

# NMCCB-27 FamilyGram OCT. 08

## HALLOWEEN PARTY



## MCMAP



## From the CO



CDR Robbins

Greetings to all NMCB 27 family members. We have passed a great milestone in country. We have been here over a month now and are a month closer to coming home! You will hear many of the troops refer to the deployment as "Groundhog's Day". This is in reference to the Bill Murray movie where his character lived the same day over and over until he got the day right. Many of the troops mention that the only way that they know the passing of time is to look at their watch and/or by the number of church sermons they have attended. Many of the days run together here. The command master chief and I just got back from a trip to the outlying dets where our Seabees are doing what Seabees do best; build. While I cannot tell you exactly where we have troops, I can say that we have Seabees from Ramadi, all the way up the Euphrates River to the Syrian border. Some of these bases are extremely primitive with very little creature comforts such as plumbing or toilets. Seabees thrive in this type environment. They are happy to have a hammer in their hand and things to build. Most of the Seabees expressed a desire to stay away from the main base at Al Asad and continue to work in the primitive conditions. Thank you for your continuous support throughout the deployment.



## From the XO



LCDR Lippl

Life in the desert is mostly hot, usually dusty but not nearly as hard as those that come before us. I've heard stories about 9 month deployments without a single shower while sleeping in tents with 20-30 of your closest friends and no air conditioning. Food was limited to MRE's and water bottles.

Even in 2004, when I was here last, life was a little bit tougher. I did not see (let alone get to use) a flush toilet the entire time. We had porta-johns and other arrangements that I won't get into. Sometimes we ate pretty well, sometimes we had MRE's or nothing at all. We had bottled water and, thank goodness, hot coffee. If lucky, we lived in a bombed out building with the wild dogs and other creatures that roam Iraq. Once, we were lucky enough to find a tent. Later we learned that the previous occupants had moved out because one was struck with an Iraqi wedding round. It seems that we throw rice at weddings, but the Iraqis fire their weapons in the air to celebrate. Eventually, those rounds land. Every once in a while, I got a chance to call home, but rarely did because there was always gunfire in the background and I didn't want to upset my mother or girlfriend (now my wife).

In 2008, life here is pretty good. Sure, there are some guys (and girls) out on projects in more primitive conditions. I'm told they really don't mind the conditions because they, unlike us, don't have to attend meeting after meeting, after meeting. Here with the main body, we have new, clean housing. Most people only have one roommate. We have showers and flush toilets and sinks with running water. This base also has at least four dining facilities (there may be more) with a wide variety of good food. We have Indian night, pizza night, stir fry, a grille and a couple salad bars. They have a desert bar with cake, cookies and ice cream. To work off the food, we have several gyms, a swimming pool (with water aerobics) and salsa classes. We all have access to phones and internet, I have not heard a shot fired yet and we are far enough from the Iraqi weddings to be safe from falling rounds. In short, yes, we are at war, but war is not exactly hell. So don't worry about us, thanks to those who came before us, conditions here are pretty good.



# COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

Family and friends of NMCB 27

We can all be extremely proud of Seabees as they wasted no time in making their presents known here in Iraq. All hands have demonstrated their capabilities by showing positive results along with quality work and Can Do Spirit!

As the Commanding Officer and I travel to visit our project sites we are brimmed with compliments from Marine, Army, Air Force, and Special Operations units. We are greeted by these various units from their most senior leadership down to their most junior troop, and all are very eager to express how much they appreciate the remarkable work and the positive attitude our Seabees have.

Not only am I proud of the work our Seabees have done so far, I am also proud of all the members who received notice for promotion during this advancement cycle. We are in the process of writing all the advancement letters and I look forward to congratulating our Seabees on their achievement.

This addition of our Family Gram is dedicated to the Chiefs Community with in NMCB 27. Just in case if you're wondering, my job as the Command Master Chief is to be a liaison to the Commanding Officer in all enlisted matters. In this capacity, I assist the Commanding Officer in issues of quality of life, discipline, training, operations, and morale.

That's it for now.

Out.

## CHAPLAIN

To all our NMCB-27 Seabee families:

October has been a busy month for all our Seabees. Everyone is settling into the routine of construction projects, and almost all the Seabees I talk to are happy to be busy and working. I'll have to admit, having not seen all the things that Seabees do on a daily basis, I am most impressed with the professionalism and efficiency of NMCB-27. You can be justifiably proud of the work your Seabee is doing.

