

NAVY SEABEE VETERANS of AMERICA

CAN DO



Volume 37 Edition 1, Winter/Spring 2026

Cover: Caricature of the Victorious Seabee at the end of WWII

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

It's hard to believe that I introduced myself as the National Chaplain six years ago.

As I start my 7th year in this capacity, I want to thank all the National Commanders who appointed me and also past Vice Commander Doug Bower who informed me that the NSVA was searching for someone to fill this position.

I have always tried to provide insightful views hope I never offended or overlooked any one no matter what their personal beliefs are. As we bring this year to a close it is my fondest wish and prayer that everyone has a Joyful and Healthy Holiday and that the future brings you a Prosperous New Year. I will continue to stay in this position as long as I can or until I am no longer able due to Health or other unforeseen issues.

I will close by saying "GOD BLESS AMERICA"

Michael Boncheck National Chaplain

Navy Seabee Veterans of America



COMMANDERS CORNER

Happy Birthday Seabees, March 5th marks 84 years of pride, service, and the Can-Do spirit!

This is an exciting year as we also celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Navy Seabee Veterans of America, honoring our legacy while building momentum for the future.

One of our biggest milestones this spring is the launch of the new NSVA National Website. The site will make it easier to join, renew, communicate, and stay connected through National ALL HANDS updates and Island platforms. I encourage every member to visit nsva.org, log in, and complete your profile to help strengthen our Seabee network.

I also challenge each of you to stay engaged and participate in the many events happening across the country. From Seabee Birthday celebrations to major reunions, these gatherings keep our camaraderie strong and our mission alive.

Just as important, I ask each of you to reach out to new and prospective members and invite them to join us or take part in upcoming events. If you are a new member, welcome and help spread the word. Engagement is key to our forward progress, and we want to hear from you. This organization is for **ALL Seabees**, regardless of what other organizations you may belong to. Together, we can join hands to keep Seabees connected, supported, and united for the good of all.

Key Highlights for 2026:

- Seabee Wreath Laying Ceremony, Saturday, March 14 | 0900, Navy Seabee Foundation with NSVA, Wreath placement at the Seabee Memorial, Admiral Ben Moreell gravesite.
- All Seabee Reunion, Gulfport, MS | April 16-19
- NSVA National Convention & 80th Celebration, Newport News, VA | September 9-13
- East Coast All Seabee Reunion, Pigeon Forge, TN | October 25-29

Along with numerous battalion reunions and regional events, 2026 is shaping up to be a remarkable year of connection and fellowship.

As we mark eight decades of service, let's continue to honor our past by staying active, supporting one another, and growing this organization for the next generation of Seabees.

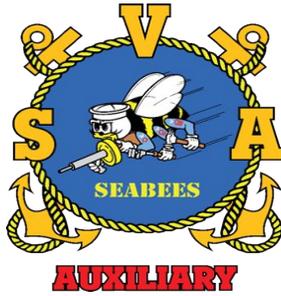
Once a Seabee Always a Seabee, CAN DO!

Respectfully,

Eric M. Treece

National Commander

Navy Seabee Veterans of America



President's Perspective the NSVAA Officers



The 2025-2026 NSVAA Elected and appointed Officers L-R: Chaplain; MaryJo Kenyon, Parliamentarian; Suanne Deveraux, Historian; Linda Hillyer, Secretary; Elaine Coffin, Treasurer; Nancy Staples, Vice President; Nancy Ward, President; Carol Parker.

We hope to see many of the Auxiliary members at the National Convention in September. Visit www.nsva.org for more membership information on the Convention.

There are 4 (four) resolutions that have been received, numbered and placed before the Resolutions Committee for review. Upon reviewing the resolutions, the committee will determine their recommendations for each resolution and forward to the National Executive Committee at the Mid-Year Meeting for placement on the 2026 National Convention Agenda.

Listed below are the 4 (four) Resolutions that will be considered for adoption at the 2026 National Convention scheduled to be convened in Newport News, VA from September 9th thru the 12th.

Please take the time to review these important proposals and to disseminate them to your Department and Islands. Make your appointed convention delegates and alternates, attending the convention, aware of your questions or concerns regarding these resolutions.

OFFICIAL NSVA RESOLUTION FORM

RESOLUTION: 2026–__1_____

SUBMITTED BY: National Treasurer Gerald A. Kissinger, NSVA National Executive Board

SUBJECT: Amendment of Navy Seabee Veterans of America, Inc., Standing Rules, Rule 5: National Convention and Convention Committee, Paragraph D.

WHEREAS:

WHEREAS The National Treasurer of the Navy Seabee Veterans of America, Inc. (NSVA) is a required Officer for attendance at the annual National Convention and Reunion.

WHEREAS The National Treasurer is required to give reports to the Main Body regarding the financial health, stability and state of the finances for the NSVA during the General Session.

WHEREAS The NSVA Standing Rules, Rule 5, Paragraph D. is written to “Provide for the National Commander and National Secretary adequate **complimentary** accommodations at the National Convention Headquarters Hotel with sufficient administrative work area for the duration of the Convention and (1) day prior to the Convention”.

WHEREAS The NSVA Standing Rules, Rule 5, Paragraph D must be amended to include the Office of the National Treasurer be provided with adequate complimentary accommodations at the National Convention Headquarters Hotel with sufficient administrative work area for the duration of the Convention and (1) day prior to the Convention.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Navy Seabee Veterans of America, Inc. Standing Rules, Rule 5, Paragraph D. be amended to include the Office of the National Treasurer be

provided with adequate complimentary accommodations at the National Convention Headquarters Hotel with sufficient administrative work area for the duration of the Convention and (1) day prior to the Convention.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Main Body approves and authorizes this change to the Standing Rules during the General Session of the 2026 National Convention and Reunion of the NSVA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That this resolution be adopted and implemented effective immediately.

