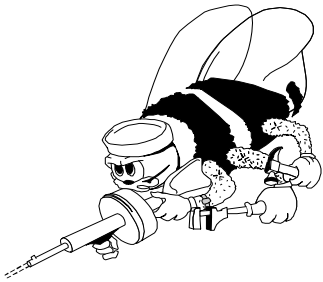


MCB 2 Reunion Association

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SEABEES

A Newsletter for Former US Naval

Mobile Construction Battalion 2 Personnel

and host to CBD 1802, CBD 1804, CBMU 1, CBMU 101, CBMU 553 and CBMU 577

Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year!

Military and Retired News and Information Inside & A Plea

I have been able to glean quite a bit of military info for all that I hope is news to you. It is getting more and more difficult to keep the association's accounts open without more support. If we lose our web site, all of the Newsletters will be gone and those that are Naval historians searching for Korean-era information will have one less place to look. The web page costs about \$10.00 per month, payable annually. With fewer and fewer of us left, it is incumbent upon all of us to try to keep the Association operating. I continue to try to get information that is pertinent to our lives (VA, etc.). But, if you would just as soon not have this connection, please let me know and I will pass that information along. It takes money to keep operating. Please consider continuing your support. Thanks, Scott

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Navy recruits will have to pass a run test prior to boot camp

— source Navy Times

The Navy has never required prospective recruits to demonstrate much in the way of Forrest Gump-ian running talent prior to reporting to Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, but changes are on the horizon. Starting Jan. 1, 2018, the service will implement an initial run test that all recruits will have to pass in order to begin recruit training. A mile and a half will have to be covered, for men, in under 16 minutes and 10 seconds, and under 18 minutes and 7 seconds for women, the Navy said. After passing the test, eligible recruits will be grouped according to fitness abilities and will begin working toward the standards of the Navy's physical fitness assessment. "It is the responsibility of each recruit to work hard and maintain all

See *Navy recruits* (Continued on page 2)

The Commander and Staff

Our leadership consists of:

Commander Pete Elliott

Staff:

Paul D'Angelo

Vic Jaccino

Don McLain

Rich Nelson, Vice Commander

Malcolm Pearson

Stoney Serrett, Commander Emeritus

Scott Williams, Sec'y/Treas./Publisher

See our web page:

<http://mcb2seabeereunion.com/>

(Continued from page 1) *Navy recruits*

Navy standards," said the commanding officer at Great Lakes, Capt. Mike Garrick. "Physical fitness is one of the greatest predictors of sailor success. Before they arrive to boot camp, recruits are expected to train to meet the physical fitness standards." Any sailor-hopeful who fails the initial test will have an opportunity to take it again within 48 hours, the Navy said, but failing a second time will result in the recruit receiving an entry-level separation discharge. In this event, recruits can "reapply at a later date with a waiver from Navy Recruiting Command," Navy officials said. "The initial run standard raises the bar at RTC, helping us develop tough, more qualified sailors during basic military training and send a more lethal force to the fleet," said Rear Adm. Mike Bernacchi, commander, Naval Service Training Command. The Army, Air Force and Marine Corps have all employed some variant of an initial fitness test for years, and while the Navy is joining the club, the new run time requirements are still quite relaxed, comparatively. Eligibility to ship out to Marine Corps boot camp, for example, requires male poolies to complete a mile and a half run in 13 minutes and 30 seconds, whereas women have 15 minutes to cover the same distance.

SEABEES

January - March
Dates to Remember

Nov. 5, 1951	MCB 5 arrives at Cubi Point for the first time.
Nov. 11	Veteran's Day
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving.
Dec. 1, 1937	RADM Ben Moreell becomes Chief of Bureau of Yards & Docks.
Dec. 2, 2018	Hanukkah begins, sundown.
Dec. 7, 1941	Day of Infamy. Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
Dec. 8, 1941	U.S. declares war on Japan.
Dec. 10, 2018	Hanukkah ends, sundown.
Dec. 25	Christmas day.
Dec. 31, 1947	Seabee Reserve established.
Jan. 1, 2019	New Year's Day.
Jan. 5, 1941	Bureau of Naval Personnel authorizes formation of Construction Battalions.
Jan. 21, 2019	Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
Feb. 8, 1945	NCB 115 first troops ashore at Subic Bay, Philippines.
Feb. 12	Lincoln's birthday.
Feb. 13, 1945	Fleet Admiral E.J. King authorized retention of the Seabees as permanent part of the postwar Navy.
Feb. 18	President's Day
Feb 19, 1966	Salt water distillation unit installed by Seabees in Antarctica became operational.
Feb. 21, 1966	CNO directs reactivation of CBC Gulfport, MS.
Feb. 22,	Washington's birthday.
Feb. 28, 1957	Fleet Admiral Nimitz wrote to Admiral Moreell on the Seabees' 15th anniversary commending them for their roll in helping to defeat the Japanese in WWII.
Mar. 1, 1942	RADM Ben Moreell requested the Navy construction units be authorized to use A distinctive designation and insignia. The Seabee insignia was authorized
Mar. 2, 1867	Civil Engineer Corps established.
Mar. 5, 1942	Seabee Birthday.

Marine Found Guilty of Stealing from Toys for Tots

Will Serve Almost 3 Years

– source Military.com

A former staff sergeant who used his position as a Toys for Tots program coordinator to make payments to himself and who defrauded the Marine Corps to the tune of more than half a million dollars will serve 33 months in prison. Christopher Aragon of Mobile, Alabama, will also have to pay restitution of \$534,044.08 to the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and another \$20,044.70 to the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation. After his prison sentence, Aragon must undergo three years of supervised release, receive court ordered mental health treatment, and undergo credit. He'll also lose a residence "traceable to criminal proceeds," officials said.

Aragon, who served as a supply chief for 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company, a Marine Corps Reserve unit in Mobile, was also in charge of coordinating the unit's Toys for Tots program. It's not clear when Aragon was discharged from the Marine Corps.