We are receiving many packages from all our home front friends, and the little "extras" are much appreciated. Even in the days of e-mail and phone calls, it's always nice to get a special package. On behalf of the Seabees here, I would like to express a big "thank you!"

A program that is beginning to take off now that we're settling in is the United Through Reading. The program is simple. The Seabee is videotaped reading a book to his or her favorite child or children, and the book and the DVD disk is sent home to be watched by the child or children, reading along with the same book dad or mom are reading. It is a great opportunity for parents to stay connected to their children.

We hope you are enjoying a great New England autumn, and we look forward to pictures of autumn. Dusty tan gets old after a while, so send us some red, yellow, and brown autumn leaf pictures.

Continue to e-mail, write and send packages. We also appreciate your prayers for our safety, and thanks for your support of this worthy effort.

CMDMC Heiland

Chaplain Crane

# OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

Greetings to all from the desert. Things on the Operations front are going very well for NMCB 27. Our construction crews are already making a huge difference for the Marines in their ability to complete their mission safely and efficiently.

The Seabees of NMCB 27 have completed numerous construction projects such as the Tactical Fusion Center (TFC) Electrical Project that was lead by Bravo Company. The Crew Leader, CE1 Tempel was singled out by the customer for his outstanding work ethic and quality of construction. In addition to providing superior construction, he and his crew went above and beyond their tasking by pointing out some existing electrical safety issues and then completing the repairs for the customer before the job was turned over. Congratulations to CE1 Tempel and his crew.

Another big success for NMCB 27 was a Forward Resuscitative Surgical Station (FRSS) that was built at a remote site. This project was lead by Charlie Company. BUC (SCW) Whitney and his crew finished this time critical project with a quality of work that was very impressive. His crew received accolades from the customer who has requested that this project be a model for any additional FRSS sites to be built in the future. We have been asked by the 1<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Regiment to put together a construction package model so that future crews can emulate the quality of work that his crew completed.

We would never be able to be as successful as we are if it were not for Alfa Company. They are making things happen every day. Our Construction Mechanics keep our equipment running at peak efficiency and our Equipment Operators move all of our personnel and project materials to different project sites. In addition, they have provided many hours of earthwork in support of projects lead by other Companies. Recently, Alfa Company had 2 members, EO1 Rump and MR2 Kremer recognized with a Letter of Commendation from the Marines for critical earthwork performed on short notice.

NMCB 27 has also addressed many small quality of life projects in and around our base for a myriad of customers. These projects, although small, can make a huge difference to the customers who do not have the skill or the tools to help themselves. The Seabees of NMCB 27 stand at the ready to assist these very appreciative units.

I also want to recognize other members of the Operations Staff who work behind the scenes to support our Companies so they can continue to enjoy much success. BUC (SCW) O'Connor provides Quality Control services as well as Material support. BUC Tompkins assists the Companies with project planning. EA2 Kassim provides much administrative and project management support. Our Operations Team is lead by LCDR Cook and assisted by LTJG Lopes and ENS Wilkins who all do a fabulous job.

We have only been in the desert for a short period of time but as you can see, we are making a huge contribution to the eventual turnover of control to the Iraqi people. Rest assured that your Seabees are making things happen in a big way. "Seabees Can Do".

## HOTEL COMPANY

I'm MAC William Naylor, Hotel Company Chief. I wanted to let you all know back home that your Seabees are hard at work and morale is high. LTJG Keenaghan and I are proud of how they rise to every occasion and take on every challenge as if it was their own personal mission. It's you folks back home that have the hardest job of this deployment and without your support we wouldn't be able to accomplish ours. The LTJG and I would like to thank each of you personally for your support. Our Seabees in Hotel Company appreciate all the packages and letters from home. It's what keeps us going and allows us to focus on what we need to do. Again, thank you for what you do.



BUCS Parkhurst



MAC Naylor



# SEABEES BUILD AT TRIPOLI

**TRIPOLI, IRAQ – (Oct. 6, 2008)** - Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 27 are building projects aimed at improving the quality of life for Marines conducting operations at Marine Combat Outpost (COP) Tripoli, in Western Iraq's al-Anbar province. The Seabees have constructed South West Asia huts and are putting finishing touches on the Battle Aid Station located at the COP.

The Seabees, a highly motivated team, work day and night to accomplish this mission.

“We are deployed here to Iraq on a construction mission,” said Utilitiesman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Scott Taylor of Spruce Creek, Pa. “We are building and improving the various camps to improve the quality of life for our Marine brothers, which will enable them to be more attentive in their mission,”

NMCB 27 hit the ground running after taking over from NMCB 17 in mid-September. Many Seabees got off a flight from Kuwait and stepped on a convoy -- headed directly to the construction project at Tripoli.

