continue to say *Can Do!*

## BUC Joel Egan Baldwin 1967–2004

*Seabee CPO killed in Iraq awarded Purple Heart Medal*

STORY BY MELISSA M. SCALLAN

PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY NMCB 7 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Claudia Baldwin clutched the plaque honoring her late husband, wiping tears from her eyes as she recalled the type of man and Seabee he was.

“Joel was an extraordinary family man,” she said. “He was an outstanding friend. He had a great volunteer spirit and he truly would give someone the shirt off his back.”

Chief Builder Joel E. Baldwin, 37, was killed Dec. 21 in a suicide attack on a crowded mess tent in Mosul, Iraq. His wife received the Purple Heart March 23 in his honor.

Baldwin was deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 at the time of the attack.

About 30 people gathered at the Naval Construction Battalion Center chapel for the ceremony, including Baldwin’s brother, Andrew, also a Seabee with NMCB 7, and the late chief’s 9-year-old daughter, Calli.

Ernest Brant, the Mississippi state commander for the Order of the Purple

Heart, presented the plaque. The plaque has a picture of the Seabee with the inscription, “Honoring the Memory of Joel E. Baldwin for defending freedom and serving his country.”

Everyone who knew him described Baldwin as a caring person who always helped people.

“This is very touching, and we’re privileged to be a part of it,” said CAPT Will McKerall, addressing Baldwin’s family members. “We all thought so much of your husband. You continue to have our deepest sympathies.”

Baldwin’s commanding officer at the Naval Construction Training Center Gulfport, CDR John Rice, said the Seabee always motivated others.

“Joel Baldwin was always a motivated Seabee,” Rice said after the presentation. “He always came into class with a smile on his face. He was always a motivated guy and made the students think.”

Claudia Baldwin said the military, the community and many agencies have helped



Baldwin was photographed during the ceremony promoting him to Chief Builder. Below, his family pins on his anchors.



her cope with her loss. She added that her husband would be very proud of the Purple Heart.

“Joel was the epitome of gung-ho,” she said. “He loved his country and he loved his troops. This is a great honor. It makes me very proud. He deserves this.”

*Melissa M. Scallan wrote this story for the Biloxi Sun-Herald. Copyright 2005 The Sun-Herald. Used with permission.*

CDMCM(SCW) Sean B. Libby (left) and CDR Bret J. Muilenburg render a salute in honor of BUC(SCW) Joel Baldwin at a memorial ceremony held at the base chapel on Dec. 24, 2004, aboard Naval Station Guam.



## UCT 1 Diver Killed in Vehicle Accident

*Hard-charging Seabee had been unit Sailor of the Year in 2003 and 2004*

MOMBASA, Kenya—A U.S. Navy Seabee assigned to Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 1, under the operational control of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT), was killed in an automobile accident here March 9.

BU1(SCW/DV) Alec Frank Mazur, 35, from Vernon, N.Y., was assigned for duty to Combined Task Force 56. Four other U.S. military personnel were injured, including two other COMUSNAVCENT Sailors and two Army officers attached to Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). They were part of a team returning to Mombasa after completing an engineering assessment in the vicinity of Kenyan Naval Base Manda Bay, Kenya.

“Loss of anyone is a tragedy; not only for the family of the fallen member, but friends, co-workers and comrades alike,” said Marine Corps COL Craig Huddleston, chief of staff, CJTF-HOA. “We have been pretty fortunate; serious injuries and casualties are the exception for HOA. But we must remain vigilant and keep safety to the forefront.”

Mazur, his wife Dawn and their two children, were based out of Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Norfolk. His UCT 1 team is an elite, highly trained

unit with about 70 members who can deploy worldwide on short notice.

According to press reports, Mazur’s younger brother, Josh, said the family didn’t know where Mazur’s latest assignment had taken him. Mazur was often deployed, his brother said, including

three stints in Iraq; training in Australia and Alaska; working in Japan, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Antigua.

When he wasn’t on duty, he enjoyed woodworking. Josh Mazur said his brother once hand-made a set of log toys for his 6-year-old son for Christmas. Mary Townsend, Dawn Mazur’s sister, said Alec made a wooden sleigh for a niece.

“He was the best brother-in-law anybody

could ask for, the best uncle anybody could ask for,” Townsend said.

When the accident was reported, the CJTF-HOA Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) launched a MEDEVAC for the five military members.

“When the initial call came in, you could hear chaos and confusion in the background on the scene,” said Marine Corps LTCOL Bob Morrison, RCC director. “Once we managed to get the



BU1(SCW/DV) Alec Frank Mazur, 1970-2005

initial assessment of the situation, we provided the field team information directing them to a hospital in Mombasa and began the process here.”

Morrison said that once senior leadership made a decision to send a HC-130 “Hercules” aircraft to recover the members, aircrews from the 71st Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461, 31st Expeditionary Rescue Squadron and members of Team Alpha, 124th Infantry (Light) were alerted to go on standby.

“We stepped up our posture, putting our resources on a higher state of readiness to support this mission,” said Morrison. “We knew we were sending the HC-130, but we went ahead and equipped the helos with extra fuel tanks to ensure they had enough fuel to make a round trip journey in the event we needed to use them.”

The accident victims were treated at Mombasa Hospital before returning to their Camp Lemonnier base camp.

Mazur’s personal military awards included the Joint Service Achievement Medal; five Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medals; four Good Conduct Medals and a Navy Unit Commendation.

A board of officers is investigating the accident. ☎



## One slice of the war

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED BY JOC(AW) SUZANNE SPEIGHT

I heard someone say here, “everyone takes home their own slice of this war.” I believe this is true. I came here solo as a mobilized Reservist. I went back home with a fresh perspective on the nature of service and how we all, as individuals, play our parts.

I was once in the chow hall watching the news and the reporter was commenting on events in Fallujah. I recalled seeing that same reporter earlier in the day and he was reporting from a location not far away from where I sat. It reminded me that we’re here in the very midst of historic, news-making events. But it strikes me as odd that much of my job, like many other jobs here, is very ordinary.

Like now, for example. As I write this I’m in the public affairs office, at the computer composing a story, and later sending e-mail quite like I would have been if I’d been mobilized instead to Port Hueneme or Yokosuka or Key West. The stresses and struggles I have experienced here have not so much related to improvised explosive devices, but more often to “explosive” interactions in dealing with others in this stressful place. Now, with a longer view aft, I see some of that was self-inflicted.

Anyway, the point is that it’s easy to get wrapped up in our own cycle of meetings, deadlines, and so on, and lose the immediate sight picture of what is happening all around us every day here.

Although Fallujah has quieted

significantly since the major fighting ceased late last year, Seabees, Marines and Soldiers are still fighting here. My berthing area is located near the MEDEVAC helo landing pad. Last fall, the landing area was a busy place.

Sometimes at night I would hear the sound of a helo, often followed the next day by a press release from the First Marine Expeditionary Force Public Affairs Office. The release is standard and follows a familiar formula. “A [Seabee] [Marine] [Soldier] was injured in action while conducting security and stabilization operations in Al Anbar Province ...”

But over here, and back in the States in hundreds of warm family homes, we know those Seabees or Marines or Soldiers were not generic. They had a family, friends, maybe had a spouse and children—and they were maybe barely more than a kid themselves. And while I did not know any of them personally, in a small way, I suppose I did.

I listen to them in the often endless line



at the PX, or in the laundry, or talking with their friends, their conversations frequently comical and belying the seriousness of their work here. They have smiled at me in the chow hall, perhaps hoping to solicit some friendly conversation, sometimes surprised when they notice my Navy chief journalist rank. I have visited them in Bravo Surgical, hearing a story of their injury and how they usually hope not to go home, but back to their units.

I will leave here with a newfound appreciation for the rich freedoms and conveniences Americans enjoy. I’m frequently out in town taking photographs and Iraqi people love seeing themselves in the digital camera. They often ask me to make prints. I’ve come to realize that many of these friendly, curious people



have probably never actually seen a photograph of themselves or their families. There is no drugstore one-hour photo kiosk on the corner. There is no drugstore at all.

And sometimes, when I take off my helmet, people would stare. Most of the children haven’t seen a woman outside of their own family with her face uncovered.

In Najaf, I went to photograph Seabees working alongside Iraqi citizens in a small Bedouin community building a school where there had never been one. I could see the women in the distance in their “cart convoy,” carts loaded with hay, children riding along in the front; or walking, shouldering heavy loads of hay; or working at outdoor brick ovens in the heat of the day, covered from head to toe in their now familiar native garb.

In my view, a great many aspects of daily life here are changing for the better for all Iraqis. We see that every single day, as our Seabees taught the grinning, eager students of the Iraqi Construction Apprentice Program, or rebuild a shattered schoolhouse, or restore sorely needed water and electricity. Progress for good is made in Iraq every single day. But to see the average lives here makes us realize

how fortunate we are as Americans.

I’ll be rotated out of here by the time you read this. As a Reservist, I will return to a regular life—albeit one somewhat more mundane in comparison to my experiences out here. I go back to people I love and hold dear, who are hopefully prepared to listen to tales from my brief stint as a “war correspondent.”

As excited as I am about going home, with many fond memories of my time and the friends I have made here, I’ll keep in mind my shipmates from all services who are not going home quite yet. I’ll always remember the wonderful smiles of friendly Iraqi children. There is much more work to do here for them.

For me, for all Seabees, Veteran’s Day and Memorial Day certainly will always be more than just a three-day holiday weekend. 🌐



JOC(AW) Suzanne Speight is a Navy Reservist from Jacksonville, Fla. She was formerly assigned to NMCB 14 and was mobilized to active duty out of the Navy Public Affairs Center Jacksonville unit. She served as the public affairs officer for the First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group (I MEG) in Al Anbar Province.

## CMDCM James D. Fairbanks Selected as Second Force Master Chief of the Seabees

Command Master Chief James D. Fairbanks, currently assigned to the Twenty Second Naval Construction Regiment (22NCR), has been selected by RADM Michael K. Loose, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and chief of civil engineers to succeed FORCM Harrell T. Richardson in October as the second Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees.



“The job of representing the NCF as its Force Master Chief has been my singular honor and the pinnacle of my career,” Richardson said. “Seabees are people who care deeply and work hard to achieve incredible results, often on tight schedules or, these days, sometimes under hostile conditions. They must have the very best representative at the very highest levels of decision-making. With Master Chief Fairbanks, the Seabees will continue to be aggressively represented and well cared for. I wish him great success.”

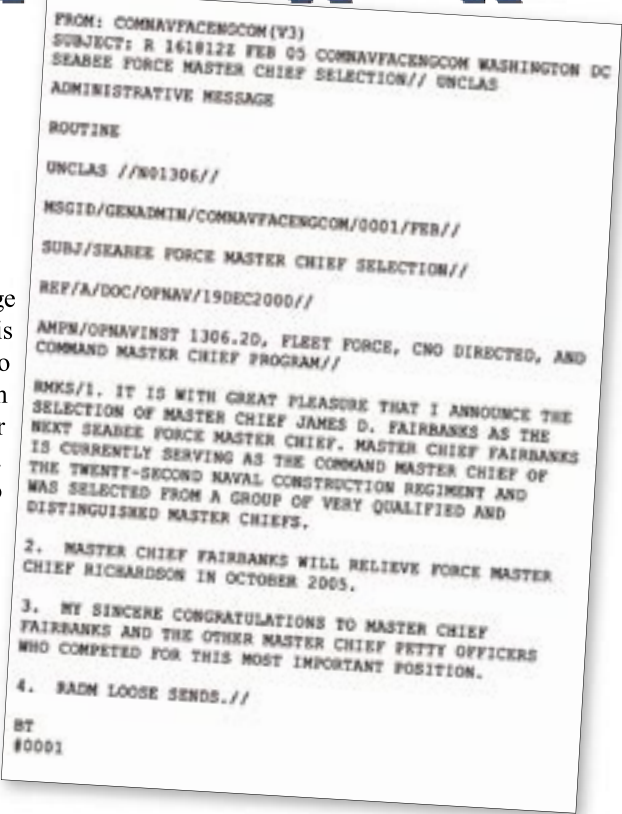
Among those who already know him or know of him, the word that comes up most often when discussing the new Force Master Chief of the Naval Construction Force (NCF) is “leadership.” When Master Chief Fairbanks’ name was announced as the new Force, few were surprised.



