



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Seabee Birthday Ball
Hale Koa Hotel
Honolulu, Hawaii
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
08 March 2013
As Prepared For Delivery**

Thank you Scott for that introduction, as well as your leadership here at Naval Facilities Engineering Command-Hawaii and your efforts as my Fleet Engineer.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and especially our Civil Engineer Corps Officers and Seabees -- Happy Birthday and Aloha!

It is my pleasure and honor to be here for this celebration and to have this opportunity to speak to you tonight. I would especially like to extend a warm Aloha to all the spouses, family members and loved ones here. Your contribution to our mission cannot be overstated. Thank you.

In early February I was able to join some of you on the 21st Annual Seabee Run. I enjoy getting out and participating in this type of event, especially for a run on Ford Island. I would like to thank Lieutenant Junior Grade Chris Hoggan, the event coordinator. Chris, for your information, I still haven't received my trophy yet. Seriously though, well done on a great race and fundraiser for this Seabee Ball.

I would like to thank everyone involved with organizing the Ball this year, especially the Officer's Spouses Club. Alice Pope, Carissa Hoggan and Suzy Taylor; you have done a wonderful job.

Tonight we celebrate the heritage and accomplishments of the Civil Engineer Corps and the Seabees. On March 2, 1867, Congress authorized the establishment of the new Navy staff corps, comprised of commissioned civil engineers. On March 5, 1942, the Seabees were formed. This week the Civil Engineer Corps is 146 years old and the Seabees turned 71 years old. Congratulations, you guys are almost as old as the buildings you maintain! I do appreciate your efforts on that front.

The Civil Engineer Corps and Seabees have so much to be proud of as you look back on your prestigious history of achievements, particularly here in the Pacific. The creation of the Seabees was the result of a singular event in our Nation's history. As you may recall, that event happened right here at Pearl Harbor. It was in the early morning hours of December 7th, 1941, when our Nation was surprised by an attack on our Pacific Fleet. As our Nation prepared for war, it became clear that we needed a militarized Naval construction force to build our advance bases as we moved through the Pacific.

Three weeks after the attack here at Pearl Harbor, Rear Admiral Ben Moreell requested specific authority to recruit men from the construction trades for assignment to a Naval construction regiment composed of three Naval construction battalions. Their mission would be to construct and defend advanced Naval bases in the war zones. Admiral Moreell even

created their official motto -"We Build, We Fight." This was the beginning of the legendary Seabees.

In the Pacific Theater of World War II, the Seabees built and fought along the Pacific roads to Tokyo. Their exploits earned the respect of the United States Army and Marine Corps troops they fought side-by-side with. Their achievements earned them the gratitude of the Allied fighting men who followed the trails they had paved, all the way to victory. The Navy Seabees played a pivotal role in our victory in the Pacific during World War II.

During the Cold War, the Seabees rose to the challenge as they built and fought in Korea and Vietnam. In times of peace, the Seabees spent more time building than fighting, but their achievements were no less impressive as they constructed bases and facilities on six different continents. They also began sending small detachments to provide local military aid and to complete humanitarian projects in underdeveloped countries, earning them another title, "The Navy's Peace Corps," a mission that is still critically important to us today.

The Seabees have distinguished themselves in our modern day engagements as well, including Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Since our nation was once again surprised by an attack on September 11, 2001, our Seabees have been in the vanguard of our efforts in Operation's Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The Naval Construction Force was the largest on ground naval force in Afghanistan and Iraq. Seabees were the face of the Navy to our sister services and foreign nations in these combat zones.

During these conflicts, many Civil Engineer Corps Officers and Seabees have also been sent around the world on Individual Augmentation. Recently I spoke at the 'IA' Luncheon and was able to meet several of those who have recently returned. I understand Commander Keith Barton and Construction Mechanic Petty Officer 2nd Class Andrew Bauman are here tonight. Will you please stand and be recognized? Can I get everyone who has served on 'IA', and all those who have deployed with Seabee Units to stand and be recognized. Thank you for your courage and commitment.