“Our mission to support the Marines is important to me,” said Construction Electrician 1<sup>st</sup> Class Peter Maxon of Plainville, Maine. “We make life better for the Marines, and in turn they are helping our Iraqi allies make life better for themselves.”

Among the many tasks assigned to the Seabees, the detachment restored four non-functioning restroom trailers in one day's time, resurrected decommissioned shower trailers to accommodate the influx of females to the base. The Seabees also improved areas of the perimeter that were vulnerable to enemy infiltration by closing gaps in the berm areas and leveling areas that created dead space. They also constructed stairways to several posts to prevent Marines from suffering non-combat injuries. To further aid in the comfort and welfare of the Marines, the Seabees also converted several ISO-containers into living areas in response to billeting shortages at the camp. (story continued on next page)



## Tripoli story continued

Gunnery Sgt. Mark Shawhan of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment Kilo Company remarked, “This is an outstanding group of people, always willing to help, no matter the time of day. It is not unusual to see the Bee’s working at midnight or later, and they never complain.” Shawhan also added, “The Seabees are the single best group of support personnel I have ever worked with. The Navy should be proud. They are truly second to none.”

The Seabees of 27 bring a broad range of technical and military skills providing a unique capability to the general support engineering mission. In addition to the construction, these essential capabilities include robust organic support functions such as logistics, maintenance and communications.

“Being here is a life challenging experience. You meet new people and learn a lot about another culture,” said Utilitiesman Constructionman Brian Foster of Reynoldsburg, Ohio. “We get treated very well and are appreciated by the Marines for what we do.”

During a recent site overview from NMCB 27 Commanding Officer, James Robbins, he said “The Seabees have done so much with so little for so long that they can do anything with nothing!”

The Seabees of 27 also known as the “Skibees” are homeported out of Brunswick, Maine, and are deployed in Iraq and other areas in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.





# TRAINING



BUC Hayes

During the preparatory three months in Gulfport, MS, Seabees of NMCB 27 completed training in their leadership, construction, and military skills. The training conducted improved the readiness level of the battalion by about 30% and prepared the Seabees to fulfill their mission overseas. A select group of highly motivated members completed extensive military training to prepare them to provide additional security in the movement and protection of battalion personnel. Many Seabees extended their training into the evenings by attending Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist classes to prepare them to achieve the qualification.

The focus shifted to accomplishing our operational tasking, but the training did not stop once we deployed overseas. In addition to the On the Job training the members receive everyday to improve their leadership and construction skills, periodic training is conducted with each member to maintain their military skills and keep them from growing complacent. Also, several members have been able to attend Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) classes, others are pursuing qualification as Fleet Marine Force (FMF) specialists, and the Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist classes continue in the evenings.

## CHARLIE COMPANY

Greetings from the Land of Sand. I want to thank all of you for the large part you play in the success of our mission. Support comes in many forms, and all are greatly appreciated.



BUCS Whitney

As we race towards the Holiday Season, Charlie Company's Builders and Steelworkers are quickly setting new standards for "Can Do" in their role as the construction company in support of the area troops. Our Mission has us building many basic structures to allow Marine Commands to do their jobs and function more efficiently. Always, we are asked to customize or add creative amenities to these jobs to make things even better and these opportunities allow our Seabees to shine. Sometimes its custom ramps to allow easier access or double wide doors. In other cases we are asked to mount special equipment in creative ways. Each time it proves that there are no better craftsmen or women anywhere in the world than those of NMCB 27 and it is truly fun watching them show off and impress all by bringing to life anything the imagination can think up.

And this phenomenon isn't restricted to Mission critical tasking either. In their "Spare Time" Charlie Seabees have created some masterpieces around camp. From custom office furniture to shelving and countertops, the list of "Camp improvements" is growing long. Ornate, steel flag holders for the quarterdeck, curl up bars for the Marines, custom wood storage inserts for the combat vehicles, weapons holders for almost all the working spaces, and numerous park benches and picnic tables adorn the multiple berthing areas and are put to constant use. Not unlike when your loved ones tinker away in the backyard or garage at some pet project at home, they are doing the same thing here to stay busy and make the time pass. The added bonus of practicing these talents that they enjoy turns out to be a less hostile living environment. Who knew the XO could be tamed by a custom Adirondack smoking chair?