Sponsoring Members:

1. Gerald Kissinger – National Treasurer | Email: cbsw1285@gmail.com |
Tel: 720-641-8379
2. Eric M. Treece – National Commander | Email: ericmtreece@gmail.com |
Tel: 757-968-0446
3. Karl F. Douge' – National Vice Commander | Email: combatelectric@aol.com |
Tel: 305-230-8000
4. Charles H. Coffin – National Secretary | Email: nsvasec@gmail.com |
Tel: 203-843-5513
5. David J. Buchanan – Past National Commander | DBuchanan@centurylink.net |
Tel: 352-564-0378
6. Jack F. Tangen – Past National Commander | Email: jtangen5553@gmail.com |
Tel: 585-880-3235

OFFICIAL NSVA RESOLUTION FORM

RESOLUTION: 2026–__2_____

SUBMITTED BY: National Commander, Eric Treece, NSVA National Executive Board

SUBJECT: Establishing the NSVA National Outreach Program

Establishing the NSVA National Outreach Program

WHEREAS:

WHEREAS the Navy Seabee Veterans of America (NSVA) exists to promote fellowship, preserve Seabee history, support Seabees and their families, and serve our communities; and

WHEREAS, Seabees have a proud legacy of responding to humanitarian needs, disaster recovery, community rebuilding, and support of fellow veterans; and

WHEREAS, the growth of NSVA requires a nationally coordinated, transparent, and accountable system to manage outreach activities, donations, sponsorships, and partnerships; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 National Convention authorized the formation of an Outreach Committee to begin building a national framework for service-based engagement; and

WHEREAS, the National Commander has initiated planning for a National Outreach Program to strengthen NSVA's public mission, member engagement, and community impact;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Navy Seabee Veterans of America hereby establishes the NSVA National Outreach Program as an official National program of the organization.

1. PURPOSE

The Outreach Program shall provide direct assistance to Seabees and their families, support disaster response and humanitarian missions, build partnerships, and provide a national fundraising platform.

2. GOVERNANCE

The program shall be overseen by a National Outreach Committee appointed by the National Commander and approved by the National Board.

3. FINANCIAL AUTHORITY

The National Treasurer is authorized to establish restricted accounts for outreach funds. All funds shall be reported and audited.

4. FUNDRAISING

The Outreach Program may conduct fundraising, accept donations, and apply for grants.

5. ISLAND PARTICIPATION

NSVA Islands are encouraged to conduct outreach within their communities under the National Outreach Program.

Islands may establish local outreach efforts, participate in national initiatives, and apply for Outreach funding in accordance with National guidelines.

6. COMMANDER AUTHORITY

The National Commander is authorized to appoint committee members, approve missions, and sign agreements.

6. REPORTING Quarterly reports shall be provided to the National Board.

OFFICIAL NSVA RESOLUTION FORM

RESOLUTION: 2026–__3_____

SUBMITTED BY: NSVA National Executive Board

SUBJECT: Digital Continuity and Website Modernization

WHEREAS:

WHEREAS, the Navy Seabee Veterans of America (NSVA) relies upon its national website and digital systems for membership management, communications, fundraising, outreach, and public representation; and

WHEREAS, the National Convention is the legislative body of NSVA pursuant to Article VI of the NSVA Constitution; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article VIII, Section 3.A of the NSVA Bylaws, the National Executive Committee is vested with the power to administer the affairs of NSVA between Conventions; and

WHEREAS, the current NSVA website contract is scheduled to expire in March 2026, creating a risk of service interruption if a successor vendor is not in place; and

WHEREAS, early transition is necessary to implement upgrades, data migration, and system testing without disruption;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the National Executive Board hereby authorizes the National Commander, in coordination with the National Treasurer and appropriate officers, to select and contract with a successor website and digital services provider no later than eight (8) weeks prior to expiration of the current contract in order to implement improvements, upgrades, and system migration without interruption.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Board authorizes expenditures not to exceed \$5,000 for website design, development, migration, and implementation, and \$225 per month (\$2,700 per fiscal year) for hosting, security, and digital services to ensure uninterrupted operation of nsva.org.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any funds raised or designated for website modernization may be applied to these costs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this authorization shall remain in effect unless modified or revoked by the membership at the next National Convention.

OFFICIAL NSVA RESOLUTION FORM

RESOLUTION: 2026-__4_____

SUBMITTED BY: Chuck Douge, National Vice Commander

SUBJECT: NSVA National Convention Policies

WHEREAS,

WHEREAS, the Navy Seabee Veterans of America, Inc. (NSVA) is governed by its Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules, which vest authority in the membership and the National Executive Board for matters affecting national conventions, reunions, and financial administration; and

WHEREAS the Annual Convention represents the highest decision-making authority of the NSVA membership; and

WHEREAS conventions and reunions—whether designated as official National events or Island-hosted gatherings—require consistent procedures to ensure transparency, accountability, and organizational visibility; and

WHEREAS hosting Islands and organizers incur costs related to facilities, logistics, hospitality, and administration; and

WHEREAS centralized registration and financial processing through National Headquarters promotes uniform accounting, reporting accuracy, and organizational integrity; and

WHEREAS advance notification and publication of NSVA reunions strengthens communication, participation, and public awareness across the organization,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NSVA membership assembled at the Annual Convention hereby adopts the following policies governing conventions and reunions:

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1. Annual Convention Authority

- a. This resolution is submitted for consideration and approval by the NSVA membership at the Annual Convention.
- b. Upon adoption, this policy shall apply to all future NSVA conventions and reunions unless amended or rescinded.