Between December 2013 and December 2014, Aragon and his wife, Teneshia Aragon, conspired to defraud the program by using an issued credit card to make unauthorized payments to himself. He also forged documents, including invoices, and submitted

them to the Toys for Tots foundation. For an overlapping period, between October 2014 and August 2016, Aragon also conspired to defraud the Marine Corps as a whole out of a much larger sum of money. According to the Department of Justice, he teamed up with his wife and Dana Davis, the owner of a Mobile restaurant called the Runway Café, to commit credit card fraud. Using his unit-issued travel card, he used his position as authorizing official to approve fake charges from the café. His greed ended up getting him caught.

According to a DOJ release "[Aragon] prepared false documents, such as invoices and personnel rosters, and submitted them to the Marine Corps, which later conducted an audit and noticed excessive discrepancies in food expenditures," it states. "For example, the Marine Corps noticed that, one, many Runway Café invoices did not match official 3d Force Recon activities and, therefore, did not support a legitimate need for food services [and, two], Runway Café's invoices were for more meals than could be consumed by the number of Marines assigned to 3d Force Recon."

Davis and Teneshia Aragon have already received sentences. Davis received six months in prison in August and was ordered to make full restitution. Teneshia Aragon was sentenced in September to five years of probation, the first six months of which will be spent on house arrest. She was also ordered to make full restitution.

Cynical Philosopher...

- ◆ I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you
- ◆ Money talks ...but all mine ever says is good-bye.
- ◆ I always wondered what the job application is like at Hooters. Do they just give you a bra and say, "Here, fill this out?"
- ◆ Denny's has a slogan, "If it's your birthday, the meal is on us.." If you're in Denny's and it's your birthday, your life sucks!
- ◆ The location of your mailbox shows you how far away from your house you can be in a robe before you start looking like a mental patient.
- ◆ I can't understand why women are okay that JC Penny has an older women's clothing line named, "Sag Harbor."



National World War I memorial a step closer to reality

- source Military Times

A century after the first world war, a project to build a national World War I memorial has taken a significant step forward. The latest design concept for the memorial has been approved by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, according to an announcement from the World War I Centennial Commission.

Plans call for the memorial to be built at Pershing Park along Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington by 2020. Illustrations of the planned memorial feature a long stone wall with figures of troops leaving their families, fighting and falling in combat, suffering wounds and ultimately returning. The plan shows the structure in a wooded park setting with a reflecting pool.

“We will continue to push forward in this effort. Our veterans deserve our best effort, and we owe it to them,” said WWI Centennial Commission chair Terry Hamby in a release. The site for the national World War I Memorial was designated by Congress in 2014 and is intended to honor more than four million American men and women who served in the war.

The memorial project is funded through private donations. A memorial to the war already exists on the National Mall, a small structure with columns supporting a dome, placed by the citizens of the District of Columbia in the 1930s, but a national World War I memorial was never built.

Finding Your Buddies

From time to time I suggest ways to track down old military friends. One of the best is the web site: ***Together We Served*** (www.togetherweserved.com). There's a separate site for each of the Services.

Over 1.8 million people have profiles on TWS. It is easy to log on. You can do so as a guest or you can join for free. TWS is not intrusive. You'll get an occasional email with a service “newsletter” but that's about all.

When you join you will be asked for a referral name and that person's member ID - feel free to use mine: Scott Williams 44260. TWS offers a locator service and believes they can find virtually any former service member.



Above: New Army pinks and greens uniform.

The Navy's Admiral-To-Ship Ratio, Then And Now

• source Task&Purpose

It has been said before, but as the song says, it bears repeating: “In 1944 there were 256 flags for 6,084 ships; today there are 359 flag officers for 280 ships.”

A Survey of US Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accoutrements

I recently ran across this 2007 document written by David Cole, a professional military historian. The document runs 133 pages and is quite large (over 7MB).

Fascinating reading on line or to download.

https://history.army.mil/html/museums/uniforms/survey_uwa.pdf

It's official: Army approves 'pinks and greens' uniform

— source Army Times

Formerly known as the “pinks and greens,” the World War II-era officers uniform could go Army-wide as soon as 2020, according to a release posted to the Army’s website but was not shared through any of its social media channels.

“The current Army Blues Uniform will return to being a formal dress uniform, while the Army Greens will become the everyday business-wear uniform for all soldiers,” the release said. The new uniform will be “cost-neutral,” according to the Army, though details of the budgeting plan were not immediately available.

Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey told Army Times in September that while higher quality materials translated to a dollar-for-dollar more expensive uniform, the fielding plan would negate some of those extra costs in the aggregate. For example, the release said, new soldiers will receive the uniform when they reach their first unit of assignment.

This, theoretically, would relieve the cost of issuing and tailoring uniforms for soldiers in basic training who end up dropping out, or whose weight fluctuates, requiring more alterations. The uniforms are also expected to last longer - about six years, Army spokesman Lt. Col. Isaac Taylor told Army Times. “We are purchasing a higher quality uniform with a longer service life, and we are executing a longer phase-in period to remain cost neutral,” Taylor said, but he did not provide a price breakdown.

The standard uniform set-up will require pants and brown leather oxfords for both men and women. Women will have the option to wear a pencil skirt and pumps. Everyone will also be able to buy a leather bomber jacket as an outerwear option. The rest of the Army would have until 2028 to pick up the new uniform, the release said.

Green Beret accused of trying to smuggle 90 pounds of cocaine into the US headed to trial

• source Army Times A

7th Special Forces Group soldier is facing two counts of conspiracy to traffic cocaine following his August arrest, according to court documents. Master 5

Discounts you may not know about.

A range of clothing and accessories stores offer special prices and deals for military personnel.

- **Bass Pro Shops:** Eligible military members receive a 5% discount every day on select products and Cabela’s gear with a valid military ID.

- **Champion:** Military personnel and veterans get 10% off. - **Big 5 Sporting Goods:** Active-duty and reserve military personnel, retirees, and veterans receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchase.

- **Foot Locker:** Qualified military personnel can get a 20% discount off most purchases on Footlocker.com.

- **Michaels:** Get 15% off your purchase - including sale items - every day with a military ID.

- **MLBshop.com:** Military personnel and first responders, along with their spouses and close family members, get a 15% discount on their purchase.

