

13th Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



*“Construimus, Batuimus”
“We Build, We Fight”*



13th C.B.

1ST EMBARKATION

NOTC - Norfolk
ABD - Hueneme, (left 8 Aug'42)
Ready Date - 23 Aug'42
Left ABD - 15 Aug'42
Destination - Dutch Harbor

(at Dutch Hbr. 26 Aug'42 to 15 Aug'43)

2ND EMBARKATION

NOTC - Parks
ABD - Hueneme
Ready Date - 13 May'44
Left ABD - 9 Jun'44
Location - ~~Liea-6-Tinian~~ Okinawa

LOG

- 4-30-43 - 13th CB is complete at NOB Dutch Harbor. (1st Brig. report 4-30-43)
7- 1-43 - 13th CB at Dutch Harbor. (Com 13 to ComAlSec dtd 6-21-43 - Secret Disp.)
8-10-43 - 13th CB return to U.S. 1 Sep'43 approved. (VCNO Secret Disp. 041254 Aug to ComAlSec
9- 1-43 - 13th CB arrived U.S. on Chamont, now at Fort Lawton awaiting transportation to
Camp Parks. (Conf. dispatch 192023 Aug Com 13 to VCNO)
5-17-44 - 13th CB arrived Hueneme from Parks 4 May'44. (CinC disp. to RDO Wash., 041921
5 May'44)

6-13-44 - 13th CB left ABD Hueneme 9 Jun'44 for 2nd embarkation. (WRK)
8- 2-44 - 13th CB was received by the 2nd Brig. during Jun'44. (2nd Brg. monthly report for
Jun'44)
8-10-44 - 13th CB report for 1 Jul'44 - operating at MAS Honolulu (Keehi Lagoon) on Oahu.
8-30-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 13th CB - operating at Keehi Lagoon, Oahu.
9-25-44 - 13th and 135th CBs to be moved about 13 Oct. to Tinian (approx 1528 men); approx.
700 men, remainder of 13th and 135th, to be booked for casual shipment to LIRP.
(Sec. Disp. 22 Sep from Cincpoa to CNO 220045 NCR 5757)

13th C.B.

From the Chronological History of the 1st Brigade:

- 26 Aug'42 - Arrived Dutch Harbor from U.S.
30 Jun'43 - Detachment left D.H. for U.S.
14 Jul'43 - Det. of 3 off. & 24 men arrived D.H. from
Akutan.
14 Aug'43 - 13th CB left D.H. for U.S.

(Com 17 Sec. ltr ND17/Al2-1/L7 over 50/2b over Ser 0096 to
Budocks dtd 6 Nov'44)

13th C.B.

- 1-12-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 13th CB - operating at NAS Honolulu (Keahi Lagoon), Oahu. Report endorsed by 3rd Regiment.
- 10-27-44 - Upon embarkation, the 13th CB is detached from the 3rd Reg. and 2nd Brig. and ordered to report to the 6th Brig. (OinC of Hawaiian Area NC Brigades Conf. ltr. HAB-06-HCB/fnf over PL6-4/00/MM Ser. 6046 to the OinC of the 13th CB dtd 23 Sep'44)
- 11-3-44 -- The 13th CB arrived Pearl Hbr. 16 Jun'44. Secured all projects as of 23 Sep'44 prior to embarking for the next station. (The 13th CB was at Dutch Hbr 26 Aug'42 to 15 Aug'43). (Dirpaddock's Pearl Hbr. Sec. ser. 00384 to Budocks dtd 14 Oct'44 - Historical data on Advance Bases of 13th CB).
- 12-13-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of 13th CB - Batt embarked for Island X on 29 Sep'44 and debarked at it's present location on 24 Oct'44.
- 12-29-44 - 1 Dec'44 report of 13th CB - No info on location. Report endorsed by 30th Reg.
- 1-10-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 30th Reg. - The rear echelon of 4 officers and 166 men of the 13th CB reported 19 Nov'44. An additional draft of 15 men reported 29 Nov'44.
- 2- 6-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 13th CB - no info on location. Report endorsed by the 30th Regiment.
- 3- 3-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 13th CB - location not given. Report endorsed by 30th Reg.
- 3-16-45 - ^{out} Conservpac requests earliest possible April shipping of the 11th, 35th, 68th, and 80th CBs to Samar. (Conservpac Sec Disp 132333 dtd 14 Mar'45 to Conserv7flt)
- 3-16-45 - ComFwdArea nominates 117th and 135th CBs for mounting estimated 26 May, 13th CB for mounting estimated 26 June. Pending CincPoa approval, these 3 CBs authorized release from present duties 3 wks prior to mounting date for rehabilitation and reoutfitting. (ComFwdArea Sec Disp 130943 Mar'45 to Cincpoa and Conservpac)

