

1942

25th ANNIVERSARY

1967

UNITED STATES NAVY CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS



CAN DO!

'CONSTRUIMUS, BATUIMUS - WE BUILD, WE FIGHT!'

Provided by Steve Morse, UT3, NMCB 62
from 10-1968 thru 1-1972



25th Anniversary
CAN DO!
The Story of the Seabees
1942-1967

Published by
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Washington, D.C.

March 1967

Enlistment in the U.S. Navy is Open to All, Regardless of Race, Creed, or National Origin.



THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington

February 19, 1967

I had the honor recently to award the Medal of Honor, posthumously, to Marvin G. Shields, a U. S. Navy Seabee. Wounded three times, he gave his life in defense of his fellow men during the heroic defense of Dong Xoai in South Vietnam.

The Seabees this year are celebrating their twenty-fifth Anniversary. Their leaders, the officers of the Navy Civil Engineer Corps, are celebrating their one hundredth Anniversary.

Throughout their history, the Seabees and Navy Civil Engineer Corps officers have responded with a "Can Do" to every demand placed upon them for support of United States and allied forces around the world. In today's struggle for freedom, they continue to serve our nation with courage, skill, and dedication.

They have earned a "Well Done" from all their countrymen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Lyndon B. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



“KING BEE”

Admiral Ben Moreell

The need for a militarized Naval construction force was not always self-evident. Although a rudimentary force of this type was organized during World War I, it was dissolved after the signing of the armistice. But the germ of the idea remained in the minds of many of the Navy's Civil Engineers, and Navy construction battalions appeared in U. S. war plans of the early 1930s. All this, of course, was merely on paper.

In 1941, under duress of the rapidly developing war situation, Rear Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Navy's Civil Engineers and of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, decided to turn the idea into reality. In October of that year, he began organizing Headquarters Construction Companies to form the nucleus of construction battalions; and after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he began organizing the battalions themselves. On December 28, 1941, he requested specific authority for his actions, and on January 5, 1942, he gained from the Bureau of Naval Personnel authority to recruit men from the construction trades for assignment to Navy construction units. The construction battalions were formed under the leadership of officers of the Navy Civil Engineer Corps.

From their beginning, the Seabees, whose name comes from the initial letters of construction battalion, were unique. They were the “one wholly new military organization of World War II,” and under the leadership of their King Bee, as he was called, they literally built the allied way to victory—and to dominance of the postwar world we know today.

In recognition of his achievements and responsibilities, including the establishment of the Seabees, Admiral Moreell became the youngest vice admiral in the Navy.

TODAY'S CHIEF Rear Admiral Alexander C. Husband

D-Day at Okinawa was April 1, 1945. Four days before the main assault, three platoons of the 128th Naval Construction Battalion stormed ashore in company with a force of U.S. Marines on a group of small offshore islands known as Kerama Retto. The Seabees assembled and emplaced pontoon causeways while under heavy Japanese ground and air attack. When the main assault on Okinawa took place, the 128th Seabees again joined Marines in the attack.

The Seabee commander, Alexander C. Husband, was decorated for distinguished service in this action. It was not the first or the last distinction he was to receive.

Immediately following graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1935, he was assigned sea duty aboard the cruiser USS *Raleigh*. Then the Navy sent him to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he earned his master's degree in civil engineering.

After World War II, he served in many responsible positions, advancing steadily in rank. On November 1, 1965, he became Chief of Navy Civil Engineers and Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks (now the Naval Facilities Engineering Command), and assumed responsibility for organizing, maintaining, and administering all Seabee battalions.

Not only does Rear Admiral Husband today lead more than 20,000 Seabees, he directs the activities of about 2,000 Civil Engineer Corps officers and more than 20,000 civilians, and administers military contracts involving many thousands more. He is also responsible for construction and maintenance of the entire Naval Shore Establishment, valued at more than \$20 billion, a figure greater than the combined assets of the three largest U.S. corporations. All military construction in South Vietnam and Thailand is under his supervision.

To the Seabees he is known as today's "King Bee."





While a civilian employee at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island, in 1942, Frank J. Iafrate submitted a design for the emblem of the 1st Seabee Battalion. Iafrate's design of a bee holding a gun and tools in his many hands was eventually accepted as the emblem of all Seabees. Iafrate himself became a Seabee and his emblem became known the world over.

An unofficial though popular Seabee insignia of World War II days depicted a muscular half-naked Seabee gripping a hammer in both hands. With rifle slung across his shoulders, he stands against a red, white and blue shield which bears in Latin the slogan, "We build, we fight." At his right is the oak leaf cluster of the Navy Civil Engineer Corps and at his left a Navy anchor.



WE BUILD... WE FIGHT... WE CAN DO!

The Seabees were born in the dark days of Pearl Harbor when the task of building victory from defeat seemed almost insurmountable.

The first Seabee detachment took the field early in 1942. It had been scheduled for Iceland. Following the Pearl Harbor disaster it was hastily rerouted to Bora Bora in the South Pacific. There it began to build and safeguard the "Allied Lifeline," the vital supply route from the United States to Australia. These pioneer builders and fighters were the vanguard of more than 325,000 Seabees who served in World War II. Their officers were drawn largely from the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps and while serving with Seabees officially became Seabees. This "construction army" built the airfields, fuel depots, roads, dock facilities, key supply installations, and the ship-to-shore pontoon causeways, from which counterattack could be mounted.

In the Pacific the Road to Victory stretched from Guadalcanal through the Philippines and Iwo Jima, to Okinawa, and Tokyo. In the Atlantic the Victory Road led from North Africa through Sicily and Italy to Rome, and through France and Germany to Berlin. The Seabees' part in this allied effort is justly famous in song and story, and in the annals of blood, sweat, and tears.

The first Seabees were drawn largely from the construction trades. They were can-do types who built bridges and dams, erected tall buildings, strung power lines, drove tunnels. More than 100,000 of them volunteered in the first months of the war. Their average age was 37.

Young or old, Seabees won the respect of the men they served with. Side by side with Marine and Army troops, they fought in more than 400 actions.

General Holcomb of the Marines said, "Wherever Marines have gone, they have seen their Seabee comrades performing miracles of construction and repair, often under heavy fire."

General MacArthur said, "The only trouble with the Seabees is that we don't have enough of them."

The first Seabees established a great tradition and their achievements have been repeated in Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

But Seabees have been active in peace as well as in war. They have helped in disaster relief—following earthquake, windstorm, fire, and flood—whether in Alaska, Chile, Haiti, or California. Recently, under the Navy's People-to-People Program, Seabee Teams have worked in foreign countries in programs of community development. In Ethiopia, Costa Rica, the Central African Republic, Southeast Asia and elsewhere Seabees and local citizens have carried out projects in construction and development of roads, water systems, sanitation facilities, schools, and hospitals. Medical aid has been an outstanding feature of this work.

Today in Vietnam, Seabees are once again building and fighting for freedom alongside Marine and Army troops. They are producing construction at the rate of approximately \$10 million a month and have given technical and medical aid to thousands of Vietnamese civilians. A Seabee has won the Medal of Honor for heroism under fire.

It is a familiar role with a new dimension. With increased U.S. military and political responsibilities come new aspects of service and performance. Ahead lies the promise of a better world and a lasting peace. As usual the Seabees are ready. They "can do."

PACIFIC ROAD TO VICTORY

Bora Bora, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Rendova, the Society Islands, the Bismarck Archipelago, the names ring with history and romance, a sense of loss and a sense of triumph . . . Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte, Tinian, Iwo, Okinawa. For the Seabees it is the story of history's greatest construction war, told in terms of the Pacific theater of operations.

With every place there was a structure, a man to build as well as a man to fight. Often improvising, often working against almost insurmountable hardships and difficulties, short of supplies, short of tools, plagued by disease, heat, rain, mud and enemy bullets, a man structured the road to Tokyo.

In the Pacific alone, Seabees built more than 100 major airfields, more than 400 piers, 700 square blocks of warehouses, hospitals for 70,000 patients, tanks for storing 1 million gallons of gasoline, housing for 1½ million men. At Tinian they placed enough asphalt to pave a road from New York to Boston, at the same time excavating enough coral to build three Hoover dams.

In Japan they repaired housing, electric and telephone systems, roads and public buildings. They surfaced airfields, constructed chlorination plants, dock facilities, and many other installations.

That they built for peace as well as for war is evidenced by the Japanese nation of today.



Timber, New Britain



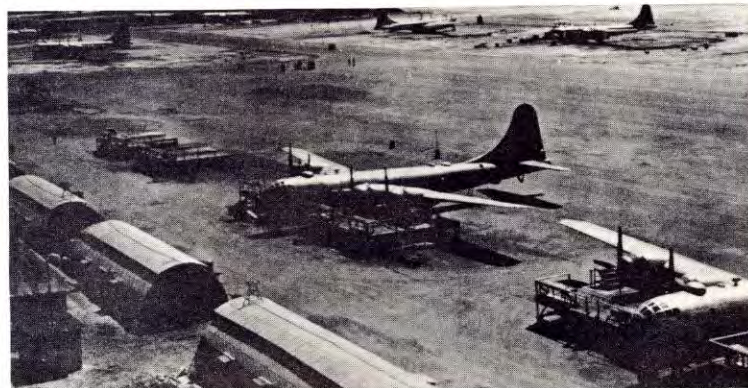
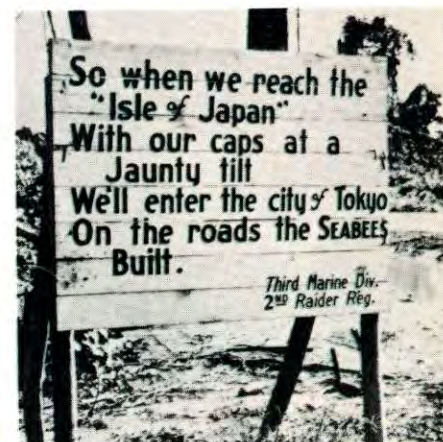
"Somewhere in the Aleutians"

Surfacing airstrip





Green Island



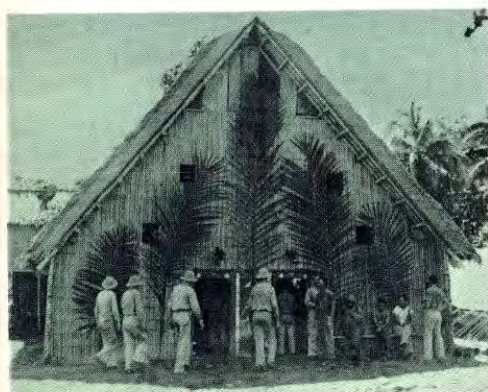
Tinian Airfield



Slow going



Surrender





Seabee Lawrence Meyer shot down a Japanese plane with a .30 caliber machine gun he had salvaged, repaired, and mounted on the rim of his foxhole

FIRST BLOOD

The Seabees were not yet 6 months old when they came under fire the first time. At Guadalcanal they followed the Marines ashore in what became known as "the battle the United States must win." They helped hold a narrow beachhead against nearly overwhelming attacks. At the same time they converted a muddy Japanese airstrip into Henderson Field, a major all-weather airfield capable of supporting a Piper Cub or a B-17 bomber.