- **NBA Store:** Military service members receive a 15 percent discount on their order.

- **Nike:** Receive a 10% discount at Nike.com and at Nike stores as an eligible military member.

- **NFL Shop:** All eligible military personnel enjoy a 15% discount to use when purchasing products on NFLShop.com.

- **Under Armour:** For eligible military personnel, the sports retailer offers a 10% discount with verification

Sgt. Daniel Gould, a recipient of the Silver Star, pleaded not guilty to the charges in September and was scheduled for trial in November, according to Northern Florida’s district court. “Daniel J. Gould did knowingly and willfully combine, conspire, confederate, and agree with other persons to distribute a controlled substance,” according to the indictment, between Jan. 1 and Aug. 13. That soldier had planned to load 90 pounds of cocaine onto a military transport vehicle in Colombia and ship it back home to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, NBC News reported after his arrest. A spokesman for Army Special Operations Command would not identify the soldier by name but said that the plan was foiled by a fellow soldier who reported the plot. Drug Enforcement Administration officials interdicted the cocaine while it was still on the ground in Colombia. Gould had already returned home to Florida from a vacation in Cali, Colombia, when he was arrested.

Changes to Eligibility Requirements for VA Aid & Attendance

- source Florida Today

VA has published their final rules, which were effective Oct 18. These rules are not statutory changes to federal laws; rather, they are administrative regulations promulgated by the VA – however, they affect the eligibility requirements for VA “wartime” pension benefits, including so-called “Aid and Attendance” benefits. Some of the major changes under the new rules are:

Asset Cap-Although VA pension benefits are “means tested” (i.e. the applicant’s income and assets are considered in determining eligibility), there was previously no specific asset limitation, and applicants were assessed on a case-by-case basis. The new rules provide a countable asset “cap” which matches the Community Spouse Resource Allowance for Medicaid (\$123,600 for 2018). An applicant’s annual income is included in calculating their countable assets, as are the assets and income of the applicant’s spouse.

Transfers of Assets and “Lookback” Period-Under previous regulations, when an applicant has assets in excess of the cap, an applicant could transfer assets (e.g. to a family member, a trust, or an annuity) without penalty, regardless of the amount transferred. This is NO LONGER the case. The new rules include a “lookback” period of 3 years beginning with the effective date of the rules (i.e. the VA will not penalize asset transfers prior to October 18, 2018). If an improper transfer of assets occurred

during the 3 years immediately prior to the application for benefits, a penalty period of ineligibility of up to 5 years may be assessed (depending on the amount of assets transferred). The new rules specifically note that transfers to family members, trusts, and annuities are generally considered penalizable transfers for the purposes of the “lookback” period.

Unreimbursed Medical Expenses (UME) and Caregiver Agreements-Luckily, some of the changes are helpful expansions of current rules. For example, fees related to residence in an independent living facility now count as UME under certain circumstances, and other items which previously did not count (e.g. prescriptions, special dietary items, vitamins and supplements) are deductible from income if they are prescribed by the applicant’s physician. Further, costs related to service animals and transportation for healthcare purposes are now countable UME. Additionally, family members (instead of healthcare personnel) can be paid caregivers, and the payments will count as UME, provided a qualified medical professional indicates that the applicant requires a protected environment due to a “physical, mental, developmental, or cognitive disorder.” Qualifying payments to caregivers can also include services which previously did not count as UME, such as shopping, preparing meals, laundry and housekeeping, managing the applicant’s medications, and helping with the applicant’s finances.

There are a number of other rule changes which may affect you (or your loved ones). The key to best protecting yourself and your family is (as it always has been) planning ahead. Planning ahead and properly timing your application is the only way to avoid unnecessary penalties, and ensure well-deserved benefits are received at the earliest possible date.

THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY.....

I met Ira first in early, 1952...I was 18 years old and a UT striker while Ira was a Steel Worker 1/c and seemingly, ageless. He spoke a lot about Baton Rouge, LA. though he didn't seem to have that Cajun pronouncing and the flavorings of that culture. He was called Pappy probably because of the age difference between we youngsters and him.. He was one of those strangely sophisticated artisans with the steel and iron... an artist, so to speak, and certainly had a command of the King's English. One would think perhaps having had some learned stage or

movie-making experience. He was sharp in the wearing of the Seabee greens when others during that period would wear greens with tattered, torn-off sleeves and equally 'lucky--bag' looking discarded trousers, Ira was the epitome of the classic and cultured, poster model. One clue that some of you oldsters like me, who know who I am telling you about, he claimed his only daughter was the movie star Sandra Dee who eventually married singer Bobby Darin of 'SPLISH, SPLASH, I WAS TAKING A BATH fame during that period..Also Bobby was noted for his song, MACK, THE KNIFE. Pappy was the only Seabee I ever knew who could weld cast-iron.... John Wilborn

VA Hospital Quality of Care: Five Improved & One Got Worse

- source Stars & Stripes

VA hospital performance data is available on its Hospital Compare website: www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/search.html. The statistics score hospitals based on 25 categories, including patient satisfaction, overall efficiency and death rates. The scorecards are used to rank hospitals using a star system – one star being the worst and five the best. Five low-performing VA hospitals have improved enough in the past six months to no longer qualify as high risk. Those in Dublin, GA; Harlingen, TX; Roseburg, OR, Nashville, TN and Denver, CO were removed from high-risk status based on new performance statistics. Last year, 15 hospitals, including the facilities in Dublin, Harlingen, Nashville, Roseburg and Denver, received one star ratings. In February VA announced an “aggressive new approach” to improving those hospitals, which included more direct oversight from VA headquarters. At the 15 hospitals, 26 managers and senior leaders were removed – a result of “close scrutiny of performance trends,” said VA Press Secretary Curt Cashour. The five hospitals removed from the high-risk list are on track to rise to two stars when the new star ratings are released, Cashour said. Nine other hospitals are still designated as high risk. Those facilities are located in Hampton, VA; Big Spring and El Paso, TX; Jackson, MS; Loma Linda, CA; Memphis and Mufreesboro, TN; Walla Walla, WA and Phoenix AZ. One high-risk hospital has gotten worse. The Washington, DC, VA Medical Center was elevated to “critical” in July after a quarterly review found conditions had deteriorated. This hospital has been under scrutiny since last year, when the VA IG warned of widespread failures that put veterans at risk. The warning prompted former VA Secretary Shulkin to fire the hospital director. Since then, a series of temporary directors have led the facility. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said in August he would soon announce a new, permanent leader for the hospital.