As we all know, with any great achievement, there are often great sacrifices. We are reminded of this when we recognize the name of our Pacific Fleet Destroyer, USS *Stethem*, named in honor of a Seabee who was killed by terrorists in Lebanon in 1985. Over the last 10 years there have been 120 Seabees wounded in action and there have been 19 killed in action. Four years ago this month, NAVFAC-Hawaii lost Lieutenant Junior Grade Francis Toner, IV, while he was on an 'IA' to Afghanistan. He was killed in action by an enemy who was posing as an Afghanistan National Army soldier. In September 2011, he was posthumously awarded our Nation's fourth highest military award, the Silver Star, for gallantry in action. I know his memory and his legacy will live on here in Hawaii.

Around the world in places that need Americans' hand the most, the Seabees are there, participating in efforts in South and Central America, the Asia-Pacific, the Mid East, Africa and the Caribbean. In numerous countries around the globe, Seabees are building schools, clinics, and water distribution centers for those in greatest need.

Last year I had an opportunity to speak at the opening ceremony for Pacific Partnership 2012 in the Philippines. This annual deployment of forces works closely with a host nation, other

militaries and Non-Governmental Organizations to conduct humanitarian projects. Before I had even arrived in the Philippines, our Seabees were already there, working with the host Nation and others to renovate schools and a health clinic.

Later in Pacific Partnership 2012 I visited Vietnam, where I met a young NAVFAC Civil Engineer by the name of Lieutenant Junior Grade Dave Hartley. He gave me a guided tour of the projects that the Seabees were working on in that country.

Seabees also were busy in Indonesia and Cambodia. I understand that Lieutenant Junior Grade Dan Groszek and his team were working in Cambodia where our Seabees partnered with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces to build a maternity center in hopes of providing expecting mothers a safe place to bring their children into the world.

I appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in the Pacific Partnership deployments. Your work has helped advance our relations with our allies and partners in the region, one of my top priorities for the Pacific Fleet. I am looking forward to seeing Lieutenant Junior Grade Van Nguyen and his team in the Solomon Islands for Pacific Partnership 2013 later this year.

Our Seabees are also helping out here at home. Recently, 258 Seabees answered the call to help our own citizens after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey.

The Seabees of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303 are busy here in Hawaii. Are you guys here tonight? I heard about your great work with the Rim of the Pacific 2012 exercise in July where you provided contingency engineer support during four separate humanitarian assistance and disaster relief scenarios. That's impressive work, but I also heard you guys got to meet the President recently!

When the President came to Hawaii for Christmas vacation, CBMU 303 provided force protection engineering support at his vacation home. Because of their reputation, the United States Secret Service requested their unit by name to handle the visit. There's no doubt CBMU 303 has a "Can Do" attitude. There is also no doubt they have the talent to "get it done." Senior Chief Jim Dolan, my hat's off to you. I appreciate the initiative, especially in asking the President to meet with your team when the project was through. Well done!

Also, I understand there is a Change of Charge coming up on the 29th. Senior Chief Harfmann, congrats in advance! I know CBMU 303 will continue to impress.

As I bring my comments to a close I want to take an opportunity to congratulate Steel Worker Chief Louis Salazar on his recent selection as a Limited Duty Officer. Last year's Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year, I first met you on stage at the Sailor of the Year luncheon. With your talent, I know you will do outstanding work as a Mustang. Congratulations!

Finally I want to also thank the spouses and family members for your home front support. By maintaining the home front, you enabled your Sailors to focus on their job. I know you can appreciate the importance of their mission and I appreciate the importance of yours. There is a famous Seabee saying, "the difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer." I know that is a motto that applies to each of you as well. Can I please get all the family members to stand and be recognized? Mahalo.

As we steam into an uncertain future, I'm glad to have Seabees on the team. Your community is critically important to our Navy and to the Pacific Fleet as we focus on my priorities. For 146 years the Civil Engineer Corps has been working tirelessly to improve our Naval shore infrastructure, provide quality facilities and support our Sailors and Marines and their families. For more than 70 years, the men and women of the Seabees have given their all to protect our Nation and serve our armed forces with pride. You have much to be proud of and I want each of you to know just how proud I am of you.

Even with sequestration, I would like to echo what General Douglas MacArthur had to say about Seabee performance in World War II: "The only trouble with your Seabees is that you don't have enough of them."

May God Bless each of you, the Seabees, the Civil Engineer Corps, our Navy and our Nation.

Mahalo.