The construction job was difficult enough. Complicating it were bombs and shells that ripped holes in the field day and night. Seabee "crater crews" filled these holes almost as fast as they were made. The Seabees stockpiled Marston matting (pierced steel planking used as airfield surfacing) beside the runway in bundles sufficient to repair the average hole. They placed trucks loaded with sand and gravel at strategic points. They often worked under heavy fire. Forty minutes after a bomb or shell exploded, you could hardly tell that the field had been hit.

During the 3-month battle, the Seabees performed wonders in expanding Henderson Field and keeping it going. They continued work even when Japanese troops pushed the Marine line back to within 150 feet of the field. During one attack, the Japanese blasted 53 bomb and shell holes in the airfield during a 48-hour period.

Despite the worst the enemy could do, Seabees kept Henderson Field functioning throughout the bitter campaign. Their success in keeping Marine fighter planes in the air played a large part in U.S. victory at Guadalcanal. The United States won the battle it had to win. Thus began the Seabee "can do" tradition.

A 500-lb. bomb hits Henderson Field



The airfield on a quiet day





BUILDING LITTLE

One of the earliest Seabee traditions to emerge during World War II was the almost legendary ability of a Seabee to improvise.

Early in the Solomons campaign, for example, the 15th Construction Battalion was handicapped by a lack of machine tools. A Seabee warrant officer, who had been a machinery salesman before the war, set out on a trip to New Zealand, where he successfully repurchased equipment from his former customers, and the Seabees soon had a well-equipped machine shop. More equipment was scrounged from the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* in return for repair jobs. Before long the Seabees were taking in repair work from the Army and the Marines, and were even repairing airplanes.

Lacking a replacement for a blown-out bulldozer head gasket, Seabees in the Ellice Islands fashioned a replacement from thin sheets of metal and paper, and quickly put the dozer back into service. A Seabee chief on Samoa manufactured a replacement condenser out of waxed paper, tinfoil from cigarette packages, and an old beer can in order to keep one piece of equipment operating. On Guadalcanal another Seabee petty officer kept captured Japanese trucks in operation by improvising replacement radiators out of metal ammo boxes, a method that was soon being used all over the Pacific. Other Seabees learned how to keep tractors running by mounting fuel drums in place of smashed radiators.

The 55-gallon fuel drum, as a matter of fact, proved to be one of the most useful of Seabee construction materials. With the



Drilling blast holes with a tank gun speeded road building

BUILDING BIG

ends cut out and welded together, thousands of drums were converted into culverts. Split down the side and flattened, they made excellent roofing material. One group of Seabees even manufactured a sightseeing canoe from fuel drums.

Wornout tires that would no longer hold inner tubes were kept in service by filling them with a mixture of palm tree sawdust and cement. Beer and Coke bottles were used as insulators for power and telephone lines. Seabees learned how to make replacement watch crystals out of plastic glass from wrecked planes.

Perhaps the best-known of all stories of Seabee ingenuity, however, is that of a first class petty officer named Aurelio Tassone, who converted a bulldozer into a piece of combat equipment during the Treasury Islands campaign in 1943. Coming ashore on his bulldozer, Tassone found that a Japanese pillbox was holding up the advance. While a Seabee lieutenant provided covering fire with a carbine, Tassone raised his blade as a shield against enemy fire and advanced on the pillbox. At the last minute Tassone dropped the blade and demolished the emplacement.



Aurelio Tassone: bulldozed enemy pillbox



Seabee-built naval air station gets a big customer



ATLANTIC ROAD TO VICTORY

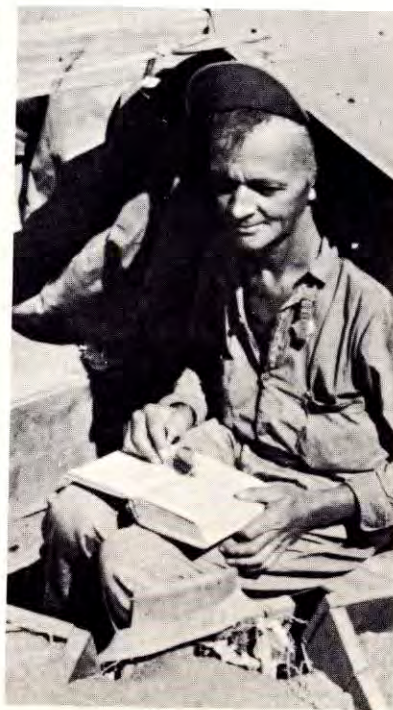
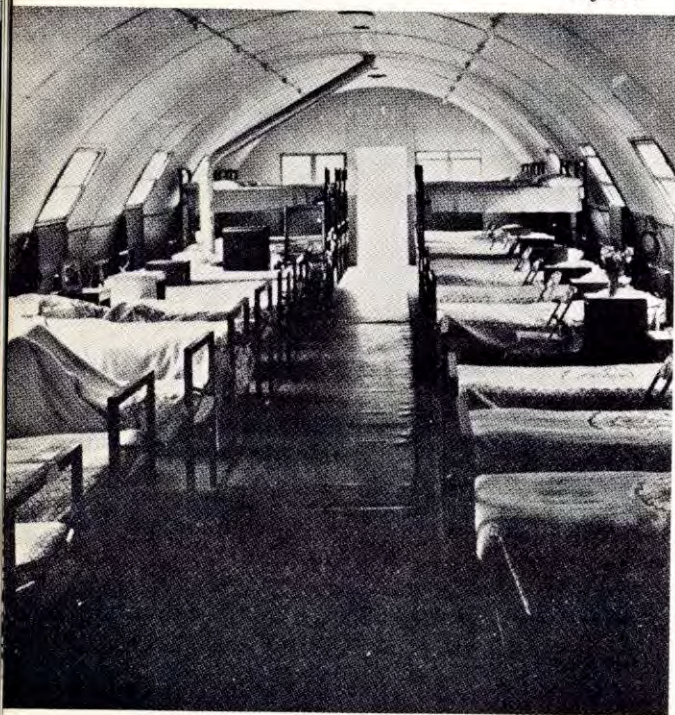
The Atlantic Road to Victory in World War II was two-pronged. The Northern Road led through Seabee-built bases and facilities all the way from Argentia, Newfoundland; to Iceland; Scotland; Northern Ireland; and England; France and Germany.

The Southern Road led through bases and facilities at Bermuda and the Caribbean to Freetown, West Africa; Casablanca, Morocco; Arzew, Algeria; Sicily, Italy; Southern France; and Berlin. In England, alone, Seabees built fifteen amphibious bases, in addition to a variety of other facilities. On the continent they bridged the Rhine and went to the heart of Germany.

In jungle, ice, and desert, the Seabees again—with the Army, Marine, and Aviation Engineers—paved the way.

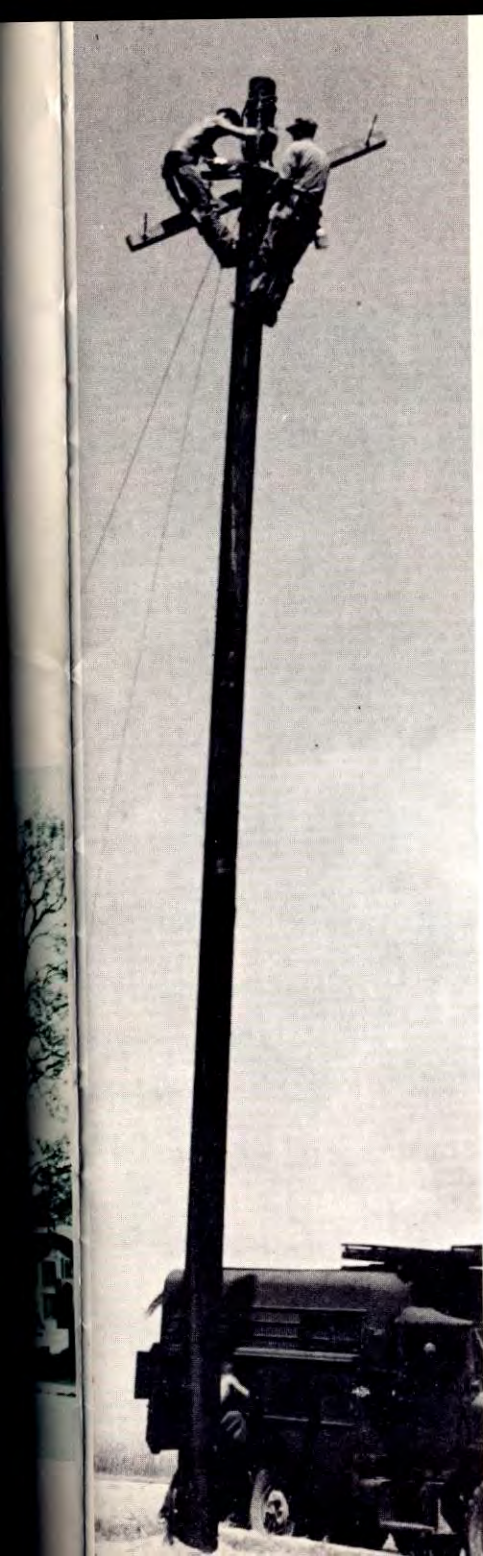
Here, too, the Seabees built for peace as well as for war—witness the Italian and German nations of today.