Did You Know?

High blood pressure was redefined in November by the American Heart Association, which said the disease should be treated sooner, when it reaches 130/80, not the previous limit of 140/90.

Origins of Navy Terminology

– source navy.mil

Every profession has its own jargon and the Navy is no exception. For the Navy, it's bulkhead, deck and overhead and not wall, floor, and ceiling. Some nautical terminology has found its way into everyday use, and you will find the origins of this and Navy terminology below.

Log Book - In the early days of sailing ships, the ship's records were written on shingles cut from logs. These shingles were hinged and opened like a book. The record was called the "log book." Later, when paper was readily available and bound into books, the record maintained its name.

Long Shot - Today it's a gambling term for an event that would take an inordinate amount of luck. It's origins are nautical. Because ships' guns in early days were very inaccurate except at close quarters, it was an extremely lucky shot that would find its target from any great distance.

Mayday - "Mayday" is the internationally recognized voice radio signal for ships and people in serious trouble at sea. Made official in 1948, it is an Anglicizing of the French m'aidez, "help me". No Quarter-"No quarter given" means that one gives his opponent no opportunity to surrender. It stems from the old custom by which officers, upon surrender, could ransom themselves by paying one quarter of a year's pay.

Pea Coat - Sailors who have to endure pea-soup weather often don their pea coats, but the coat's name isn't derived from the weather. The heavy topcoat worn in cold, miserable weather by seafaring men was once tailored from pilot cloth - a heavy, course, stout kind of twilled blue cloth with the nap on one side. The cloth was sometimes called P-cloth for the initial letter of "pilot" and the garment made from it was called a p-jacket - later, a pea coat. The term has been used since 1723 to denote coats made from that cloth.

Port holes - The word originated during the reign of Henry VI of England, who insisted on mounting guns too large for his ship and the traditional methods of securing these weapons on the forecastle and aftcastle could not be used. A French shipbuilder was commissioned to solve the problem. He put small doors in the side of the ship and mounted the cannon inside the ship. The doors protected the cannon from weather and were opened when the cannon were to be used. The French word for "door" is "porte" which was later Anglicized to "port" and later went on to mean any opening in the ship's side.

My Ghost Story

John Wilborn UTCS

For many years I had two jobs. In 1980 I moved from Oxnard, California to Glendale, Arizona. I had a drain cleaning service that was family owned and operated by me and for more than 15 years I also worked as a stationary engineer at nights.

Many of my daily service calls would be scheduled in the morning, when I'd get off work at the power plant. During the winter months, when the days were short, I'd get off shift at 6 AM and it would still be dark when I'd arrive at the customer's home. Such was the setting as I tell you this story. I'm still looking for a logical explanation----perhaps you have one? I assure you, it really did happen. I've noted my real name; however, the other participant I'll simply refer to as Mrs. Gales.

The morning held promise of being a beautiful day although it was still dark. The stars were like glinting flakes of diamonds in the clear desert sky and the Eastern quadrant of the Arizona horizon hinted of a beautiful sunrise within a reasonable period of time. The air was quite chilly and occasionally a light welcome breeze would fan my brow as I drove through the Central Phoenix streets on the way to Ms. G's home ---- very little traffic; caught some flashing, yellow signals while listening to Christmas carols over AM 550. I was happy to be going to my first job now, for within a few hours, the Christmas shoppers will be out and about----in Phoenix, 'white-knuckle' driving, accompanied with a preponderance of 'road-rage', was the order of the day, order of the season. The date was December 15th 1995. Ms. G. had called the night before and although her plumbing drains were completely clogged, she had assured me she was able to wait until morning.

Ms. G. lived alone in North Central Phoenix. I had provided drain cleaning service to her home since the mid-80's. I had not been there for several years. The last time I recall seeing Ms. G., she had been mourning the death of her husband. The porch light was on as I arrived at her home. The light illuminated the house number easily and as I approached the porch and Ms. G. opened the front door. A large matronly woman in her late 60's, she was still in her bathrobe with something feminine covering her head, holding a large ceramic coffee mug in one hand and in the other clutching a smashed, half-smoked cigarette between nicotine-stained fingers. The odor of the acrid cigarette

smoke mixed with the stupefying, gut wrenching smells of a stopped up sewer, assailed my nostrils as I entered the home to check conditions and come up with solutions. All of these events would come to be recalled as the pleasant times regarding the service call for what lay ahead bothers me even now, many years later.

Ms. G. shuffled back to her overstuffed chair and plopped down and we began to speak of the sewer problems. As we conversed, I got the most unusual feeling; no, I should say, alarming feeling----maybe a premonition that things weren't as they should be. My senses seemed to dull, and then, almost as if a creeping sensation was coming over me, I sensed the cold. Yes cold, for I suddenly blurted out to the seated lady of the house, "do you still have your air-conditioning turned on, or perhaps the evaporative cooler?" The cold was absolutely foreboding, maybe even threatening. When she told me the gas furnace was heating the room, I shivered, an uncontrollable reflex. The same as feeling the hair raise on the back of your neck physically move when you are startled. I realized Ms.G. was still droning on and on telling me some unimportant trivia. Her voice had dulled drastically as had my sense of hearing and even smelling. I turned away from the seated woman and rushed from her house, overwhelmed by the unexplained eerie happenings. I even contemplated just leaving, not doing the job at all. The chill outside air was pleasantly warm now compared to that evil-feeling temperature inside. In a quandary, I gathered my tools, equipment, and ladder. I'd be working on the job through the roof vents to clear the stopped-up house drains.