2. Island-Hosted Conventions

- a. When an NSVA Island hosts an official NSVA convention, fifty percent (50%) of all collected registration fees shall be retained by the hosting Island to offset direct convention-related expenses.
- b. The remaining fifty percent (50%) of registration fees shall be remitted to National Headquarters in accordance with established NSVA financial procedures.

3. National-Hosted Conventions

- c. When the NSVA National organization hosts a convention, one hundred percent (100%) of all registration fees shall be retained by National Headquarters.

4. NSVA Reunions – Notification and Publication

- d. Any Island or authorized group seeking to host an NSVA reunion shall submit a formal request to National Headquarters prior to public announcement.
- e. Upon approval or acknowledgment, National Headquarters shall publish the reunion on official NSVA communication channels, including the national website and social media platforms.

5. Registration Processing for Reunions

- a. All registrations and registration fees for NSVA reunions shall be processed through the official NSVA Website.
- b. National Headquarters shall collect and account for all reunion registration revenue.

6. Revenue Disbursement Timeline

- a. All reunion-related registration funds due to hosting Islands or organizers shall be disbursed by National Headquarters within thirty (30) days following the conclusion of the event.
- b. Disbursement shall be accompanied by a summary accounting of registrations and fees collected.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Treasurer, in coordination with the National Commander and National Secretary, is authorized to administer, enforce, and publish procedures necessary to implement this resolution, and that these provisions shall be codified in the National Headquarters Standing Rules.

Submitted Respectfully

Chuck Douge
National Vice Commander
Navy Seabee Veterans of America

**Because You Served,
They Could Benefit.**
Scholarships for Seabee
Children & Grandchildren!

Offering Scholarships for: Four-year
Colleges and Universities, Community
Colleges, **Career & Technical Education**
(CTE) and Trade schools

**NAVY SEABEE
FOUNDATION**
seabee.org

SEABEES!!! Parents, Grandparents have your children or grandchildren applied for a Navy Seabee Foundation Scholarship? Why not? Do it NOW as applications end in April! Visit Seabee.org for more info.

Licensed Insured

**Righteous Cleaning
Service**

The Righteous Cleaning Service is a proud sponsor of the Navy Seabee Veterans of America.

Their team believes in ritual purification of a clean home, delivering superior results that leave your space spotless and your spirit uplifted. Located in Myrtle Beach, SC Righteous Cleaning Service includes Residential, Commercial & deep cleans and move in/out.

Contact Stacey at 1-(319)-470-1116

or stacey@righteouscleaningservicellc.com

ISLAND HOPPING



NSVA Island X-1 in Gulfport, MS sent in the following pictures of their Christmas Luncheon. It looks like everyone was enjoying themselves and the food looks delicious!



The Upper right picture features Dick Wade, a WWII Seabee Veteran and an Island X-1 Life Member. Submitted by Bob Smith, X-1 Gulfport.



Here is a group picture taken of the MCB-11 and NMCB-8, 2025 reunion in Pensacola, FL. MCB-11 and NMCB-8 will be combining reunions in 2026 in Colorado Springs, CO. See the following pages for details and information on attending.

On the 26th of October 2025, NSVA Dept. of TN hosted the East Coast All Seabee Reunion. That Sunday afternoon, we were rewarded with attendance of Seabees from across the Nation for the reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN. Stories of deployments together, various duty stations around the world, old friends and a remembrance of being one of the original Beavers/Bobcats/Seabees in WW II were shared.



Above is Troy Branch Cmdr. X-1, Greenville, TN with WWII Seabee Veteran, Mr. Louis Trippit.

Mr. Trippit, of St. Louis, MO, was the oldest Seabee present. Mr. Trippit was in the first group of 60 to enter Bora Bora at the beginning of World War II. From Beaver to Bobcat to Seabee, Mr. Trippit, having just turned 100 years old, shared experiences from his time in service. One outstanding memory, his unit was at Saipan for 13 months cleaning up and rebuilding. "Our food was awesome. We had a 5-star chef who had joined us and provided us with 3 hot meals a day made up of food obtained from the local area."



Above Seabees, Honeybees & Spouses



POW/MIA Family Table



L to R - Louis Trippit, John Augustine, Joe Waters, Jerry Farmer & John Dainelski

NSVA Island X-1 Officer Swearing in Ceremony
Island Officer swearing in by SC District Commander Chett Winchell:



L – R NSVAA Officers: Michelle Sweitzer – Commander, Lois Synowiez – Chaplain, Susan Smith – Treasurer, Barbara Synowiez - Secretary

NSVA Officers: Ricky Burkhart – Commander, Karen Clough - Vice Commander, Gene Cowhick – Secretary, Jerry Luzadder - Treasurer



Island X-1 WWII Seabee Dick Wade's Birthday Celebration



Michelle Sweitzer - NSVAA Cmdr. presents Adeline Segalla with Scholarship from NSVA Island X-1 Scholarship recipients not pictured: Zachary Johnson, Hunter Grimes and Brielle Jennings

Here is a photo of Island X-1 Gulfport's Veterans Day Parade ride.

The family members of Island X-1 Gulfport, MS rode the float in the Gulfport, MS Veterans Day Parade. Many thanks for their dedication on Veterans Day! Pictured left to right: Commander Island X-1 Gulfport Rick Burkhart, Marjean Burkhart, Caroly Niolet, Vanessa Niolet, Elizabeth Phipps, Gary Phipps, James Storie, Ashlen Storie, Tessa Grimes, Cheryl Lombardi, Vinnie Lombardi and Brent Grimes (Not pictured truck driver).