England



Northern Ireland





Normandy

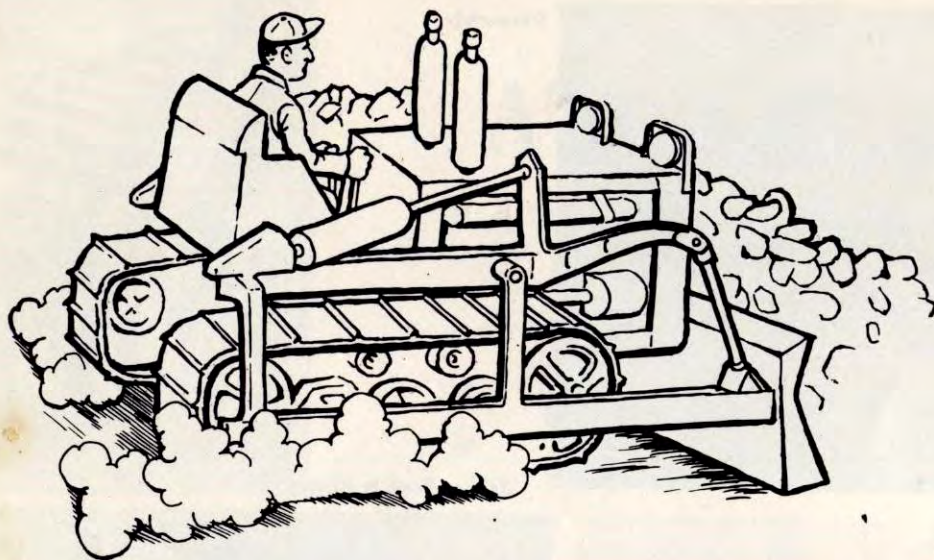


Anzio



Seabee Road to Victory

Seabee High-Wire Artists



The Town Was Grateful

The versatile match of Seabee and bulldozer is an image which will never be forgotten by citizens of a village in southwestern England. When a German airstrike exploded a fuel dump and sent a river of flaming gasoline downhill toward the village, Seabee Philip Bishop quickly bulldozed a dam which stopped the channel of fire and saved the community from destruction. The "bulldozer-fireman" received the British Empire Medal (Military) and the enduring gratitude of an English village.

Actions like Bishop's added a new dimension to the Seabees' role in wartime.



Mademoiselle Seabee

The allied landing in Normandy in 1944 produced some strange happenings, perhaps none stranger than what occurred in the village of St. Marie du Mont. Richard D. Anderson, a Seabee doctor, accompanied the building-fighting Seabees into the village.

In the midst of a battle with German defenders, a highly disturbed Frenchman rushed up to the doctor. He made the doctor understand that his wife was having a baby and needed help immediately. The doctor obliged. The child, a girl, was born amidst shot and shell, destruction, death—and liberation.

Out of gratitude the parents named her Seabee.

Somewhere in France today there is perhaps a Mademoiselle Seabee Paule Fouchard, 23 years old.

Normandy: first Seabee camp

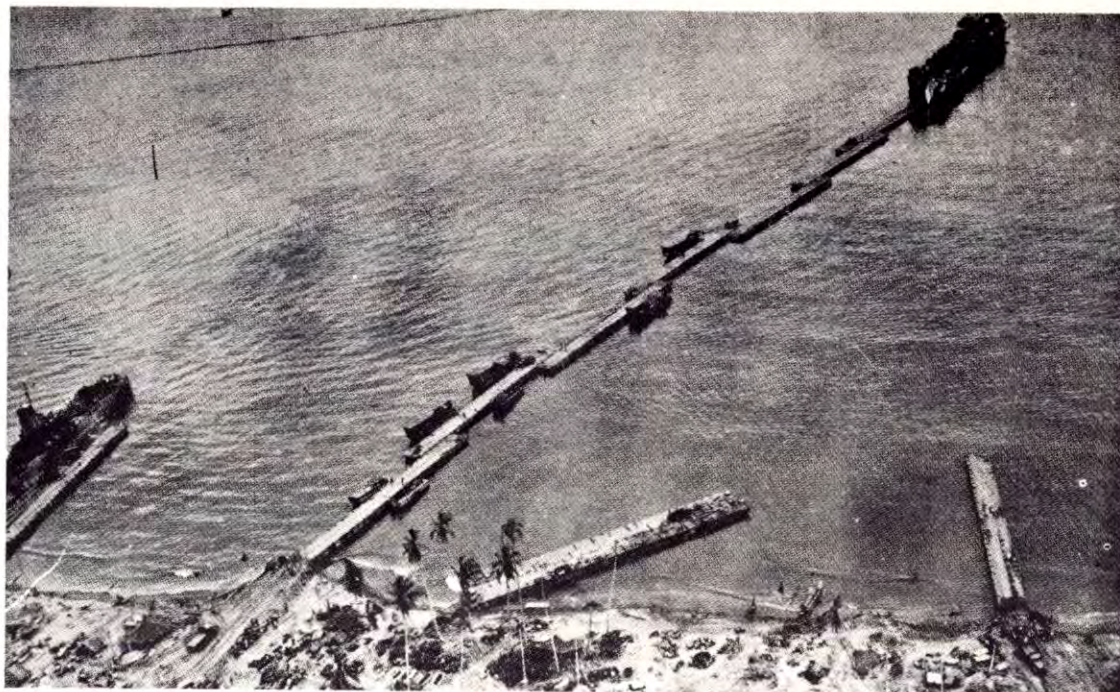


Normandy: Seabees on the beach

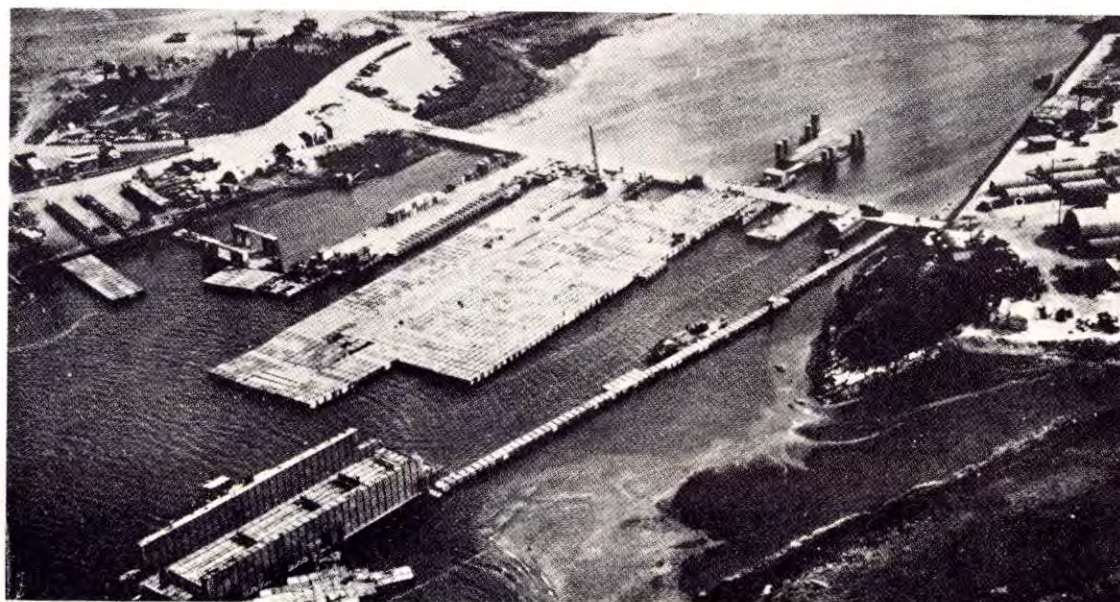


Germany: Seabees operated boat ferries during Rhine crossing

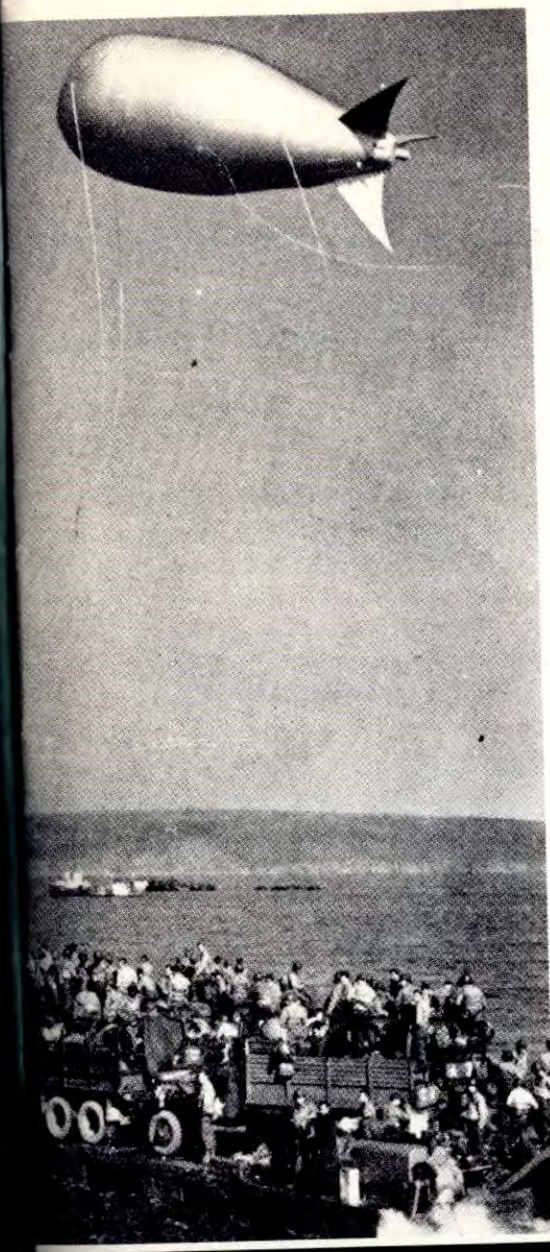
*Seven-league boots:
seven-section causeway at Leyte, P.I.*