My mind still in a turmoil, I went about the task that I had come to do. No problems with that but every time I'd have to re-enter the house to run water or flush toilets or check other conditions, I'd experience again that horrific cold and the sense of things being around, that unholy cold seemed to invade my very being. I didn't want to stay there. Anywhere but not there. I sensed, but never saw, a figure. A dispirited personage of human form, nothing determinate as to size or shape really, but a figure with scraggly hair and a long unkempt beard, entertained my senses. That and the terrible cold. I retched until my eyes watered. I gulped in large breaths of air as I rushed outside again realizing that I had not been breathing. It seemed hopeless, too frightened to even breathe. Who would ever understand, or even offer some solace? My work was complete. I had done what I had come to do. Gener-

ally, after completing a task such as this, one would feel a sense of accomplishment. Not this time though! I still had to go in the house and be paid for services rendered. As I entered the home for this final time, Ms.G. was still sitting in her big, untidy looking chair, still smoking, mug in hand, appearing totally relaxed and comfortable. After presenting the written invoice, I stood waiting in front of her chair as she made out the check and handed it to me. It didn't seem to startle or alarm her, but I suddenly I blurted out to her my questions, my concerns, and yes, most definitely, my fears. I must have sounded like a blithering idiot; the cold temperatures, seeing things that obviously weren't there, never being so scared in my whole life, never wanting to work here again, and on and on.

Mrs. G. listened patiently to my rantings and my ravings as if she grasped everything I was blurting out to her. As I had said, I was standing in front of her chair facing her, when she suddenly pointed her finger. No, not at me, but behind me. My pounding heart fluttered and seemed to skip an unhealthy number of beats. My eyes must have bugged right out of my head. What was there behind me? I whirled around, ready to confront what or who. There was nothing lurking there behind me; no sinister thing or person, or whatever my mind had conjured up. Nothing! Only a wall filled with pictures, portraits, and other family paraphernalia. Truly, it was as if I could not control my eyes. My eyes were drawn to and focusing on one picture. A man with a beard and long, straggly hair. Steady, wide-set and piercing-looking eyes, stared lifelessly back at me. Without a glimmer of doubt, I knew it was the thing I had been sensing, the source of my fear, my rattled emotions, my unknown thing. "That was my son, he was a good boy, but he had a lot of problems---too many."

I knew my back had been turned away from Ms. G. when she spoke to me, as I had still been staring at the picture of my unknown thing. How could she have known that it was the picture I had been looking at? Her voice lowered now, almost whisper like, "A good boy, he was my son, too many problems. He killed himself out in the garage. Too much happened to him, so many things. He shot himself, out in the garage." The entire time I had been staring fixedly at the man's picture when suddenly, much like what happened when I first felt the cold, astounding things began to happen in the room. Ms. G's. droning, whisper-like voice suddenly sounded clear and audible. The heat from the nearby furnace

permeated the space with welcome warmth. The outside traffic sounds were now distinct and the ticking of the old round top mantle clock was interrupted by its chiming, indicating the hour change.

I turned back toward Ms.G. with a sense of unfulfilled wonderment. The ash on her smoldering cigarette fell onto her old coffee-stained bathrobe, staying there, undisturbed. The half-filled coffee mug leaned over her lap precipitously, almost spilling the remaining contents. I could not help but notice how white her knuckles were from clutching the coffee mug so tightly while her other hand holding the cigarette appeared aged and spidery looking. Her fingers dug deeply into the fabric of the old overstuffed chair, like she had been on a fearful trip, an odyssey to another dimension. I now smelled the aroma of overcooked coffee from the kitchen so vividly and the dustiness and staleness of the unkempt room. She moved quickly for a lady her age. Her face from a trance-like mask to the now smiling Ms.G. I had known over the years. She lit another cigarette from the still smoldering butt which she seemed to pinch between her nicotine-yellowed fingers. She rose from the old chair, quite possibly a throne to her, in an almost regal flair. Standing now, straight and proud, ready for her day. I didn't blurt out questions to her this time. I too, was feeling much better. But still, I had to know for some peace of mind. I had to pursue some logical explanation. Having scarcely muttered a 'how,' when she responded in an almost contented sounding voice. 'It's like this every single day. I've come to live with it, because I know it is Him.' When I heard Ms. G. utter the word Him, it was almost as if she was speaking of a Heavenly Personage. Perhaps her departed son had become that to her. I didn't inquire any further. My emotions were strangling me. Between joy and sorrow, but not fear any longer and not even to mention that all those unholy seeming events that had occurred were still as unexplained as when they had happened. It was a long time before I told anyone this story, or happening, or event. I'm still at a loss as to how or what to refer to it as. When I told Mary, my wife of more than 40 years, she listened attentively with a look of almost calm acknowledgment. She never seemed to be a bit frightened or flustered. Mary, who had patiently contended with me over these long years, took it pretty much in stride, encountering all the illogic of my 'whys' with the sound feminine logic she displays and calls to task so often when she deals with me, with a soft, simple 'why not.'

SMOKEY'S CRACK

John Wilborn UTCS

Don't titles grab your attention--every time you write a story, you have to think of a title. What if GONE WITH THE WIND would have been FRANKLY MY DEAR, I DONT GIVE A DAMN. If you think this is going to be one of 'those kind' of stories because of the title--well, it isn't. I had mentioned to you recently that term of 'FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS'---life's 'bad breaks' for certain people--everything isn't always what it's cracked up to be--it's raining soup and you've got a fork. As I tell these stories to you, the names of course are changed to protect the innocent--any similarity to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

So it will be with Smoky--I made that name up --he used to talk a lot about the Great Smoky Mountains back east--how his ancestors from Scotland had settled there in the days of Daniel Boone. I could have as well named him Gator or Peaches or Spud or Cherry--the reason I say that is that Smokey's family had become migrant farm workers--during the Great Depression years, their own farm had failed and they had lost their roots. The large family traveled over the road and spent a lot of time harvesting in Florida for instance, the Gator handle--or picking peaches in Georgia and cherries in Alabama and potatoes (spuds) wherever they were grown. Schooling for the children was sparse or even non-existent. Smoky had less than a second grade education--his numerous brothers and sisters fared little better, if at all. I met Smoky first when we had just completed boot camp in San Diego. We had been herded onto a train for a trip up the California coast--I had been assigned a Navy Construction School--when I finished school, I would be a Navy Seabee. Smoky was assigned to the same base but not for school--his assignment was called General Detail. He would work three months mess cooking and then on to barracks cleanup.