Veterans Day Parade in Knoxville, TN

Honoring All Veterans that we have served with, those who have served and especially those who served and did not return.

It was an early, cold 30-degree, Veterans Day morning in Knoxville, TN, when members of the NSVA Department of Tennessee and Island X-2 arrived in downtown Knoxville, TN, for the American Legion Post 2, Knoxville's, 100th Anniversary Veterans Day Parade.

This historic parade was broadcast being broadcast on local Channel 6 ABC News as one of the top 10 Veterans Day Parade's in the U.S.

Univ. of Tenn. Dragoon and East TN Veterans Honor Guard, VVA Chapter 1078, VFW Post 1733, East TN Women Veterans Network, US Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary along with various high school bands and many Veterans Organizations along with supportive businesses, made up the 93 members of the parade.





Island members in attendance were John Drexler, Frank Acs, John Augustine, Fred Phillips, Jack O'Hearn, Chett Winchell, Bob Eastman and Rene's weeks. It is with a great appreciation for these and all Seabees and members of the NSVA, stepping up on this cold morning to show the "Bee" and honor Seabees both Past and Present, and for our fellow Veterans from all Branches.



This historic parade was broadcast being broadcast on local Channel 6 ABC News as one of the top 10 Veterans Day Parade's in the U.S.

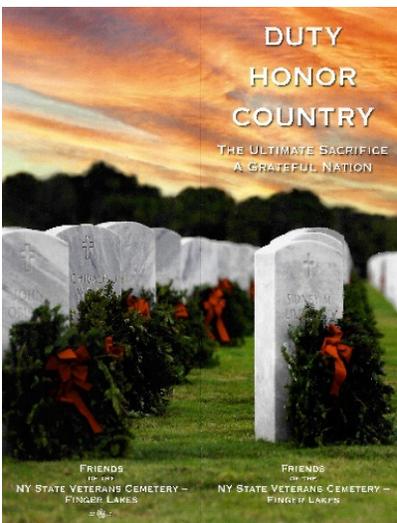
NSVA X-1 Gulfport, MS

Below is a picture of our NSVA X-1 Gulfport, MS brick dedication for our 16 fallen members:



CUCM Duane Vance, EOC Ronnie Harvey, BUCS Phillip Fleming, EOCS Terry Lebkicher,
CECS Gerald Murphy, EO1 Richard Spink, Mr. Renfro Richardson, CMC Jim Todd,
BUCS Jack Lee, EOCS David Geter, EQCM C.T. Green, UTCS Samuel Kirsch, LT Ernest Fenton,
EOC Robert Reeter, MSGT Doug Meloche, Mrs. Nadine Nicolls

Special thanks to Don Galster, Ricky Burkart, Gene Cowhick, Brent Grimes and Bob Smith for help putting it together.



Located in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region in Central New York resides a Veterans Cemetery that was formerly the Sampson Naval and Air Force bases. An organization “The Friends of NY State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes” undertook the challenge to raise funds to improve this resting place of our deceased veterans.

On February 3, 2026, Linda Ratsep, a former Navy Captain, member of VFW Post 6200 in Ovid NY approached NSVA Island X-19 of Syracuse New York requesting a Letter of Resolution signed by the current X-19 Commander to be submitted to the former Senator Michael F. Nozzolio and Representative Claudia Tenny to secure federal funding on behalf of the “Friends of the New York State Veterans Cemetery-Finger Lakes”.

The X-19 Island Commander signed the Letter of Resolution for submittal to the Friends of the NY State Veterans Cemetery. The members of Island X-19 endorsed the underwriting of this honorable cause.

Since the initial X-19 request and response for support for this initiative, the NSVA Department of New York has also endorsed and supported this most worthy cause.

The significance of this event is that **Seabees** were selected to endorse this honor.

Submitted by Norm Sulock, member X-19, Syracuse, NY



Jim Furey, Past National Commander seen here being honored and receiving a Quilt of Valor at the MCB 1-9-10 reunion on 10/23/25, Branson, MO. Congratulations to Jim and all the other Seabee Veterans that have received a Quilt of Honor.

From the past Editor

It has been my pleasure and honor to have worked on the CAN DO, attempting to provide newsworthy articles, information and updates about the NSVA affiliated Islands, Departments and National happenings that the readership and members supplied. I have strived to keep this publication objective and open, free of any political bias as our constitution states.

If you haven't surmised by now, the CAN DO is You're newsletter, it depends on the membership's input. It needs Islands like X-1 Gulfport MS, the Department of Tennessee, X-4 in Longmont CO, X-19 in Daytona FL, to mention a few, providing pictures and articles on their activities and updates. So please make a concerted effort to get these stories, events and happenings documented and sent to the new Editor; Patrick Reinard at Reinard.patrick@gmail.com

Yours in the Can Do Spirit
Jack Tangen, PNC

"Iron and Mud: Seabees at Tan Chau", 1970.

Posted - February 6, 2026 Courtesy of John Ratomski

I. The Edge of the River War

The Mekong River shimmered under the relentless Southeast Asian sun, its muddy surface broken by the slow churn of brown current and drifting reeds. To the men of Naval Construction Battalion 62 — the Seabees — this was not just a river. It was the artery of a war, a highway of men and machines threading through the heart of South Vietnam.