# COMBAT OPERATIONS CENTER



CUCM Gohm

Greetings from the Combat Operations Center (COC). I am CUCM Tom Gohm, Senior Watch Officer. Along with my 3 fellow Watch Officers (BUC Theroux, BUC Gray, and BUC Reno), our 3 Watch Supervisors (CE1 Calkin, CE2 Thompson, and BU2 Tarbay), and our 3 Petty Officers of the Watch (EA1 Lang, UT3 Foley, and EACN Morton) we provide around the clock service as the eyes and ears of the command.

The COC provides an over watch of all Battalion functions outside the wire. The COC also acts as a hub for information coming into the command and going out to Higher Headquarters. With an impressive suite of electronics we have the ability to receive and display various information to aid our success in an acronym rich world. Nearly every bit of information we handle is Secret since it has to do with the operation of the Battalion. I'll try to give you an idea of what we do without telling too much.

With Blue Force Tracker (BFT) we can see the whereabouts of any BFT equipped unit superimposed on a map. The unit name, speed of travel, grid location and other various bits of information are also displayed. With this system we also have the ability to send FIPRs, which are like text messages. With Command Post of the Future (CpoF) we have jobsites and information about each project geoaffixed to another electronic map. Any significant event, unit, route, along with various other information can be displayed. CPoF is also compatible with BFT which expands our capacity in that. CPoF is an interactive system that once information is entered at a station it can be viewed at any other station in the system. The MiRC system has about 100 chat rooms. We keep track of 7 specific chat rooms at all times. We monitor the Marine Air Wing (MAW) homepage, which provides information on weather and has numerous links to other intelligence sources including route information and passwords. We track the significant events in theater and mark the ones that affect our unit on a huge paper map. The paper map provides a one look visual of the Area of Operations (AO) that computers can't. We also have 2 phone systems, numerous radio and data networks, and 2 e-mail systems.

Our responsibilities are many and include administrative routing of reports, tracking of people's location through the many movements made, providing information to the Convoy Security Element (CSE) teams that do regular missions outside the wire. We are involved in ensuring that all of the requirements are met prior to the convoy's step off and we stand ready to coordinate if the convoy needs help. We interact with many departments in the command to do these things.

In the COC our ages range from 20 to 52, we vary from less than 2 years to over 23 years of service, we come from NMCBs 27, 26, and 23. 10 people with different backgrounds and of points of view, all together with one specific goal – To get the job done and return home to our families. There are stories of then, now, and plans for the future. The conversations are about how proud we are of our family members and how well they handle the extra burden with us being gone. We wish you the best through the Holidays and we all look forward to seeing you soon.



## NMCB 27 Tiger Team

Seabees assigned to NMCB 27's "Tiger Teams" have vastly improved the living conditions for marines in Western Iraq. The Team is a specialized task orientated unit of four to seven Seabees per location. Each team is lead by a Chief Petty Officer with a crew of one or two construction electricians, utilitiesmen, and a builder.

Originally, these teams were established to address hazards, safety concerns, and assess future projects throughout remote camps and surrounding area in the short term. However, the significant and continuous improvements made during the team's time at the camp were noticed at all levels of the Navy and Marine Corps. These improvements have lead to the tiger teams being an invaluable asset assigned within the camps. Tiger Team members relish this unique opportunity because every day brings a new challenge – a challenge of their experience in construction and ability to adapt available construction materials for a useable and desired end product by the Marines.

These Teams do not received accolades for completing tasks or receive awards for being under man days expended because the Navy views their mission as support of the camps. Further, there is no easy method to manage or prepare operational standards for tracking the Teams tasking because every task is exclusive to the end user. Also, each Tiger Team has been living far from the confines of Al Asad that offers hot meals, running water, and bathrooms and despite all of these discouraging factors every Sea Bee wishes to remain at their current locations.

Bravo Company is truly proud of their dedication and spirit to not only succeed in difficult conditions but to thrive and improve the spirits of the Marines they are supporting. CWO2 Jacob D. Carpenter, Executive Officer H&S Company Task Force 2/2 RCT-5 I MEF Forward, summarized the positive effect the Tiger Team with "In regards to the Seabee support aboard COP Rawah, TF2/2 can not ask for better support than what is being provided by these Sailors. They are on call at all hours and respond immediately to the needs of the COP. Their quality of work has been superb. Thank you for their great attitude and support."



# Dust Abound

## NMCB 27 SUPPLY

### Al Asad, Iraq

#### **WELCOME!**

Have you ever asked yourself, “What do the Seabees in Supply do?” Like anything it’s all about perspective; so let me paint you a portrait of a day in the life of Supply operations at our Seabee camp.