Smokey and I got along good so we stayed in touch those sixteen weeks--myself in school, Smokey cooking and cleaning. As fortune would have it, we were ultimately ordered to the same Mobile Construction Battalion. That unit, having just returned from duty in occupied Japan, and in several months time due to go to the Philippine

Islands. The Korean War was raging and a mountain needed to be moved to build an air base to serve that area of the Pacific.

Near our California base was a small town of Oxnard--lots of gals and other diversions, however Hollywood was only 50 miles away so liberty everywhere was outstanding--didn't need a car--get out on the highway in uniform and the good folks would pick you up and haul you pretty much where you wanted to go. More than a few times, invites to their homes for meals would also be in the offing. I met a family down in Santa Monica (friends to this day--fifty years later) but Smokey met a family right in Oxnard and began dating their daughter. I met her a couple of times, but not until a few days before shipping out when our battalion had a Farewell Dance, did I realize Smokey and Cindy were very serious about one another.

In early June 1952, we boarded a troopship and headed for the Philippines--twenty two days it took us to reach those lovely islands--rainy season --living in tents--mud--mud--mud. Smokey had a whole bundle of letters waiting at our first mail call--all from his true love in Oxnard--the first of many--Cindy wrote every day---sometimes several times a day. Smokey couldn't read her letters--he could scarcely read typewritten words and barely sign his name. Smokey had fallen through the cracks of the American Public School system. Well, need I tell you who was to become the personal confidant for Cindy and Smokey?

I recall those feminine letters so well--they smelled so good--and Cindy was very capable of penning long, interesting letters. The first time Smokey approached me for my assistance--to read Cindy's letters for him, I was kind of embarrassed--so was Smokey. Smokey as a good and private person--I realized how it must have made him feel to have to ask for such a favor. Well, we got acclimated to the strange goings on--about a week after reading Cindy's letters to him, he asked for my help to write Cindy--hell, by then the feet was wet--might as well dive in all the way. The letters began pretty much as 'HELLO--HOW ARE YOU--I AM FINE--I HOPE YOU GET THIS LETTER SOON--GOODBY and very reluctantly the emotional fact of LOVE, SMOKEY, was mentioned.

I mentioned I had met Cindy--a very attractive and level-headed young lady but after a few returns for responding to Smokey's letters, she be-

come quite giddy--plans and happiness and futures together were at the forefront of their relationship. Smoky would get embarrassed as I would read Cindy's letter to him--but he kept bringing them to me. I had been assigned to work on plumbing installation--Smoky was back mess cooking again--in the evenings he would come over to my tent and we would share Cindy's letters. A while later I was sent to work in the refrigeration shop--right near the mess hall and galley, so I saw Smokey a lot then. We would write Cindy twice a week--it was no strain, and in fact, I become an active player in this strange drama--I come to enjoy playing the role.

The Navy had an information and education program (I & E Office) --helped men like Smokey get their GED--in Smokey's case, helped him with more basics of reading and writing. Smokey and I had progressed in our letter writing to Cindy--statements of love and devotion were readily exchanged--plans on Smokey's return to stateside were openly discussed--lives being spent together was as open as the HOW ARE YOU's used to be. I asked Smokey one time what he wanted to strike for in the Navy--he told me he wanted to become a welder--a steelworker. At the refrigeration shop where I worked, were the ice making machines--met a lot of crew leaders who would come for ice for their water and I would visit with them. One older reservist was named Lew Pividori out of New Jersey--a master steelworker --a builder of skyscrapers. I asked Lew if he would consider taking this young man Smokey, when he finished his mess cooking duties on his crew.

Well, the story does have an eventual happy ending--Smokey had a knack with the welders' stingers--he could lay a bead of weld very few could compare with. His training with the I&E Office did him good also--he had special abilities--almost a photographic mind and memory. I got to read less and less of Cindy's letters to Smokey, however I still had to write his letters for him. Lead pencils were a great deal more common of writing instrument there in the jungle than ball point pens--I can still picture Old Smokey, his stubby little lead pencil--blunt on the point, chewing on the end of his tongue, nose almost down on his paper, diligently practicing his long hand script.

It would come to pass however, that a transition must eventually take place--Smokey would have to begin writing his own letters to Cindy--Smokey would have never made a good forger--try as he might, he could not mimic my penmanship, so we devised a story--not a lie really--maybe a 'little fib' for everyone's benefit. Smokey was to tell Cindy that he had hurt his writing hand and was having to print with his other hand--it worked and Smokey took over. Smokey had got off mess cooking and had become one of Lew's best young strikers--I would see less and less of him--we stayed in the Philippines that first tour for thirteen months--shoving that big old Mount Maritan out into the salty depths of Subic Bay--we were building a fine air base.

When we returned to the states in July 1953--the Korean Truce had just been signed. The battalion scattered far and wide on military leaves-- I went back to see my relatives in Iowa--when I returned to California a month later, we started to prepare for returning to the Philippines again. I saw Smokey only one more time--this day at the personnel office, he was preparing to check out of the battalion. In his training and dealings with the battalion I&E Office, it was noted Smokey was very adept for learning languages--he was being reassigned to a joint service organization up in Monterey, California. It was called the Armed Forces Defense Language Institute and that is where special operatives and interpreters were schooled. It seemed that training someone like Smoky would be especially easy because not so much would have to be 'unlearned'.

As Smokey and I visited that day for the last time, it may have seemed awkward at first--actually it seemed as if Smokey was getting a better break than I--he wasn't having to return to the basic-basic existence of jungle living--there may even be a commission in his future--and his future was to include Cindy--our Cindy--me and Smokey's Cindy --that giddy girl who sent those perfumed smelling letters, had agreed to be Smokey's wife on his graduation from the language school--I mused if he ever told her about the letter writing. I asked Smokey how his family was --he thought for a moment like he was running figures through his head and remarked off--handedly "well, I suppose they are doing the peanuts in Georgia--no, maybe the tobacco up in Kaintuck."

