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Quonset's success as a business park is rooted in our veterans - by Steven King

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Steven King

On Veterans Day, we reflect on our heritage as a military base that was key to our country's victory in World War II, and beyond.

In 1941, the U.S. Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks requested the creation of an organization to provide construction support to the Navy and Marines in remote locations, including combat situations. Thus, the Naval Construction Battalions were born with the Naval Construction Battalion Center at Davisville serving as a base for the original units. You may recognize their iconic name — the Seabees.

The group proved indispensable. The Seabees took part in every major amphibious operation during World War II, fighting and building in more than 400 locations before the war's end. More than 325,000 sailors served as Seabees during World War II in more than 60 skilled trades. The Seabees quickly adopted the motto "Can Do," which was fitting, given the group's ingenuity and ability to accomplish their mission, regardless of the obstacles.

We continue to honor their service today at Quonset by hosting the Seabee Museum and Memorial Park right by our front gate. We have also adopted their "Can Do" credo, which is reflected in everything we do at the business park, including our commitment to building and maintaining world-class infrastructure for the companies who call us home and the people who work there.

The support of the R.I. Congressional Delegation has been a key to our success for decades. Through their efforts, Quonset was awarded an \$11.25 million grant that will allow us to rehabilitate Pier 1 at the Port of Davisville—built for the original Seabees back in 1941. This investment will boost our capacity for shipping and continued support of offshore wind development. The Port of Davisville—the state's only public port—consistently ranks as one of the top 10 auto importers in North America and supports nearly 1,700 jobs and hundreds of ships calls annually.

In July, state and local leaders joined us to cut the ribbon on an \$83 million expansion at Pier 2, which came in \$7 million under budget and will extend the pier's life by 50 years. Pier 2 was built by the Seabees in the 1950s. Improvements to the pier included extending it by 232 ft., creating a third berth and dredging to accommodate larger ships. This modernization will allow the port to sustain its auto import success while preparing for future wind energy projects.

Our continued success at Quonset is inspired by the Seabees' "Can Do" spirit. Quonset Business Park hosts more than 200 companies with over 12,000 jobs, including one of every six manufacturing jobs in R.I. We are also one of the nation's premier business parks, ranking again this year as one of the top 10 industrial parks in the U.S.

On Veterans Day, we honor the Seabees for their hard work, commitment, and sacrifice and all our veterans for their service to our country.

To learn more about the Seabees, visit seabeesmuseum.com/seabee-history.

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