Hitting the beach, Marshall Islands



At the pontoon experimental area, Davisville, Rhode Island, Seabees built a variety of experimental pontoon structures, including a floating airfield



"Rhino" ferry, Normandy

Ship to Shore

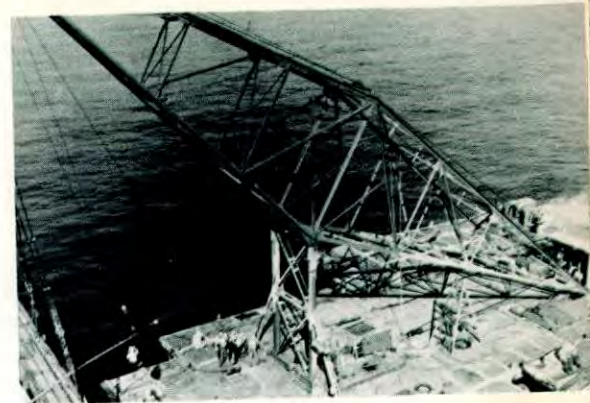
• • • • Symbolizing their building and fighting prowess were the ship-to-shore pontoon causeways which enabled the United States and her allies to put men and equipment ashore in landings considered impossible in any previous war.

Seabees not only assembled the causeways, often under blistering fire, but literally rode them to the beaches.

The causeways were composed of individual pontoons (each a steel box 5 x 5 x 7 feet) assembled in sections. The sections were usually two pontoons wide and 175 feet long. One section was carried on each side of a landing ship and launched into the water at the proper time. There the sections were assembled by Seabees from the mother ship to form a causeway from ship to shore.

Pontoons became known as "magic boxes" because of their versatility. They could be combined to make piers, barges, and even floating drydocks. They could be powered to become launches or ferries. They could be fitted with cranes, piledrivers, and dredgers and become waterfront workhorses, creating harbors and ports where wilderness had existed a few hours before.

With the Sperry bombsight and radar, the Navy pontoons of World War II have been called the key technical device leading to victory.



Pontoon barge with crane



Steaming toward Iwo: pontoon barges lashed alongside



U.S.S.R.—Seabees build a weather station, Petropavlovsk



On Russian soil—Seabees and Russians work side by side

Seabees in Russia

Seabees are ready to build anything, anytime, anywhere. Thus it came as no surprise to the Seabees stationed on Attu in the Aleutian Islands in 1945 when they were ordered to Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula to build a Fleet Weather Central to be operated by the U.S. Navy.

It was perhaps the only occasion when Americans were invited to build something on Russian soil.

Work on preliminary plans was begun immediately and within 7 days 20 Seabees were aboard ship with supplies and equipment bound for the southern end of Kamchatka Peninsula.

The site chosen for the weather station was near the city of Petropavlovsk.

It was in rolling, wooded country within view of the active volcano, Keryakchaya.

The weather central itself consisted of six standard-size Quonset huts attached to a central wood structure. The arrangement permitted centralization of utilities and complete access to all facilities without the necessity of going outdoors. It included quarters for the 9 officers and 24 U.S. Navy enlisted men who were to operate the station.

The project was completed in eighteen 10½-hour working days, the Seabees being assisted by the weather station personnel and Russian Army laborers.

In addition to the housing, the Seabees cleared the site and leveled it, erected radio masts, and installed utility and weather equipment. On October 6, 1945, the project was completed and the Seabees returned to Attu.

Airfield construction, Tsingtao

Seabees in China

When the shooting stopped in World War II, Seabees were sent to occupy territory formerly occupied by the Japanese on China's east coast. They performed a variety of missions. Most important of these was the establishment of ports and airfields from which Japanese troops could be evacuated and through which supplies and personnel could reach China, then nearly prostrate after many years of war and enemy occupation.

Seabees landed at Tsingtao and deployed up and down the coast to build "Gropacs." Gropac was a code name for a small advance-base harbor. In this case the harbors were used for evacuation of Japanese troops and arrival of much-needed supplies.

At Tsingtao itself, Seabees enlarged and completed construction of a partially built Japanese airfield. Local materials were



Shanghai headquarters



Shanghai harbor

used and many Chinese were employed.

Other Seabees moved north to Tangku and constructed Gropac facilities there. Still others landed at Shanghai and helped open that great port which, like Tsingtao, had been largely closed by war and enemy action. A Gropac facility was established at the Naval Operating Base, Shanghai, and at the Shanghai wharf. Here as at Tangku and elsewhere Seabees handled the food and supplies that helped China survive during this critical period.

Seabee Gropac harbors and facilities were the only organized and undamaged ports operating to serve China for many months after the war.



Pop Niday

Seabee at South Pole



An original cast



'SOUTH

James Michener's Pulitzer Prize winning *Tales of the South Pacific*—and the stage show and motion picture based on the book—endured Navy Seabees to a worldwide audience.

But actual experiences of Seabees were as fabulous as those recorded in song and story.

When Seabee Commander Bradford Bowker led a party of four Seabees ashore at Guiuan in the Philippines, he was mistaken for General MacArthur. His appearance set off a celebration in which thousands joined.

One wet morning, Seabee Raymond Armstrong lifted the tarpaulin off the engine of his crane. A Japanese soldier ran out. Armstrong picked up a handful of rocks and ran after the Japanese. When a rock sailed past his head, the fugitive halted and surrendered.

When a Japanese threw a grenade and hit him on the chest during the landing at Saipan, H. D. (Pop) Niday, a veteran of two world wars and four Pacific landings, picked up the grenade and threw it in the water. Then he grabbed the first available weapon, a sword that had belonged to a Japanese officer on Guadalcanal, and cut off his attacker's head.

Seabees question the statement that judo is a Japanese specialty. How do you account for the fact, they say, that the Japanese hired future Seabee Roy H. Moore to coach their 1932 Olympic Judo Teams?

Seabee Warrant Officer Jim Taylor grew weary of GI grub. On Espiritu Santo he cultivated a 7½-acre plot of native vegetables and tropical fruits. Stoop labor was strictly GI. When his unit moved to New Guinea and elsewhere, Taylor continued his operations and became known as the Seabee Gardener of the Pacific.

PACIFIC'

When a Japanese human-wave attack threatened to engulf Seabee defenses at Momote Airstrip in the Admiralty Islands, 19-year-old Edward O'Brien singlehandedly killed 16 before receiving a bullet through the heart. Inspired by his valor, the ten-man detachment repulsed the assault and killed 320 of the enemy.

When U.S. Marines stormed ashore on enemy-held New Georgia, a party of Seabees emerged from the jungle where they had been reconnoitering for airfield sites. "The Seabees are always happy to welcome the Marines!" the Seabee lieutenant in charge explained.

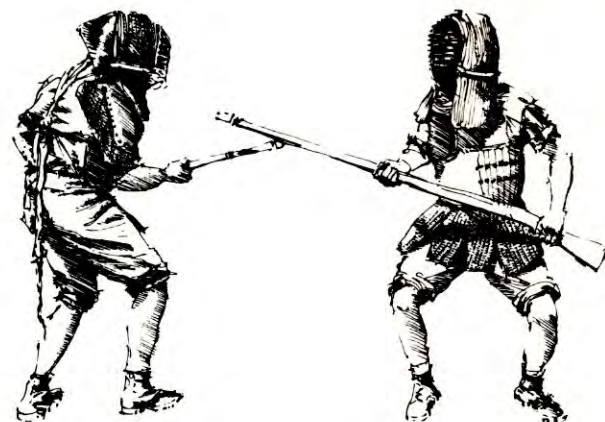
Seabees don't always have opportunity to see their efforts pay off. G. R. James did, however. To express appreciation for Seabee efforts in building the world's largest airfield on Tinian Island, the U.S. Army Air Force took James on a B-29 bombing run over Japan.

Curious to know what an aged Aleut Indian was shouting at him every time he approached the old man's house, John Hunter undertook a study of Russian. He found he was correct in guessing that the old man's dialect was a mixture of Aleut and Russian tracing back to days when the Aleutian Islands belonged to the Czars. After weeks of study during his spare time as a working Seabee, Hunter at last discovered what the old man was saying. "Keep away from my daughter, you young scoundrel!"

Like a character out of *South Pacific*, a Seabee lieutenant named John Volpe became governor of Massachusetts. Volpe ran again and again, establishing a new kind of Seabee "can do" legend—once a Seabee, thrice a governor.

Then there was the Seabee musician named George Liberace. In the Pacific, he used to entertain his outfit and its commander, A. C. Husband. Liberace became a popular favorite of the entertainment world, and his commander became admiral of all the Seabees.

Smash hit: Nurse Nellie Forbush (Mary Martin) and Seabee Luther Billis (Myron McCormick).



Ken do, not "Can Do"



1942-1945

TESTIMONY TO THE "CAN DO" SPIRIT



The only trouble with the Seabees is that we don't have enough of them.

Douglas MacArthur

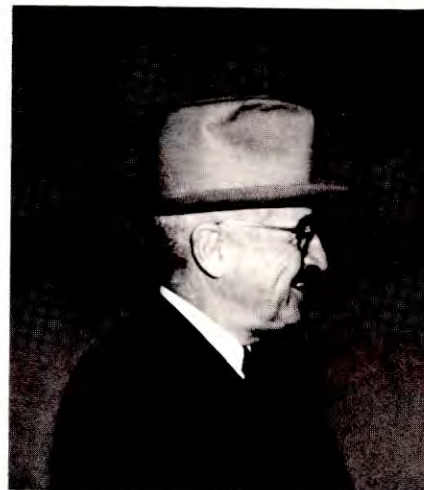
General Douglas MacArthur



Please accept my congratulations on the work of your organization.