THE SEABEES OF STATE: ‘WHERE THE IMPOSSIBLE ONLY TAKES A LITTLE LONGER’

By: Lawrence Neal, DS Public Affairs Posted: 5/30/2013 Posted June 1, 2013 –

Navy Petty Officer Kody Orkis was simply driving to work one Monday morning when his day went from routine to life-affirming in an instant in the middle of a Berlin intersection. “The woman was crossing the crosswalk and she began to look confused,” he remembers. “She collapsed, and I could see she was going into a seizure.”

Orkis was an emergency medical technician before joining the Seabees and then finding himself assigned to Embassy Berlin just three weeks earlier. “I got her isolated and prevented her from flailing around. She had hit her head and her face started to turn dark purple. The capillary action in her fingers had gone away, and she had swallowed her tongue,” he said. Orkis dealt with all of that. “The police came, but they had to wait for the ambulance. By the time the ambulance came, her seizure had passed.”

German police reported that the State Department Seabee had saved the woman’s life, and two days later, the head of the German Foreign Office’s Americas Desk phoned the Embassy to express his nation’s thanks and express a hope that his actions would be recognized. The citation the Seabee later received reads that “Kody immediately acted to come to the aid of the victim, taking charge of the scene, immobilizing the victim, directing other passersby and administering first aid until medical attention arrived.”

Seabees of the State Department’s Naval Support Unit don’t save a life every day, but Orkis’ response isn’t a surprise to anybody who works with the ‘Bees. “Can-do” is their motto, but they seem to think it’s really, “can-do anything.” The Naval Support Unit commanded by Lt. James Galloway punches above its weight. With only 110 members, it nonetheless maintains a worldwide presence in 47 U.S. embassies and consulates, and has a profound impact on the lives of both U.S. diplomats and host-country locals every day.

NSU’s success begins with the fact that it is only a bit less exclusive than the U.S. Naval Academy. “Fewer than 10 percent who apply get into the program,” Galloway said. “We go out and find the right people, in the right phase of their lives, to support these State Department missions. They have the right skill set and the ability to learn. The training

they get is completely different than anything they have seen, and they have to be pretty clever, pretty sharp.” He added that the State Department exposure has a unique, enhancing impact on NSU personnel. In most of the military, wearing your rank on your sleeve for everybody to see is both a benefit and a limit. But the State Department’s Seabees do not wear uniforms, “so these men and women go out and learn that they can be whatever they want to be because they are not limited by their titles. It takes away that barrier.

“I’m amazed about how well they’ve integrated themselves into the embassy communities, and how much of a leadership role they play.” Just fitting in at all is the first challenge that a Seabee deployed with the State Department confronts. “Most have been in the Navy five or 10 years,” says John Fitzsimmons, Director of the Security Technology Operations Division. “When they come here, it’s an entirely new culture for them. They are living overseas as civilians with their families, which is quite different from what they’re used to – you will do this, you will do that – but the ‘Bees we get at NSU are chosen for their maturity and their ability to think on their feet. “The Seabees often come with their families and because the numbers are smaller, the NSU can afford to be selective.”

Versatility is a necessity for a Bee with a high degree of eagerness common, added Fitzsimmons. “We have utilities men who are familiar with construction. We have construction electricians who are familiar with wiring. We have builders who are familiar with how to build and how to drill into a wall safely or, if need be, how to destroy a wall,” he said. “And the steelworker has to be able to go and troubleshoot a camera system and the builder has to troubleshoot the vehicle barriers. They learn extraordinarily fast.”

Galloway said that a typical day for an embassy Seabee “would be ensuring all security systems are fully functional, and they are extremely complex. An embassy might have 100 cameras that need to operate. And then there is making sure all the keypads on the doors work, making sure the hard-line doors are securing properly, and that entrance and exit barriers are working. There is a lot of management of the

locks and keys.” He said that “they are working side by side with the Security Technical Specialists, and are really integrated into the program.”

Fitzsimmons said that Seabees also bring fresh insight to an embassy’s Security Engineering Office. “It’s an excellent fit. Because they have a relatively short tour with us, they can come in with new perspective and can spot something that has been ignored and figure out ways to improve things. They get excited about it and they attack it.”

“These guys are always figuring out better ways to do things.” In Athens, he said, “we took care of the power-assisted vehicle barriers, the delta barriers, at post. They were relatively new, about three years old when I got there. And one by one they started failing.” He said it was the Seabees who raised the possibility that undersized hydraulic hoses were at fault. “We contacted the manufacturer and found out they should have been installed with much bigger hoses.”

And Seabees sometimes help out in completely unexpected ways. “There’s a program where embassies can hire students over the summer, so we put in for one. We didn’t know what we were going to get.

Well, we got an art student. I wanted to expose her to the stuff we were doing, but she was not all that thrilled with pulling wire,” Fitzsimmons remembers with a smile. “But one of the Seabees was a steelworker and he took her out to the shop and taught her welding. Pretty soon she was out there making sculpture. She came back all black from the soot and with spatters all over her clothes, but it enthused her about the rest of the job. She really, really got into the whole rest of the work.”

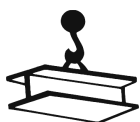
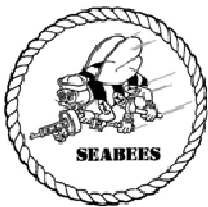
What happens to Seabees after their tours with State are done? Plenty come back. “We have a lot of direct hires now as Security Engineering Officers and as STS’s who were Seabees. And facilities managers, too. OBO has hired a lot of these guys as facility managers. “At 20 years, if you got in at 18, you can retire at 38 and you’re young enough for a second career with us. The former ‘Bees that we get have leadership, they have a broad range of skills, they’re familiar with the Foreign Service life, they’re familiar with our mission and they fit in extremely well right from the get-go,” he said.



