

NAVY SEABEE
VETERANS OF
AMERICA

24TH BATTALION
AT LARGE



Special points of
interest:

- 2026 Reunion
- 2025 Reunion
Highlights
- 2025 Cruise

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The Island Breeze

January 2026

From The Commander—Jeff Anders

Hello Seabee Family,

As I sit to write to you all, Christmas has passed and the new year has just begun. The past few months have been chaotic and hectic but also fruitful, but God has seen us through it all. This time of year, is when we take the time to slow down and reflect on the past year and all that we have experienced. It is also the time that we enjoy fellowship with our families and friends as we look forward to the new year. I want to extend the invitation on to you, my Seabee family, to remember to enjoy the “Fs” in life; friends, family, fellowship and fun. Our hope is that you will join us in Chattanooga, Tennessee this April at our annual reunion to once again enjoy the “Fs”, as we use this opportunity to reconnect with and refresh one another.

As many of you are already aware, I have officially assumed the responsibilities of Commander of Island X-24. I had the baton pass to me from a long line of commanders who were much more worthy of this honor than I, but here I am. My wife Peggy and I joined this family for the first time in Franklin, Tennessee all the way back in 2014. Since that time, we have had the honor of serving this group as Chaplain, hospitality room workers, craft

project leaders, and finally in various planning and leadership roles. As we begin the new year, my wish is for you to not only attend the reunion, but to also actively play a part in growing our little family and helping to ensure that we will continue to flourish into the future. As much as we do and plan, it has been shown that groups only grow and prosper due to the relationships formed by those involved. As many of you are already very much aware, Peggy and I, along with a vast and invaluable host of others, have invested a lot of time and effort into making not only this one, but all the past reunions fun and memorable. We do this for several reasons, of which here are just a few: we love you; we hate the time separated from you, we enjoy the precious time we have been given to spend with you. Every one of these moments of reconnection, reflection, laughter and joy are what makes all of the hard work, time invested and effort given not only worth it, but it also refuels us to do it all over again. We became keenly aware years ago that if we were going to do this, helping to plan and do the reunions, we would be investing not just our time and efforts but also our



Jeff and Peggy

hearts. Words cannot truly express what each and every one of you means to us and how you all have touched and helped to shape our hearts and lives. And that my friends, is why we do what we do!

I hope this wonderful holiday season has been filled with love and joy. And, as you make your resolutions for this next year, remember to add (and keep) the 2026 Island-X24 reunion to your list. The official dates are set for April 30th – May 3rd in Chattanooga, TN. The full reunion information packet will be available via your email, online and for those who receive it in the mail. I look forward to seeing you all in April, but until then, may your lives be filled with God’s blessings.

Sincerely,
Jeff Anders



David and Pam Yassemedis

We are “more than conquerors through him who loved us” .



Sea Cadet Color Guard

The Chaplains Corner—David Yassemedis

Christ's Ultimate Power Over Death

As we begin a new year together as past or present shipmates, family members or friends, we all are aware of the finality of life on earth and how short our time here is. We all cherish the occasions we have gotten together at previous reunions, sharing stories together and catching up with things that have happened since we last saw each other. Since our last newsletter in 2023, our battalion has lost at least 6 service members that have passed on to the next life.

I believe that Jesus Christ has conquered death and that means that believers have also been granted victory over death. We are “more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). Christ is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20), which means that Jesus’ resurrection is the first of many: believers who have “fallen asleep” (died) will be likewise resurrected. Jesus promised His followers, “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).

Death is the devil’s most powerful, terrifying weapon against us. At the cross,

Christ defeated Satan on behalf of us helpless sinners: “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out” (John 12:31; cf. Colossians 2:15). With the empty tomb, Christ destroyed the devil’s most powerful weapon, death. Satan, our accuser, is now powerless to condemn Christians. We will not share his fate (Revelation 12:9–11; 20:10, 14).

When Christ conquered death for us, He removed the “sting of death,” sin (1 Corinthians 15:56)—that is, we will not be judged by God according to our sins; rather, we will stand before God robed in Christ’s own perfect righteousness. That is why believers in Christ “will not be hurt at all by the second death” (Revelation 2:11), and “the second death has no power over them” (Revelation 20:6). Christ has received our death penalty for sin and, through His death, has conquered death (Revelation 20:14). Believers “are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

What can separate us from the love of God in Christ? “Neither death nor life” (verse 38). Christ has conquered death, and believers stand firm on Jesus’ words: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die” (John 11:25–26, BSB).

My prayer is that you may all know Christ before you pass from this life to the next. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you at this years reunion in Chattanooga. If you can’t make this years reunion, I am still a phone call or an email away, and would be happy to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out to me with any thoughts or concerns you might have about the afterlife and I will try my best, with the Lord’s help of course to help you navigate to the “Cross”. Through Jesus only, may we make it heaven. He HAS conquered death and paved the way for us.

In our Lord’s service,

David Yassemedis

**Island X24 2026 Chaplain
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**Vietnam
Veterans**

By the time you receive this newsletter, we should be well into 2026 and only a few months away from our annual Seabee reunion. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone again, and I'm not the only one; I've already received three registration forms.

Our reunion will be held at the Embassy Suites in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the same location as in 2021. Jeff, Brent, and DB have gone to great lengths to ensure that we all have an enjoyable time. In addition to our banquet on Saturday night, they have made arrangements for us to enjoy another group dining experience on Thursday evening at the Mayor's Mansion Inn, located at 801 Vine Street in Chattanooga. Following the meal, we will board the Southern Belle Riverboat for a relaxing cruise down the Tennessee River to the sounds of a live band.