- Location - Tinian 13th C.B.
- 3-29-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 13th CB - located at Tinian. Report end. by 30th Reg.
- 4-24-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 13th CB - located at Tinian. End. by 30 Reg & 6th Brig.
- 4-25-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 30th Reg. - The 13th CB has been alerted and is relieved of all duties on 6 May'45.
- 4-28-45 - 13th CB listed as scheduled for BIVE. Approx ETD April. (Comservpac Sec ltr Ser 001581 dtd 11 Apr'45 to ComFwdAreaGenPac)
- 5- 8-45 - The 13th CB is located at Tinian. Assigned Okinawa. (Dirpaddock's S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)
- 5-25-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 30th Reg. - Alerting of the 13th and 135th CBs has been modified by directives recd from higher authority. Lifting date has now been set for 4 Jul'45. Work stops 13 Jun'45.
- 5-29-45 - 1 May'45 report of 13th CB - located at Tinian. Report end. by 30th Reg & 6th Brig.
- 6-7-45 - The 13th CB detached from present duty. Proceed in accord with shipping instr and report to Comdr Const Troops APO 331. (Comservpac sec disp 042341 Jun'45 to Com Mariannas)
- 6-27-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 30th Reg - The 13th CB has 30 officers & 1054 men on board for the month of May'45. 5 men were temp detached 20 May'45 to report to IsCom Okinawa to await arrival of remainder of Batt. The 13th CB is to secure on 5 Jun'45 preparing for forward movement.
- 6-27-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of 13th CB - located at Tinian. Report end by 30th Reg & 6th Brig.
- 7-23-45 - The 13th CB detached from the 30th Reg and 6th Brg on 5 July. Ordered to proceed to CCT APO 331. (6th Brg conf orders ser (0158) dtd 5 July to OinC 13th CB)
- 7-23-45 - The 13th CB assigned to the 17th Reg and 8th Brg effective 10 July. (CCT APO 331 sec report on assignment of CB units ser 897 dtd 10 July to all CB activities assigned CCT APO 331)

Location - Okinawa (~~correction~~)

13th C.B.

- 7-29-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 30th Reg - Construction activities of the 13th CB secured on 10 June and batt moved in to a military training program. 1 off. and 4 men temp detached 25 June to report to the 8th Brg at Okinawa for temp addtl duty. These men will report back to the Batt upon its arrival at Okinawa.
- 7-30-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 13th CB - no info on location. Report via 30th Reg and 6th Brg.
- 8-1-45 - The 13th CB reported 17 July to the 37th Reg for duty. (37th Reg conf end ser 027 dtd 18 Jul on 6th Brg orders ser 0158 dtd 5 July to 13th CB)
- 9-30-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 13th CB. Located at Okinawa. Report via 37th Reg & 8th Brig.
- 10-11-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 13th CB. Located at Okinawa. Report via 37th Reg. & 8th Brig.
- 10-31-45 - For consolidation purposes request inactivation when directed by CNOB, Okinawa the 13th CB. (Comdr.,NOB, Okinawa conf disp 291147 Oct'45 to Comservpac).
- 12-4-45 - Comservpac reqs NOB, Okinawa to inactivate 13th CB. (Comservpac spltr ser 5800 dtd 13 Nov'45 to CNOB, Okinawa).
- 12-12-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 13th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 37th Reg. & 8th Brg.
- 1-14-46 - Inactivation of 13th CB was completed on 5 Dec'45. (OinC, 8th Brig. ltr ser 3125 dtd 6 Dec'45).

INACTIVATED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ON BOARD</u>		<u>AUTHORITY</u>
	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	
30 Jun'44	30	1066	Recap.
1 Aug'44	31	1063	MoR
1 Sep'44	30	1078	MoR
30 Sep'44		1063	Rscap
1 Oct'44	30	1063	MoR
1 Dec'44	30	1079	BNP625 & MoR
1 Jan'45	31	1079	MoR
1 Feb'45	31	1076	MoR
1 Mar'45	30	1072	MoR
1 Apr'45	30	1069	BNP625 & MoR
1 May'45		1045	BNP625
1 Jun'45	30	1054	BNP625 & R
1 Jul'45	30		Rster
1 Aug'45		1008	BNP625
1 Sept'45		990	BNP625
1 Oct'45	28	903	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45	16	729	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'45	16	484	BNP625 & R

13th Construction Battalion (INACTIVATED)

U. S. I.

Date	Description	Location	Reference	Notes
5/30/44	Lion 6	En route	-	-
6/23/44	Lion 6	FRAY (P.H)	Yuseneme Conf. deep. 102147 June.	Departed Port Yuseneme June 9 for FRAY.
9/20	"	"	Cinepou sec deep 152213 Sept.	being lifted aboard for augmented const. Tinian
9/25	-	(Tinian)	Cinepou sec 220045 Sept.	Loading 21 Sept Eta Marshalls 13 Oct
11/10	-	LIRP (Tinian)	to Tinian sec act deep. 010521 Nov.	
3/13	-	(Bine)	Comdenepoc sec 110237 Mar and Comjudaroc sec. 130943 Mar.	nominated to be alerted for Bine. for mounting set. 26 June.
130443 Mar. sec. nominated 13, 1176135 as substitute for H3, 52 698 - and			3/14 - cde Burke note - "alerted - to move to Bine by 070029"	

13 to C.B. Page 2

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
6/12	-	-	Comdenepoc sec deep. 042341 June.	detached present duty proceed to report Col. const Group Apo 331.