“His style of leadership, vast knowledge of the Naval Construction Force and his genuine concern for what happens to Seabees are qualities that will make him a great Force Master Chief,” said Master Chief Utilitiesman David Sammons. Fairbanks said it felt great to be selected as the Seabees’ Force Master Chief, but emphasized that he did not get there on his own. “I feel great appreciation for all of the great people I’ve worked with throughout my career, especially the Seabees who work hard everyday and make us all proud to be a part of this great organization.”

During his tenure as Force Master Chief, Fairbanks will interact with Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Terry Scott and other Fleet and Force Master Chiefs to improve Navy programs. He will also join the MCPON’s panel of the Navy’s most senior enlisted leaders to help make decisions for the Navy as a whole.

The NCF’s Force Master Chief is the “voice of Seabee” to the highest levels of the Navy and even the federal government at large, where he can continue to provide positive influence on important benefits for his Sailors. Even though there is much work to be done, Fairbanks noted how the NCF and the Navy as a whole have improved significantly since he enlisted in 1977. “We have had so many improvements to our people programs in the Navy, such as Navy College, the Thrift Savings Plan, Navy Knowledge Online and many others. There are so many opportunities for Sailors to excel today,” said Fairbanks. CAPT Mark Handley, commanding officer of the 22NCR, says Fairbanks’ great Seabee knowledge will help him in his new job. “He has the critical experience that is



necessary for the job of Force Master Chief. He has been an operations chief in combat, a battalion command master chief, and right now he is a regimental command master chief. Master Chief Fairbanks pulls all of this experience together, and I think that gives him keen sense of leadership,” Handley said.

Handley also added that Fairbanks possesses the important communication skills that will allow him to excel in a big job. “He knows how to interface with senior enlisted and senior officers. He leads his peers, his juniors and his seniors. I know he has made me a better officer,” added Handley.

“He takes care of his troops.” This is a typical phrase that people use to describe Fleet and Force Master Chiefs, who uphold the highest standards of professionalism and stimulate better communication at all levels of the chain of command. They strengthen the chain of command by working within it to foster a better understanding of the needs and viewpoints of enlisted members and their families.

Fairbanks said the key to success as a leader is caring about your people. “If leaders put their people first, they will always succeed.” He also had this advice for junior sailors who want to be a success in the Navy and life, “Stay focused on your goals, find friends who

are positive and want to succeed too. There is no limit to the good you ‘Can Do.’”

Fairbanks is a Native American Indian and native of White Earth, Minn. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in November 1970 after completing boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. He was assigned to Ordnance School, Quantico, Va. Upon graduation he received orders to Second Battalion Eleventh Marines, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Corporal Fairbanks was honorably discharged in September 1972.

As a civilian, Fairbanks attended the Detroit Lakes, Minn., Vocational School and later was employed with American Iron and Supply Company as a welder and Union Steward until December 1976.

He returned to active duty in the U.S. Navy in January 1977 and was assigned to Amphibious Construction Battalion 2, Little Creek, Va. After completing a two-year tour he was honorably discharged January 1979 and returned to work for American Iron and Supply Company in Minneapolis until August 1986.

Fairbanks reenlisted in the Navy in September 1986 and was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1, Gulfport, Miss., until February 1990, when he received orders to the Naval Construction Training Center, Gulfport. His next duty station was Public Works Department, Keflavik, Iceland. After a 30-month tour there, he transferred to NMCB 133, where he served until January 1999. He reported to the Naval Construction Training Center in March of that year to serve as the Command Master Chief until May 2001, reporting to NMCB 1 as Command Master Chief until January 2003.

He’s been Command Master Chief for the 22NCR since January 2003.

Fairbanks is a graduate of the U.S. Navy Senior Enlisted Academy. He has an Associate of Arts degree from the University of Phoenix and is designated a Seabee Combat Warfare and Master Training Specialist. His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3), Army Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (2) and numerous service and unit awards.

—JO1 Christopher Bush



AL ASAD, Iraq — Chief of Naval Operations ADM Vern Clark, sixth from left, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott, third from right, posed for a photo with Sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23. The Seabees were repairing runway damage and helped expand airfield operations while rebuilding Iraq.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY CDR DENNY MOYNIHAN

## Seabees build hardened galley facility for Marines

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq -- Seabees of the former I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group completed construction on a new, reinforced dining facility here.



USMC PHOTO BY SSGT DEMETRIO J. ESPINOSA

“I am extremely proud of the work we’ve done here, especially in light of what happened in Mosul,” said project crew leader Builder 2nd Class Paul Verratti, referencing the bombing attack at a dining facility aboard a coalition camp.

Sailors, Marines and Soldiers welcomed the opening of the new dining facility, which replaced a temporary tent used since the Army field dining facility was closed. The new facility offers service members a refuge from the heat, dust and stress of working at a forward operating base (FOB).

Named Unger Hall, is named after Army Spc. Daniel Paul Unger, 19, Company A, 1st Battalion, 185th Infantry Regiment, 81st Brigade Combat Team, who was fatally wounded during a rocket attack here May 26.

About 20 Seabees completed the project—built of HESCO bastion barriers, wooden columns and concrete—in just less than four weeks. The new facility will be used by more than 1,500 military and civilian personnel stationed at Forwarding Operating Base (FOB) Kalsu.

“Being in the new chow hall, it’s a relief to know you can relax and eat instead of thinking about being in an unprotected building,” said Marine Cpl. Justin Dawson, of Aberdeen, Md., assigned to the command element of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The Seabees have not been without their own security concerns during the project. “We’ve seen some incoming fire in this camp,” said Builder 3rd Class Rebecca Newman. “It hasn’t been easy, we’ve worked overtime to get the job done and get it done right.”

FOB Kalsu is positioned in Iskandariyah, Iraq. It’s named in honor of Army 1LT James Robert Kalsu, a former Buffalo Bills defensive lineman killed in Vietnam on July 21, 1970. The FOB supports hundreds of U.S. military members and is slated to become a long-term base in support of future *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. 🌐

## NAVFAC TO BUILD TEST FACILITY FOR PRESIDENT'S NEW HELICOPTERS



STORY BY JOHN VERRICO

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Department of Defense announced Jan. 28 that the team led by Lockheed Martin Systems Integration, Oswego, N.Y., had been selected to build “Marine One”—the new presidential helicopter (VXX) based on Lockheed’s U.S. 101 medium lift helicopter.

The Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) is building a facility to test and evaluate the new helicopter fleet.

“We are honored to be directly supporting the Presidential helicopter program with this fast-track project,” said LCDR Nick Yamodis, deputy resident officer in charge of construction at NAS Patuxent River. “We have a great team assembled and are looking forward to breaking ground in the coming months.”

The VXX program will integrate the latest communications, navigation, and mission systems technology with a new helicopter for the Presidential support mission to replace the current fleet of VH-3D and VH-60N aircraft. NAVFAC selected Hensel Phelps Construction Company of Greeley, Colo., to build the Presidential Helicopter (VXX) Program Support Facility at Naval

Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River in Southern Maryland.

The Presidential Helicopter Programs Support Facility at NAS Patuxent River is split into three separate but related construction projects. The 202,000-sq-ft hangar facility will house the entire VXX team, including engineering, aircraft maintenance, logistics, program management, and the flight test and evaluation spaces. In addition to the VXX hangar, a new 11-story air operations control tower will be built to replace the current tower, originally constructed in 1943. An air operations annex will be demolished and an addition to another existing air operations facility will be constructed as part of this contract.

Preliminary scope and design development started in 2004, with construction scheduled for completion in the summer of 2006.

Hensel Phelps Construction Company will work closely with NAVFAC, the VXX program office, and NAS Patuxent River during the design and construction of these facilities. The contract will be incrementally



PROJECT RENDERING COURTESY GIULIANI ASSOCIATES  
HELO IMAGE COURTESY LOCKHEED MARTIN

funded as authorized by Congress with the initial funding now of \$36.8 million, and the total cumulative value not to exceed \$84.4 million. Hensel Phelps was competitively selected through NAVFAC’s eSolicitation website based on technical evaluation and a competitive negotiation process. 🌐

## NMCB 40 Seabees Welcome ‘King Bee’ on Okinawa Trip

STORY BY  
JO2 BARBARA SILKWOOD

OKINAWA, Japan—The Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 hosted the Naval Construction Force’s top leaders Feb. 19 during the battalion’s third month of deployment here.

RADM Michael K. Loose, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and chief of civil engineers, along with Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees Harrell T. Richardson, arrived over the weekend to address the crew and tour the construction project sites.

After presenting several Seabees with their Seabee Combat Warfare pins and other awards during a morning ceremony, the “King Bee” spoke about how the upbeat attitude of the Seabees is far-reaching into the surrounding communities of Okinawa.

“Yesterday, I spent the entire day with your customers, from Marine generals to Marine colonels, and I can tell you across the board you have literally blown away every customers’ expectations,” Loose said. “Before they get to work, they see you out in the dark, and as they are on their way home, they still see you working.”

He said the prevailing perception of the Naval Construction Force throughout the island is reflected in the phrase “a Bee of activity,” complimenting the diligent work ethic and positive attitudes of NMCB 40 Seabees.

“What you are doing here in Okinawa is extremely important, probably more important than you may know,” said Loose. “I heard from the three colonels yesterday—and they wished their Marines had the good order and discipline you have. You are now the model citizens, or as your sign says on the gate, the ambassadors for the U.S.,” he said.

“I have probably been to 30 different site inspections, and this is the best I have ever seen from a customer ranting and raving and bragging about the Seabees, so you are doing great,” Loose concluded.

The admiral turned the floor over to NMCB



RADM Mike Loose greets UTCN Brysen Ahquin during a tour of NMCB 40 projects.

40’s skipper, CDR Clayton Mitchell, who introduced the admiral’s staff and presented each with a gold command coin in recognition of their strong leadership.

The admiral’s tour began in the morning at the Special Boat Unit Facility project in White Beach. Upon his return to camp, Loose spent the next several hours interacting with the crew.

“I brought 10 coins, and they said you are one of the ones to get one,” the admiral told Builder 3rd Class Jason Hutcheson at a medical project site.

“You have made a gigantic impact on this battalion, not just this job,” Loose said as he shook Hutcheson’s hand and handed him the coin.

Inside the armory, Loose greeted the

familiar face of Gunner’s Mate 1st Class Stephen Grell, who knew Loose several years before when Loose was NMCB 40’s commanding office.

“I made first class and you made admiral, so I am still working for you sir,” Grell laughed. 🌐



**Can I read that when you’re finished?** Equipment Operator 2nd Class John Paul Hunter uses some downtime to peruse *SEABEE* Magazine Double Issue 2004. Hunter, from Ellwood City, Pa., is mobilized to *Operation Iraqi Freedom* from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23, Det. 1223, out of Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center Pittsburgh.

SEABEE MAGAZINE PHOTOGRAPH BY PH2(AW) MICHAEL D. HECKMAN

## ‘Can Do!’ Reserve Seabees Mobilize Compassion for Homeless Veterans

Seabees, community leaders and veterans groups hammered together a deal to provide first-class living conditions for homeless veterans in the Iowa Quad Cities area. They’re three-quarters of the way there already.

STORY BY MARY LOUISE SPEER & IT1 DARRYL HOWLETT  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY IT1 DARRYL HOWLETT & JAKE JACKS

Seabees from the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center Rock Island, Ill., military veterans and contractors gathered March 19 to celebrate the completion of a third unit in the Veterans for Veterans Housing Project at College Street Apartments in Davenport, Iowa.

The event was marked by a ribbon-cutting and a flag-raising ceremony.