It was 1970. The Vietnam War was entering a new phase. American strategy had shifted from search-and-destroy missions to Vietnamization — turning over responsibility to South Vietnamese forces while the U.S. began its long withdrawal. Yet along the Cambodian border, the Mekong Delta was still alive with danger. Tan Chau, a quiet fishing town perched on the edge of Cambodia, had become a critical outpost in Operation SEALORDS — a campaign to choke off enemy movement along the waterways.

And it was here, amid the heat, mud, and mosquitoes, that the Seabees built their pier.

II. Builders in a War Zone

They came not to destroy, but to build. That was the paradox of the Seabees — construction men who carried rifles, welders who worked with one hand on a weapon. Their motto, carved into every heart and toolbox, was simple: "We build. We fight."

At Tan Chau, the assignment was straightforward on paper: construct a pontoon pier to support riverine operations, a lifeline for Navy patrols and supply craft pushing deep into enemy territory. In practice, it was chaos.

The Mekong was treacherous — its currents swift, its mud bottom deep and unpredictable. The tropical heat melted steel tools and blistered hands. The men worked in shifts that blurred together, each hour bringing the same mixture of sweat, noise, and tension.

III. Arrival at the Edge of Nowhere

Their arrival had been quiet, almost surreal. The Seabees came upriver in a convoy of flat-bottomed landing craft, engines groaning under the load of lumber, rebar, and welding equipment. Vietnamese children watched from the banks, waving timidly. Beyond them, the jungle stood thick and unbroken.

Tan Chau itself was a ghostly outpost — half military camp, half fishing village. Bamboo huts leaned over the river, and the air smelled of diesel, fish, and humidity. The Seabees set up camp on a patch of high ground, their tents flapping against the humid breeze, sandbags piled around in crude fortifications.

At night, they listened to the Mekong whisper — and sometimes, to distant gunfire echoing from across the Cambodian border.

IV. The River That Never Slept

The Mekong looked peaceful by day, but it carried death beneath its surface. Viet Cong units used it to move men and munitions under the cover of reeds and darkness. The Navy's patrol boats — swift PBRs and armored monitors — hunted them relentlessly.

The Seabees' new pier would give those boats a secure dock, a place to refuel, rearm, and launch patrols upriver. Every weld, every beam of steel, was a link in the chain of America's river war.

But it also made them a target.

V. Welding Under Fire

On the morning of May 14, 1970, the work site came alive with the crackle of acetylene torches.

Sparks showered from steel braces as Seabees crouched over their welding masks, fusing metal into the skeletal frame of the pier. The air stank of molten iron and gasoline.

They worked fast, methodical — one man cutting, another aligning, a third welding. The pontoon sections bobbed gently in the current, anchored by thick ropes that creaked with every wave.

Suddenly, a sharp crack split the air — rifle fire from across the river. The men froze. A second shot whined overhead, splintering a crate of lumber. Then, as quickly as it started, it stopped. The Seabees ducked behind sandbags, rifles in hand, waiting.

Minutes passed. Silence returned.

“Back to work,” one of them muttered. And they did.

VI. The Hands That Built and Fought

Every man in the battalion carried two skill sets: one for construction, one for combat. They could lay concrete in the morning and fire an M-16 at night. They knew how to calculate load stress — and how to take cover when mortars whistled overhead.

Their faces were leathery from sun and grit, their uniforms perpetually soaked with sweat and river water. Yet they worked with the quiet efficiency of men who had long accepted the absurdity of war — that in order to build something lasting, you sometimes had to risk being destroyed.

VII. Floating Foundations

The pontoon pier began to take shape — a grid of steel and concrete slabs resting on modular pontoons. The design was genius in its simplicity: flexible enough to rise and fall with the tide, strong enough to support armored boats and cargo trucks.

The Seabees welded braces deep into the riverbed, their arcs of light cutting through the haze.

Sparks flew like fireflies against the dusk. The sound of hammering and clanging carried far across the water, mingling with the distant thump of artillery.

The pier grew day by day — from a skeletal framework into a solid platform, a bridge between land and water.

VIII. Nights of Heat and Fear

At night, the jungle came alive with sound — cicadas, frogs, the occasional snap of gunfire far away.

The men slept in their boots, rifles within arm's reach. Every few hours, flares rose over the river, casting the world in brief, ghostly daylight.

Sometimes, the enemy came close. One night, a sentry spotted movement near the far bank. The camp went on alert, machine guns sweeping the tree line. After a tense hour, they stood down. False alarm. Or maybe not.

Sleep was rare. Work was constant.

IX. Letters Home

In rare moments of quiet, the Seabees wrote letters. They wrote about the heat, the mosquitoes, the food — and always, about the river. “It’s never still,” one man wrote home. “Even when it looks calm, you can feel it moving under you — like it’s alive, carrying everything you build away.”

For some, the pier was more than a mission. It was a symbol — proof that they could carve order out of chaos, even for a little while.

X. The Day the River Tested Them

The Mekong’s current could turn violent in an instant. One afternoon, as the men prepared to pour concrete, a storm rolled in. The wind rose, turning the brown water white with foam.

“Secure the pontoons!” the foreman shouted. The Seabees scrambled, tightening ropes and driving stakes into the mud. Rain slammed down, hammering the unfinished pier. Waves battered the pontoons, tearing one loose.

Without hesitation, two men dove into the river, swimming through debris to reattach it. They wrestled the heavy pontoon back into place as lightning flashed overhead, welding sparks and thunder merging into one furious storm.

When it passed, they were soaked and shivering — but the pier still stood.

