



A TRIBUTE TO ALBERT ROTH



Memorial Day is a great reminder to pause and to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the protection of our freedom and our way of life.

At last night's Cruise Night in Chalmette, Louisiana, sponsored by the St. Bernard Parish Chapter of Louisiana Region AACA, we paused our '50s music to do just that, honoring those who did not return, as well as those who survived to tell their story.

Albert Roth, my father, served in the first wave of Seabees - 6th Special Battalion, USN. Boot Camp and special training at Dam Neck/Oceana/Norfolk in January-March, 1943, a troop train to San Diego, and then shipping out to Auckland, New Zealand with an immediate turnaround to the islands of Vella Lavella, Treasury, Figi, Bougainville, and so many others.

The 6th Special Seabees Battalion was establishing Port and Airstrip Facilities on islands that were still Japanese-Controlled. I've been told by Marines, that despite inter-service competitive spirit, that the USMC really respected what the Seabees did, and likely could not have taken the Solomon Islands without them.

Admiral Halsey is quoted as having said "when I see one of those Seabee Bulldozers, I could kiss it".

Dad didn't talk about his service which lasted the duration of the war in the Pacific. I did see some of the CENSORED letters he and mom exchanged with segments cut out or blackened - "Loose Lips Sink Ships". There were no liberty ports, and they had no real liberty until they returned to Treasure Island/San Francisco, many months after V-J Day and the end of the war - amazing by today's standards.

On the home front, My mother, Martha Roth spent my first 4 years in a New York City factory, making and inspecting tents for our military, Sewing "MR" as instructed in the corner of those which passed her scrupulous inspection, and hoping that dad might get to use one of them and recognize her sewn-in initials, knowing that she had given it special care. Years later, relating her story at a 6th Special Battalion Reunion at Biltmore, one of dad's officers told mom that all inspectors used the same "MR" code, that as well as her initials, the "MR" also stood for "Mildew-Resistant". She and dad had a great laugh over that one.

We were the lucky ones. Dad survived to come home, and later instilled in me his love of mechanical things - his ability to keep his old car running - his desire to find out what makes it work and to try to make it better in some way - and his love of country. Dad's parents were immigrants to this country, as were mom's - all in the first decade of the 1900s. They, my grandparents, always made us aware of just how exceptional this great country of ours really is, and how important it is to defend her, and to respect and revere those who were lost in her defense.

Let us all pause for a moment to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and to thank those men and women who served.

**MARTY ROTH
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA**

I mentioned on another thread, that my father had worked at the Todd Shipyards in Bayonne, New Jersey prior to the formation of the Seabees. This was considered a "safe" job, exempt from military draft. Many people were surprised when dad, married just over 1-1/2 years, and with a 3 month old son (me) volunteered for this new outfit called "CB" or Construction Battalion, identified as SeaBees. I've been told by several other Seabees that dad's unit, the 6th Special Battalion had especially nasty, dangerous assignments - I've listened to many of the Vets who come through the World War II Museum (formerly the D-Day Museum) here in New Orleans, and I encourage everyone to visit.

Many people today do not know that initially the Seabees were in harms way, and still unarmed; that sometimes their only protection was the blade of a Bulldozer.

Dad once in his later years said that the carnage he saw on Figi and Bougainville were beyond belief, that growing up In Plattsburgh, NY and later living in New York City and New Jersey, nothing he had ever experienced could prepare him for the cruelty of the Japanese soldiers.

My point is that he could have stayed safe at the shipyard, but CHOSE to put himself in the path of danger, as did you, your father and grandfather!

Thanks to you, and to all of our brave men and women who served, and especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice. _____

**MARTY ROTH
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