“On behalf of the two local Navy construction battalion units, thank you for inviting us to participate in such an incredibly worthwhile community project,” said LCDR Scott Svoboda, commanding officer of the Rock Island reserve center, home of the Seabee Reserve participants. “This has been an outstanding collaboration effort for an extremely commendable cause—showing appreciation to our nation’s veterans.”

Among other hard-working community and veteran groups, numerous Rock Island Reserve Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25, Det. 0225, and Amphibious Construction Battalion 1, Det. 113, were instrumental in doing the grunt work to bring the townhouse complex back into first-class living condition. Attendees at the dedication included representatives from Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 299, the Run to the Wall motorcycle club, business leaders from Associated Builders & Contractors and a Naval Honor Guard.

The push to provide permanent housing for local homeless veterans and their families kicked off on Veterans Day 2003, when four Iowa Quad-City Rotary groups pledged \$15,000 for a down payment on a four-unit apartment building. The single complex is comprised of 1100-sq-ft townhouse units, each with three bedrooms, new appliances and water heaters.

The first two units needed extensive remodeling, according to project manager Builder 1st Class Jeff Kaczinski, a Seabee assigned to the ACB 1 detachment. The just-completed third unit needed even more attention, getting torn down to the wall studs before being

**Top:** Project leaders cut the ceremonial ribbon (L-R): Bruce Katz, Rotary; Sarah Oliver, federal Veterans Administration; Charles Brooke, mayor of Davenport, Iowa; Merrill Anderson, Rotary; Dave Rastrelli, President of North Scott Rotary; LCDR Scott Svoboda, C.O. of NMCRC Rock Island; Dave Schumacher; Association of Builders and Contractors. **Middle:** GM2 Eric Martin (L) and SK3 Troy Ulshoeffer (R) performed an honor guard role with a ceremonial flag raising. **Bottom:** The Run to the Wall motorcycle club, comprised largely of veterans from all the military services, came out in force to support the dedication event.



built back up to its current high standard. The fourth unit has had new sheetrock installed and is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

“It’s a good feeling knowing that we’re this much further to having all four units completed. It has been a huge effort,” Kaczinski said. He credited numerous area contractors for their generosity and assistance with the project, which was begun by Merrill Anderson, the president of Veterans for Veterans Housing.

“There are two neat components about this,” Anderson said. “First, this fills a need for permanent, secure housing for veterans in the Quad-Cities. Second, we’re doing this with no government money.”

This type of project is termed “permanent supportive housing,” according to Anderson. “There is plenty of temporary housing, which is defined by stays ranging from overnight to nine months. This is longer term, up to one or two years. Until this project, there was no housing of this type strictly for veterans in the Quad Cities [Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa, and Moline



Above: The third townhouse unit (L) in progress and the exterior of the building housing the four units. Below: The Quad Cities motorcycle community, filled with military vets, strongly supported the project.



and Rock Island, Ill.]”

For example, Anderson said, one of the next occupants is a 55-year-old veteran who had developed a degenerative disc problem. He had done physical work all his life, but when he was no longer able to do that work it put him in an economic tailspin and he developed depression. The man lost his house and was living in temporary housing.

“He is enrolling in school to be retrained,” Anderson said. “While he is retraining, we can help him live in an affordable, three-bedroom apartment. When he is retrained, he can get a decent-paying job and not be behind the financial eight-ball that normal housing would put him in while he was

in school.”

“I’m very proud of the work that started long before I came,” Svoboda said. He took over as commanding officer at the Rock Island Reserve Center in December. “My role is to help equip the Seabees and empower them to take on projects like this. It amazes me what they’ve done with those units.”

Svoboda applauded the community’s assistance in seeing the project through. “I’m impressed by the supportive nature of the community with the military,” he said.

This Seabee/community/veteran group expects to complete work on the Davenport



apartments later this spring.

“We’re hoping the next phase would be done on the Illinois side,” Kaczinski said. 🌐

*Portions of this story originally appeared in The Quad-Cities Times (www.QCTimes.com) and are copyright 2005. Reprinted with permission.*

## NMCB 4 Sweeps Six Big Annual Awards



The Navy League, the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) and the Civil Engineer Corps (CEC)/Seabee Historical Foundation honor enlisted and officer men and women each year who make great contributions in leadership and inspiration within the Naval Construction Force and the U.S. Navy. With the announcement of several 2004 award winners, five awardees are currently serving with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4, homeported in Port Hueneme, Calif.

"It is unusual to have such a high number of prestigious awards earned in one battalion," said CDR John Korka, NMCB 4's commanding officer. "You have to be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. These Seabees and CEC officers not only accomplished their mission, but they did so in

supporting the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

In a similar fashion, Chief Builder (SCW) William Wright won the Navy League's **2004 Claude V. Ricketts Award for Inspirational Leadership**.

His efforts improved force protection and morale for more than 1,200 Marines conducting offensive operations in the North Babil Province of Iraq. Wright also served as assistant officer-in-charge of the tactical construction team during the reconstruction phase of *Operation Al Fajr* in Fallujah.

Wright's efforts there not only earned him the attention of the Navy League, but also that of the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation—which awarded him the prestigious **Steelworker 2nd Class Robert D. Stethem Award for Inspirational Leadership**.

surveys of damaged bridges, military camps, supply routes and force protection structures.

The SAME also presented its well-known annual awards to enlisted and officer recipients.

NMCB 4's Utilitiesman 1st Class (SCW/NAC) Sean Stewart earned SAME's **2004 Marvin Shields Award** for outstanding contributions to facility construction and maintenance. While serving as an air detachment platoon commander, Stewart demonstrated exceptional leadership, tactical and technical prowess in a combat environment.

The award is named in memory of Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for heroic actions in Vietnam (*SEABEE* Magazine No. 3, 2004).

SAME's **2004 Moreell Medal** was awarded



MCMAHAN



WRIGHT



MCCOY



STEWART



KURGAN

a stressful, high-tempo combat environment."

The Navy League is a civilian organization that recognizes outstanding individuals from all sea service commands who exemplify the very best in leadership and excellence.

One such individual is Construction Electrician 2nd Class (SCW) Mindy McMahan, whose hard work was recognized with the **Captain Winifred Quick Collins Award for Inspirational Leadership**. This award is given to one enlisted person and one officer annually and recognizes exceptional leadership and performance of military duties in a highly professional manner.

McMahan was deployed with the battalion air detachment to Fallujah, Iraq, and later redeployed to Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq. As Detachment Kalsu crew leader, McMahan led a team of electricians in the repair and maintenance of electrical infrastructure

Wright wasn't the only member of NMCB 4 to be recognized by the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation. LT Jeffrey McCoy also stood out among his peers, earning the **Rear Admiral Lewis B. Combs Award**. The esteemed Combs Award recognizes an individual's contributions to the legacy of the Seabees and the Civil Engineer Corps.

McCoy and his Seabee Engineer Reconnaissance Team troops deployed to Fallujah, where he performed more than 50 operational missions throughout central Iraq, often under hostile-fire conditions.

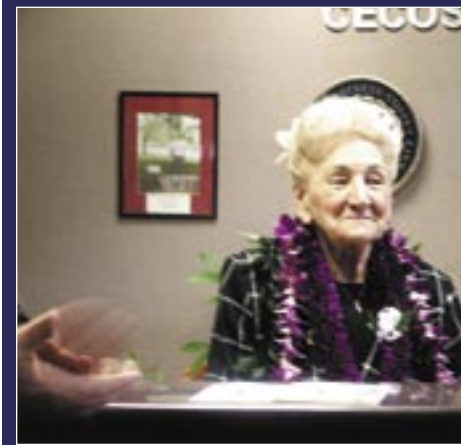
McCoy's critical master-planning solutions helped lay a firm foundation for rebuilding operational bases for Iraqi security forces. He led his troops on 169 convoys covering more than 6,000 miles throughout the Sunni Triangle. He also supervised 21 engineering

to LCDR Christopher Kurgan, NMCB 4's operations officer. This honor recognizes an officer who distinguishes himself among Active, Reserve, inactive, retired and civilian peers for outstanding contributions to military engineering.

The award is named for ADM Ben Moreell, founder of the Seabees in the early days of World War II.

Kurgan's engineering expertise enabled the battalion to complete more than 50,000 mandays of work, including 54 construction projects across three major theaters of operation in nine different countries. Kurgan led Navy Seabees and Army engineers in the construction of numerous essential projects, often under sporadic enemy fire.

Planning and executing quick engineering decisions, frequently in dangerous living and working conditions, set Kurgan apart from his peers, according to SAME. 🌐



### CECOS' 'Commodore' Hunt Cited for 50 Years of Federal Service

Coworkers, friends, Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) officers, Seabees and the Civil Engineer Corps Officers School (CECOS) celebrated Eileen "The Commodore" Hunt's 50th year of continuous federal civil service in March. Hunt has been a fixture at CECOS for 39 years.

RADM Michael Loose, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) and Chief of Civil Engineers, presented Hunt with a 50-year service pin and a 50-year certificate signed by the Hon. Gordon R. England, Secretary of the Navy. Loose also presented an appreciation letter and other mementoes on behalf of the NAVFAC and CEC community.

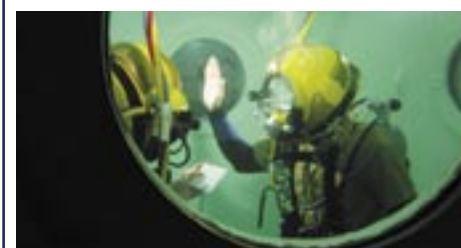
Referring to her current position as Student Service Coordinator, Hunt said, "I just enjoy working, being around people. I enjoy the students. It's all like family to me."

— Ed Niedzwiecki



### NAVFAC & NFESC Pick Vertin for SOTY

Builder 1st Class Jason Vertin, a member of the Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center's (NFESC) elite diving unit at Port Hueneme, Calif., was recognized first as the 2004 NFESC Sailor of the Year (SOTY)—and then he was chosen SOTY for all of NAVFAC. CAPT W. J. Beary, NFESC commanding officer, presented Vertin's first award in the company of NFESC's fellow divers and "Jake" (far right), their mascot. Vertin and his counterparts support NFESC's mission for underwater construction, maintenance, inspection and demolition. The Dive Locker Team provides skilled divers for ocean operations that include underwater construction and testing and evaluation of tool systems and techniques in the interest of the Navy, national defense and Homeland Security. 🌐



### High-Pressure Promotion Ceremony

LT Bill Butler, CEC, USN, gave the promotion oath (above) to LT Christopher Steele, CEC, USN, March 3, and then pinned on Steele's new rank at the bottom of the 15-ft Open Tank at Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center, Panama City, Fla. The two officers, wearing khaki uniforms with surface-supply MK 21 diving equipment, are assigned to the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Ocean Facilities Program office. For more information on a variety of Navy diving programs, point your Web browser to <https://www.npdc.navy.mil/ceneodrive/ndstc/index.cfm>. 🌐



# Seabee Named 2005 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year

50,000 candidates were boiled down to one; second Bee one of five finalists

STORY BY JO1 MIKE MILLER  
PHOTOGRAPH BY PH3 PAULA SATO

NEW ORLEANS—Chief of Navy Reserve VADM John G. Cotton announced the selection of Seabee Utilitiesman 1st Class (SS) Tom Mock as the 2005 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year (NRSOY) during a ceremony at Navy Reserve Forces Command here March 30.

Mock is a Reservist attached to Navy Supply Support Battalion 1 at Navy Marine Corps Reserve Center (NMCRC) Phoenix. He was chosen from among a candidate group of 50,000 Navy Reservists.

Cotton presented each finalist with the Navy Commendation Medal for meritorious service.

Another Seabee, Engineering Aid 1st Class (SS) Stephen Harmon, from Fleet Support Training 1610, NMCRC Houston, was one of five finalists.

“The finalists are chosen by a selection board,” said Navy Reserve Force Master Chief (AW/NAC) Thomas W. Mobley. “Those five are brought to New Orleans for interviews, evaluation and selection. A second board, comprised of five master chief petty officers, then makes a recommendation to the chief of Navy Reserve, who, in turn, makes the actual selection.”

