



The Seabees of NMCB-74, Inc

“ALL ERA 1966-2014”

A 501-C3 Non-Profit Military Veteran Group #81-4897826



Pres: Daniel Bower Vice Pres: Lorraine Santo Treasurer: Robert Harrison Secretary: Deianna Bower

Board of Directors:

Chairman: Gerald Schmuck, USN, CUCM (ret): David Geter, USN, EOCS (ret): Rick Cole: 2nd & 3rd Tour-RVN

The Seabees of NMCB-74 Inc

4th Quarter Newsletter AND Reunion Report



(photographs by Bea Harrison)

“Our Fine Gang of Veterans”

...but just as importantly>>>>>>



Our Wives, Widows & Significant others!

...at our Meet & Greet at our hosts' fine home and property in Vancleave, Mississippi; Bob and Bea Harrison.

Monday evening August 16th, 2021

It was simply a great time that we all had and we commend everyone for their more-than-willing participation in every event. I also thank everyone for their patience with our VFW Banquet site. They had an air conditioning breakdown in the midst of a heat wave, but our intrepid Seabees proved they'd been through worse before and soldiered on. Our banquet went slow, and then our auction came off very well. CAN DO! Angelo Ranaudo, our charge-ahead auctioneer, proved yet again that he missed his life's calling; he should have been a stand-up comedian!

My wife and I arrived on the previous Thursday to get caught up with good friends over lunch or dinner, and on Sunday many began to come in by car or airplane. Many we had not met before, and one or two others we had not seen in over 50 years, such as Les Howard. We were most of the way through the reunion when it hit me: Les and I used to go exploring in North Carolina in the off-hours of our weapons training sessions at Camp Lejeune in summer 1970. He had a nearly new late '60's VW bug and we went all over the place in that car.



Here, Les Howard is looking over copies of our corporate paperwork, 501©3 approvals and the SVA/NMCB-74 rosters we use for mailings after our corporate meeting.

Folks, things like this are why we have reunions. I urge you to come to our next reunion. You just cannot predict whom you might bump in to from your youth.

Our reunion this year ran the first half of the week—the 15th through 18th of August, and the SVA had their 75th Anniversary reunion the rest of the week. We did it that way so that SVA members who were veterans of NMCB-74 might take in both reunions with only one round-trip plane ticket. I think that worked out quite well and we met and enjoyed the company of MANY good folks that we might not otherwise have met.

Many of them came as a result of all the social-media buzz out there on many different sites catering to Seabee vets. Reunion Co-Chairman Harold Hurst told me that there are counted, 67,000 (!) Seabee veterans that are members of all those social media sites!

Our attitude is that if you are a veteran of NMCB-74, you do not have to be a member of our organization to join in with the fun—all are invited. At this reunion some did join and some didn't, but we are glad all of them came! Membership gets you a quarterly newsletter that helps you stay informed of the happenings in the modern Seabees, plus often good, positive stories that came up during the reunions, plus links to important announcements from the VA that you might not otherwise be privy to. More on that later in this newsletter.

As has been traditional with several past reunions going back to our years in the "MCB-74 Vietnam-Era Association", our reunions are not regimented with loads of activities, but rather geared for freedom to go to restaurants with new-found friends or gather in carload groups to go sightseeing or on base.

Many did that; a few attendees had not been to Gulfport in many years and a couple had not been back since the Vietnam Era! A half-century later, the coast has exploded in growth, and where our hotel sits was simply an I-49 “S”-curve on the way to training out at Camp Swampy. And now, for miles there are six or more lanes of packed traffic and businesses stacked up on both sides of the highway. And if you left Gulfport previous to 1972, I-10 cuts across that very “S”-curve carrying thousands east and west across the United States every day.

One couple came, Kevin & Angie Nash, and he was in the Seabees from 1994 to 1999, and then managed the Shoney’s Restaurant just south of the host hotel for three more years. Later, he and his wife moved to New Mexico and had not been back in nearly 20 years. On Tuesday Aug 17th, we and several carloads of reunion attendees took a base tour led by Myrna Geter, (Base Security requires an approved escort so that a group can roam the base) Kevin surprised me when he said that he saw A LOT of changes and improvements to the Seabee base since he’d been there. Another vet in our convoy said that this is the first he’d been back since the early ‘70’s. I grinned and asked him what he thought. He just grinned back at me and shrugged his shoulders; “I dunno. My head exploded back there somewhere.”

True enough, the base had changed a great deal until Katrina came along in 2005, and that about finished off what had been left after WWII and Vietnam. The complete rebuilding into a modern military base is pretty much complete now.

The rest of the week we hung out with a variety of couples right through banquet night on Wednesday night. Then on Thursday we said good-bye to many that we could find and headed for our next stop with my wife’s sister’s family in Griffin GA and finally got home near the end of August.

It was a great time. Please consider joining us at our next one, a “mini” reunion next May in Branson MO. More on that in this newsletter.



Figure 4: Rick Cole & others visit before the meeting.



Our Corporate membership meeting on Wednesday 8/18 at 1PM.