Forrestal

James Forrestal
Under Secretary of the Navy



When the final story of the war is written, your splendid Corps will deserve no small credit.

Harry S. Truman

Harry S. Truman
Vice President of the United States



You have come forward more quickly than any branch of the service, and I want you to know that we are all mighty proud of you.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the United States



What seems to me particularly interesting is the work of the Seabees.

Eleanor Roosevelt
Eleanor Roosevelt



The accomplishments of the Seabees have been one of the outstanding features of the war.

Ernest J. King

Admiral Ernest J. King,
Commander in Chief
United States Fleet,
and Chief of Naval Operations



I am not surprised but gratified to note the many evidences of progress.

Frank Knox

Frank Knox
Secretary of the Navy



I do not know how we could have gotten along without the Seabees.

A. A. Vandegrift
General A. A. Vandegrift

U. S. Marine Corps

Southeast Asia



Seabee helpers, Thailand

Haiti



BUILDING FOR PEACE: 1945-1967

Roads to war have led to roads to peace. Here, too, the Seabees have built.



Olympic Games parking lot



Chile



Africa



Seabee Flood-Control in Costa Rica

A Seabee Team in Costa Rica built dikes and dams which ended a long-standing mudflow threat to the city of Cartago. This aspect of the Alliance for Progress Program was praised by the Costa Rican president.

Azores

When a typhoon ravaged a town in the Azores, the United States Government was quick to send aid, including a number of prefabricated housing units to provide shelter for the homeless. A group of Seabees was sent to supervise and lend technical assistance, while the citizens of the Azores did the actual construction.

Alaskan Earthquake

On Good Friday, March 27, 1964, a disastrous earthquake and tidal wave leveled much of the city of Kodiak, Alaska. One day later Seabee volunteers from Port Hueneme, California, were on the scene working at disaster relief. Seabees restored utilities, provided a drydock for the heavily damaged fishing fleet, and did much to restore Kodiak.

Seabees Restore Chilean Wharf

Seabees restored "Molo Chacabuco," the Chilean Navy's main wharf, after earthquakes had rendered it unusable. The Seabee builders simultaneously taught their trades to Chilean construction workers.

Seabee School in Santo Domingo

In 1963, the old Santo Domingo fairgrounds buildings were the site of a technical school built and staffed by a Seabee Team. Spanish-speaking Seabees installed diesel equipment and electrical systems and instructed Dominicans in their use. When the Dominican political crisis arose in 1965, the Seabees helped evacuate U.S. civilians and maintain order. Later they were joined by other Seabees who participated fully in the U.S. peace-keeping mission.

"Road of the Sixth Fleet"

The U.S. Sixth Fleet was honored recently by the Greek populations of Iklaini and Sgrapa who named the road between the two towns "O Estos Americano Stolos," or Road of the Sixth Fleet. The road had been built by a detachment of Seabees. After completing the road, they built a soccer field for each village.

Help for Haiti

In Port-au-Prince, Republic of Haiti, a Seabee Team restored the collapsing municipal pier to economic life. The pier was vital to Haiti's sugar export and national economy. Reinforced concrete pilings of 65-foot average length, new decking and a fender system constituted the Seabees' good-neighbor touch to the 2,000-foot structure.



Antarctic airfield



THE KOREAN WAR

At the end of World War II, the rapid demobilization of the Seabees followed the same pattern . . . "as that of" . . . the other Armed Forces. By June 1946, only 20,000 men remained on active duty.

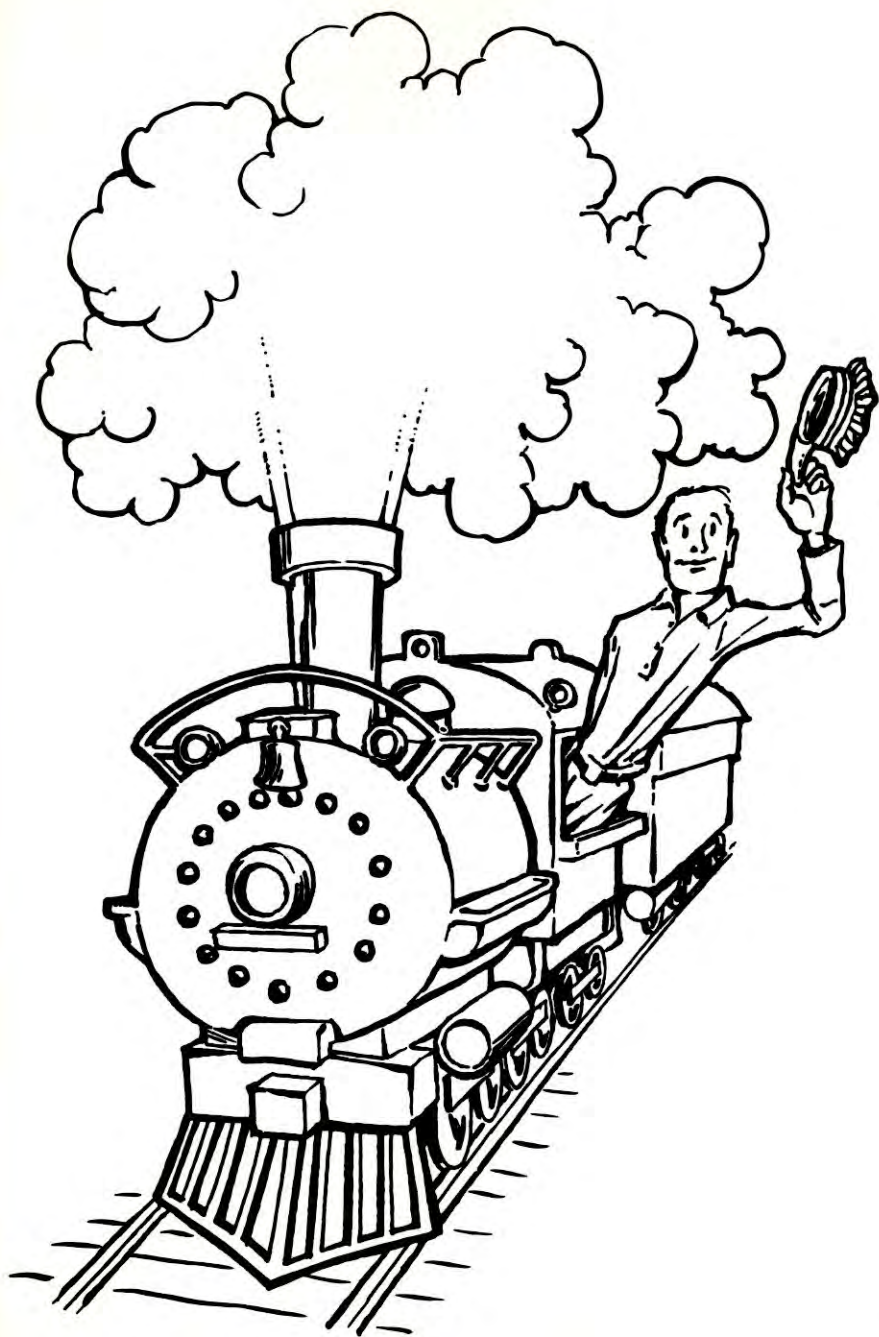
Just before the beginning of the Korean War in June 1950, the number in active status had dwindled to 3,300. With the declaration of the emergency, the active duty force was increased to over 14,000. This rapid expansion was possible because of the existence of the Seabee Reserve Organization.

In Korea, the Seabees rose to the challenge of the cold war in the tradition of their "Can Do" predecessors. At the Inchon landing in September, 1950, Seabees positioned pontoon causeways within hours of the first beach assault and did it while under continuous enemy fire and in the face of strong tides with enormous reach.

During the heavy fighting for Inchon and the approaches to Seoul, the First Marine Division was pushing inland when a locomotive steamed toward them from enemy territory, approaching on tracks miraculously left intact following a heavy mortar and artillery duel. The Marines, expecting North Korean troops, aimed their rifles and bazookas. Then they were surprised to see green fatigue uniforms of a strictly GI cut on the train's occupants, and at first mistook them for members of an enterprising U.S. Army unit. A veteran Marine sergeant, who had seen action in World



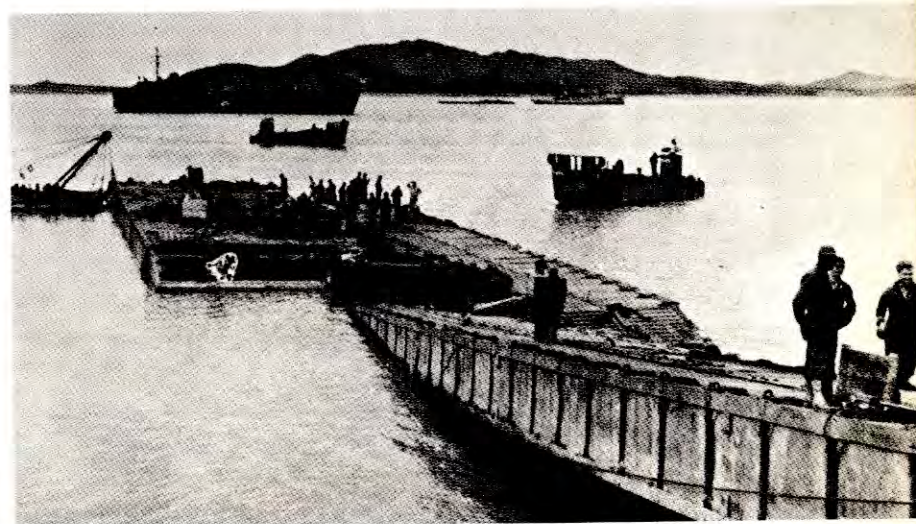
Inchon



War II, corrected that erroneous view as the locomotive drew near: "It's just them damn Seabees—at it again." Ten Seabee volunteers had liberated the locomotive from a point several miles behind enemy lines and were returning—in style—from their successful mission.

