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NEWSLETTER / NEWS RELEASE
From the Office of Mayor Thomas P. Schneider

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UNITED STATES NAVY SEABEES CELEBRATE
75TH ANNIVERSARY ON SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2017**



Mayor Thomas P. Schneider has declared Sunday, March 5 as “Navy Seabees Day” in Florissant in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the United States Navy Seabees. A U.S. Navy flag that is a gift to the City from a Navy Master Chief will adorn the flag pole at City Hall this weekend to honor the 75th anniversary of the “Can Do!” Seabees.

“For 75 years,” said Mayor Schneider, “Seabees have been paving the way to victory in war and peace, serving the Navy and Marine Corps with a “Can Do!” spirit of great pride and dedication.” Mayor Schneider served with Naval Construction Battalion 74 during two tours in Vietnam and then as a Seabee surveyor in Guantanamo Bay. While in the reserves, after a BSCE from UM Rolla, he was commissioned as a Naval Civil Engineer Corps Officer

The Seabees were created on March 5, 1942, after Rear Admiral Ben Moreel, chief of the Navy’s Bureau of Yards and Docks, recognized the need for a militarized construction force. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Navy approved formation of the first naval construction battalions.

The Seabees 75th anniversary kickoff ceremony was held January 18, 2017 at the Seabee Museum in Port Hueneme, California.

The event marked the start of celebrations commemorating the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Navy Seabees, the 150th anniversary of the Civil Engineer Corps and the 175th anniversary of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) this year.

Regionally, a formal Seabee Ball will be held beginning at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at VFW Post 3838 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. All active and former Seabees throughout southeast Missouri, southern Illinois and St. Louis are invited to attend. For more information contact Thomas M. Meyer at 573-270-4499 or tmmeyster@tlmrealty.com.

“As we kick off this year-long celebration, let’s not forget those who have fought bravely and given their all in support of us, our families, our way of life and our great nation,” said Rear Admiral Bret Mullenburg, Commander of NAVFAC and Chief of the Civil Engineer Corps.

The earliest Seabees were recruited from civilian construction trades and were placed under the leadership of the Navy’s Civil Engineer Corps, emphasizing experience and skill. In the Pacific, where most of the construction work was needed, Seabees landed soon after the Marines and built major airstrips, bridges, roads, warehouses, hospitals, gasoline storage tanks and housing.

Between 1949 and 1953, Naval Construction Battalions were organized into two types of units: Amphibious Construction Battalions and Naval Mobile Construction Battalions.

Following Korea, the Seabees embarked on a new mission. From providing much-needed assistance in the wake of a devastating earthquake in Greece in 1953 to bringing construction work and training to underdeveloped countries, the Seabees became the Navy’s “good will ambassadors.” Seabees built or improved many roads, orphanages and public utilities in remote parts of the world.

These “civic action teams” continued into the Vietnam War, building schools and infrastructure and providing health care service. After Vietnam the Seabees built and repaired Navy bases in Puerto Rico, Japan, Guam, Greece, Sicily and Spain. Their civic action projects focused on the Trust Territories of the Pacific. In 1971, the Seabees began their largest peace-time construction on Diego Garcia, a small atoll in the Indian Ocean, taking 11 years and costing \$200 million.

From the islands of the Pacific to the jungles of Vietnam, to the mountains of Bosnia and to the sands of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Seabees have built and fought for freedom. In peace time, they have been good will ambassadors. In peace and in war, they have lived their motto, “Can Do!”

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, which was established in 1842, is the Navy’s oldest systems command. The Navy Civil Engineer Corps was established in 1867 following the Civil War. More information is available at www.navy.mil.