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Bee Line

MCB 53

FALL 2007

“With Compassion for Others
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For Peace with Freedom”

MCB 53 Alumni Association

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A year after making his NASCAR Busch Series debut at California Speedway, Brad Keselowski is prepared to return to the track, this time in the No. 88 Navy Seabees Chevrolet Monte Carlo SS for JR Motorsports, and compete for



a top finish in the Camping World 300. In honor of the 65th Anniversary of the Seabees, the U.S. Navy's construction battalion, the No. 88 Navy Chevrolet featured a special Navy Seabees paint scheme for Saturday's Sept. 1 Speedway race at California Speedway. Instead of the regular navy-colored paint scheme, the No. 88 was tan with the Seabees 65th anniversary logo adorning the hood. In June, JR Motorsports team owner Dale Earnhardt Jr. visited the

Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Miss. While there he had the opportunity to visit with a number of Navy Seabees stationed there and gained experience on some of the equipment they work with on a daily basis. Brad Keselowski, Driver, No. 88 Navy Seabees Monte Carlo SS said, "Going back to California with JR Motorsports will be a completely different experience for me. Last year I was running for another team when I attempted to make my first Busch race at California. Working with the Navy team is very different. I'm excited to go back to the track with a competitive car and a team that has a shot at a top 10 or a top-five run. It makes a huge difference to show up with a team that has all the parts and pieces in place to run up front. I'm also honored to run the special Seabees paint scheme this weekend. The car looks really great. It's pretty awesome to get to represent the sailors who defend our country out on the track each week."



Honor and Respect

Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform. My legislation will clarify regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not. I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

This Bill was passed July 25, 2007.

Memoriam

Two of our Seabees have mustered in with the original construction team. Charles H. Hutton (A and F company, 68 & 69) passed away January 3, 2006. Our other shipmate, David Mayer, is also in heaven,

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eating chocolate chip cookies and drinking a beer, after leaving Ky. at 3:40 am on July 2, 2007. May Peace in our heart and Fellowship remain our constant companions.

Replica Seabee expected to create a buzz at parades

Original article by Arline A. Fleming Journal Staff Writer The Providence Journal

Welcome to the world, BabyBee! A new Fighting Seabee has been born. And he, or possibly she, will be making the rounds of Rhode Island parades and veterans' events. After four months of gentle gestation, Baby Bee will require strong arms, and a trailer, to embark on public outings. But she - or possibly he - is dressed in fresh paint, ready to stroll. "Bee's about 200 pounds," said Robert Schwab of North Kingstown, who played a major part in creating this portable replica of the original, and much larger, Fighting Replica Seabee that long stood at the main entrance into the Quonset Point-Davisville area. The original now stands on the museum grounds, where it was moved in 1999. "We needed something decent for parades, just to show what the Seabee looks like," he said. "It's kind of a landmark, and people really like that."



THE ORIGINAL Fighting Seabee was born during World War II, when the Navy created Construction Battalions, or Seabees, to build advance bases in the war zone. In 1942, a Navy lieutenant asked civilian employee Frank J. Iafrate, a North Providence native who was working at Quonset Point, to come up with an insignia to represent the new group. Iafrate sketched out the bee that was to become the Seabees' logo.

He is said to have chosen a bee because of its busy worker reputation, and because a bee won't go looking for trouble, but if bothered, will lash back with a sting. Six and a half decades later, thousands of men - and recently women - have served as Seabee builder-fighters, and Iafrate is forever connected to the image of the Tommy gun-toting bee wearing a white sailor's cap and an I-mean-business look on his face. The bee's multiple fists carry the appropriate building tools and a machine gun. Iafrate died in 2000. Rugh, of Jamestown, is a retired Seabee and volunteer at the museum, where retired Seabees gather each Wednesday to paint, hammer, pour cement, and essentially build this museum, using free labor and whatever grants and funds they can gather. "We're always looking for support," Rugh said. So in a sense, Baby Bee has been designed with recruiting in mind, making public appearances and reminding the general public of the Seabees' presence. "IT ALL HAPPENED right here," said 85-year-old Robert T. Mellor, of Wakefield, a veteran of World War II, who comes to the museum each week to work, and who assisted with the final painting of the replica. "This should be a living museum to the Seabees," he said, also quick to note "this is where the Quonset Hut was created." Rugh said the local chapter of Seabee Veterans of America, Island X-1