“These candidates for Sailor of the Year are the best of the best,” said Cotton. “When I show their resumes to the master chiefs at the Pentagon and tell them who they are and what they do, they shake their heads in amazement and say, ‘Where do you get these people?’ I tell them, ‘America.’”

Cotton praised Mock’s achievements, including his deployment to Iraq.

“Mock is the type of Sailor that gives me confidence in the future of our Navy,” said Cotton. “He is the type of Sailor I brag about when I am touring our great nation.”

“I am a United States Sailor and a Navy Seabee,” said Mock. “I have had the privilege of serving on a ballistic missile submarine as well as in Iraq in support of the global war on terrorism, and many other places. But as I stand here today, I am serving with some of the finest Sailors I have ever known. We are one force and ours is one fight. It is very humbling to receive this award, and I will continue to lead and serve in the United States Navy.”

Mock will be meritoriously advanced in July to chief petty officer during the Sailor of the Year recognition ceremony in Washington, D.C. 🌐



## NMCB 74 Chaplain honored with distinguished service award

LT Marc Massie, the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74 command chaplain, was selected March 10 to receive the 2005 Military Chaplains’ Association (MCA) Distinguished

Service Award in the U.S. Navy category.

The MCAs are given each year to chaplains serving with Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Veterans Administration and Civil Air Patrol units. Massie earned the

award primarily for his efforts to support NMCB 74 personnel during the battalion’s deployment to Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004.

“One of my main goals was making sure I attended all the convoy briefs with the troops before they left the wire,” Massie said. “I said a prayer and would just be there for them.” 🌐

## SIX ADDITIONAL SEABEE UNITS ARE AWARDED PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION FOR OIF

NAB LITTLE CREEK, Va.—Six Seabee units have been added to the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) originally awarded to units of the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) in November 2003.

The citation was awarded for performance against enemy forces during *Operation Iraqi Freedom* from March 21 to April 24, 2003.

The additional Seabee units now eligible to receive the award are the First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group (I MEG) Command Element, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7, NMCB 15 Air Detachment, NMCB 21 Air Detachment, NMCB 25 Air Detachment, and Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 303 Detachment.

“During 33 days of combat to the transition to civil-military operations, I MEF sustained a tempo of operations never before seen on the modern battlefield, conducting four major river crossings, maintaining initiative and sustaining forces,” read the original citation from Secretary of the Navy Gordon England.

NMCB 7 is an active duty battalion based in Gulfport, Miss. NMCBs 15, 21 and 25 are Navy Reserve units from Kansas City, Mo.; Lakehurst, N.J.; and Fort McCoy, Wis. respectively. CBMU 303 is also a Reserve unit based in San Diego, Calif. The MEG Command Element was comprised of members from various commands and units.

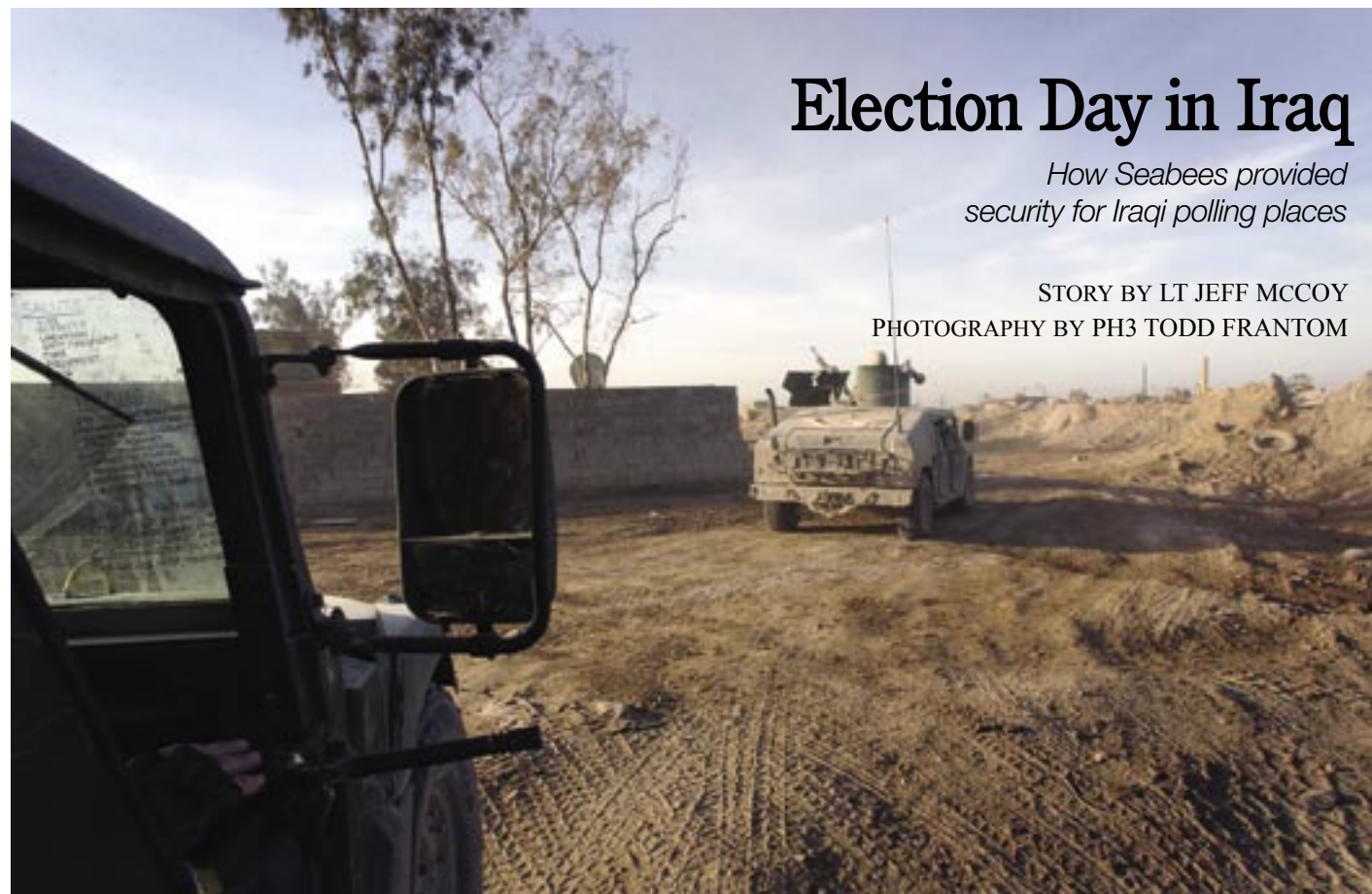
These units were added to the original list of Seabee units receiving the citation that included 30th Naval Construction Regiment (NCR), NMCB 5, NMCB 74, NMCB 133, NMCB 4, Naval Construction Force Support Unit 2, Underwater Construction Team 2 Air Detachment and 22nd NCR.

— Daryl Smith



GONAIVES, Haiti—Melda Alchideau, 6, attends Haiti’s *Ecole N. D. de la Nativite*. Behind her are U.S. Navy Seabees constructing a new school building for her and her classmates. After the hurricanes of 2004, flood waters were more than 12 feet deep at this location. When asked what she thought of the work being done, she said, “*Tres bien*,” which translates to “very good.” The U.S. Navy, Army, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard are contributing to *Exercise New Horizons*, a three-month humanitarian and civic assistance project in Haiti sponsored by U.S. Southern Command. The task force conducting the mission will build eight school houses, drill three potable water wells and conduct free health clinics. See more on page 42.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PH2 ROGER S. DUNCAN



# Election Day in Iraq

*How Seabees provided security for Iraqi polling places*

STORY BY LT JEFF MCCOY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PH3 TODD FRANTOM

FALLUJAH, Iraq—After six months on deployment in most locations, a Seabee unit often begins to wind down operations as its tenure draws toward a close. But when the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 got the nod to provide support to the first free elections in Iraq in more than 50 years—not long before the battalion came back to the States—they eagerly answered the call.

The work began several days prior to Election Day, when teams of Seabees hauled hundreds of concrete security barriers to polling sites in remote areas near the Syrian border.

NMCB 4's team arrived to a crowded camp in the middle of the night after nearly nine hours traveling across the desert terrain. Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Bruce Dennis, too tired to find a sleeping spot in a tent crowded with a surge of election security personnel, flopped his sleeping bag on the hood of his Humvee and stretched out comfortably. Despite the near freezing temperatures that night, he got some well-needed rest.

"I wrapped up like a cocoon—it was

comfy!" Dennis said.

While planning their next mission the following day, the Bees heard an improvised explosive device (IED) detonate nearby—another reminder that insurgents would pull no punches to impede free elections.

On the day prior to elections, the team convoyed to Ar Rutbah, a city of 15,000 in Western Iraq, to set up a polling center. The site had no polling booths, but this was no problem for NMCB 4 Seabees.

Builder 3rd Class Donald Lehl led a crew to build voting booths, and in a few hours, the crew had constructed 12 sturdy booths with ledges and partitions.

Equipment Operator 2nd Class Todd Johnson worked feverishly throughout the day, moving concrete barriers that keep vehicles away from the polling center and offloading supplies.

Other Seabees helped set up metal detectors, portable generators and concertina wire. In fewer than eight hours, the Bees completed a secure and highly functional polling site.

On the ride back to camp, a Marine security team was encountered blocking the road. They had just discovered a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) and cordoned off

the area. Insurgents had packed the doors of a sport utility vehicle with explosives wired to the dome light.

The vehicle was set to detonate when the door was opened.

Later that evening, relieved to be back in a secure area, the team joked about putting bumper stickers on their civilian cars with sayings like "I brake for IEDs" and "My other car is a VBIED."

Lehl said he was proud to have contributed to the election effort. "To be making history and to help liberate an oppressed people, it feels pretty good."

When the voting was over, the team packed up their equipment at the polling site. As the Seabee vehicles lined up to leave, an elderly man and his adolescent son walked up and asked if he could still vote. The independent election supervisor directed the team to dig out a ballot.

He provided instructions, the man dutifully filled out his ballot on the hood of the Seabee Humvee, and another small step on the path to a democratic Iraq was complete. 🌐

## The Provisional Support Battalion

Drawing on the classic Seabee "We Build, We Fight" legacy, Seabees—along with storekeepers, electronics technicians, culinary specialists and others—stepped up alongside their Army and Marine counterparts to provide additional combat security support during the Iraqi election process.

The Provisional Support Battalion (PSB) was established just prior to the elections under the direction of the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) commanding general. The troops supplemented infantry forces by utilizing Army, Navy and Marine support assets normally employed in rear security positions. Senior PSB staffers said the Seabees proved a powerful asset during the days prior to the election.

"The Seabees drew upon their basic capabilities and training in defense tactics," said Marine Corps Sgt. Major Richard Smith, Command Sergeant Major of the First Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group (I MEG). "I have every confidence that they will excel at whatever they are asked to do in support of the election process."

Four female Seabees were assigned directly to polling stations, screening female citizens as they entered the voting precinct.

—JOC Suzanne Speight

## When Seabees Came to Town

U.S. Navy ENS Majid Awad (left), originally from Bahrain, plays with local Iraqi children on Iraqi Election Day. Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Seven (NMCB) 7 worked in partnership with residents of a small Bedouin village on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, to build a school and to implement improvements to the village water, electricity, and sanitation facilities. Wherever the Seabee convoys travelled (below), they were most often met by droves of small Iraqi children—kids who, like kids all over the globe, have an appreciation for a fine lollipop and the excitement brought by friendly strangers coming to town.





