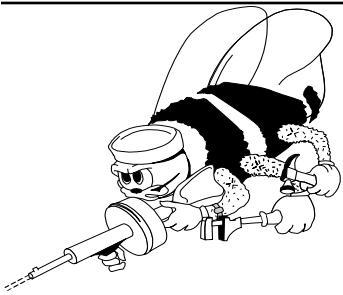


MCB 2 Reunion Association

Volume 7, Issue 1

November 27, 2007



SEABEES

*A Newsletter for Former US Naval
Mobile Construction Battalion 2 Personnel*

and host to CBD 1802, CBD 1804, CBMU 1, CBMU 101 and CBMU 577

WOW!
Wasn't St. Louis Great?!
Next Stop:
Myrtle Beach, SC!

Thanks to All!

by Pete Elliott

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to all of you who unanimously re-elected me to the position of Commander of the MCB 2 Reunion Association for my 6th term. Little did I know back in 1991 at our first reunion in Springfield, MO, when Stoney asked for volunteers to assist him on the reunion committee when others and I stepped forward that I would be part of an extremely successful organization. You have also re-elected a group of committee members who are dedicated to YOUR association.

We presented an award to Scott Williams, secretary/treasurer/and just about everything else, for his overall dedication; an award to Sam and Mary Ragusa for always being there to help out when and where they can; and an award to David Haines, who was able to attend from PA and is overcoming a serious health problem. Dave is truly an inspiration to all of us by attending.

The rest of the committee: Roy Peak; Joe DeFranco; Rich Nelson; Malcolm Pearson; and Stoney Serrett, our Commander Emeritus, all deserve awards for their many years of dedication to OUR group. An award of a huge THANK YOU goes to

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

each and every one of you for your continued support of the MCB 2 Reunion Association.

1991	Springfield, MO
1993	Nashville, TN
1995	Las Vegas, NV
1997	Denver, CO
1999	Charleston, SC
2001	San Antonio, TX
2003	Cleveland, OH
2005	Las Vegas, NV
2007	St. Louis, MO
2009	Myrtle Beach, SC

Myrtle Beach is in the planning process as you read this. Scott and I are planning on going there in January or February 2008 and look over some properties. It is our hope that we can get the same type of setup and arrangements we had in St. Louis. We will keep you advised.

Pete Elliott

The Commander and Staff

Our leadership consists of:

**Commander
Pete Elliott**

Staff:

Joe DeFranco
David Haines
Rich Nelson
Roy Peak, Vice Commander
Malcolm Pearson
John Petronka
Stoney Serrett, Commander Emeritus
Scott Williams, Sec'y/Treas.

Seabees

October - February

Dates to Remember

Oct. 13, 1775	Navy Birthday
Oct. 16, 1942	Eight men of NCB 6 killed at Guadalcanal, first Seabees killed in action
Oct. 31, 1941	First Headquarters Construction Company authorized by Admiral Nimitz (forerunner of battalions).
Nov. 8, 1942	Seabees land in North Africa with American assault forces.
Nov. 10, 1775	Marine Corps Birthday.
Nov. 11	Veteran's Day
Dec. 7, 1941	Pearl Harbor attacked.
Dec. 10, 1941	Guam falls
Dec. 23, 1941	Wake Island falls
Dec. 31, 1947	Seabee Reserve established.
Jan. 5, 1942	Bureau of Naval Personnel authorizes formation of Construction Battalions.
Jan. 27, 1942	Bobcat detachment sent to Bora Bora, Society Islands; first Navy construction unit sent to overseas duty.
Feb. 1, 1944	Seabees land with Fourth Marine Division on Kwajalein.
Feb. 19, 1945	Seabees land with 5th Marine Division on Iwo Jima.