Davisville, worked out a lease for six acres on the base property. During the past decade, its members have cleared brush, moved in Quonset huts, and set up displays of Seabee memorabilia. At the center of the park is the Chapel in the Pines, where, Rugh said, many Seabee weddings were once held. Inside the chapel they've stored original murals from the Seabee mess hall and a classroom. Both the chapel and the original Fighting Seabee were constructed more than 40 years ago, he said, and both are in need of work. The original Fighting Seabee is to be sandblasted and repainted over the summer, said Rugh. And the roof of the chapel needs to be replaced. THE MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS are a nonprofit group, and rely on help from outside sources to maintain these memorials to the Seabees – a military branch the retirees feel is somewhat misunderstood, perhaps even forgotten. But during World War II alone, more than 100,000 Seabees are said to have passed through Davisville before going overseas. The Seabees left Quonset/Davisville in 1974 for bases in Mississippi and California. But there are Seabees serving in Iraq, the men said, and a list of Seabees who have died there is on exhibit at the museum. Mellor, who hopes school groups will come to tour the park and museum, carries in his wallet a worn and creased printed description of the Seabees that reads: Seabees, their simple motto tells the story: "We build, We fight." From the island hopping of World War II and the cold of Korea, to the steaming jungles of Vietnam, the Seabees have built entire bases, bulldozed and paved thousands of miles of roadway and airstrips in now long forgotten places. "I keep it because people do want to know what we do," Mellor said. And because he doesn't want anyone to forget. The Seabee Museum is open Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., or by appointment. For more information about the

Aloha

Things are progressing nicely on the October 2008 Reunion in Hawaii. As of 8/29/07, 18 fellow Seabees have already signed up. Just a reminder, in order to see if we are able to get the Hale Koa Hotel, we need a fairly accurate account by the end of this September of how many members plan to attend this reunion. The first plan is the Hale Koa Hotel which is the military hotel and is open to all retired military (including reservists), DOD (present and retired) and 100% service-connected disabled veterans. The Hale Koa is on the edge of Waikiki and is within easy walking distance of downtown. If there are any questions as to whether you are eligible then please see web site www.halekoa.com The Hale Koa is a 5 star hotel and is priced according to rank and type of view desired. It is a lot less expensive than comparable hotels in the area. I need a rough idea by September 30, 2007 of how many people will be going to the reunion and of these, how many qualify for the Hale Koa and would be willing to sponsor an extra room for a fellow attendee. I will take this information to the general manager when we are there this year and see whether there is anything that he is willing and able to do to accommodate all of us. Please send this information to me either by email at d2butler@aol.com or leave a voice mail on my home phone 207-698-1803.

One of our fellow Seabees, Bob Graziano, has put me in touch with his cousin who is a travel agent in New York. Her name is Becky and her travel agency is called "ALL ABOARD TRAVEL AGENCY". She is willing to work with any and all of us who will be traveling to Hawaii. She should be able to get group rates if there will be a lot of people flying out of the same airport. Her telephone number 1-800-531-4488. She won't be able to do anything until the beginning of December because most, if not all, airlines won't book until 330 days before you fly.

As for Chyrl and me, we will be making the "**SUPREME SACRIFICE**" (LOL) of returning to Hawaii in less than 4 weeks to continue on with the plans. We will update you as we go along.

Aloha, Don

November Alumni Birthdays

Phillip D. Bottenfield	VIET era
Keith J. Kusch	VIET era
Keith Harley	VIET era
Dale M. Berg	VIET era
Leonard W. Pettitt, Jr.	VIET era
John J. Koza	VIET era
Edward J. Gaillard	VIET era
Gary L. Eberle	VIET era
Stephen C. Wilson	VIET era
Nelson L. Stants	VIET era
Roney J. Steele	VIET era
Orin D. Nelon	VIET era
David L. White	VIET era
Thomas N. Earp, Jr.	WW II era
John A. Haynie	VIET era
Roscoe S. Putnam, Jr.	VIET era
Paul A. Sprayburry	VIET era
Barry L. Wren	VIET era
Ralph J. Storti	VIET era
Donald E. Butler	VIET era
Neil L. Jensen	VIET era
Francis P. Pappas	VIET era
Robert E. Barnhart	VIET era
Clarence E. Harris, Jr.	VIET era
Gilbert S. Harrington	VIET era
William E. Johnson	VIET era

December Alumni Birthdays

Harrison P. Barton	VIET era
Orval F. Hoenike	VIET era
Stephen W. Garrett	VIET era
Lester W. Garden	VIET era
Cap L. Jeannerett	VIET era
Charles R. Markley	VIET era
Howard R. Vanscoy	VIET era
Clifford L. Thorburn	VIET era
Ronald J. Bush Sr.	VIET era
Robert D. Tansley	VIET era
William P. Kalbach	VIET era
Harper P. Duelly	VIET era
Lyle W. BeckmanSr	VIET era
John M. Dienst	VIET era
Joseph R. Hayden	WW II era
Gerald L. Hayward	VIET era

museum, go to <http://www.seabeesmuseum.com/> or call (401) 294-7233.



Joe Cormier, of North Kingstown, paints the platform that will be the home base for the new smaller Fighting Seabee sculpture
Journal photos / Frieda Squires

PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF JULY TO BE "SEABEE MONTH" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Carter, Fellela, Gallison, Serpa, and Melo
Date Introduced: May 09, 2007

RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations hereby proclaims the month of July to be "Seabee Month" in the State of Rhode Island. We thank them for their heroic service to our nation in its greatest hours of need.



Seabee: (see-bee) n. A fully Automatic, Overworked, Under Paid, MRE Fed, Beer Cooled, Amphibious Animal that thrives on Military Intelligence.



Navy Seabee Veterans of America