SEABEES AND MARINES JOINED AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE TO PROVIDE TSUNAMI RELIEF IN S.E. ASIA ON

## OPERATION UNIFIED ASSISTANCE

Not long after the devastating tsunami in Southeast Asia Dec. 26, 2004, more than 400 Seabees prepared to deploy or were already en route to the region to provide a variety of disaster recovery efforts, from clearing roads and removing debris to assessing damage. Approximately 50 Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 embarked in *USS Fort McHenry* (LHA 43) and went to Indonesia, with an additional 250 Seabees from Okinawa deployed shortly thereafter. Approximately 100 Seabees from NMCB 7 deployed to Sri Lanka and about 30 Seabees from Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 2 went to Thailand to perform port surveys and assist in offloading Maritime Pre-positioning Force ships.

“The American taxpayers made an investment in a very solid and robust military capability that has a wide range of uses,” said ADM Thomas Fargo, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, “and we’re demonstrating the value of that investment.” >>



Seabees and Marines load supplies from a vertical replenishment at sea onto *USS Fort McHenry* (LSD 43). The ship was deployed with troops from Combined Support Force 536 aiding in *Operation Unified Assistance*, the humanitarian operation effort in the wake of the tsunami that struck Southeast Asia.

Under the direction of the U.S. Pacific Command and the American joint-service Combined Support Force (CSF) 536, more than 13,000 U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and other service members provided humanitarian assistance to millions of people affected by the tsunami—triggered by an offshore 9.0 earthquake in the region that swept Southeast Asia on Dec. 26, 2004.

The Navy/Marine Corps team played an integral role in the Department of Defense’s intensive humanitarian effort alongside other federal and international agencies in support of the governments of Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and other nations affected by the disaster.

NMCBs 7 and 40, with elements from the Thirtieth Naval Construction Regiment (30NCR) and divers from Underwater Construction Team 2, were a hard-hitting force in rendering effective aid in the tsunami-damaged areas in southern Sri Lanka.

Seabees deployed all over the region performed all manner of disaster relief, from simply picking up debris to clear a schoolyard to contingency construction, road clearing and runway repair projects. The Sailors and Marines they accompanied used their equipment to deliver fresh water and provide other aid to the victims of the tsunami. The Seabee divers from UCT 2 went to Thailand, where they provided support to the Navy

STORY BY JO2 BARBARA SILKWOOD, JO2 CHAD V. PRITT AND JOSN S.C. IRWIN

component.

The first group of Seabees from NMCB 40 arrived Jan. 11 and joined the swelling ranks of U.S. military troops providing assistance and relief in the wake of monumental devastation. Transiting to Indonesia aboard *Fort McHenry*, the Seabees pushed ashore and established a base camp to build up their capabilities.

The detachment carried sufficient stores of fuel, medical supplies, road clearing equipment, electrical power generating equipment and the necessary tools to sustain them throughout the expected duration of the operation. *Fort McHenry* personnel provided the Bees ashore with most of their food and water.

Seabees arrived in Sri Lanka with nearly 350 tons of earth-moving machinery—including 46 pieces of engineer equipment, such as loaders, excavators, water treatment and distribution trucks, and power generators, tools and necessary materials.

Prior to departing for Indonesia, personnel were briefed on applicable health and safety precautions, including protective measures to prevent against the spread of disease. Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Mario Portillo, NMCB 40’s preventative medicine technician, explained that the sheer scale of the disaster presented significant medical

challenges of its own.

“The threats come in the form of typhoid, malaria, dengue fever, cholera, dysentery and other waterborne diseases,” he said. Portillo stressed the importance of maintaining the highest possible level of cleanliness—and he re-emphasized the need to follow prescribed medical procedures without fail.

“You must take care of yourself first before you can help anyone else, because the more who become ill, the less effective the unit as a whole can be in providing assistance to others,” Portillo said.

Among the first group to leave for the tsunami zone was Construction Electrician 2nd Class Jonathan Nelson of NMCB 40’s Bravo Company. He put a fine point on the magnitude of the humanitarian need and the necessity to keep a clear perspective on the hard work the Seabees knew they faced.

“We have a difficult task ahead of us that will prove to be both physically and mentally demanding on everyone involved,” Nelson said. “If we are able to put the situation into perspective and remember the cause we are supporting, it will be easier to deal with what we see and hear while we are there.”

NMCB 7’s group arrived Jan. 13. Aided by the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit,

NMCB 7 Seabees, 15th MEU Marines and *USS Duluth* Sailors remove trusses after a school building is taken down by a Seabee bulldozer.



“Like everyone else out here, I feel perhaps for the first time in my career a new sense of service. I’ve been in the service of my country for over 34 years. This is a different kind of service and when it’s all said and done, perhaps the one I’ll be most proud of.”

— Lt. General “Rusty” Blackman, USMC, Commander, Combined Support Force 536

In a scene reminiscent of World War II, Seabees from NMCB 40’s Detachment Indonesia are transported by landing craft from *USS Fort McHenry* (LSD 43) to *USS Essex* (LHD 2) en route to the beach.



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PH3 JOHN P. CURTIS (2)

NMCB 7’s Seabees unload supplies from a truck in Koggala before starting debris removal projects.



U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSN S.C. IRWIN

the group completed several operations in the southwestern Sri Lanka cities of Koggala and Galle, including clearing a schoolhouse site of rubble before demolishing two nearby unstable structures.

Many of the projects involved work at local schools. In Galle, the Navy and Marine Corps team demolished two buildings at the Uswat Hasala Muslim Ladies College that had been rendered structurally unstable by the pounding water. They also cleared 250 cubic yards of rubble, making the site safer and available for reuse.

Other important school-related projects included demolition and clearance of buildings at Salputhua Central College and Da Silva Elementary School.

“We’ve seen an immediate effect through our efforts,” said LT Jorge Cuadros, NMCB 7’s on-site officer in charge. “Within two days of clearing the demolished schools, children were back to their classes learning.”

Cuadros had led a comprehensive engineering assessment of the area, including a mangled railway system. “It was amazing to see miles and miles of devastation,” Cuadros said. “Parts of the railroad tracks looked as if they were picked up and thrown 20 feet off course.”

Tsunami survivors also had to deal with the burden of contaminated drinking water and structural damage beyond repair to many buildings. NMCB 7, in conjunction with the Marines’ 9th Engineer Support Battalion and the Austrian Army, led the way in

distributing more than 10,000 gallons of drinking water to relief camps near and around Sri Lanka’s tsunami-ravaged coastline.

Members of the 70-person group improved the city’s protective seawall by shifting large rocks to vital positions. They also reconstructed restroom facilities on school grounds.

NMCB 7’s main objectives were completion of engineering efforts approved by local

inland by the tsunami, blocking busy streets and pedestrian transit areas.

Moving the beached fishing vessels to the Galle harbor for repair was another step the group took to help the local economy regain a toehold in the vitally important fishing industry and begin a swift recovery.

“We [will] work until the [Sri Lankan] government feels it is ready to turn the workload over to local contractors,” Cuadros added. “Being able to respond to the relief effort so quickly is just another example of how ready our battalions are to help out in situations like this.”



government officials and clearing the community of hazardous debris.

The Seabees exhibited their *Can*

*Do!* attitude by applying it to demolitions, returning the railroad system to its original layout and performing limited construction projects at the relief camps throughout Sri Lanka.

The Seabees also were tasked with hauling away a number of large fishing boats that were swept up to a kilometer

**Top:** A local woman salvages timber from the Ahangama Primary School in Sri Lanka as Chief Builder Elliot C. Galloway from NMCB 7 works in the background. The school was destroyed by the tsunami. U.S. Marine Corps photograph by Cpl. Josh H. Hauser. **Middle:** NMCB 40’s HM1 Donald Prewitt (L) and CM2 James Stromberg carry their seabags as they load onto Landing Craft Utility (LCU) 1651 inside *USS Fort McHenry’s* (LSD 43) well deck and prepare to transfer to *USS Essex* (LHD 2). Prewitt and Stromberg are Seabees then assigned to Detail Indonesia. U.S. Navy photograph by PH3 John P. Curtis. **Bottom:** A U.S. Navy SH-60B helicopter from Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 47 delivers supplies in Keude Panga, Sumatra, where officials conducted surveys in the devastated region of Aceh to determine the needs of tsunami victims. U.S. Navy photo by PHAN Jordon R. Beesley.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PHAN JORDON R. BEESLEY. INSET PHOTO BY DAMON J. MORITZ >>



*Special Message from the Hon. Gordon R. England, Secretary of the Navy:*

“To the Sailors and Marines [who supported] *Operation Unified Assistance* and your fellow military and civilian counterparts.

“The tsunami that struck Southeast Asia Dec. 26 was a horrific tragedy. American Sailors and Marines, American warships and helicopters provided essential assistance to tsunami victims in difficult and dangerous circumstances. Your compassion, professionalism and dedicated efforts were awesome. Well done!

“With more than 6,000 flight hours and more than 20 million pounds of medicine, food and water delivered to date, you saved thousands of lives and eased the suffering of thousands more. America’s sea services once again brought great resources and flexibility to bear in the noble cause of helping others.

“Your fellow Americans are proud of all of you and what you accomplished. Those whom you assisted are grateful for your help, for your care and for your friendship. You showed the world American compassion and mercy. At sea, ashore and in the air, you brought honor to yourselves and to our nation.

“Thank you for your continued service to our Navy and Marine Corps, to our nation and to the world. Thanks for all you’ve achieved and for continuing to help others in the future.”



# Operation Frosty Teamwork

STORY BY JOSN RON KUZLIK

PHOTOGRAPH BY MA1 JAY WHITAKER

Seabees from Navy Reserve Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) 74 and 21 are back home following *Operation Frosty Teamwork*, the field component of Exercise Bearing Duel 2005 that was conducted at the Camp Shelby, Miss., national mobilization site.

The mission of the Bearing Duel field exercise is to train Bee battalions and certify them for possible future deployments.

Over the course of a month-long operation from mid-February to early March, nearly a thousand Active and Reserve Seabees trained side-by-side in this comprehensive training exercise that combined resources and integrated administrative, logistical and operational components.

More than 400 Bees from NMCB 21 out of Lakehurst, N.J. and more than 600 Active Bees from NMCB 74 in Gulfport, Miss., contributed to contingency construction projects and engaged in combat operations training, learning to operate in a hostile field situation and sustaining simulated operations in this realistic environment.

According to NMCB 21 operations officer LCDR Dave Diefenderfer, this field exercise presented a unique set of challenge from previous field exercises, including movements of personnel from the LSA to both outlying sites and command and control elements.

“The command element was permitted to communicate with the dets,” Diefenderfer said, “but they were not allowed to assist with any issues on the ground, thereby necessitating command and leadership in the field at the small unit level.”

To give this scenario a “real life” topspin, the instructors and the aggressors’ strategy included hard-hitting tactics that could be employed any time of day or night.

“Even though our battalion comes from 10 detachments, unit cohesiveness and integrity came together with the successful integration of small-unit leadership,” Diefenderfer said. 🌐




# True tales of the 'SEABEE COLD CASE UNIT'



Residents of Trevorton, Pa., were surprised to see Navy Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 21 Detachment 0521 personnel descend upon the sleepy little town in camouflage BDUs, heavy equipment and hardhats at the ready. The Seabees were present in this remote area of Central Pennsylvania to perform road construction training. As with many Seabee training projects, the job prepared members for an upcoming field exercise and provided hands-on training with road improvements and large-vehicle operations. But it performed a public service as well. Police cold-case investigators hoped that the road construction would facilitate transportation of boats to a flooded strip mine pit they intended to search to recover evidence crucial to a 15-year-old homicide case.