Notes from our members:

From **Pat (Ann) Carey**: [Pat had ordered US and POW flags] Here's my check for the flags. Use the extra for **Pat's** dues or, if he is paid up, use it for whatever is needed [thank you!]..... from **Frank Jacus**: Hope to find you and yours in good health. Enclosed is my check for US flags [on the way!]. Keep up the good work. PS: We had a Warrant Officer named **Winters**. Does anyone have any information on him? [We had a **Raymond Winters** on our roster but he passed away December 14, 2002, and was reported in the V4 #7 issue of the *Seabees* Newsletter dated April 7, 2003]..... from **Robert 'Bud' Breeding**: [Bud sent a check for dues and I called him. **Robert Gardner** had sent **Bud** an old Newsletter and **Bud** liked what he saw. **Bud** was with MCB 3 at Cubi Point from 1951 through 1954, as an Equipment Operator working on the airstrip. Welcome aboard, **Bud**. His contact information is on page 7].....Received dues from **James Krause & Philip (Barbara) Matalucci** [thanks]..... received reunion registration from **Willis Struecker, Pat Badgett, Robert Gardner, Joe DeFranco, Ron Howatson, Jim Green, George Gustin, Bill Knight, Jack Schrader, Roger Germundson, Rodney White, Rex Roark, William Body, Walter Waddell, Richard Tittle, Richard (Jean) Skillicorn, Ralph Burnley, Don McLain, David Anderson, Jack Wilson, Vic Jaccino and Tom Stapleton** [thanks, all]..... from **John (Geri) Petronka**: We will be at the reunion with **Mary & Sam** and will be in early on the 17th driving from Pennsylvania to help you. We can hardly wait to see all of you [all of me will be there!]..... from **Althea Herr**: I just wanted to write a few lines to thank you for sending me copies of this year's Newsletters. There were a lot of good articles in them. Enclosed is a check for next year's Newsletter and for the cost of the postage for sending this year's Newsletters. I know the yearly cost is only \$20, but use whatever is left over for any other needs [thank you!]. This can

keep **Gerald's** name on the Good Guy List, or put mine there as the 'Good Gal' [done]. Thank you so much for your help and tell everyone at the reunion I said 'hello' and to have a good time!..... from **Rodney**



White: [sent his reservation for the reunion] While I am at it, I'll send a check for my dues [thanks]. Things are good and hot here in Colorado. We'll see you in October at the reunion..... from **Gene Staples**: I am sending these pictures and articles for your review. Hopefully, some of the printed pages will give you some insight on various subjects [thanks]. The picture of the LST was taken as we went under the Golden Gate Bridge some time in 1951. Loaded aboard the LST were 3 'dozers, 3 mobile cranes, 3 cherry pickers, 8 6X6 trucks, Jeeps and other things along with food in freezers. There was 150 of our personnel plus the ship's company. The other picture is of my brothers when they were in the service in WW II. There were 7 boys and 2 girls in my family and there were five of my brothers in the service at one time and four of us were in when I was in the Navy. Enclosed also is a check for dues [thanks] with extra to send a copy of the book, *Seabees At Port Hueneme*. If more money is due, please let me know [you sent plenty enough and thanks] I cannot remember the names of but a few of the buddies that I served with, old age and time fades them away. I worked as a construction worker when I was laid off at the plant where I worked after college. My work was in Instrument Control and was Instrument Field Engineer in Alaska and also in nuclear power plants. Mostly, in the start-up of new plants and refurbishing of the ones that had been in operation for some time. **Scott**, you are doing a great job with the Newsletter and for all of us OLD Seabees, I thank you [thank you!]..... from **Riley McDaniel**: I received the July 28 Newsletter two days ago and thanks so much. I enjoy getting it and reading it. I have all the copies saved since April 7, 2003. I really enjoyed the 50 Rules To Live By that was on pages 12 & 13 of this issue. To my amazement as I was reading the Good Guy List, I didn't find my name there. Sorry about that. I always try to send my dues in December of each year, but I have had a lot of medical problems since 1994, so it must have just slipped by me. But, even with all my problems, I am still plugging along. I was at Subic Bay in the Philippines in 1953 and 1954 and, after getting