XI. The Rhythm of Work and War Days blurred together — cutting, welding, pouring, defending.

Helicopters buzzed overhead delivering supplies. Gunboats came and went, their decks blackened by sun and oil. The Seabees learned to measure time not in hours but in projects completed, sections joined, and nights survived. The war outside their worksite came and went like a tide — close one moment, distant the next.

They were never far from danger, yet they lived in the rhythm of labor, of creation.

XII. Brotherhood in the Heat

In the evenings, when the day's heat finally broke, the men sat together by the river, swapping stories, smoking cigarettes, laughing at the absurdities of life in Tan Chau. There was camaraderie born not of glory but of endurance — the quiet bond of men who worked side by side in a place where time and safety were luxuries. They talked about home — about snow, cars, women, and music — all the things that felt like another life. For a few minutes, the war faded.

XIII. The Finished Pier

When the final section of concrete was laid, the Seabees stood back and looked at what they had made. The pier stretched out into the Mekong — a stark, solid silhouette against the glittering water. It wasn't much to look at, but it meant everything. Supply boats could now dock safely. Patrol craft could refuel without drifting into danger. The Navy had its foothold on the river's edge. For the men who had welded it, every beam and brace was a reminder — of sweat, fear, and perseverance.

XIV. A Target in the Current

A week later, the enemy struck. Mortar shells whistled from across the river, exploding near the pier. The Seabees hit the dirt, returning fire from behind sandbags. Smoke filled the air; fragments tore through the scaffolding. When it was over, two men were wounded. The pier was scarred but still standing. That night, under the glow of lanterns, they welded again — patching the damage, reinforcing the structure. "If it can take a mortar," one of them said with a grim grin, "it can take anything."

XV. The Quiet Departure

Their mission completed, the Seabees packed up and prepared to move out. Another battalion would take over maintenance and defense. Before leaving, they walked the length of the pier one last time, boots echoing against the concrete. The river rolled on beneath them, indifferent, eternal. Somewhere upriver, a patrol boat's engine growled — a reminder that the war, like the Mekong, never truly stopped.

XVI. Reflections in Iron

Years later, the photograph would resurface — two men crouched over a beam, welding sparks flying, the river glinting behind them. To most, it was just another black-and-white snapshot from a long war. But to those who had been there, it told a story: of courage without fanfare, of creation in the midst of destruction, of men who built something lasting in a place where so little lasted at all.

XVII. Legacy of the River Builders

The Seabees' work at Tan Chau was just one project among hundreds — airstrips, bridges, hospitals, bases — all carved from jungle and mud. Yet each structure carried the same quiet defiance: a belief that building could be an act of hope, even in war. Their pier became part of the fabric of SEALORDS operations, supporting missions that disrupted enemy supply lines and secured the Mekong Delta. For a time, the river belonged to them.

XVIII. Epilogue: The Sound of Sparks

Today, the Mekong flows on, indifferent to the battles fought along its banks. The pier at Tan Chau may be gone, reclaimed by silt and time. But somewhere in its depths, fragments of steel and concrete still lie — silent witnesses to the men who worked, fought, and built there. In 1970, on the edge of a war that seemed endless, the Seabees left their mark not in blood, but in iron — in the bright hiss of a welding torch cutting through the humid air.

They built a pier. They built a moment of strength.

And in that moment, they built a piece of America on the Mekong.



Navy Seabee Veterans of America Ship Store Order Form

Make Checks Payable to **NSVA**

Mail Form to: NSVA Ship Store Atten: Betty/Ernie Nelson

5142 Endeavour Ave. Dover, FL 33527 (Questions Call: 813-376-3947)

Shipping Information

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Shipping cost: \$1 per patch				
	Quantity	Cost	Shipping	Total
SVA Shirt Patch (3.75"x3.5") \$7.00				
SVA Garrison Cap Patch (2.25"x2.25") \$7.00				
American Flag Patch (3.6"x2.25") \$7.00				
POW/MIA Patch (3"x4") \$7.00				
75 th Convention Patch \$5.00				
Life Member Patch \$5.00				
75 th Anniversary Lapel Pin (1" Diameter) \$5.00/pin			+\$2 shipping	
Uniform Button Covers \$6/SET of 4 +\$2 shipping				
Window Decal 4/\$10 \$1ship				
Shipping Bolo Combo \$5.00 Cord Shipping \$2/cord	Quantity	Bolo/Cord Cost	Shipping Cost	Total
Bolo Cord \$20.00				
Bolo Slide only \$15.00				
Bolo Cord only \$10				
CALL 813-376-3947 FOR LG ORDERS TO POSSIBILITY REDUCE SHIPPING COST				
GRAND TOTAL				






Circle below

Cord Length
36" 42"

Cord Color

White National
Office

Burgundy
District Office

Blue
Island






Revised-MAY 2025

NATIONAL NSVA Garrison Cap Order Form

One Cap per order form.

NSVA SHIPS STORE MANAGER 5142 Endeavour Ave. Dover Fl. 33527-5881

813-376-3947 (Attention Betty or Ernie Nelson)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO NSVA: Mail the form and money to the above address for processing.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Customer Signature _____

This is a custom order, not subject to change, refund or cancellation.