We took a similar cruise when we were in Chattanooga before, and for me, it was the perfect social outing. The slow cruise down the river felt like time had slowed down, a welcome respite from the hurried activity back at the motel.

According to Jeff, the number of reservations for the cruise is limited to fifty people, so if this sounds like something you would like to do, then you'd better sign up early—I have.

We fill every reunion with as many social activities as we can that allow us to spend quality time with each other, and this year is no different. In addition to the evening meal at the Mayor's Mansion and the river cruise on Friday, Peggy and Jeff will host another craft decorating session that morning around 8:30. For those who are less creative, like me, there will be an excursion to the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum and an opportunity to take a train ride into the countryside. I don't intend to miss that train ride; I'll save you a seat if you want to come along!

That same evening, starting at 7:00, there will be

attention with idle chatter—I might snap at you! Also, don't forget the live auction, the fifty-fifty drawing, and the memorial service on Saturday morning.

The Saturday evening banquet is, as always, the showpiece of the reunion. For those of you who still have your Dress Blues or Dinner Mess Dress uniforms, please wear them; nothing shows your pride and dedication to our nation and your time spent in the Seabees more than standing tall at attention in your uniform, with medals and ribbons thrust forward, as the National Anthem is played and the Color Guard posts the colors. We plan to have a guest speaker and another round of presentations of the Quilts-of-Valor. Oh, lest I forget, we will close the banquet with the entire group singing the Song of the Seabees. Last year, some of you were a little weak and were slightly out of key. Let's do better this year! Start practicing now, and when it comes time to stand up and sing, make sure that the motel guests on the very top floor hear you and are jarred out of bed. By that time, the reunion will be at its end, and it won't even matter if they call down to the front desk to complain. As if that would stop a Seabee from showing his pride!!!

See you at the end of April.



Neal and CJ Beard

"We fill every reunion with as many social activities as we can that allow us to spend quality time with each other, and this year is no different."



You know who

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2026 OFFICERS****Commander**

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**WW2 1942-1945 - 24th U.S.
Naval Construction Battalion****Desert Storm 1990-1991
Reserve Naval Mobile Con-
struction Battalion 24****Operation Iraqi Freedom
2005/2009 - Naval Mobile
Construction Battalion 24****2026 Reunion****Chattanooga TN****April 30-May 3****Details at****www.islandx24.com****In Memory of Those With Whom We Served**

Peter Antone Jr.	1946-2025 (Desert Storm)
Jimmy Arnold	1943-2024 (Vietnam)
George "Danny" Cole	1949-2025 (Desert Storm)

Ephraim Meadows	1957-2023 (Desert Storm)
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Donald Nelson	1937-2026 (Desert Storm)
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Steven Rowlee	1965-2024 (Desert Storm)
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Robert Stroop	1927-2024 (WWII)
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Zollie Ward	1952-2025 (Desert Storm)
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Mark Williams	1948-2025 (Vietnam, Desert Storm)
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Honey Bees**Doris Jean Pitman 1927-2025 (husband was 24 WWII veteran and former Island Commander)****From the Editor—Tim Jufer**

First, I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to have served the past two years. 2025

was a busy year that began with a Seabee cruise to the Caribbean. I think there were 17 of us and we had a wonderful time. It was a first for Deb and I and hopefully we can do it again in the future. There is no better company than a bunch of Seabee family.

After that we had another great reunion and it was due in large part to the efforts of Jeff and Peggy Anders. Since I have been with the Island, they have worked tirelessly in every capacity and now Jeff continues on as Commander. I have no doubt that we are in good hands for the next several years with Jeff, Neal Beard, Brent Hatcher, Ron Gruzesky and Ronald Baldwin in leadership positions. Participation has remained high and we are financially sound as an organization. We do need to continue to recruit and build our membership. Hopefully the Iraq veteran group will catch on soon and see the benefits of joining with us. Get the word out every chance you get.

We have lost a few long-time members over the past couple years. These were folks that played a vital role over the years in making the Island so successful. Every one of them will be missed as their seats will be empty.

Jimmy Arnold and David Smith paid me a couple visits at the RSS in Huntsville as we were preparing to decommission the battalion. Jimmy's primary concern was that the battalion's history would be preserved and our artifacts would be saved for future generations. I believe we have honored his wishes with our donations to the Veteran's museum in Huntsville. Jimmy had done a lot of work in the past to preserve a monument that was dedicated to the first CEC officers killed in WW2 who happened to be from the 24th. The original plaque is now on display in the museum in Port Hueneme.

During one of my first reunions only a few years ago, I had the opportunity to sit down and have lunch with Robert Stroop and his grandson Matt. I enjoyed hearing about his time aboard ship in WW2. He told the story of actually witnessing atomic bomb testing while at sea. His stories were amazing and he lived a very full and interesting

life. Neal had the opportunity to interview him before his passing.

The passing of Danny Cole has left a void that will be tough to fill. For many years, Danny was the editor of this newsletter and he also published our annual reunion cruise books. I will do my best to fill that void, but I cannot do it alone. I need your support and your input! Please feel free to send any information you would like to share with the group including updates about yourselves and family and even stories about your time with the Seabees. We all have stories, and some of them can actually be shared. It would even be nice if we could begin highlighting different members with their life stories. I would love to be able to read the stories of those that served in WW2 and see how that experience shaped the remainder of their lives. Now is the time to put your story to paper so it can be shared with future generations.

As always, I am looking forward with anticipation to see my old friends in a few months. I truly enjoy the time we have shared together and maybe this year I will have a little more time to fellowship.