Seabees also participated in the landing at Wonsan and remained in Korea during the ensuing campaign to build airfields and other facilities.

The rapid demobilization that followed World War II was not repeated after the signing of the Korean Armistice on July 27, 1953. Commitments for Seabee operations were maintained at a high level.



Wolmi Do



THE NAVY'S

In many foreign countries, the Navy has a secret weapon at work: the goodwill generated by Seabee Teams. In cooperation with local residents, Seabee Teams build water systems, roads, dams, hospitals, orphanages, schools, sanitation facilities, and other community projects. All work provides on-the-job training to local people, exposing them to U.S. equipment, methods, and construction know-how, as well as to American values and attitudes. Teams have worked in Haiti, Santo Domingo, Liberia, the Republic of Chad, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Chile, Costa Rica, Thailand, South Vietnam, and other countries.

A team usually consists of one officer, 11 construction workers, and a hospital corpsman. The 13 members are selected for ability, maturity, self-reliance. Before taking the field, they study the country to which they are going, its geography, history, politics, economics, and religion and become acquainted with its language and customs. They also receive training in special skills such as construction mechanics or equipment operations.

Each team is outfitted with construction equipment, medical supplies, and other necessities. Included are a bulldozer, grader, front-end loader, and dump truck, all air transportable.

An important aspect of the work of Seabee Teams is medical assistance. This is directed by the hospital corpsman. Other team members often assist him. They may treat as many as a hundred patients a day. Besides treating disease and doing dental work, Seabees give instruction in sanitation procedures and public health.

Navy Seabee Teams put something into a country. They help develop human as well as material resources. They are ambassadors for peace at grassroots level.

In more than a dozen countries on four continents, Seabee Teams have helped make life better

PEACE CORPS



Dominican Republic

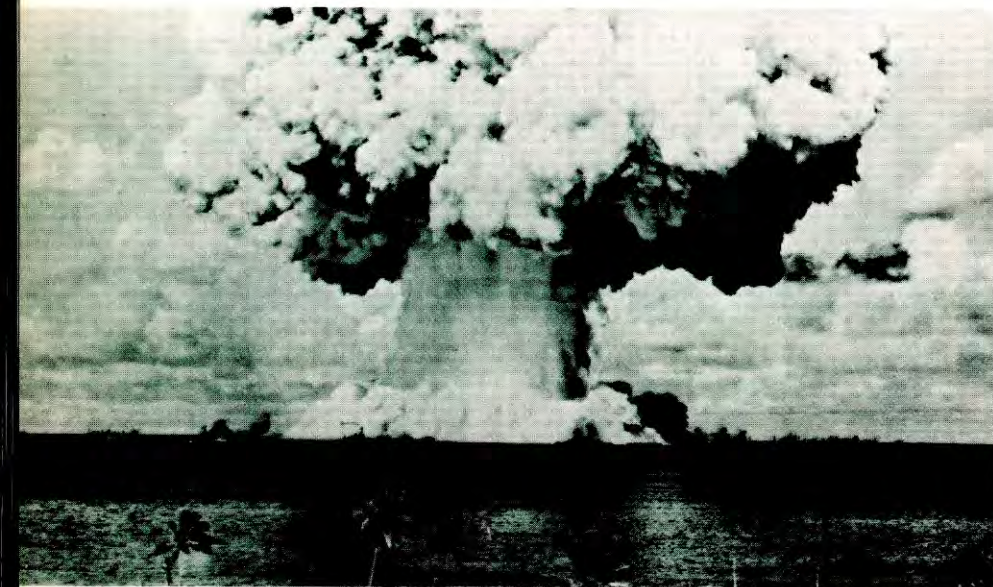
Thailand



At McMurdo Station, Antarctica, Seabees have erected the first nuclear power plant and first salt-water conversion plant on the Antarctic continent



Training for underwater construction



Seabees participated in the original A-bomb tests at Bikini and in many subsequent nuclear tests

Far-Out Assignments

Seabees at Home

Just before the outbreak of the Korean War, a basic reorganization of Seabee battalions was in progress. During the war, the reorganization was substantially completed. Two distinct types of battalions were established to gain specialization and mobility. The Amphibious Construction Battalions are landing and docking units, and have the mission of placing causeways, constructing pontoon docks, and performing other functions necessary for landing personnel and equipment in the shortest possible time. The Mobile Construction Battalions are responsible for land construction of a wide variety which includes military camps, roads, bridges, tank farms, airstrips, and docking facilities.

Amphibious Construction Battalions are based at Coronado, California, as part of the Pacific Fleet, and at Little Creek, Virginia, as part of the Atlantic Fleet.

The home ports of Atlantic Fleet Mobile Construction Battalions are Davisville, Rhode Island, and Gulfport, Mississippi; and the home port of the Pacific Fleet Mobile Construction Battalions is Port Hueneme, California.



Davisville



Little Creek



Coronado

Port Hueneme



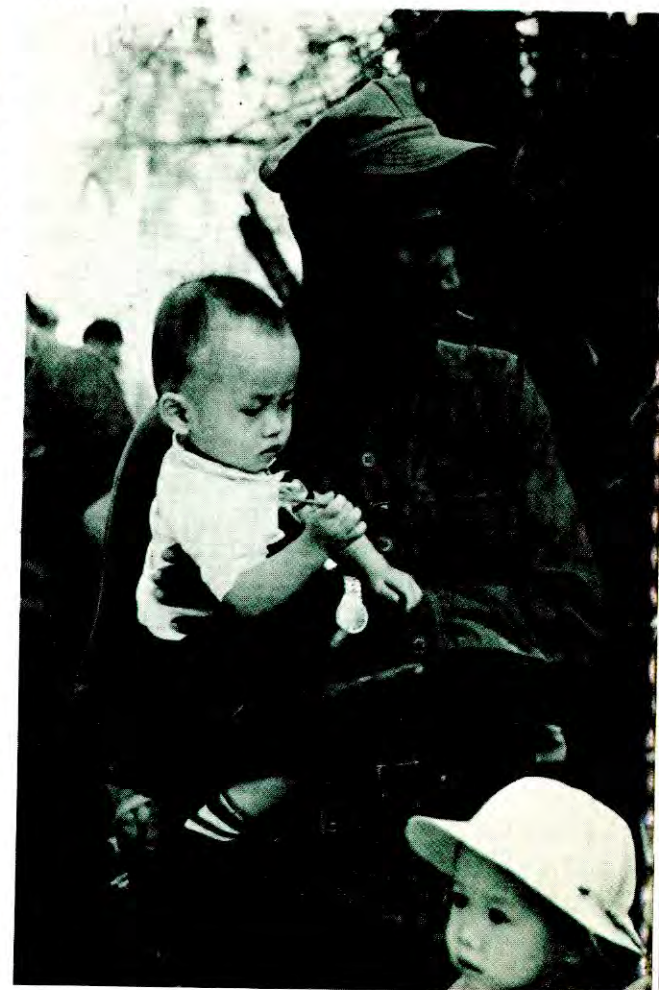


1967: Seabees are bridging important gaps

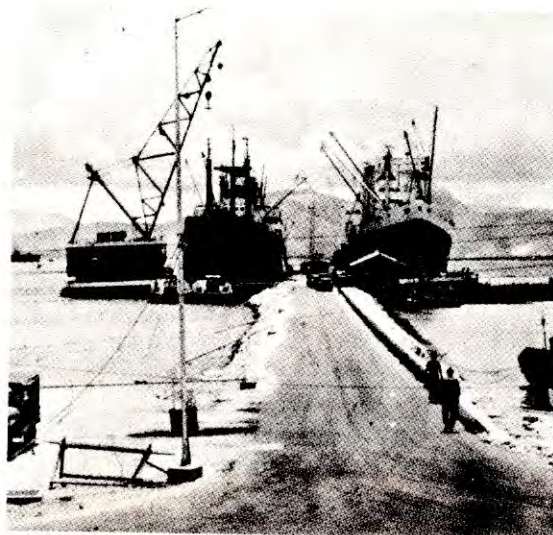
Hit by mortars



On patrol



Each Seabee battalion "adopts" an orphanage



Da Nang pier relieved supply bottleneck

Ready Willing and Able!



VIETNAM:

In South Vietnam, Seabees are establishing a new reputation as builders and fighters. From Hue and Phu Bai in the north to the Delta Region in the south, they are creating the structures necessary to support the allied commitment, while at the same time fighting side by side with U.S. Marines, Army troops, and the forces of United States allies.

Rain, heat, leeches, dawn-to-dark effort, often feature their daily life.

At Phu Bai, Seabees are building warehouses, cantonments, and supply depots. At Chu Lai, they are completing an 8,000-foot aluminum plank runway for Marine air squadrons, as well as a warehouse complex, camp facilities, petroleum lines, communications, and roads.

At Da Nang and East Da Nang, Seabees have completed a 400-bed hospital, an Army cantonment, a warehouse complex, and storage and equipment parking areas, and have alleviated a critical ship tie-up in Da Nang Harbor by rapidly constructing a new 300-foot pier.

Every Seabee unit in South Vietnam has adopted at least one orphanage. These orphanages are being repaired, rebuilt, and . . . "modernized by the U.S. Seabees, and the orphaned children are finding 'foster fathers' among the Seabees." Seabees do their best in many ways to aid the civilian population, young and old.

In combat at Dong Xoai, East Da Nang and elsewhere, Seabees have distinguished themselves. They have been decorated for gallantry in action and for repelling key enemy attacks. Some have given their blood and their lives for their country and for freedom.

Building and fighting, today's Seabees are establishing a new chapter in a great tradition.