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

discharged in January 1955, I finished college and taught agriculture for three years. I then went to work for the State of Louisiana in the Personnel Department for 19 years. I then transferred to Job Training with the Louisiana Labor Department for my last few years (32½) of work. I retired 20 years ago this year. I will try to get my dues sent to you in December but enclosed is one for this year [thanks]. Bro. **Scott**, don't write all this stuff in the next Newsletter [OK... I left a lot out.] Most of the folks reading it will think I have lost all my marbles. At any rate, Thanks a lot and have a good year and many more, if the Good Lord sees fit [thank you]..... from **Ruth Williamson**: Sorry I am late in getting this information to you, but my beloved husband, **Clarence Roy Williamson**, passed away November 18, 2006. So sorry I am late..... from **Chuck Chapman**: I finally was able to track down the obit for **Jack Balding**: **Jack Craig Balding**, 78, of Buena (WA) died Sunday, June 3, at Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital. Mr. **Balding** was born in Dayton, WA, and served in the Navy. He had been employed as a heavy equipment operator. Survivors include two sons, **Michael Balding** of Kennewick and **Craig Balding** of Minneapolis; three daughters, **Cheryl Bloker** of Tulaip, WA, **Becky Bleckinger** of Union Gap and **Angela Malensant** of Rapid City, IA; and four grandchildren. That is all that appeared in the paper [thanks, **Chuck**]..... from **Chuck Chapman**: [When **Chuck** sent the email telling me about the passing of **Jack Balding**, I asked how he knew **Jack**. This is his response] I am an old Seabee from the days in Cubi Point 1952, '53 & '54. I was one of the first to land and take up residence in tent city before we had water. We took our baths at the bottom of the hill where a stream dropped over the hill before it ran into the bay. Water was in lyster bags, urinals were between the web roots of the mahogany trees and you made your own two-holer out back of your tent. I was captain of tent number 1. I played in the Cubi Point band and was with the group that put on the road show at Clark Air Force Base, at Cubi Point,



Sangley Point, and Subic Bay. We played in the club many nights and traveled to Manila to play with the big band known as the Glenn Miller Orchestra of the

Philippines. I was the one that cracked the paymaster's safe when the locking mechanism rusted shut and they couldn't get the money out for payday. Oh, the stories we can tell of the old days in Cubi Point. I think I have some pictures of the road show cast, but for the life of me, I can't remember any of their names. I don't know if anyone remembers when MCB 2 came back to the states in '54 and we were given the task of tearing down the old elephant building that sat on the northwest corner of the parade ground, kitty-corner from the Administration Building. I had the crew that tore that building down. We had a Seabee dance band that year that played at the Officer's Club for the Seabee Ball that year. Again, I think I have some pictures of that band while they were doing that gig. Also, after I did a tour at Coronado following my time with MCB 2, I went to Class B Steelworkers' School on base and lead the Seabee Military Band on parade during Saturday pass-in-reviews. Oh, there are many stories to be told of the good ol' days..... from **Henrietta Leavell**: Thank you for continuing to send the Newsletter, but my husband, **Max Leavell**, died on January 3, 2007. The Seabees and his Navy meant so much to him. Please remember his family in your prayers and he would have loved to go to the reunion this year..... from **Erv Lampe**: [Erv wrote me a few months ago that his son was going to make a business trip to Korea and asked **Erv** if he wanted to accompany him. Of course, **Erv** said he would. The following is a short account of their trip] Well, we've been to Korea and we're back home and I'll tell you it's not the same Korea I remember from 53 years ago. We were finally permitted to come on base, but only after about 2 hrs. of negotiations thru an interpreter. When we got the o.k., they provided a jeep with a driver and 2 armed guards. They drove us around but we only got to see what they wanted us to see. No pictures allowed. They did allow us to see where the small contingent of U.S. Marine advisers are located, but we were not allowed to talk to them. Kind of disappointing after traveling so far, but what can you do

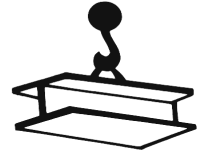
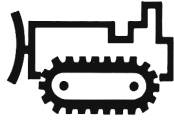


when they hold all the cards. Do you think I look like a North Korean spy?..... from **William 'Pete' Taylor**: I am enclosing a check for my late dues. Maybe this will get me back on the Good Guy List [yep, it



(Continued from page 4)

