Raymond Reed
28th, 30th, 53rd, 128th, NCN & CBD 1040
NSV-Florida Island X-8 former Secretary

09/14/1942 to 12/26/1945

U.S. Navy Seabee during World War II
Served on Iceland, Scotland, Algeria,
Tunisia, Southern France, Hawaii, Guam,
Okinawa & Korea.

Credits: A Salute to our Veterans by Irene J. Dumas

Ray Reed was born on 22nd of June, 1923 in Scranton, PA; he grew up in Phillipsburg, New Jersey and attended the Phillipsburg High School along with his two brothers, Robert and John.

The day after Pearl Harbor, Ray went down to the recruiting station to enlist, he was eighteen years old; he was turned down because he only weighed 112 pounds. Ray was told to go home and eat a dozen bananas and to come back when he weighed at least 115. He did, but he didn't put on enough weight until June of 1942.

On 14 September 1942, during the height of World War II and when the Construction Battalions of the Navy where forming, Ray signed up for the military again this time being accepted. He joined the United States Navy Seabees.

At the time Ray volunteered for military service it was a high point in many areas of the war, On 2 September 1942. Rommel was driven back by Montgomery in the Battle of Alam Halfa and around 13 September 1942 the Battle of Stalingrad had begun.

After his physical he was sworn in and told to report for Basic Training at Camp Bradford, Norfolk, VA, although he was technically assigned to CBD10-10; as a Second Class Boatswain’s Mate; he also had served with Several Construction Battalions, (the Seabees).

During his military career Ray traveled to several military bases; Iceland, Scotland, Algeria, Tunisia, Hawaii, Guam, Okinawa and Korea. His most noted experience during the war was that of D-Day, the Normandy Invasion.

There were actually two invasions then, Normandy and Southern France that started 6 June 1944. Ray went in on the second invasion in Southern France, on 15 August 1944.

The story is that on the 6th day of June 1944 all the troops loaded up in North Africa, but it two-pronged, "a little-known fact" Ray said. What happened is that they didn't have enough LSTs (Landing ship tanks) that carry tanks and also soldiers.
Nine times out of 10 they would hit a sandbar, and they still had 100 yards of water from there to the beach. It was their job, the Navy Seabees to line causeways up so the troops could go over the causeways right onto the beach.

On 7 May 1945 an unconditional surrender of all German forces to Allies and on 8 May, V-E (Victory in Europe) Day occurred. Although the war had ended in Europe, the war in the Pacific was still going on until 6 August 1945 when the first Atomic bomb was dropped.

On 26 December 1945 after the war ended, Ray Reed was discharged from the US Navy; during his military career he had earned the French Legion of Honor, Good Conduct Medal, Combat Ribbon, American Theater, Ribbon, European Theater Ribbon w/2 battle stars, Pacific Theater Ribbon w/2 battle stars, Victory Ribbon, Korean Occupation Medal and Expert Rifle Medal.

After the military, Ray married Ethel and pursued the occupation of that of a Printer. He likes to play golf and is an active member of the Seabee Veterans of America

On January 2009, Ray was awarded France's top honor from the French Ambassador to the United States stating that he had been chosen for Frances highest honor “The Legion d'Honneur or French Legion of Honor award”

Ray Reed and 28 former servicemen were honored in a formal ceremony held in Naples, Florida in late March 2009, at the Edison College Campus, several hundred friends and family members attended the ceremony. He was in France then, and appreciated what they did, but never expected this after 65 years, he said.

The letter that was presented by Ambassador de France read:

“Dear Mr. Reed, I am pleased to inform you that by a decree signed by the President of the French Republic on 19 December 2008, you have been named a "Chevalier" of the Legion of Honor,

The award testifies to the President of the French Republic’s high esteem for your merits and accomplishments. In particular, it is a sign of France’s true and unforgettable gratitude and appreciation for your personal, precious contribution to the United States decisive role in the Liberation of our country during World War II.

The Legion of Honor was created by Napoleon in 1802 to acknowledge services rendered to France by persons of great merit. The French people will never forget your courage and your devotion to the great cause of Freedom.

It is a personal pleasure for me to convey to you my sincere and warm congratulations.

Sincerely, Pierre Vimont”

Ray Reed and his wife Ethel are residents of North Ft. Myers, Florida and active members with Navy Seabee Veteran of America, Florida Island X-8.