1954: first Seabees land in South Vietnam to help evacuate refugees from the north



Seabee doctor holds sick call at Nam-O



Seabees build "instant pier"



THE SEABEES AND YOU



You want to do your part. You can do YOUR part - as a Seabee

The 205 Reserve Seabee Divisions of the Naval Reserve Construction Forces Program supplement the active duty force, and will form Mobile Construction Battalions and regimental staffs. These divisions are located at Naval Reserve Training Centers throughout the United States. The 18 Reserve Mobile Construction Battalions are composed of divisions which train together annually as a unit so that members of these divisions can readily identify themselves with a specific unit.

You can fill one of the Seabee billets that make up our Mobile Construction Battalions. There are seven different Seabee ratings which cover the entire construction industry *Where does your interest and ability lie?* The pages immediately following will help make this clear to you.

There is a place for you in the Seabee Reserve

SEABEE training develops experts in all construction trades

Reserve CB training encompasses the construction trades with its seven ratings:

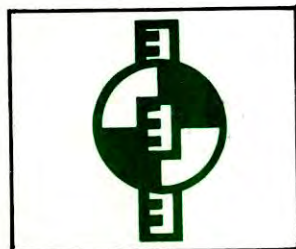
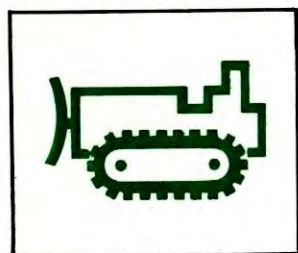
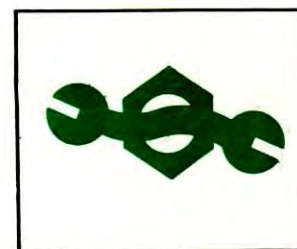
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- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Steelworker | • Engineering Aide | • Equipment Operator | • Construction Electrician |
| • Builder | • Utilitiesman | • Construction Mechanic | |
-

The major function of the Seabee Reserve is to train its members, regardless of race, creed, or national origin, to use their civilian skills or service-taught trades wherever the Navy operates. Naval Reserve Seabees are trained for one specific purpose—to step from civilian life into the Navy's construction forces in time of emergency and fill the officer and enlisted jobs required of an expanded construction team.

The Reserve Seabee must be kept up to date in

every phase of Navy activity. The Reserve Construction Forces Program does this by having the divisions train a minimum of 48 drills, or equivalent, each year, and by training as part of a battalion-size force once each year. Under this Unit Battalion training concept, you train together for two weeks each year to develop not only your individual skills and military proficiency, but also your ability to function as part of a team.

But let's look now at the ratings themselves and see what suits you best.



Steelworkers



Steelworkers rig all the special equipment used to move or hoist structural steel, structural shapes, and similar materials. Steelworkers erect or dismantle steel bridges, buildings, tanks, docks, and other structures. They place, fit, weld, cut, bolt, and rivet steel shapes, plates, and built-up sections used in the construction of advanced-base facilities. They rig cable assemblies used in heavy construction equipment including power shovels, bulldozers, carryalls, and cranes. They splice ropes and steel cables, and fabricate cargo nets and slings. Physical strength, stamina, and the ability and willingness to work aloft are essential qualities for this occupation. Average, or above, ability to use numbers in practical problems and aptitude for work of a mechanical nature are necessary. School courses in sheet metal, machine shop, and foundry are desirable. Construction experience is an asset.

Builders construct, maintain, and repair all types of wooden and concrete structures. In addition, they perform such functions as shoring, underpinning, pile driving, and capping. They operate sawmills, carpenter and cabinetmaking shops; they mix and place concrete in all types of structures, including underwater installation. Builders should be average, or above, in general learning ability and should possess a high degree of mechanical aptitude. School courses in carpentry and shop mathematics are desirable. Experience with hand and power tools used in construction and experience in the building trades are of value. Builders are assigned to naval activities ashore. They work primarily in construction and maintenance units overseas. In the United States, they are assigned to primary or advanced construction centers, amphibious bases, or other naval activities which have particular need for Builders.



Builders



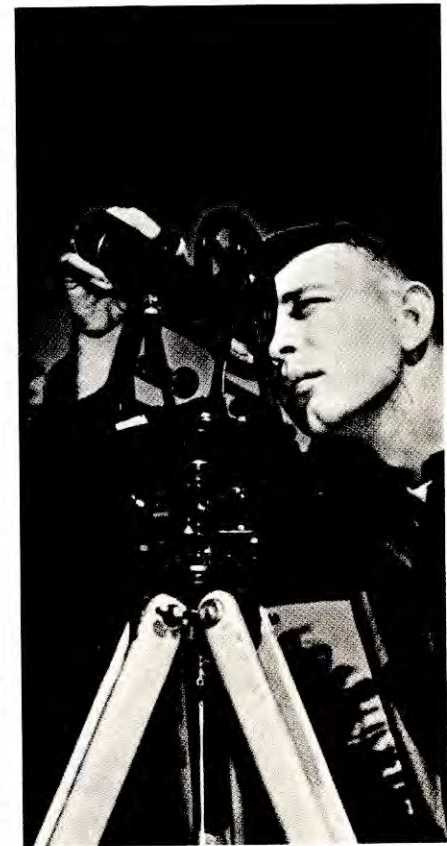


Utilities Men

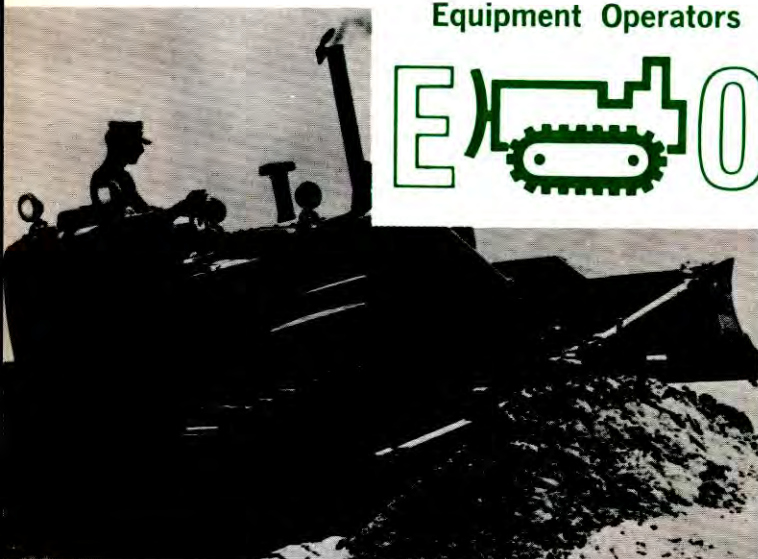
Utilities Men maintain and repair boilers, evaporators, and related equipment for the distillation and purification of water. They maintain and repair furnace brickwork, fuel pumps, condensers, and install the plumbing and pipefitting work required in the maintenance of this equipment. They operate, service, and maintain the heavy machinery used to power Navy utilities stations, make chemical tests to determine the safeness of water, and maintain and operate water supply and sewage disposal plants or installations. Utilities Men should be average or above in general learning ability and possess a high degree of mechanical aptitude. School or apprentice training in plumbing and other related technical fields, as well as mathematics, is helpful. Experience in stationary steam or in diesel engineering, in water supply, or sanitary engineering is valuable.



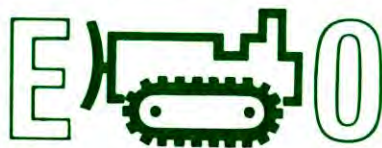
Engineering Aides make reconnaissance, preliminary, and final location surveys for roads, airfields, pipelines, ditches, buildings, drainage structures, and waterfront construction. They adjust, clean, and maintain levels, transits, alidades, and other equipment. They make topographic and triangulation surveys, maps, and profiles, and test materials. They compute the amount of material to be moved in cuts and fills. They lay out all types of construction work. Engineering Aides should be well-grounded in mathematics and be above average in general learning ability. The ability to visualize, and a predisposition to do accurate, detailed work are important. School courses in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, mechanical drawing, and drafting are helpful. Experience in highway construction is a great advantage.



Engineering Aides



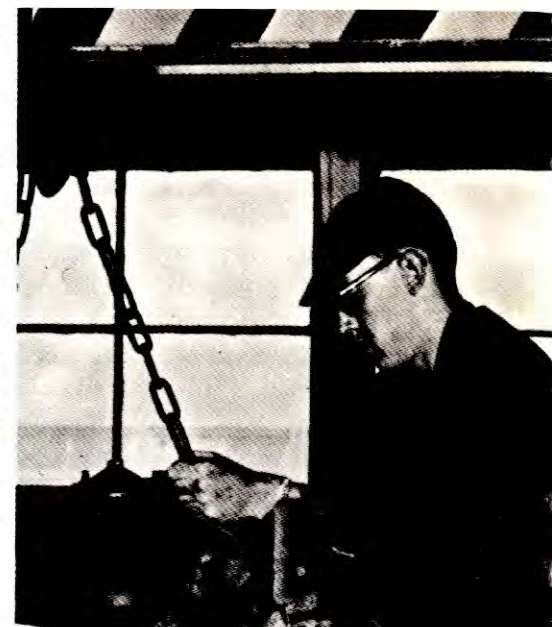
Equipment Operators



Equipment Operators dispatch, operate, fieldcheck, and service automotive and heavy construction equipment such as buses, trucks, tractors, shovels, cranes, scrapers, piledrivers, ditchers, rollers, and graders. They rig cable assemblies and change attachments (blades, dippersticks, backhoes, clamshell buckets, winches, and hoists) to adapt construction equipment to various types of operations such as heavy digging, scraping, pushing, pulling, lifting, or pounding. Equipment Operators should have average or above physical strength, normal color perception, and average or above general learning ability. In addition, they should have aptitude for things mechanical and should enjoy working on large construction projects. School courses in auto or electrical shop are helpful as is experience in construction work and automotive repair.

