

Laboring in the Cause of Freedom

Wright Museum to Celebrate the WWII-era Contributions of Navy's "Fighting Seabees"



"Folk art" Seabee, gift of C. Bruce Wright. *Wright Museum Collection.*

Wrench and hammer in hand, the tommy gun-toting "Fighting Seabee" is among the armed services' most easily recognizable insignia.

Established in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the Seabees are the Construction Battalions of the U.S. Navy. The Seabee name itself is a "backronym" of the pronunciation of "CB."

As America prepared for an unprecedented global military undertaking, war planners recognized early on that base construction, road building, and the creation of other infrastructure would be needed—particularly in parts of the world where the U.S. had little or no prior physical presence.

The Wright Museum will celebrate Labor Day for the entire month of September with a special display of recently-donated artifacts documenting the contributions of the Navy's hardworking Construction Battalions.

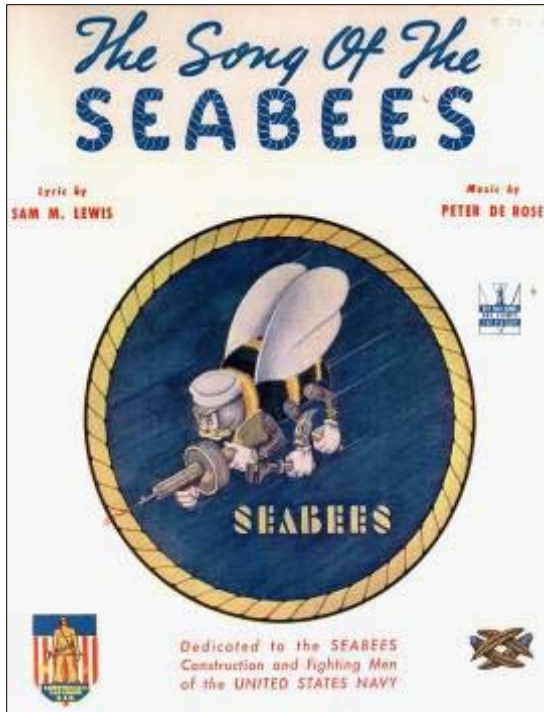
More than 325,000 men served with the Seabees in World War II, fighting and building on six continents and more than 300 islands. In the Pacific, where the most construction was needed, Seabees built airstrips, bridges, roads, warehouses, hospitals, and housing.

C. Bruce Wright of Kennebunk, Me., served with the Seabees and was stationed at Argentia, Newfoundland before entering Officers' Training School. Wright (no known relation to the museum's founder, David Wright) recalls his experience:

"The Seabees were a generally hard-drinking, rough-speaking group of men of muscle and brawn: hard-working solid construction workers who would tackle any job and particularly enjoyed doing the impossible. They were experts at their trades and at improvisation. Mostly, they were a culture unto themselves.

"I sometimes think these hard and skillful workers hid their innate caring nature, showing only their tough side to others. I always knew how patriotic they were since most were beyond draft age and just wanted to serve—their average age was 35. Oh, how I learned to respect them in a year!"





The hardworking nature of the Seabees is further illustrated by the lyrics of the 1942 tune, "The Song of the Seabees:"

*We're the Seabees of the Navy
We can build and we can fight.
We'll pave a way to victory
And guard it day and night.*

*And we promise we'll remember
The "Seventh of December"
We're the Seabees of the Navy
Bees of the Seven Seas.*

*The Navy wanted men
That's where we came in.
Mister Brown and Mr. Jones,
The Owens, the Cohen's and Flynn.
The Navy wanted more of Uncle
Sam's kin
So we all joined up, and brothers
we're in it to win.*

Admission to the special display, located in the Wright Museum's lobby, is free. Museum admission is free for Wright Museum [members](#); non-member admission is \$6 for adults and \$5 for seniors, veterans, and active U.S. servicemen and women; children under 8 are admitted to the museum free of charge. For more information and directions to downtown Wolfeboro, N.H., call 603/569-1212 or visit www.wrightmuseum.org.

The Wright Museum is a one-of-a-kind non-profit institution dedicated to preserving and sharing the stories of America's Greatest Generation. With its vast collection of fully-operational military vehicles and extensive exhibits relating to the American Home Front, the Wright Museum is a member-supported national treasure located right here in New Hampshire. In the words of Senator Bob Dole, "The Wright Museum tells the story of [a] great national achievement, a story that, more than ever, today's generation of Americans—and especially our young people—need to understand and appreciate."

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