This is a required meeting according to the laws of the State of Michigan where our group is incorporated. During the week we let attendees know that we are looking for good people to replace us seniors in offices across the spectrum but we didn't have anyone approach us to talk about it. We are looking for the younger generation of veterans who feel the call to step forward, the future of our fine organization depends on it. I did a tally during the reunion and only one of our officers and Board members are younger than 70! So, if you feel that you might be able to carry one of the offices including mine, contact me, or Jerry Schmuck, the Chairman of our Board of Directors. We older vets will remain as active as we can, helping the new leadership excel in what they do.

“THE NEW NMCB-74 CHALLENGE COIN”

Our Board of Directors approved a suggestion by Reunion Co-Chairman Harold Hurst to create a new Challenge Coin depicting both logos that NMCB-74 had over the years since it was called the “74th NCB” during WWII.

This view is one side of the coin with the banner that says, “Fearless”. On the flip side is the logo during the Vietnam era and up into the 80’s. On that side the banner reads, “Does More”.

One of these will be given to each life member of our organization as a souvenir for their challenge coin rack. We offered this as a surprise during our banquet and handed them out to each Life member who attended. Then, over 40 more were sold to members who wanted one for family, or others who were there who wanted one for their collection.

For those Life Members who were not at the reunion, we will be mailing out a coin to you and expect to have that part of the project completed by the end of the year. Our first 100 coins are already over half gone and we will get a fresh supply from the same company in Gulfport in October.



Those who wish to order extra coins can order them now. In person the coin costs \$10.00. Extra coins through the mail cost \$12.50 for the first one, (because of the new postal rates) and \$11.50 each above that, postpaid.

Simply send a check to: Bob Harrison, 14001 Mt. Pleasant Rd, Vancleave, MS, 39565. He will email me the information and I’ll send them out from here in Michigan.

Bob is also the source for a fresh membership roster and for a financial report on the reunion that’s available upon request from any Life Member. His email address is beabob@bellsouth.net , phone number is 228-806-2361.

“THE BULLDOZER RAFFLE”



Fabricator Harold Hurst moves the dozer into position for photos at the Meet & Greet

Harold Hurst is setting up a fundraiser to raffle off this dozer for a suggested \$100 per ticket (that's for 10 entries in the drawing) that would benefit this non-profit "The Seabees of NMCB-74, Inc" and would greatly assist our donating to Seabee veteran's causes that are already in place (Seabee Scholarships and the CEC-Seabee Historical Foundation, etc) as well as some that may yet be created in the future.

More information will be coming up in the near future after this raffle is fully set up.

“MINI REUNION 2022 IN BRANSON, MISSOURI”

I have asked Harold Hurst, and he has accepted, if he would set up a reunion in Branson during Armed Forces Week, May 18th through the 21st of May. Much preparation has been done already and full information will go out to our membership when everything is signed and set up.

The hotel has been very helpful in all this, doing nearly all the legwork for Harold already. If you the members have never yet been to Branson, this is a wonderful family-friendly place for veterans and families to spend a few days together. Naturally, we will be watching very carefully the development of the waning issues with the C-19 virus, which sunk our 2020 mini-reunion in Branson.

Full information will be sent out as soon as possible so that you can make plans.

“IMPORTANT LINKS”

In nearly every newsletter I'll repost certain links that I think are important to Seabee veterans, and to veterans in general. And most other links will be of interest that came off the web in just the last few days.

ALL NMCB-74 PAST YEARBOOKS 1967-2004

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sdilyroi3p7cgt/AABe_5pd5H7TZ-HzrTUdYb7ca?dl=0

“Enhanced pension benefits help eligible wartime Veterans, surviving spouses increase income”

https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/94273/enhanced-pension-benefits-help-eligible-wartime-veterans-increase-income/?utm_source=VRfeature&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=VetResources+Sep+15+2021

“You Asked, We Answered: What should I know about additional COVID-19 vaccine doses?”

https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/?utm_source=Homepage&utm_campaign=Coronavirus

“All The Latest VA Information: Sept 15th”

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2f11db4>

“Upcoming VA Events”

https://www.va.gov/outreach-and-events/events/?utm_source=header&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources

“FDA rejects full approval for Pfizer booster, limiting authorization to the elderly and vulnerable” (Sept 17th)

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/fda-rejects-full-approval-for-pfizer-booster-limiting-authorization-to-the-elderly-and-vulnerable/ar-AAOz310>

MORE Reunion Week Photos



Harold brought the dozer in from north of Dallas, and it got its share of attention in the hotel parking lot.



Later Harold moved the trailer and dozer out to Bob & Bea Harrison's for safekeeping.



On Monday Afternoon, tropical storm Fred passes us by out in the gulf heading for landfall in Pensacola. The weatherman predicted that the edge of the storm was going to overlay Vancleave, which would have been disruptive to that evening's Meet & Greet at Bob & Bea's, but as it turned out, we had sun and clouds the entire evening, and no rain.

We had escaped the storm.



On Tuesday at least seven carloads of us go through Base Security's background checks.... everybody passed. It took awhile! Our authorized military escort, Myrna Geter, is at right. I apparently did not take photos on base. I did note that I saw nothing left from all the WWII buildings that we used during the Vietnam era. The base is now a completely modern base except for the water tower; it's still there, towering over a modern base that proves it's the last remaining relic standing.

In future newsletters I will seek to publish more relevant photos from our reunion. This may be 2021's 4th quarter newsletter but there will be more informative newsletters coming between now and the end of the year. Till next time, ---Dan