STORY BY YN1 ANNA LAPORTE  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JO1 MIKE MILLER



<p>As the Seabees rolled through the small town in a gigantic olive-drab Navy dump truck, the citizenry must have wondered what was going on. Onlookers couldn't know that the Bees had been asked to assist the Sunbury City Police and Pennsylvania State Police in a dormant investigation involving a missing single mother who had resided in the area.</p> <p>Barbara E. Miller disappeared on June 30, 1989, reportedly under suspicious circumstances. Police actively investigated the case for the first few years but developed few leads. As time wore on, the activity on the case fell off as other cases pressed for police attention.</p> <p>In 2002, a task force was stood up to re-open the Miller case. Hundreds of people were interviewed and numerous leads were pursued. Along the way, dogged police work developed significant information that indicated the body of</p>	<p>Barbara Miller had been deposited in an abandoned, water-filled strip mine known as "The Canyon."</p> <p>Homicide Task Force members made many trips to the location to look for clues, but they encountered significant difficulty in doing so. The existing one-mile road leading to this body of water was littered with large boulders, overhanging branches and washouts, making it hard for police to travel to the area without considerable time and effort—and the exclusive use of four-wheel-drive trucks.</p> <p>After making a number of these thorny trips, police determined they had to develop a plan for improvement of the road to permit passage of trailered boats to The Canyon. Boats would be needed to accomplish planned underwater searches.</p> <p>When the task force experienced frustration in obtaining assistance from</p>	<p>other sources, they contacted NMCB 21 and the Seabees agreed to pitch in.</p> <p>Homicide Task Force members Sgt. Degg Stark of the Sunbury City Police and Cpl. Richard Bramhall Jr. from the Pennsylvania State Police Milton Barracks were impressed with the hard work, persistence and commitment of the Bees in making further investigative leads possible in the Miller case.</p> <p>Using minimal equipment—in five days—these Seabees turned a rough, pitted road that formerly required 35 minutes to traverse into a smooth, two-lane dirt roadway that could accommodate the 15-ft-wide by 30-ft-long pontoon boats police divers needed to tow in to search the mine pit.</p> <p>"These Seabees did a <i>fantastic</i> job," Stark said. "That road was terrible—we broke a leaf spring on a 4WD vehicle we used to get up there. The 'road' was so</p>	<p>narrow that tree branches were scratching the police vehicles.</p> <p>"With the Seabees' help, we got our pontoon boats up there with sonar and remotely piloted vehicles and we made some progress investigating our case. We absolutely could not have gotten this done this way without their help."</p> <p>Chief Equipment Operator (SCW) Martin O'Horo, then the NMCB-21 Det. 0521 officer in charge, said, "Not only was this a good training evolution for my troops, but also benefited the community—which is something that all training projects should be able to do."</p> <p>Seven members participated in the road work training. It required widening more than a half-mile of roadway and filling large holes in the sections of the road with existing material found at the site. Several of the craters measured up to 30 ft long, 7 ft wide and 3 ft deep.</p>	<p>Seabees also trained on the use of bulldozers, grading and the removal of rocks, some of them very large.</p> <p>In addition to O'Horo, other NMCB 21 participants included Equipment Operator 2nd Class Douglas C. Jumper, Builder 2nd Class Joseph Pehanick, Equipment Operator 2nd Class (SS) Timothy T. Waters, Equipment Operator 3rd Class Thomas F. Davison, Equipment Operator 3rd Class Robert Maslyar and Construction Mechanic 3rd Class (SS) Joseph M. Richardson.</p> <p>With mobilization always a possibility for Navy construction battalions, road-building training like this only strengthens Seabee abilities and readiness.</p> <p>That it may help hard-working police find a killer was a bonus. 🌐</p>	
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EOC(SCW) Martin O'Horo gives instruction on the use of a grader to E03 Robert Maslyar. As with many Seabee training projects, the road-cutting job prepared NMCB 21 for an upcoming field exercise and provided hands-on training with large-vehicle operations. The road construction facilitated transportation of boats to a flooded strip mine pit police investigators wanted to search in order to recover evidence crucial to their case.



Below, E02 Douglas Jumper clears away topsoil and debris during training on a track loader. The Reserve Bees turned a rutted, one-lane track filled with holes and littered with rocks into the equivalent of a two-lane dirt highway in just five days. The valuable training project was a cooperative effort with police officials investigating a cold homicide case that was many years old. Above, E02 Tim Waters has a look at the mine pit where homicide investigators hoped to find clues.



STORY BY CAPT JIM WORCESTER AND LCDR CHRIS KURGAN

NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION FOUR

SEABEES AND MARINES CROSS-POLLINATED THEIR WARRIOR DNA IN IRAQ AS A CONTIGUOUS MANUEVER FORCE THAT PENETRATED BAGHDAD JUST 19 DAYS AFTER KICK-OFF. THOSE LESSONS LEARNED SHOW THE WAY TO A NEW TRAINING THOUGHT PROCESS. HERE IS HOW AND WHY 1NCD IS REWRITING THE NAVAL CONSTRUCTION FORCE

# GENETIC CODE

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF) took Baghdad within 19 days of penetrating Iraq's border with Kuwait because, in large part, it attacked swiftly across the desert of Southern Iraq.

IMEF attacked farther and faster than any similar force had ever done in modern times. Integral to IMEF operations and its victory in *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (*OIF*) were the Seabees, organized as a combatant commander called the IMEF Engineer Group (IMEG).

The most important lesson learned by the Naval Construction Force during *OIF* was that, like the Marines it supports, the NCF must be a maneuvering force—moving faster, farther and lighter than ever in its 63-year history. To build the

proficiency required, the model for NCF military training also has to move.

Implementing *OIF* lessons-learned meant tinkering with the genetic structure of how Seabees are trained—and Seabee DNA is rooted deep. The changes would make us a tougher, faster, more agile force, but let's face it: Nothing like this occurs without lots of thinking and lots of discussion. *OIF* accelerated much of that.

“Train like you fight, fight like you train” is a phrase we all know, but now it is going to take on a new meaning—one that affects every swinging hammer in the Seabee Nation, from the battalion commander to the Equipment Operator driving the MTRV to the Culinary

Specialist warming up a field kitchen.

Actual combat experience in *OIF* suggested that Seabee units should take a building-block approach to unit-level instruction and practice it at the cornerstone of NCF military training—the battalion-level field exercise (FEX).

The new FEX concept emphasizes construction operations in support of fast-moving battlefield action, and it provides practical concepts to rehearse as part of a Marine Corps battlefield organization.

The combat zone experiences of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 during its trip to *OIF* led to rethinking of existing field exercise training. Here's how we expect it will work. >>





New NCF training modes call for Seabees to have additional battlespace flexibility based on lessons learned in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

area in Kuwait. At the onset of hostilities, Task Force Mike moved quickly through the 1st Marine Division area in southern Iraq, building bridges, improving main and alternate supply routes and providing other engineering support. In its five-week advance to Baghdad, the command element moved its camp eight times. Orders often would come in the middle of the night and require a mount-out within hours of notification. At the same time, the TFC-RE conducted resupply missions from Kuwait, logging more 49,000 convoy miles in the campaign. When major hostilities were declared over in April 2003, the NMCB 4 command element established a base camp at Ad Diwaniyah and supported civil-military projects at numerous sites throughout the city. The battalion's

post-war experience once again stretched its logistics capabilities.

As soon as we set camp, the battalion got orders to establish additional detail sites in the towns of An Najaf and Karbala to execute reconstruction and civil-military missions that continued through the end of July 2003.

While the battalion had settled into camps at each of its detail sites, effective employment demanded extensive convoy operations. From Kuwait, supplies flowed with great frequency. Each civil-military project required well-planned convoys to move troops, each with a security team.

For the first time in recent memory, Seabees gave equal effort to defensive and construction operations.

**Rewriting the code**

Soon after NMCB 4 returned to homeport in September 2003, the 31st Seabee Readiness Group (31SRG) approached us to discuss what we had learned in the field at combat speed. The idea was to apply our experiences and lessons-learned to existing FEX templates and thus make them available to the NCF at large.

Prior to *OIF*, FEX training typically was that an NCF unit moved into a training area, established a defense and built a camp replete with squad berthing tents, galley and shower facilities. The unit normally remained in place for the duration of the exercise. Following our discussions, we worked with 31SRG to develop a new



OIF lessons learned redefined what Seabees will be expected to do in the field with Marine Corps counterparts. Bees will move faster and farther, have additional capabilities and continue to build and fight, as in this well-concealed fighting position. Such methods will be tested in new FEX concepts.

exercise plan that provided contemporary training built on how we had actually performed the missions in the war zones. This meant more frequent and lighter maneuver, with missions that challenged smaller, usually company-sized units.

The revised template included:  
§ *Units will flow into theater, establish a rear-area Logistics Support Area and conduct Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration prior to the commencement of hostilities.*

§ *Units may maneuver often and on short notice.*

§ *Threats will cover a spectrum of possibilities; from curious or agitated civilians to facing enemy forces defined in NCF Required Operational Capabilities/Projected Operating Environments (ROCs and POEs).*

§ *Units, including details, may operate independently and provide for self-defense. Units may be required to provide their own logistics support.*

§ *Convoy operations will be extensive.*  
We deployed a 125-Seabee-strong Survey Liaison Reconnaissance Party (SLRP) to build "LSA Fox." The SLRP maintained a tactical posture and active security appropriate for the threat as outlined in the exercise operation order. LSA Fox enabled the battalion to commence training upon its arrival, and then prepare for the deployment of work

details. Training included crucial improvised explosive device (IED) identification, convoy immediate-action drills, enemy prisoner of war handling, call-for-fire practice, in-country briefs and conducting operations checks of equipment.  
**Developing leadership**

During RSOI, considerable emphasis was placed on ensuring small-unit leaders had a full understanding of the battalion's mission. They were actively involved in the planning process and, for many of them, this was their first exposure to such operations and planning methods.

Equally important, the RSOI training provided an opportunity to ratchet up a tactical mindset and launch a battle rhythm. As three days of training progressed and plans came together, the troops grew more anxious to move into the detail deployment phase.

Resourcing support personnel and equipment to multiple details requires continuous, highly focused planning. Twice as much CESE (civil engineer support equipment) than had typically been used on past exercises was required.

During the planning day, the battalion actively rehearsed for movement to the forward operating base (FOB) from dawn through nightfall—all the while simultaneously loading and checking convoys.

The battalion moved into the FOB in two movements. The first convoy consisted of a Jump Command Post (Jump CP) and staff, security company, line company leadership with crew-served weapon teams. A mortar section provided additional fire support.

The lead convoy established defense of the FOB site in accordance with SAFE (Secure the area, Automatic weapons placed, Fields of fire established, Entrench) and the security company swept and secured the area, digging fighting positions.

Line company leadership placed crew-served weapons and assigned fields of fire. The Jump CP established a more permanent Combat Operations Center.

When the second convoy arrived with the rest of the troops, the companies fell in on the defense, finalized sectors of fire, placed aiming and limiting stakes, completed range cards and began entrenching. Within 48 hours of arrival, fighting positions were concealed and hardened with overhead covers. Triple-strand protective wire encircled a 1500-meter perimeter.

The camp was complete. Months of up-front planning had paid off as the battalion worked with necessarily intense focus. It was critical for the success of the exercise to brief planning information down to the most junior troops, who had to understand the mission and expectations.

If we learned anything during *OIF*, it was that to move *faster*, we must travel *lighter*. Initially in *OIF*, we didn't take such Seabee mainstays as General Purpose Medium tents, laundry skids or even galleys—we were as high-speed and low-drag as possible.