sure does and thanks]. I apologize for being late. Keep up the good work. You are doing a good job [thanks]. Also, please send me a roster [on the way!]..... received reunion registration from **Harold Wardenburg** and paid dues [thanks]. [**Harold** called me asking for his dues status and also requesting a roster. A roster is on the way.]..... from **Tom (Nancy) Maere**: Sorry we are so close to the deadline for reservations. Time flies when you are having fun! Enclosed is a check for our registration. See you there and thanks..... from **Joan Bates**: I was reading the latest Newsletter and I saw **Glen**'s name is still on the Good Guy List. **Glen** passed away May 1st this year. We never made it to any of the reunions but both of us enjoyed the Newsletter. **Glen** had many fond memories of his years in the Seabees and talked often of his experiences during that time..... from **Frank (Marjorie) Fibich**: At the last reunion in Las Vegas, we received a door prize for one year's dues for \$20. I misplaced the certificate when we returned home and just recently came across it. I am sending it along with a check for dues and hope this is OK [absolutely! Glad you found it.... but you forgot to sign your check! I'll bring it to St. Louis]. We'll see you in St. Louis..... from **Don Hofstetter**: [**Don** sent an email note and said they will have to cancel the reunion as he is scheduled for a checkup with his new pacemaker. **Don** said he was looking forward to being at the reunion and wearing his uniform again.]..... from **Robert (Ann) Conroe**: Sorry to be so late in paying my dues but health problems have caused a lot of delays in all my activities [thanks for the dues check]. In July, I started to have heart problems and have been in and out of the local hospital over the past three months. They had to install a total of three stents in my arteries and I am still having some problems. It looks like I will have to stay close to home for a while. So count me out on the St. Louis reunion. I am sure it will be a great one and say hello to everyone for me. Hope to see all at our next reunion..... received dues from



Fred Wilmarth, Gene Nelson, Arlin Hardwick, Stoney Serrett, Robert (Frenchie) Jandreau, Mal (Marge) Pearson, Steve Yunger [thanks all] from **Joseph O'Brien**: Enclosed is a check for my dues and my



new address [thanks for both and see page 7 for the address] from **Lionel Vidrine**: Sorry I am late but that's what happens when you get old [now, who might fit that category?]. Anyway, I am back on the Good Guy List for another year [thanks]..... from **Erv Lampe**: Enclosed is my check for dues and some extra for whatever [thanks]. A great reunion even if there were a couple of glitches [naw. There weren't any glitches. Just learning opportunities]. Hope to see you next time in Myrtle Beach..... from **Tom Sheehy**: My health has not been the greatest. Enclosed is a check for dues [thanks]..... from **Bob Colquhoun**: Hope this keeps me on the Good Guys List [it does. Thanks]..... from **Ron Glasser**: [enclosed a check for dues... thanks] Thank you for all the hard work you have put in on the reunions and the Newsletter all these years [thank you]..... from **Wayne Turley**: [claimed a one year dues door prize at the St. Louis reunion and turned it in. Thanks, **Wayne**]..... from **Phyllis (Gene) Antoine**: As most of you already know, we did lose our home in the California firestorm. We were in Missouri when we got the word. We are with friends in Texas right now and plan to go (HOME)? tomorrow, the 31st of Oct. Gene seems to be OK at this writing. I am sure we will both have a hard time viewing the property and deciding what to do next. I just pray he stays well. For all of you who know of our loss and have sent your thoughts and prayers, we are grateful to have such good friends and family..... That looks like all the letters so far for this edition. Don't fall off the Good Guy List, so send in your dues while you are thinking of it. Make plans to come to Myrtle Beach, SC, in 2009 to see old buddies, all the sights, and just relax while enjoying good company. See you there!.... Scott [ps: so sad about **Gene** and **Phyllis Antoine**. As soon as I get an address to send cards I will pass it along.]

There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it. For example, I am sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt. (Actually, I just fill them out!)

After Our Saturday Business Meeting



Front row, L-R: Dick Tittle, Willis Struecker, Rodney White, Sam Ragusa, Richard Skillicorni;

Second row, L-R: Tom Stapleton, Bill Body, Wayne Turley, Frank Fibich, Bill Knight, John Petronka, Roy Peak, Clyde Stenholm, Pat Badgett, David Haines;

Third row, L-R: Ken Colburn, Tom Roy, Mal Pearson, Jim Green, Erv Lampe, Tom Dowd, Tony DeLeon, Bob Gardner, Kenn Gaskell, Joe DeFranco, Walter Waddell, Gene Antoine, Duane Henrichson, Ron Howatson, Bob Elder, Pete Elliott;

Back row, L-R: Arlin Hardwick, Scott Williams, Harold Wardenburg, John Bloem, Ambros Johnson, Don McLain, Jack Schrader, Tom Maere, Rex Roark. OK.... If I got any of the names wrong, will you help me? I'll run the picture again if I need to correct any names.