Seabee Memorial, Arlington, VA



Notes from our members:



From **Stoney Serrett**: I am back from my 16-day trip to Canada and Yellowstone Nation Park, Glacier National Park and Teton National Park. I also had four days with my daughter and grandson in Calgary, Canada. I found your August Newsletter and enjoyed all of the things that you talked about. It sure is a great way to keep us together

although we may not be together physically. It seems like it is the next best thing. I do hope that you will be able to keep it going as long as you can. I heard from **Marilyn Knight** and she thanked me and my son **Darrell** for taking the trip to **Bill Knight's** memorial. I am sending you a check for dues [thank you!] in this letter and I plan to talk to by telephone soon. Tell **Rachel** that I really enjoyed her (and your) hospitality and hope we can do that again sometime in the future..... from **Bert Helms**: I still like to read the Newsletter. I am a little late, but better than never. [thanks, **Bert**]..... from **Jack Schrader**: [Jack asked me to send some flags] I received the flags this week and thought I should get your check out. Thanks [thank you, **Jack**!]..... from **Vic Jaccino**: [Vic called and asked for some white Seabee flags] Thanks, **Scott**. Enclosed find my check in full, plus my dues. Use the rest on whatever. Thanks.....from **Gene Perry**: [I took some caps and 'T' shirts

to a Seabee picnic and sold some] I enjoyed the get-together at the picnic. Maybe next time we will have a few more Seabees. My check for a cap and 'T' shirt is enclosed. Thanks..... from **Stoney Serrett**: [sent another check to help. Thanks, **Stoney**]..... from **Rex Roark**: Enclosed find my check for the flags and some due [thank you]. Do what is needed with the rest..... from **Hank Balconi**: [**Hank** is our Nevada agent with the Secretary of State for our corporate entity] Another year already! Hope you and **Rachel** are staying well. We are fine here. Wishing you both a wonderful holiday season coming up. [Thank you! And for you and **Patty**, too!]..... from **John Wilborn**: [**John** had a heart attack a few months ago and is feeling better now. He gives Seabee pins away to the employees at Home Depot where he shops, a lot! Enclosed a check for the pins I sent plus a bit extra]..... I received a letter from **Stoney** with the address of **Lucy Stevens**. I also received a response to my letter to Admiral **James Taylor** in Washington state..... from **Stoney Serrett**: **Stoney** sent a check to cover some expenses. [thanks, **Stoney**]..... from **Tom Dowd**: I usually send greeting cards via the Internet, but this year, on November 18, my 8-year old Dell Processor decided it no longer wished to participate in my life. Since then, me dependence on my computer has been front and center every day. My non-super fast replacement will arrive Dec. 6 and, fortunately, most of my financial deposits and payments come and go as if I was not home. Hope you are well and have a Happy Birthday [I did, and thanks!]..... from **Earl Presson**: [I received a check for dues and thank you.]..... from **Stoney**: [I received a check to help with expenses. Thanks, **Stoney**]..... That is all the letters I have received. We are trying to continue this electronic MCB 2 / CBMU 1 Newsletter, but we still have expenses related to our operation. Corporate filing, corporate agent, web site maintenance, file back-up and storage are just some of the on-going expenses. All of our past issues of the Newsletter are on our web site. If we close the web site, all of that past information will be lost. Navy historians have contacted me for Korean War and Subic Bay info. It would be a shame to loose all of that info. Please support the Newsletter.

The Good Guy List

For 2019

John Bloem, Pat Carey, Frank (in memory of his brother Mike) Castelvechi, Roy Cone, Ballard Credeur, Mary Dick (for all the Good Guys), Tom Dowd, Don 'Ike' Eminhizer, Al Erb, Richard Farbo, Frank Fibich, Richard Forster, Jack Foster, Yvonne Fowler (in memory of Bob Fowler) Meredith, Claude Garcenot, Robert Graf, John Grasz, Gordon Gwathney, Pauline (in memory of Charlie) Hagemann, Roger Hamilton, Ruth (in memory of Alex) Hamilton, Bert Helms, Mary (in memory of Duane) Henrichson, Wayne Heple, Althea (in memory of Jerry) Herr, Juanita (in memory of Leonard [Hersh]) Hershberger, Erling Husby, Vic Jaccino, Joe (Frenchie) Jandreau, Sharon (in memory of Larry) Jessop, Sharon (in memory of Ambrose) Johnson, Carol (in memory of my loving husband of 62 years Charles) Kangas, Duane Keech, Denise King (in memory of her Dad, Don Truskey), Marilyn Knight (in memory of Bill), John Kolasz, Betty (in memory of Emil) Krygier, H.A. 'Herb' Liverman, Ivan Majetic, Bob Markey, Don McLain, Bobby McMillan, John Petronka, Earl Presson, Gary Rawlings, Rex Roark, C. Edner Rudolph, Jack Schrader, Stoney Serrett, Dick Skillicorn, Alice (in memory of Ray) Sonnen, Marian (in memory of Clyde) Stenholm, Stiles Stevens, Lucy (in memory of Lee) Stevens, John Stock, Willie Struecker, Judy (in memory of Richard) Todd, Rodney White, John Wilborn, Scott Williams, R.G. 'Pete' Williams, and Bill Wisnowski.

Everyone listed here have their dues paid at least through 2019, some much longer. If you don't find your name on this list, then maybe you have 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 December 11, 2018. There are currently 45 paid up members through 2019. The Newsletter is sent primarily by email. If you or a son or daughter have an email address and you wish to receive the Newsletter by email, please send an email to Scott at williash@aol.com.

Online, you will get the Newsletter with color pictures if they are in the original, which is cost-prohibitive to print in the Post Office-mailed version

Everyone can read the Newsletter on-line on our Web page: <http://mcb2seabeereunion.com/>
Please pass this web page along. Scott

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 713 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 (22 pages). Glad to have all aboard! And, if you would like a directory sorted by ZIP numbers, let me know. You can see who lives close to you or use it when you travel. And keep sending those cards and letters – especially the ones with checks!

Scott Williams

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 (or CBMU 1, etc.)

Dues are \$25/year
(more, if you can)
January - December

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

Web page: <http://mcb2seabeereunion.com/>

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