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ViewPoint

## How Seabees builds and benefits business

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This year marks the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Navy Seabees and the 150th anniversary of the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps. Founded in 1942 at the onset of World War II, Seabees have been involved in every major conflict since that time, as well as countless humanitarian and disaster-recovery efforts worldwide.

During WWII, the Seabees grew to more than 325,000 men. The majority were seasoned construction workers and project managers, ranging in age from 30 to 50. Together, they transformed remote islands, African deserts and the frozen Aleutians into full-fledged bases, practically overnight. In the Atlantic, the Seabees operated in Africa and throughout the Mediterranean. They were a big part of D-Day and the effort in Europe. In the Pacific, they operated in every part of that vast expanse. On Tinian, they built the world's largest airfield in just six months, from which the Enola Gay would launch to end the war.

Today, Seabees are deployed around the globe supporting expeditionary warfighters, responding to natural and humanitarian disasters, building relationships through peacetime engagement, and rebuilding failed infrastructure. Whether constructing schools, field hospitals or water treatment and delivery systems, our men and women in service help promote positive change and generate invaluable goodwill.

During my 25 years as a Civil Engineer Corps officer and 20 years with the Seabees, I served alongside these men and women who all shared the same qualities: adaptability, ingenuity, vision, and above all else a steadfast commitment to mission and to team.

My military service — and the global perspective it gave me — helped me keep the long view as I guided Commodore Builders through the rocky economic terrain of 2008 to 2010. Those were tough times, but my military training gave me the courage to lead with purpose, to keep my moral compass and to remain loyal to my convictions. I learned that complacency kills ... on the battlefield and in the business world.

As a CEO in my civilian career, I still think in terms of commander's intent — clearly articulating Commodore's mission, setting the direction, leading with purpose, explaining why we're doing what we're doing. Ultimately, my job and that of my fellow CEOs is to create an environment that inspires our people to support our mission.

I am thrilled that the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation is seizing the opportunity presented by this special anniversary year to foster a greater appreciation across our nation for the Seabee legacy, and the profound and positive impact they continue to have in times of need.

Throughout the year, there will be events in cities across the country, including Boston in September 2017. The events will engage a wide audience in understanding the Seabees' mission, and will honor those who served and sacrificed. Through their hard work and dedication, the Seabees continue to shape and inspire America's youth, educating our next generation of leaders in the engineering and STEM skills required to achieve our success as a nation.



Joe Albanese is founder and CEO of Commodore Builders, based in Waltham.

Boston's business community has long benefitted from the leadership skills many learned in service to our nation and later applied in the private sector. We are known as a city that values and supports service. Please join us this September as we pay tribute to the impressive past, present and future of the U.S. Navy Seabees. For more information on planned events, please visit [seabee75.org](http://seabee75.org).

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