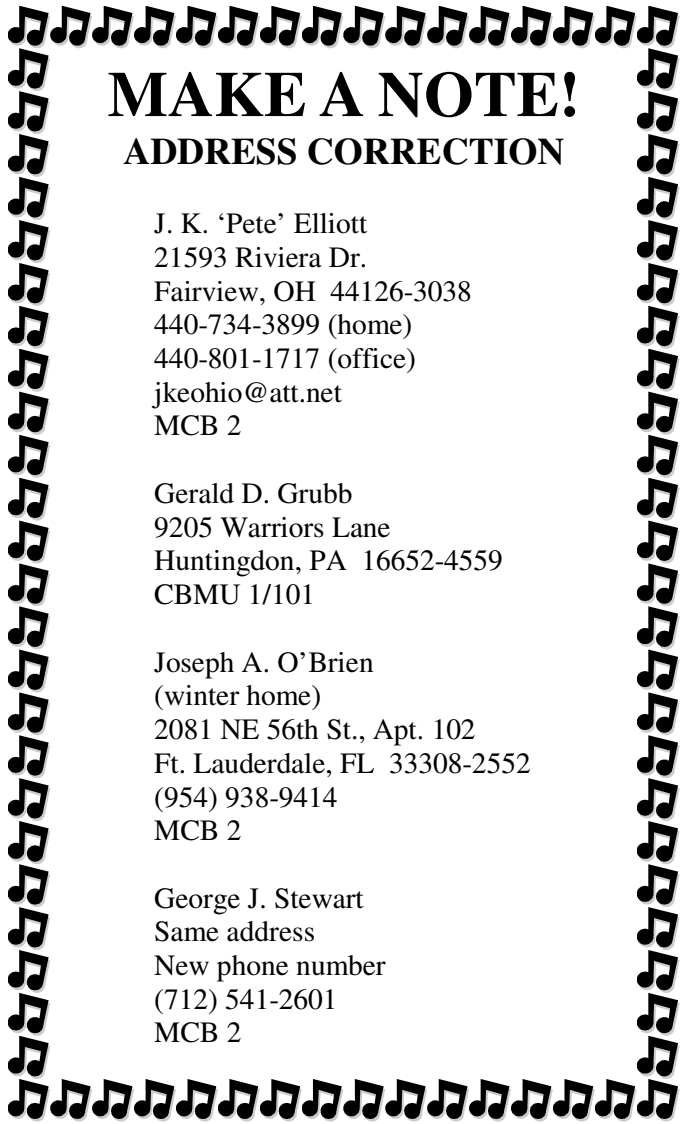


WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Robert L. Breeding
1410 Julie Lane
Twin Falls, ID 83301-2512
(208) 734-2688
kbins92@msn.com
MCB 3 (1951-1954)

Bob Elder
9 Tanewood Court
Belleville, IL 62223
(618) 397-8205
MCB 2

A penny saved is a
government
oversight



MAKE A NOTE! ADDRESS CORRECTION

J. K. 'Pete' Elliott
21593 Riviera Dr.
Fairview, OH 44126-3038
440-734-3899 (home)
440-801-1717 (office)
jkeohio@att.net
MCB 2

Gerald D. Grubb
9205 Warriors Lane
Huntingdon, PA 16652-4559
CBMU 1/101

Joseph A. O'Brien
(winter home)
2081 NE 56th St., Apt. 102
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308-2552
(954) 938-9414
MCB 2

George J. Stewart
Same address
New phone number
(712) 541-2601
MCB 2

Our Fallen Comrades

W. Lynn Abbott	10/5/07
Jack C. Balding	6/3/07
Glen F. Bates	5/1/07
Richard L. Christian	3/25/07
Max Leavell	1/3/07
Clarence R. 'Lefty' Williamson	11/18/06

May they live on in our memories.

The older I get,
the more I
realize that I
have forgotten
more than I know.