#### **Berthing**

Seabee Sam, welcome to Iraq! What? You need a room for a night, two, how about for a couple of months? Let me introduce you to CS1 White. CS1 is our friendly berthing manager whom is referred to as the “Camp Commandant”; don’t let her title scare you. She is that warm hearted lady at your summer camp who makes sure you have a bed, linen, the directions to the potty, and a little night light for those dark nights away from home. (putt... putt... putt...the sound of a little gas engine putting along...) Oh, it’s just CS1 rumbling down the road in her hallmark vehicle; the Gator!

Tired of those angry flies following you around? You know, the ones that won’t go away no matter how much you swat at them! Are you giving Charlie Brown’s Pigpen a run for his money? Time to do laundry!

#### **Laundry**

Bag it, count it, tag it, drop it..... CS3 “Dragon” Lee will do the rest. That’s right CS3 handles on average 80 bags of dirty laundry a day with drop off and pickups to the main laundering facility. She also checks each bag for proper paperwork and weight standards. So is CS3 strong after hurling over 1000 lbs of laundry a day? Oh yeah! It doesn’t hurt that she just finished here TAN belt with the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) either! Hoorah!

#### **Financials / Administration**

Seabee Sam in his endeavor to get tools from the Central Store Room he is notified that he must get authorization from his chain of command to pick up tools. Ah, you need to talk to SK2 “abba dabba” Abbott for the paperwork. Don’t let his quiet demeanor fool ya, the kid has skills! And don’t even think about getting around that lock on his desert flyer...

#### **Central Store Room (CTR)**

Wow Seabee Sam, you’ve just started your day; but don’t you have a job to do? Now that you are authorized, you need to get some tools for the job. Need to talk to SK2 Zatkovich to check out the right toolkit for the job. SK2 puts those tools in the hands of the craftsman; as soon as you do an inventory on them!



SKC McCormick



### **Dining Facility (DFAC)**

Seabee Sam, are you hungry yet? Well in your travels to get something to eat you might bump into this motivated Culinary Specialist policing the DFAC. Yup, it's CS3 Bourke. So what is "policing"? Well it's basically making sure DFAC customers don't steal food, they wear proper attire, and of course don't put their cover on the table. Well, that last rule was stricken from the books recently thanks to CS3's due diligence one evening. As CS3 has done many times before, to various patrons of the DFAC, he attempted to enforce the "no cover on the table" policy with a group of Marines.

Apparently CS3 didn't recognize the subdued collar device on the Marine he decided to address. It is a known fact; if a Marine is wearing a star on his collar he just might be the Base Commanding General! GULP!

### **Central Storeroom (CSR)**

Seabee Sam, you realized on your way back to Camp RJ you need some paper and a pen to take notes. Next stop, CSR! Who's the face behind the bars? Oh, that would be SK2 Joyce. Don't worry he won't bite. SK2 is the supply clerk who manages the general consumable supplies. A pen, some paper, how bout some batteries; "That was easy".

### **Postal Services**

Seabee Sam, taking a break after a long morning suddenly hears a familiar jingle. Wait, look! Look!

*O-ho the Mail Cargo Wagon, is a-comin' down the street,  
Oh please let it be for me!  
O-ho the Mail Cargo Wagon is a-comin' down the street,  
I wish, I wish I knew what it could be!*

Like the little boy in Music Man, Seabee Sam anxiously awaits CS1 Quinn's return from the flight-line mail distribution center. CS1 is our mail clerk for the Battalion. Her hard work is well received as Seabees get letters and packages from home. Keep those letters and packages coming!

## ***TACTICAL SUPPLY***

### **CTR - Small Preventative Maintenance**

Seabee Sam, it's time for you to get back to work! Amidst the hard work you've done, your crew leader sends you back to CTR to get an air compressor. EN3 Rangel ensures you have the equipment that will do the job. EN3 specializes in small engine preventive maintenance checks for toolkits before they are checked out and also when they are returned.

### **Class IV Yard**

Seabee Sam you got the tools and it wasn't hard, now it's time to get your materials at the Class IV Yard. While it's not Home Depot, and it's definitely not Lowes our two Seabees would give you anything but their clothes. SK2 Raymond and SK2 Grell two of our finest working for Chief Sells. They are our construction material warehouse / yard workers supporting the construction in our AOR.

# CSE





# Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP)





# PHOTOS





# PHOTOS





# HALLOWEEN PARTY

