

With Willing Hearts and Skillful Hands...

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“The Seabees have greatly contributed to the Embassy community... We will be sad to see them leave,” praised Ambassador Richard Roth at the US Embassy’s Seabee Appreciation Day. The event honored the work that the Seabees had done on their three-month Deployment for Training to Dakar, Senegal. In that time, the Seabees performed exercise related construction of a wash rack at the Senegalese Naval Base and added an operations/dormitory K-Span facility as part of an Exercise Reception Facility/Intermediate Staging Base (ERF/ISB) at the Senegalese Air Base. They also assisted in the embassy’s Halloween Haunted House and improved “Ebbett’s Field” – the embassy’s recreation and softball field.

“The First and The Finest” Seabees of DFT Senegal volunteered their time and assisted the embassy staff construct their haunted house at Club Atlantique, a private club in Dakar at which many embassy workers are members. The event is held annually for both local and embassy children. The Seabees—BU2 Reannon Blakeslee, BU2 Zachary Dewell, BU2 Jonathan Harvey, CE2 Christopher Bryant, SW2 Michael Collum, UT3 James Koscis, and EOCN Latrice Ware—showed up early and began work on the multi-room, maze that featured “haunted” rooms. They even added some new additions to the house that will be used for future haunted houses, including a guillotine. “[The haunted house] usually takes four to five days to complete. But the Seabees helped us complete the haunted house in three hours,” said Diane Burke, US Embassy Community Liaison Officer. Afterward the Embassy softball team hosted the Seabees to a pick-up softball double header at Ebbett’s Field.

Ebbett’s Field, the original location slated for the Ambassador’s residence, had been converted to a recreational facility for the US Embassy. The site’s showcase is its softball field and is home to the locally sponsored inter-Embassy softball league and the annually-held, multi-national West African Invitational Softball Tournament (WAIST). Major Keith Lynch, Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation and local sponsor of DFT Senegal, asked the Seabees if they would help improve the safety of the field and comfort of its players and spectators. The field’s third baseline is dangerously close to two spectator and concession pavilions, and each team bench had been exposed to the strong African sun. The ‘Bees had the answer. SW2 Michael Collum, SW2 Andrew Kuznicki, BU3 Brian Welk, BU3 James Simone, and EO3 Dewayne Hallman were assigned as the crew for DFT Senegal OIC-003 Ebbett’s Field Improvements. These Seabees added a 180-linear foot safety fence to ensure that foul balls and aggressive players stayed in the field of play. Using scrap material from the ERF/ISB project, they constructed two “dugouts” over each team bench, complete with K-Span roofing.

To thank the Seabees for their efforts, Ambassador Roth hosted Seabee Appreciation Day at Ebbett’s Field. The event included the Ambassador presenting the Seabees with certificates of appreciation, an exhibition game between the US and Japanese embassy softball teams, and a brunch provided by the players and families from the US and Japanese embassies.

EO3 Dewayne Hallman summed up the work and the day’s events appropriately: “Of all the things we do, one of the most gratifying results of our work is to see all the smiles on the faces of the people we help.”



Members of the US Embassy team enjoy the comfort of their new "dugout" during Seabee Appreciation Day at Ebbett's Field on 8 November 2003.



Spectators at the concessions pavilions are safer now that the Seabees installed a 7-foot fence along the third baseline at Ebbett's Field, the US Embassy's recreational facility in Dakar, Senegal.



Ambassador Richard Roth presents BU3 with a Certification of Appreciation during Seabee Appreciation Day on 8 November 2003.