The Good Guy List

Allan Alberg, Harold Agles, William Alwine, Vern Ammentorp, David Anderson, Eugene Antoine, Basil Arnold, Pat Badgett, Lewie Baker, Richard Baker, Jack Balding, Ed Ballerstein, Benjamin Balog, Mike Barron, Glen Bates, Henry Benguerel, Hank Bentsen, Frank Betonte, Ralph Binney, Vernon Blakeslee, Bill Body, John Bloem, Ralph Bokern, James Bolton, Alexander (Cat) Borys, Robert Bowdler, Don Bradley, Robert 'Bud' Breeding, Philip Brunelle, Al Bryant, Silas Bucher, Robert Buckley, David Budworth, Wayne Bulgerin, L.P. 'Pop' Burleigh, Ralph Burnley, William Burns, Elwin "Shorty" Campbell, Pat Carey, Bennie Carlson, Mike Castlevecchi, Ken Catchpole, Frank Chambers, George Chang, Chuck Chapman, Ken Chew, Walter Cloonan, Robert Coley, Bob Colquhoun, Roy Cone, Robert Conroe, Howard Cornwell, Richard Coulson, Jack Coulter, Fred Cozad, Warren Culberson, Pat Cunningham, Arnold Daisy, Paul D'Angelo, Stan Dauer, Joe DeFranco, Jim DeKeyser, Tony deLeon, Don Dellit, Ted DeVit, Mary Dick (for all the Good Guys), Melvin Dixon, Robert Doezie, George Dorge, Tom Dowd, Howard Doyle, William Duensing, Pete Elliott, Don Eminhizer, Doug Emond, Ralph Evans, Norman Eveleth, Richard Fairbanks, Dick Farbo, Frank Fibich, Jim Firebaugh, Forrest Foland, Jack Foster, Leonard Fowler, Bill Frazier, Harold Freeland, Lane Freitag, Al Fritz, William Ganske, Claude Garcenot, Ken Gaskell, Roger Germundson, John Ginther, Ron Glasser, Robert Graf, Russ Granby, John Grasz, Jim Green, Clem Gregurek, Frank Gresser, Roy Grisham, Don Grobel, Gerald Grubb, Marvin Guetling, George Gustin, Gordon Gwathney, Charles (Pauline) Hagemann, Walt Hagen, David Haines, Les Hall, Luther Hall, Alexander Hamilton, Roger Hamilton, Arlin Hardwick, Roy Harris, Art Hees, Ralph Heitt, Bert Helms, Charlie 'Don' Henderson, Duane Henrichson, Wayne Heple, Gerald (Althea) Herr, Bob Hoare, Don Hofstetter, Sam Holsomback, Ray Hooter, Rod Howard, Ron Howatson, Charles Ingalls, Hugh Ireland, Vic Jacino, Frank Jacus, Robert Jandreau, Robert Janson,

Lawrence Jessop, Ambros Johnson, Charles Johnson, Don Jones, John Jurkash, Robert Kaempfe, Lloyd Kallsen, Chuck Kangas, Ed Kazarian, Duane Keech, Les Keller, Denise King (for her Dad, Don Truskey), William Knight, John Kolasz, James Krause, Emil Krygier, Harry Ladley, Ervin Lampe, Ron Landrum, Sherwin Larsen, Harold Lind, Herbert Liverman, Dale Lundstrom, Tom Maere, Ivan Majetic, Anthony Marcella, Bob Markey, Bob Marshall, Philip Matalucci, Jack Mayo, Chuck McCabe, Gene McDonagh, Norris McDaniel, Riley McDaniel, Don McLain, Bobby McMillan, Herbert Meade, Grant Millard, Daniel Millett, Dan Mills, Chuck Minert, Frank Mingo, Gary Mitchell, Roger Mohs, Pat Morris, C. Finley Morrison, Paul Muma, Richard Muns, Eugene Nelson, Richard Nelson, Ray Nethercott, Paul Neusetzer, Don Nitsche, Joseph O'Brien, Mel Olson, Ernest Owens, Billy Partridge, Roy Peak, Mal Pearson, Ben Pedrotti, John Petronka, Amos Phillips, Mike Piro, Ralph Presson, Cecil Price, David Pyle, Sam Ragusa, Gary Rawlings, Charles Rebb, John Recklitis, Rex Roark, Gene Robinson, Dale Rogers, Richard Rose, Thomas Roy, John Ruby, C. Edner Rudolph, Vinny Ryan, Harold Saucier, Paul Schell, Darl Schmidt, Millard Schneider, Jack Schrader, Don Seethaler, Gerald Seger, Stoney Serrett, Rik Shafer, Tom Sheehy, Don Shoff, William Sigmund, Dick Sim, Fred Simon, Art Siple, Glenn Sisco, Joe Sitkowski, Richard Skillicorn, W.R. Smith, Joe Sobczak, Ray Sonnen, Ray Sorrentino, Ted Speros, Gene Staples, Tom Stapleton, Clyde Stenholm, Jim Stephens, Larry Stevenson, George Stewart, John Stock, Willis Struecker, Dan Svendsen, Richard Swallow, James Taylor, George Terry, Doug Thorp, Richard Tittle, Richard Todd, Charles Trimarchi, Don Truskey, Wayne Turley, Alfred Ulman, Jerry Vasquez, Larry Vibber, Lionel Vidrine, Walter Waddell, Phil Wagenschnur, Dick Walters, Harold Wardenburg, John Weires, Leroy Weiselberg, Duane Weltlich, Cecil Westwood, Bud Wheless, Rodney White, John Wilborn, William Wilcoxon, R. G. 'Pete' Williams, Marshall Williams, Scott Williams, Fred Wilmarth, Jack Wilson, Jesse Wilson, Preston Wilson, Jim Wommack, Bill Wisnowski, Dwight Yetter, and Stephen Yunger.