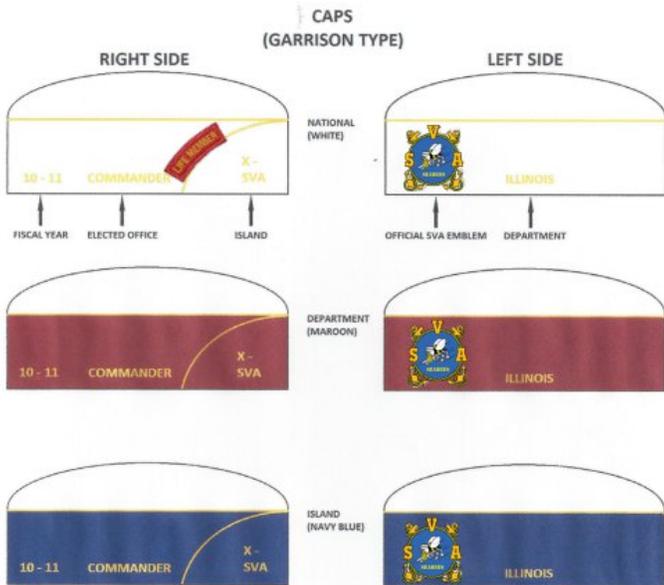
Garrison Cap will include all patches, embroidery and shipping.

Order total

Cap \$80

Vinyl Bag _____

\$80 per Garrison Cap



Size: _____ **Vinyl bag add \$5.00 (if needed)**

Circle color corresponding to position

WH National, Bur Dist., Blue Island

Fill in the blanks:

Right side

X- _____ S.V.A

Dates: _____

Position _____

The crown of all caps will be white, the color of the body will correspond to the organizational level of the member, and the piping will be gold. All lettering will be 1/2" uppercase embroidered in gold thread to match the piping.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The NSVA 80th National Convention and Reunion

September 9th through September 13th at the Holiday Inn,
980 Omni-Blvd. Newport News, VA. 23606

Please review the following pages for Convention Registration, Hotel Reservation,
Convention booklet AD forms and Merchandise.

2026 ANNUAL ALL SEABEE REUNION

April 16 - April 19, 2026 - Gulfport, MS

Hosted by NSVA Island X-1

Pam Taylor, 228-223-1762 or Robert Smith, 228-424-1185

Mobile Construction Battalion NMCB 58 Reunion

May 12-18, 2026 - San Antonio, TX

Contact John Hughes, 571-332-5961 or nmcb58association@gmail.com

MCB-12 Vietnam 1968-1969 Reunion

June 23-26, 2026 - Bath, ME

Contact Bob Williams, 207-844-8142 or mcb12vietnam@gmail.com

Department of Tennessee's 11th Annual BBQ Reunion

August 8, 2026, 11:00 - 14:00 - Kodak, TN

Contact: T. Branch, CDR - 865-924-9023

C. Sawyer, V.CDR - 423-231-2636

MCB 11 and MCB 8 Association Reunions

September 21-24, 2026 - Colorado Springs, CO

Contact Larry Hagler, 512-796-2834 or mcb11.2026@earthlink.net

NMCB 14 Association Reunion

September 26th, Orlando Florida

Visit our website for additional info. **NSVA Department of Tennessee will host**

The 2026 EAST COAST ALL SEABEE REUNION

October 25 - 29, 2026 - Pigeon Forge, TN

Contact Chett Winchell, Commander - 720-560-3834

NAVY SEABEE VETERANS of AMERICA, Inc.



80th NATIONAL CONVENTION AND REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

September 9-13, 2026

Holiday Inn Newport News, VA

Last day to Register at the hotel is August 10th, 2026.

!!!!!!!!! 1 REGISTRATION FOR EACH ATTENDEE!!!!!!!!!

Name; _____ Membership: Auxiliary Annual Life # _____

Mailing address; _____

Email; _____ Phone _____

Island X- _____ City _____ State _____ SEABEE'S Year of Birth _____

Positions held in Island _____

Positions held in National _____

Unit _____, Unit _____, Unit _____, Unit _____, Unit _____

	EVENTS: Details to Follow	COST	TOTAL COST
	Mail checks to: NSVA Convention c/o Charlie Coffin		
	2047 Ridge Road Queensbury NY 12804		
	Convention Registration fee for the 2026 Convention and Reunion A Registration fee is required for each convention registration.		
	If your guest is just attending the dinner only, the fee is waived		
	Registration Fees are Non-Refundable	\$30.00	
	SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET		
	Classic Virginian Buffet	\$60.00	
	Ham, Chicken and Brisket with vegetables, salad and rolls		
	All meals include Iced Tea, Coffee, Water and a Dessert		

	TOTAL ENCLOSED		\$
	NO REFUNDS ON DINNER FEE After 8-10-26		

**Please make checks payable to NSVA,
with “Convention” on the memo line.**

CAN DO

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Winter/Spring 2026

NSVA 2026 National Convention

Hotel information



Holiday Inn

980 Omni-Blvd. Newport News, VA 23606

Room rates available from

Wednesday Sept. 9 – Sunday Sept. 13, 2026

\$159 + taxes

Reservation phone number **757-223-2110**

group's block code: **NSC**

Last day to make a reservation at our group discount will be
on: **August 10, 2026**



SCAN QR CODE FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

Or mail to check to

NSVA

2047 Ridge Road

Queensbury NY 12804

NSVA HATS FOR SALE

\$26.00 EACH free shipping

WHITE OR BLUE



NAVY SEABEE VETERANS OF AMERICA

2026 National Convention Program Ad Order Form

September 9 - 13, 2026 Newport News, VA.

Program Rates (circle your choice)

¼ Page AD \$30.00

½ Page AD \$65.00

Full Page AD \$100.00

Inside Covers (front or back) \$150.00 ea.

A limited number of vender tables are available for rent at \$100.00.