Construction Mechanics maintain, lubricate, repair, and overhaul automotive and heavy construction equipment and diesel and gasoline internal combustion engines to insure efficient mechanical operation. They operate the various types of garage equipment for moving and testing automotive machinery. Construction Mechanics should be average, or above, in learning ability and mechanical aptitude. School courses in electrical shop, machine shop,

shop mathematics, and physics are helpful. Previous work as a machinist, millwright, or auto mechanic is advantageous. Construction Mechanics are assigned to naval activities ashore. Overseas, Construction Mechanics work primarily in construction and maintenance units. Stateside, they are assigned to primary or advanced construction schools, the Naval Construction Center, amphibious, or other naval activities.



Construction Mechanics





Construction Electricians install, operate, maintain, and repair electrical generating equipment, distribution systems, transformers, switchboards, distribution panels, motors, inside wiring, and lighting fixtures. They erect and maintain power and communication lines, and install, operate, maintain, and repair communication equipment. Construction Electricians should be average, or above in general learning ability and should possess an interest and aptitude for work of a mechanical and electrical nature. School courses in electricity, shop mathematics, and physics are helpful. Experience as electric power or telephone lineman is valuable as is general experience in the construction trades. Construction Electricians are assigned primarily to advanced bases where they serve in Construction Battalions.

A PLACE FOR YOU IN SEABEE "GREENS"

Depending upon your level of experience, you may be eligible for a direct rate into one of the seven Seabee ratings. In a Reserve Seabee Division, skilled craftsmen and construction supervisors can fill a vital link in the chain of mobilization readiness:

First—by filling an existing need for your particular skill;

Second—by assisting in the training of younger men.

If you are inexperienced, but have a strong desire to make your living in the construction industry, the Reserve Seabees will start you off on the right foot. In the Seabees there's no such thing as a "related civilian occupation," because *your work in a Seabee rating is exactly the same as your chosen civilian occupation. The only difference is you're wearing Seabee Greens while learning your job.*

You can become a part of this Seabee tradition while maintaining your civilian job by becoming a member of a Reserve Construction Battalion division. At the start of World War II, we had time on our side. In today's nuclear world, we may not have that time.

It all boils down to one point: The Reserve Seabees need you. They need your skills, your knowledge, and your determination to be ready to defend your home and your ideals.



Special Training for Best Qualified

Navy technicians work hard and long for their technical ratings. They attend trade schools and spend a period of time in each rate and are required to pass examinations before they are promoted. If you have comparable experience in certain trades, and previous military service, you can join the Seabee Reserve with a Petty Officer rate.

If you enter the Seabee Reserve without receiving a direct rate you may subsequently qualify for one of the Seabee's service

schools where you will gain a more thorough knowledge of your chosen field. These schools are located on both the East and West Coast: the U.S. Naval Schools Construction, Port Hueneme, California, for the West, and Navscon at Davisville, Rhode Island, for the East. Of course if you are already experienced and enter the Seabees with a petty officer rating, you are eligible for advanced schooling so that you may develop additional technical skills.



Train Together

Unlike most Naval Reserve Programs, the Seabees *train together* annually. Under the Unit Battalion training concept, you train together for two weeks each year to develop not only your individual skills and military proficiency, but your ability to function as part of a team. On your annual training duty, you will develop close comradeship with other members of your Battalion. You will get to know your shipmates better by working together on common problems and sharing your liberty hours.



Your unit battalion training will include work in practical aspects of your trade, organizational or team training, disaster recovery operations, and military training.



Leisure Time

Your leisure hours may consist of trying on Japanese pajamas at a Yokosuka gift shop. You may tour the ruins of some ancient fortress. You may watch sampan fishermen. Quite naturally, the life of a Seabee is not all work. Here we see some Seabees at play throughout the world. During your active duty time you too may have the opportunity for world travel.

Active Duty

If you haven't completed your active duty obligation, here's a thumbnail sketch of some of the work that the active Mobile Construction Battalions are doing overseas.

Check These Benefits:

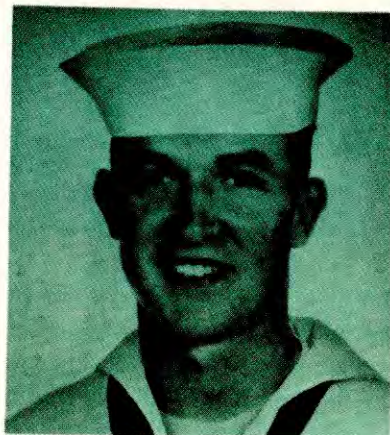
- You can earn advancement to petty officer before going on active duty.
- A Seabee Reserve direct appointment petty officer earns more pay while on active duty than one who starts active duty as a recruit in any other program.
- A Seabee Reserve can complete his 6-year military obligation at an early age with a minimum of time on active duty, and with least interruption to his civilian career.
- A Seabee Reservist "knows the ropes" when he starts his active duty and may advance faster than those with no previous military training.
- A Seabee Reservist knows that if called he will serve his country where he can do the most good . . . in an organization to which he wants to belong—where he has established his place.
- A Reservist can make a gradual transition from civilian to military life before active duty.

Can YOU qualify?

How to find out:

Just call your local Naval Reserve Training Center or the local Navy Recruiting Station and the answers to these questions will be given immediately. You may also send your inquiry to: Director, Reserve Programs, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C. 20390

The Seabee's Devotion



Fifteen minutes before midnight on June 9, 1965, the sounds of incoming mortar and 57-mm recoilless rifle fire rudely awakened the occupants of the Special Forces Camp at Dong Xoai in the Republic of Vietnam. A Viet Cong force of nearly 2,000 had started one of the fiercest battles of the Vietnamese war.

The Dong Xoai Camp was occupied by 9 men of the United States Navy Seabee Team 1104 under the leadership of Lieutenant (jg) Frank A. Peterlin, 11 men of the United States Army Special Forces, and about 400 men of the South Vietnam Defense Forces.

All of the Seabees were wounded in the battle, two died of their wounds, and all were decorated for valor.

No member of Seabee Team 1104 distinguished himself more in the Battle of Dong Xoai than Third Class Petty Officer Marvin G. Shields, a construction mechanic. Despite shrapnel wounds suffered during the initial mortar attack, Shields fought with determination in the west area of the camp and took advantage of lulls in the fighting to distribute ammunition to other defenders.

Early in the morning of June 10, Viet Cong swept over the north ramparts, hurling hand grenades, firing small arms, and using flame throwers. Although now wounded again by a bullet in the face, Shields assisted another man in carrying a more seriously wounded Army Special Forces captain to the District

Headquarters building. Ignoring his many wounds, Shields resumed firing his rifle at the Viet Cong and engaged them for an additional 4 hours in the dark.

When dawn broke, Shields volunteered to assist Special Forces Second Lieutenant Charles Q. Williams in destroying a Viet Cong machine gun emplacement in a nearby schoolhouse. The machine gun was menacing the American defenders in the District Headquarters building. Shields had never used a rocket launcher before, but he and the lieutenant took one and crawled through heavy fire to the threatening Viet Cong position, and knocked out the machine gun and the gunners. While returning from this mission, Shields was struck by machine gun fire and mortally wounded. He was able to continue crawling back toward the District Headquarters building but could not quite reach it. A Seabee and two Rangers of the Army Special Forces risked their lives to rescue him. While the battle raged, he sat propped up in a corner of the room for several hours and bolstered the spirits of his comrades with jokes and stories.

Later in the day Shields was placed in a rescuing helicopter for removal to a hospital, but during the flight he died from his wounds.

For his heroic conduct in the Battle of Dong Xoai, Marvin G. Shields was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, America's highest decoration for valor in combat. This Medal of Honor was the first ever awarded to a Seabee and the first awarded to a United States Navy man in the Vietnam war.

In presenting the medal to Shields' widow, Joan, in the Nation's Capital on September 13, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson pointed out that Shields and his conduct exemplified the spirit of the Seabees. The President said that Shields was typical of "a new kind of fighting man, forged and tempered in a new kind of war . . . men fighting with one hand and building with the other."

Shields also was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, the Vietnam Merit Medal, and the Berlin Freedom Bell. The Berlin medal is sponsored by newspapers in West Berlin to honor military personnel who have given their lives in the cause of freedom in Vietnam. In the autumn of 1965, a Seabee camp at Chu Lai in the Republic of Vietnam was named Camp Shields in honor of the hero.



The U.S. Marine Corps Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, overlooking the nation's capital, started with a small prototype made by Felix de Weldon. On his own initiative, Felix de Weldon used as his inspiration a newspaper reprint of Joe Rosenthal's memorable photograph of the raising of the American flag on Mount Suribachi. Next, he made a life-size replica to help a 1945-1946 War Bond drive.

Seeing this replica, a group of impressed Marine Corps officers organized the Marine Memorial Foundation Board. The board then commissioned de Weldon to execute the massive monument which was dedicated adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery on November 10, 1954.

It was perhaps fitting and proper that Felix de Weldon, whose work commemorates so much of the essence of the struggle for freedom, should himself have had experience with dictatorship. He came to the United States from Europe in 1937. He had already produced distinguished sculpture and painting and exhibited it in Vienna, Paris, Cairo, London, and elsewhere.

From conception to completion, the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, or the "Iwo Jima Monument" as it is often called, took nine years. It rises massively across the Potomac from the National Capital as a reminder that freedom is not easily won, is worth the highest sacrifice, is contributed to by many. It expresses the will of men to serve their nation and the will of that nation to express its gratitude.

The Nation's Gratitude



For Seabees, Felix de Weldon's monument has special significance, not only because Seabees served on Iwo Jima—and side by side with Marines, Army, and Air Force men in hundreds of dangerous actions—but because de Weldon himself was once a Seabee.



**1967 SEABEE/CEC ANNIVERSARY MEDALLION, U. S. MINT,
DESIGNED BY FELIX DE WELDON**

Reviewed and Approved
1 June 1967

Jesse Wood, Jr.
CAPT JESSE WOOD, JR., USNR
Director
U. S. Navy Recruiting Aids Division