Everyone listed here has their dues paid at least through 2007, some much longer. If you don't find your name on this list, then maybe you have

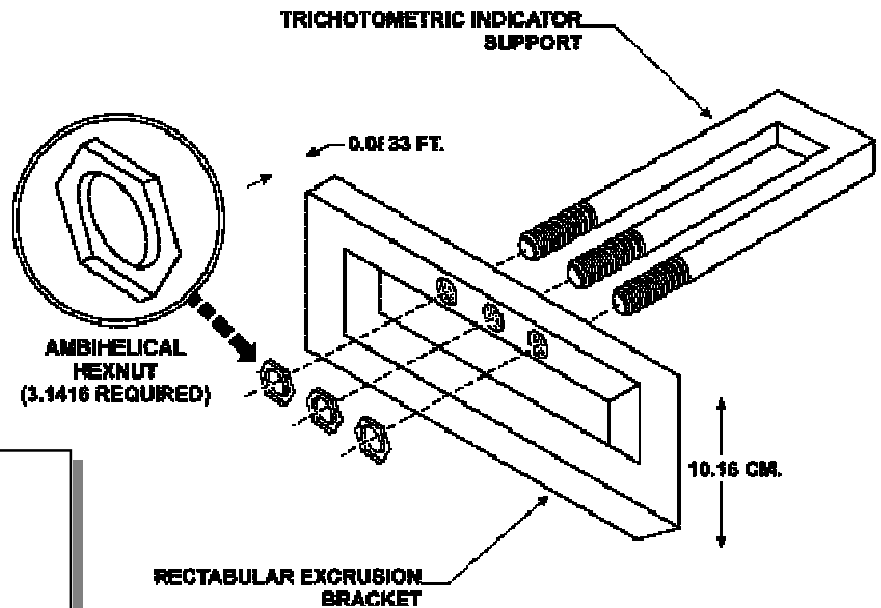
(Continued from page 8)

forgotten to send in your dues recently. All dues are paid through the calendar year, January 1 through December 31 (no dues card sent out). This list is as of November 12, 2007. There are currently 279 paid up members from a mailing list of 541. If dues have never been sent, they do not receive the Newsletter. There are 756 names on the full member roster. (SW)

Need a Membership Roster?

If you have a need for an up-to-date membership roster, drop me a line with a couple of bucks and I'll send you one. We currently have 777 names and addresses of former CBD 1802, CBD 1804, CBMU 1/101, CBMU 577, and MCB 2 personnel, so this is a pretty thick directory (23 pages). Glad to have all aboard! And keep sending those cards and letters – especially the ones with checks!
Scott Williams

We need some of these fabricated.
Any volunteers?



Who to contact about your dues

Scott Williams, Sec'y/Treas.
MCB 2 Reunion Association
725 Summer Ridge Dr.
Villa Rica, GA 30180
(770-456-4246)

e-mail: williash@aol.com

make checks payable to:
Scott Williams/MCB 2

Dues are \$20/year
January - December

This is what keeps us going
and enables us to send this Newsletter.

Enlistment Physical

Having passed the enlistment physical, John was asked by the doctor, "Why do you want to join the Navy, son?"

"My father said it would be a good idea, sir."

"Oh? And what does your father do?"

"He's in the Army, sir."