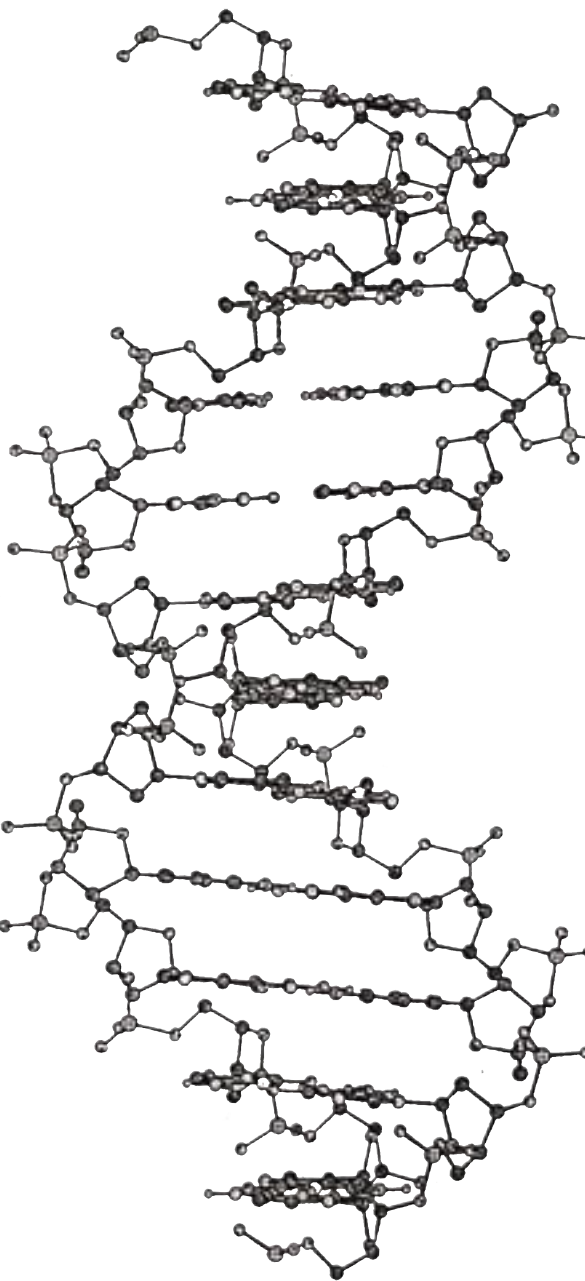
As missions evolved and we became more stable, we pulled such needed facilities, tools and equipment from the rear area in Kuwait. The new Seabee genetic code will reflect those lessons and practice their combat.

By restructuring the NCF's training DNA to underscore mobility, Seabees will become better trained, more accustomed to operating lean and they will be more fully integrated into the Marines Corps' scheme of maneuver.

In addition, the revised training template offers robust opportunity to exercise leadership at all levels of the chain of command, but especially at the small-unit level where the rubber meets the road.

The global battlefield continues to change—and so is the Naval Construction Force training that

must reflect and instill those lessons. Our combat construction "genetic code" is evolving. No matter what comes the Seabee battalions' way, they will be relevant, responsive and ready. ☼



Logistical support is emphasized in the new NCF training methods, including convoy and transportation issues.





## *Adventure, Seabee-style*

Journalist 2nd Class Barbara Silkwood (above), a Seabee attached to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40, emerges from muddy water into razor and barbed wire after going under a log obstacle in the endurance course at the Jungle Warfare Training Center on Camp Gonsalves, Okinawa. Far left, Marines and Bees negotiate a rope bridge, and Left, Equipment Operator 3rd Class Jordan Mann low-crawls through a pond. The challenging training evolutions are a component of the 3.4-mile obstacle course, part of a week-long jungle skills training class.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPHS BY PH3 JOHN P. CURTIS

# Helping Hands

In Haiti, Navy Seabees and other U.S. military members of Task Force New Horizons (TFNH) delivered more than 9,000 pounds of humanitarian supplies from the U.S. Navy's Project Handclasp to eight schools, two orphanages and a hospital April 15.

The volunteers delivering donations included members from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1, Gulfport, Miss.; the U.S. Army's 699th Engineering Company, Ft. Buchanan, P.R.; 400th Military Police from Ft. Meade, Md.; and the 176th Medical Group from Garden Grove, Calif. The U.S. Marine Corps' 4th Civil Affairs Group, Washington, D.C., coordinated the activity and provided Creole-speaking interpreters.

The donations included hygiene and medical products, books, clothes and toys, and were transported from the Project Handclasp warehouses in San Diego across the United States on a C-130 from Fleet Logistic Support Squadron (VR) 55, Point Mugu, Calif. In Mayport, Fla., Commander, Task Force (CTF) 43 arranged for further transfer to Port-au-Prince and then to Gonaives.

"The staff worked hard to unload two 40-foot containers and sort through the materials," said Capt. Doug Taylor, commanding TFNH. "This will help people here a bunch."

The needs in Haiti were and remain great. The schools were devastated during last year's hurricane; the parents cannot afford to pay tuition; and the teachers have not received a salary for months, but they are still there trying to make it through with the children.

In the makeshift classrooms, the students and teachers overcame language barriers to show their gratitude with handshakes, smiles and hugs.

New Horizons Haiti is one of the four humanitarian and civic assistance exercises sponsored this year by U.S. Southern Command in Central America and the Caribbean. As part of TFNH, a combined task force deployed to build three schools, drill three potable water wells and provide free medical attention through three Medical Readiness Training Exercises. 🌐

## Seabees on Task Force New Horizons Deliver Project Handclasp Donations in Haiti



U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY LT LI COHEN

CDR Gail Myers, above left, along with other members of Task Force New Horizons, deliver humanitarian relief supplies from the U.S. Navy's Project Handclasp to schools and orphanages damaged during the hurricane season 2004.



U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PH3 LATRICE AMES

Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 load equipment onto a Landing Craft Unit in the well deck aboard amphibious assault ship *USS Saipan* (LHA 2). Bees built schoolhouses, drilled water wells and provided medical attention to the people of Haiti.



U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY CDR JEFF MCATEE



U.S. NAVY PHOTOGRAPH BY PH2 ROGER S DUNCAN

**LEFT** Seabees pour the foundation for a three-room school house at *La Nativite* School. **RIGHT** Navy Builder 2nd Class (SCW) Steve Byers, from Paintsville, Ky., sifts sand through a screen at a construction site in Gonaives, Haiti. The sand was used to make mortar that Byers and fellow Seabees used to build one of eight schools. The Seabees are assigned to NMCB 1 based out of Gulfport, Miss.

# FALLUJAH SURGICAL

Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1 completed a potentially life-saving project at Fallujah Surgical Company in Falljuah, Iraq, April 17. The project is a brand new triage and receiving canopy, which augments the triage tents that had been used.

“It’s a timber and aluminum triage canopy to provide shelter to patients waiting to get into Fallujah Surgical,” said Chief Builder (SCW) Rob Morrison, , a native of Clove, S.C., “and also to provide lighting at night.”

The canopy will be able to comfortably accommodate up to 10 patients at a time. “We’ll be able to line up 10 stretchers, five on each side,” said Dr. (CDR) Carol Blackwood, a triage specialist at Fallujah Surgical. “Before, they would have been in the gravel or falling off the entry way.”

Eight Seabees from several construction rates were put to work on the construction. “We had steelworkers prefab the reinforcing steel that goes in the concrete and also the corrugated sheet steel that will go on the roof,” Morrison said. “We had construction electricians do the wiring and switches and lighting, and utilitiesmen capped off and rerouted the storm drain. Then we have the meat and potatoes of the project—builders—because this project is mostly timber and concrete and that’s the main part of their rate.”

The new structure was designed to allow emergency vehicles to back up to the opening for unloading patients for triage in a safe environment. “This will provide more protection for patients during triage,” said Blackwood. “We’ve had incidences with our own staff tripping over stuff. The extra room the canopy provides will also give patients protection from the heat by keeping them in the shade.”

The Seabees constructing the triage canopy noted differences between normal operations during peacetime and operations in a combat zone. “When we deploy to other places, we’ll work on a project the whole six months we’re there,” said Builder 2nd Class (SCW) Nick Hoffman, the triage canopy project supervisor and native of Decatur, Ala. “Out here is more fast-paced than normal peacetime projects.”

Security issues keep the Bees in camp, for the most part, working on such projects as camp maintenance and force protection. Because of that, the Seabees here were grateful for the opportunity to build a facility that permits health care providers to work in a more controlled environment during the critical time that is triage. “It’s for a real good command,” Morrison said. “They’re providing triage to troops throughout the theater. We’re glad to do whatever we can to help them.” 🌐

It's not TV's 'er,' but it gets the job done thanks to Seabees





THE UNKNOWN

# ‘BEE-29S’ of World War II

STORY PROVIDED BY EDWIN E. FOSTER  
PERIOD PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHM2C LEWIS E. FOSTER

A tiny and fairly flat coral island 75 miles north of Guam, Tinian is about the same size and shape as Manhattan. As soon as U.S. forces captured it in August 1944, Seabees created a system of roads in the same grid pattern as Manhattan.

In order to transport the huge quantities of bombs and supplies up from the port at the southern end of the island, a divided four-lane highway—appropriately named “Broadway”—was built. The Bees gave the roads other typical New York names, such as 8th Avenue and 86th Street.

The main north-south road, Broadway, ran parallel to the other main north-south road, 8th Avenue. The eerie coincidence that Tinian had streets named after streets in Manhattan, New York, reportedly had no connection with the Manhattan Project atomic bomb development, although personnel involved in the project were stationed on Tinian.

Tinian became an ideal B-29 “Superfortress” base for World War II. As spoils of war go, four captured runways and bountiful coral construction resources made the island an outstanding catch. In their “*Can Do!*” manner, Seabees in jungle green fatigues with uplifted tropical baseball caps swarmed over the island expanse of coral and cane fields to carve out the huge airbases necessary for the

new bombers.

Seabees of the Sixth Naval Construction Brigade (6NCB), consisting of 12 battalions commanded by Commodore Paul James Halloran, Civil Engineer Corps, USN, soon built the largest airport then in the world. Tinian’s B-29 airport consisted of North Field and West Field. North Field had about 13 miles of taxiways and runways and West Field was only a fraction smaller. Tinian’s runway construction measured from 425 to 500 feet wide with the then unheard of runway lengths of up to 8,500-plus feet.

Battalion builders hauled, blasted and packed down enough coral to fill three times the volume of Hoover Dam. They built six huge B-29 bomber strips, each a mile and one half long and a block wide, along with miles of taxiways and hardstands sufficient to park 400 aircraft.

The thousands of Seabees on Tinian operated all types of construction equipment, including asphalt plants to pave the airstrips. Seabee equipment was kept busy 20 hours a day while their maintenance crews worked to repair bulldozers, shovels, trucks and other equipment damaged as a result of the rough construction activity. Sharp and abrasive coral was especially damaging to tires and work shoes. In typical Seabee fashion, one innovative construction

crew had a Marine tank team fire armor-piercing shells into the side of a hill so that dynamite charges could be placed to break up the coral.

In addition to the airfields, Bees put up Quonset huts and a wide variety of service buildings—including the shop in which the first atomic bombs were assembled. Every airstrip was completed on time and none required more than 53 days to build.

Not long after the arrival of Air Force B-29s, a special comradeship developed between Seabees and Airmen. Many Seabee battalions would adopt an aircraft by officially painting their logo and name on the B-29’s nose. The quality of life for the crew of the plane then would improve considerably—because the Seabees provided the crews of “their” Superfortresses with better Quonset huts, washing machines, better mattresses, ice cream, cold beer and other comforts of life.

Camps on Tinian were constructed to house up to 50,000 U.S. troops, and about 1.2 million pounds of crops were produced, all of which were consumed on the island. By August 1945, a year after construction started, Tinian was the largest airbase in the world and accommodated nearly 450 B-29s.

Arrival of *USS Indianapolis* (CA-35) on July 26, 1945, marked the delivery of the radioactive components for one of the new and highly secret atomic bombs. The ship anchored 1,000 yards off the shore of Tinian and Seabees of the 6NCB helped with the unloading of the components of the secret weapons.

The Seabees stored the elements in a shed they built and organized a detachment to guard the shed and its mysterious contents. Atomic scientists assembled the weapon in the shed with several Seabees assisting. 🌐

## SEABEE WORDPLAY

READ THE STORY. FIND AND CIRCLE THE BOLDFACE WORDS.

### Puzzle No. 1: The Troops Bug Out

“Pack your bags, shipmate!” CM3 Thomas Alva Jones said to his roommate, EO3 Clarence “Corvette” Watson. “We just got orders to **Iraq**.”

This failed to thrill Watson. Oh, he looked forward to the deployment and to helping some people because that’s what Seabees did, and his girlfriend had just dumped him anyway and a change of venue was welcome. But only the week before, he had acquired the chipped and smoking 1974 Corvette sports car that had quickly spawned his new nickname, bestowed by the grinning **CMDCM** himself in a morning muster.