All program ads must be in **JPEG** or **WORD** form and must be received no later than July 1, 2026

Please make your check payable to the NSVA and mail to:

Jack Tangen, PNC

5553 Brockport Spencerport Rd.

Brockport, NY 14420-2807 Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

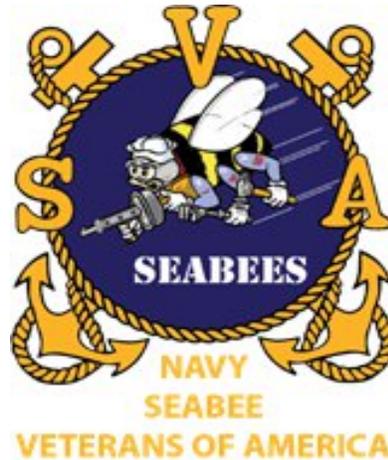
Send your Convention Program Ad in **WORD** form or pictures in **JPEG** form to Jack Tangen at jtangen@rochester.rr.com any question; call/text Jack at 585-880-3235.

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Navy Seabee Veterans of America



Support the NSVA with your **\$10.00** purchase of a business card size add on the reverse of the convention dinner program use the QR code or use the link below.



<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/navy-seabee-veterans-of-america>

NOTE FROM ZEFFY: WHEN CHECKING OUT, ZEFFY WILL AUTOMATICALLY ADD A "TIP", PLEASE FEEL FREE TO \$0 THIS OUT AS WE CANNOT REFUND THIS CHARGE!

WELCOME ABOARD



Welcome Aboard to our Newest Life Members!

**Chuck Lombardi, Life Membership Chairman, Navy
Seabee Veterans of America**

**It is with pleasure that we welcome the following
Seabees as Life Members of our Organization:**

Name	LM Number	Island	City	State
Phillip A. Cipriani Jr.	8074	X-4	Toledo	OH
Mark Z. Thomas	8075	X-1	Gulfport	MS
Galen Gallagher	8076	X-3	Northern Nevada	NV
Robert Rorick	8077	X-4	Scranton	PA
John Wolcheski	8078	X-1	Torrington	CT
Robert Wielgosh Sr.	8079	X-1	Torrington	CT
Abe Schultz	8080	X-2	Twin Cities	MN
Fernando Aquilar	8081	X-1	San Antonio	TX
Rubin Apolinar	8082	X-1	San Antonio	TX
Chad Eagle	8083	X-6	Spokane	WA
Annie L. Pennington	8084	X-6	Spokane	WA
Jerome W. Bonanno	8085	X-5	Landcaster	PA
Scott Rea	8086	X-4	Westfield	IN
Moe Deveran	8087	X-5	Glendale	AZ
Eusebio Soliz	6922	X-1	San Antonio	TX

Please feel free to contact Charles Lombardi, NSVA Life Membership Chairperson, with any questions concerning your NSVA Life Membership. Chuck can be reached at

415 Prospect St., Catasauqua, PA. 18032-2000

FINAL



SALUTE

First Name	Last Name	LM#	Island	City	State
David	Maklin	1339	X-19	Syracuse	NY
Francis	Silva	6334	X-6	Wilmington	MA
Burton	Mollohan	4609	MCB-7 at Large		
Alfred	Huard	5293	X-4	Laconia	NH
Clifford	Green, Jr	6968	X-1	Gulfport	MS
Richard	Newell	6234	X-4	New Castle	IN
Thomas	Flint	5777	X-5	Lancaster	PA
Charles	Stewart	5182	X-2	Twin Cities	MN
Bruce	Spurling	6338	X-5	Akron	OH
Thomas	Quick	4059	MCB-7 At Large		
Raymond	Davis	2286	X-6	Springhill	FL
Richard	Lucier	2700	X-6	Springhill	FL
Eugene	Roberts	4527	X-6	Springhill	FL
James	Burel	2313	X-6	Springhill	FL
Mario	Aluce	1598	X-6	Springhill	FL
Peter	Gale	3064	X-6	Springhill	FL
David	Schuck	4785	X-5	Buffalo	NY
Robert	Hering	4634	X-2	Huntington	NY
John	Kleppe	4024	X-2	Huntington	NY

Donald	Daley Sr.	3932	X-14	Hudson Falls	NY
Ronald	Davis	6233	X-4	New Castle	IN
Robert	Dever	2404	X-4	Laconia	NH
Malcom	Thomas	6377	X-5	Akron	OH
Albert	Jones	4703	X-7	Port Hueneme	CA
Charles	Miller	4838	24 th Battl. At Large		

Alexander	Dinicola	5165	X-1	Red Bank	NJ
William	Cooper	6558	X-14	Hudson Falls	NY
Joseph	Weir	1321	X-9	Cleveland	OH
Ralph	Neumeier	6059	X-1	Gulfport	MS
John	Shank		NIAL	Coos Bay	OR
Charles	Woodcock	6323	X-14	Hudson Falls	NY
William	Cooper	6558	X-14	Hudson Falls	NY
Warren	LaMont	6318	MCB-7 At Large	Pecatonica	IL
Ralph	Coe	5083	X-2	Huntington	NY

Please notify the SVA National Secretary at nsvasec@gmail.com or by calling 1-203-843-5513 of a member passing as soon as possible. Be sure to include the members' Life Member number (if applicable) and their Island/Unit affiliation. To view more deceased Seabee names, go to the Seabee Historical Foundation website at www.seabeehf.org.

ATTENTION ALL NSVA MEMBERS

Going forward please contact **Seabee Patrick Reinard** the **NEW** CAN DO Newsletter Editor for input, announcements, articles of interest, Island/Department activities and newsworthy articles and pictures to be placed in the newsletter. Patrick can be reached at reinard.patrick@gmail.com