My Favorite Old-Time Poem

"I'VE RELISHED reading this oldie many times," writes Lila Heck of Potosi, Wisconsin. "I'm sure it'll tickle those who still recall the little 'house out back'."

The Passing of the Old Backhouse

*When memory keeps me company
and moves to smiles or tears,
A weather-beaten object looms
throughout the mist of years,
Behind the house and barn it stood,
a half a mile or more—
And hurrying feet a path had made
straight for its swinging door.*

*Its architecture was a type
of simple classic art,
But in the tragedy of life
it played a leading part,
And oft' the passing traveler
drove slow and heaved a sigh,
to see the modest hired girl
slip out with glances shy.*

*We had our posy garden
that the women loved so well.
I loved it, too, but better still,
I loved the stronger smell,
that filled the evening breezes
so full of homely cheer,
And told the night-o'ertaken tramp
that human life was near.*

*On lazy August afternoons,
it made a little bower,
Delightful, where my grandsire sat
and whiled away an hour,
For there the summer mornings
its very cares entwined,
And berry bushes reddened
in the steaming soil behind.*

*All day fat spiders spun their webs
to catch the buzzing flies
That flitted to and from the house
where Ma was baking pies,
And once a swarm of hornets bold
had built a palace there,
And stung my unsuspecting aunt
—I must not tell you where.*

*Then father took a flaming pole
—that was a happy day,
He nearly burned the building down,
but the hornets left to stay.
When summer bloom began to fade
and winter to carouse,
We banked the little building
with a heap of hemlock boughs.*

*And when the crust was on the snow
and the sullen skies were gray,
In sooth the building was no place
where one could wish to stay,
We did our duties promptly,
there one purpose swayed our mind,
We tarried not, nor lingered long
on what we left behind.*

*The torture of that icy seat
would make a Spartan sob,
For needs must scrape the gooseflesh
with a lacerating cob,
That from a frost-encrusted nail
was suspended by a string—
My father was a frugal man
and wasted not a thing.*

*When Grandpa had to "go out back"
and make his morning call,
We'd bundle up the dear old man
with a muffler and a shawl,
I knew the hole on which he sat—
'twas padded all around,*

*And once I dared to sit there—
'twas all too wide I found.*

*My loins were all too little,
and I jack-knifed there to stay.
They had to come and pry me out
or I'd have passed away.
Then Father said ambition was
a thing that boys should shun,
And I must use the children's hole
till childhood days are done.*

*And still I marvel at the craft
that cut those holes so true;
The baby hole, and the slender hole
that fitted Sister Sue,
The dear old country landmark;
I've tramped around a bit,
And in the lap of luxury
my lot has been to sit.*

*But ere I die I'll eat the fruit
of trees I robbed of yore,
Then see the shanty where my name
is carved upon the door,
I ween the old familiar smell
will soothe my faded soul,
I'm now a man, but nonetheless,
I'll try the children's hole.*

*—Generally attributed to
James Whitcomb Riley*

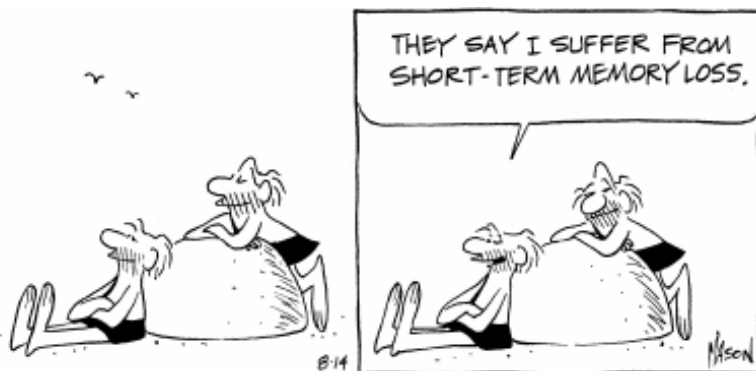


B. Vogel/PL. Armining Robert



From Gene Staples: Picture of an outward-bound LST going under the Golden Gate Bridge in 1951. The LST was loaded with 3 'dozers, 3 mobile cranes, 3 cherry-pickers, 8-6X6 trucks, many Jeeps and other equipment along with food in freezers, plus 150 Seabees and the LST ship's company.

B.C. by Hart



Used with permission of Hart