The two petty officers, and several more from units belonging to the **FIRSTNCD**, would load up eight **MTVR** cargo trucks and common **Seabee tools**, such as a **hammer**, **shovel**, **wrench** — even **MOPP** gear against an unexpected chemical threat — and head

out to **OIF** in less than two weeks.

Other units of the Seabee division were already deployed to **OEF**, mostly dets in **Afghanistan** involved with State Department activities. Still more Bees were out on **humanitarian** missions to **OUA**, supporting **tsunami** relief in South Asia.

Corvette Watson hated to leave his beloved sports car home in South Carolina with his family. He had been born in **Cody**, Wyoming, but had grown up in Spartanburg and called South Carolina home. And if his car was going to be home, he wanted to be there too.

Shuffling listlessly through a clipboard of message traffic, Watson noted an announcement that recipients of the prestigious **Combs** and **Stethem** awards had been selected. Neither one of the selectees was Watson, though, he didn’t know either of the awardees—and none of it had anything to do with his car.

“What’s the **drill** on this deployment?”

he asked. “Are any Bees from **NAVFAC** coming?”

“Hmm, dunno,” Jones mused. He was paying more attention to the newest issue of **SEABEEMagazine** than to his shipmate. The issue had a cover story about CM3 Marvin G. **Shields**, the Vietnam-era Seabee who posthumously received the **Medal of Honor**. Numerous other members of that Seabee Team 1104 had been awarded a **Purple Heart**, **Bronze Star** and other medals for their heroism.

“Next time I have lunch with Rear Adm. **Loose** or **Phillips**,” Jones smiled, “I’ll ask them about it. Probably not so different a **program** from our last trip, though, except this time you should be able to pass the **SCW** test. You aren’t that close to your **EAOS**, my man—I’ll be the **FORCM** of the Seabees before you can get out and join the **NSVA**!” 🌐

S X X I C C N R V D Y X P P U C F T O U C K D U D  
P Z R Q Z T U N D L X N U I P F C E S T H T Q Q P  
H S D S M S A A R X N R S O A C A F V A N K G F M  
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## >RADM R.L. PHILLIPS

Since I assumed command of the First Naval Construction Division last November, I have been consistently amazed at the phenomenal amount of work that Seabees are performing around the world. I take great pride in the fact that the day-to-day work of the U.S. Navy goes relentlessly forward like an unstoppable force of nature. No matter what challenges you have been given, you have handled them with skill and professionalism. But, sometimes we get so busy working on current taskings that we fail to appreciate the magnitude of what has been done. So, I wanted to highlight some of the things that have been accomplished in this short amount of time.

When I first arrived at the Division, Seabees from NMCB 1 and NMCB 74, supported by 20th SRG and CBC Gulfport, had just completed disaster recovery efforts at Naval Air Station Pensacola in the wake of Hurricane Ivan. Deploying literally within hours of the eye passing over the Gulf Coast region, Seabees cleared debris from roads and housing areas, established generator power, erected a Fleet Hospital Surgical Unit Suite, assessed structural damage and developed temporary landfills. Underwater Construction Team 1 also inspected underwater structures for damage.

Then in late December, a massive tsunami devastated the Indian Ocean region, and the Seabees again sprang into action. NMCB 7, NMCB 40, CBMU 303 and UCT 2 deployed to support relief operations in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand in Operation Unified Assistance. Seabee work, both on site and in rear areas, proved vital to the success of this operation.

Of course, Seabees have played a vital ongoing role in support of operations in Iraq. I have been amazed by the accomplishments of our Active

and Reserve Seabees enhancing force protection and quality of life there.

For example, NMCB 23 completed airfield improvements and main supply route maintenance throughout I MEF's area of operations. These critical improvements greatly enhanced air mobility and ground maneuverability in western Iraq. Members of NMCB 4 completed the Eastern Fallujah Camp, a Detainee Interview Facility and a Detainee Holding Facility. Seabees from NMCB 133, NMCB 7 and NMCB 17 were assigned to support Special Operating Forces. They completed numerous projects throughout the theater. Members of NMCB 7 were also called upon to operate Camp Moreell in Kuwait, providing critical logistic support and tactical training preparation for forward deployed personnel.

Seabees supported everything from the major counter-insurgency victory and seizure of Fallujah to the free elections of January 2005. Seabees, very ably led by the I MEF Engineer Group, can be very proud to have played an instrumental role in our nation's fight in the global war on terrorism and the shaping of Iraq's fledgling democracy.

Seabees have also been involved in a variety of exercises that test our skills and demonstrate our commitment to peace.

NMCB 133 demonstrated its bridging expertise during the Korean Incremental Training Program and conducted vital operational tests of matting material. These two joint-multinational events demonstrated crucial capabilities and will contribute to the continuation of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Members of NMCB 4 also demonstrated forward Naval presence with a highly successful deployment supporting Exercise Adriatic PHIBLEX in Albania. They constructed four kilometers of roadway, a barracks facility and a new military training range latrine facility. They also renovated a local schoolhouse and erected a new playground that will support more than 750 local school children.

Some of these exercises involve doing things in new and different ways. Seabees from NMCB 1 headed to Haiti aboard the amphibious assault ship *USS Saipan*

(LHA 2) in support of Exercise New Horizons 2005 in Haiti. Seabees joined other U.S. military forces to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance, including building schoolhouses and drilling water wells.

We also need to remember the importance of work done at the main-body sites and major deployment sites. NMCB 7 continued working on projects in Guam, such as the Support Equipment Garage, Sumay Cove head facility and exterior lighting, as well as other projects in Hawaii, San Diego and Bahrain.

NMCB 4 worked on projects such as the hospital PEB and Shoreline Gap in Rota; naval air station fence line project in Sigonella; and the aircraft maintenance hangar renovation in Souda Bay. NMCB 133 completed numerous construction projects on Okinawa, which included the dental building renovation and security-armory upgrades.

Details deployed throughout the Pacific to Atsugi, Fuji, Sasebo, Iwakuni, Pohang, Chinhae, Diego Garcia and San Clemente all expertly accomplished their important missions.

And, we don't forget that so much effort goes into getting the Seabees everything they need to do their jobs. The work that has been done by military and civilian personnel at the Regiments, Seabee Readiness Groups and at the Division has been absolutely essential.

Homeport training in Gulfport and Port Hueneme and the readiness training performed regularly by our Reserve has ensured that Seabees are ready anytime, anywhere.

Seabees are truly ambassadors of goodwill around the world. They reinforce America's ties with other nations and have a positive impact on world events. In the five months that I have been in this job, I have witnessed your dedication, your compassion — and your unyielding commitment to get the job done. I am constantly amazed ... and because of what I've seen so far, I am extremely optimistic about the months and years ahead.

I look forward to each new Seabee day.



## >CMDR K.C. TIMMONS

Do Seabees make a difference? That is an easy question to answer. Seabees are a hot commodity right now. Everyone wants Seabees today—and can't get enough of them.

As we travel around the nation and even the world reviewing projects and visiting Seabees, I am amazed at what they have accomplished.

In Haiti during the New Horizons exercise, the teamwork between Active and Reserve—and also among other services in today's increasingly commonplace joint-service environment—was phenomenal.

These are wonderful ambassadors of the American people who really touched the hearts of the Haitian people. More significantly, they made Haitian quality of life healthier. They built new schools in which children can learn, and drilled new wells so that the people could have potable drinking water.

Our troops in Southwest Asia are living the next chapter in tomorrow's history books right now. Daily they see that their labor gives Iraqi and Afghan peoples an improved way of life, gives them reasons to be proud of their nation—and puts hope in the eyes of their children.

The support provided to the Marine Corps in numerous areas has further strengthened the long-standing bond of the Navy and Marine Corps combat team. Even as we forge important new relationships with joint-service Special

Operating Forces, Seabees already are making a significant impact in that shadow community. We will continue to form a strong bond with those at the tip of the spear.

At deployment sites, the base projects Seabees work on serve two principal purposes. They enhance the base infrastructure and help us get the construction readiness training we need to hone our construction skills and remain the construction force of choice.

Right here at home, Seabees are often involved in their local communities, such as with Habitat for Humanity, in the schools, boys and girls clubs, boy and girl scouts, and many other organizations.

Our Seabees contribute to the well-being of others at home and abroad, on work time and personal time—and this is nothing short of outstanding.

Seabees are truly remarkable people and they are perhaps the nation's greatest goodwill ambassadors. They are everywhere doing great things, overcoming challenges and succeeding at everything they do.

Are Seabees making a difference? Without question the answer is a resounding yes. I personally thank each and every Seabee for their hard work and selfless dedication, and also for their unstinting service to this great nation.

Thanks for what you do, Seabees, and I look forward to seeing all of you around the globe.



# A F T E R W O R D



Broken transformer is removed



Stand-by generators spool up



New installation is prepared

## All in an Icelandic day's work

Public works Seabees here in Keflavik received an emergency trouble call on a Thursday morning that the Navy Lodge and the fuel station had lost power. At the time of the incident, the temp ranged from 26 F to 30 F; the wind chill was between 10 F and 15 F, the wind speed was from 30 to 41 mph with gusts up to 50 mph.

We responded to find that the fuse inside a transformer had blown. The blown fuse was replaced and that one blew as well. We immediately brought out a generator to provide power to the affected facilities until we could find a permanent solution to the problem. When we investigated the first transformer's trouble, we found it had shorted between the primary windings and

was a complete loss. It definitely had to be replaced, cold or no cold.

A transformer was located on base that would work--but it was being used to power the street lights. We scheduled the power outage for the Lodge and fuel station for Saturday afternoon to have the least amount of impact on the base, and Friday morning we removed the transformer that was used for street lights and replaced it.

We also made all the necessary preparations for the Saturday outage at the Navy Lodge and fuel station by placing back-up generators for mission-critical buildings.

For good measure, we had our Transportation Seabees plow an access

road through two feet of drifted snow to the location of the blown transformer.

At 1200 Saturday, everything was in place and the power turned off so work could begin replacing the transformer. It took several hours of tedious work in the cold to prepare everything for the transplant. Then, during the middle of the operation, a piece of snow removal equipment knocked down a light pole on base. Several members of the electrical division left our site and responded to remove downed pole.

Despite the sudden reduction in our work crew, the new transformer was placed, all the connections were made, and power was restored as planned at about 1900. Just a normal PW Bee day. 🌐

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED BY CE1(SCW/PJ) ERIC R. TRUEMPER

# GETTING OUT?

# MAKE SURE THIS ISN'T THE LIGHT AT THE END OF YOUR TUNNEL.



Thinking about your future? Know what you're going to do yet? There has never been a better time to *Stay Navy* and *Stay Seabee*. But if you have decided to leave active duty, see your Career Counselor about great options for putting your hard-won skills and experience to work in a U.S. Naval Reserve Seabee unit. You earned those skills, so think about putting them to work one weekend per month and two weeks per year. And you'll enjoy many of the great benefits you enjoyed on active duty, such as camaraderie, good pay, Commissary and Exchange privileges. Don't leave your career on the beach. Point your Web browser to [www.navalreserve.com](http://www.navalreserve.com) for details.

**Seabee Service Matters — More than ever. Stay Navy. Stay Seabee.**

# Outtake:

## The Debris Field

STORY BY LTJG CHRIS BISHOP  
PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSN S.C. IRWIN

KOGGALA, Sri Lanka—Sri Lankan workers, U.S. Marines, and Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalions 7 and 40 survey the site of a schoolhouse destroyed Dec. 26, 2004, by a Southeast Asia tsunami that was triggered by a gigantic offshore undersea earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale.

More than 13,000 Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Soldiers and Coast Guardsmen comprised Combined Support Force 536, America's joint-service "rapid deployment force" of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Working with international militaries and non-governmental organizations, U.S. troops and tons of heavy equipment supported the relief effort as part of *Operation Unified Assistance*. 🌐



# LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF ALL WHO THREATEN IT.