13 to C.B. Page 2

HISTORY OF THE 13TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION,
JULY 1942 - SPRING 1945

First Tour of Duty: Alaska

The 13th U.S. Naval Construction Battalion (NCB), known colloquially as the "Black Cat Battalion," was commissioned on 13 July 1942 at Camp Allen, Norfolk, Virginia. The first officer in charge (OIC) was LCDR Charles E. Tackels, CEC, USNR, of Detroit, Michigan. The executive officer was LT Frank B. Campbell, CEC, USNR, of Washington, D.C. After a short training period at Camp Bradford, Little Creek, Virginia, the 13th NCB entrained for Port Hueneme, California, arriving on 13 August. The battalion stayed at Hueneme only two days and then entrained for Bremerton, Washington. On 18 August they boarded the U.S.S. Chaumont and found that their destination was Dutch Harbor, Alaska. After an uneventful 8-day trip -- the first sea voyage for many of the men -- they disembarked at their destination on 26 August.

On arrival, they found that their first duty was unloading their ship: No stevedore battalions had yet been formed in the Seabees. In 1942 Dutch Harbor was the vital point in the defense of Alaska. Just a short time earlier, the Japanese had raided the harbor, so the battalion's first project was digging trenches and other defensive work. American strategy called for Dutch Harbor to be a giant supply base, serving as a springboard for an attack on the enemy, then in possession of Kiska and Attu in the Aleutians. The battalion promptly took up their part in this work. Docks were built, warehouses and other frame structures constructed, and the divers in the battalion did considerable underwater work in the harbor. One of the chief projects was constructing wooden barges used to supplement shipping and to supply many remote outposts.

On 20 September 1942 the Western Alaska Construction Regiment -- the first construction regiment formed in the Seabees -- was commissioned, and the 13th NCB was attached to this regiment. On 20 December LT Campbell, the executive officer, was detached; and LT(jg) Ormonde I. Jackson, CEC, USNR, assumed his duties. As the vital installations were completed, the men of the

13th NCB turned their efforts to building recreational facilities for all the service personnel at Dutch Harbor, including a large theater, various athletic courts, showers, pool and billiard rooms, and a solarium. A regimental hospital was constructed, with bomb shelters for the patients and an underground operating room. As a regimental project, the 13th NCB helped construct a marine railway. While on this tour of duty, the battalion also earned many commendations for helping to repair Navy warships.

On 24 April 1943 the 1st Naval Construction Brigade was commissioned in Alaska, with Commodore (then Commander) Robert H. Meade, CEC, USN, as commanding officer. LCDR Charles E. Tackels, our first OIC, was detached from the battalion to assume the duties of commander of the 1st Naval Construction Regiment, the name having been changed from Western Alaska Construction Regiment. LCDR (then Lieutenant) Emory G. Singletary, CEC, USNR, of Greensboro, North Carolina, was appointed OIC of the battalion.

In the spring of 1943, a group of men were temporarily detached from the battalion for duty at Akutan, Alaska. Here they built a coaling station for Russian ships plying Alaskan waters and also constructed the usual housing facilities for American personnel there. Many officers and men of the 13th NCB were temporarily detached from the battalion for regimental, brigade, and advance-base construction depot duties. While on these details, they designed the Armed Forces Radio Station (WXLC) and had a hand in designing most of the installations at the harbor.

On 7 August 1943 the men of the 13th NCB learned that they were going home, and on 13 August they sailed again on board the U.S.S. Chaumont, arriving at Fort Lawton, Seattle, Washington, on 18 August. From Fort Lawton they traveled to Camp Parks, Pleasanton, California, where they arrived on 21 August. After a 30-day leave the battalion returned to camp and settled down to a long period of military and technical training. During these months the battalion undertook some construction to expand and improve Camp Parks. Mainly, however, the men were occupied at military drills, special weapons classes, the rifle ranges, and similar activities.

On 14 October LT Singletary was detached from the battalion, and LCDR (now Commander) Harold W. Hartmann, CEC, USNR, of Peoria, Illinois, became

OIC. LT Eric Bolander, CEC, USNR, of Libertyville, Illinois, assumed the duties of executive officer on 15 November because LT Jackson had been detached from the battalion. On 6 April 1944 LCDR Hartmann was detached as OIC for regimental duties elsewhere, and on 1 May LCDR Allan R. Carmichael, CEC, USNR, of New Haven, Connecticut, became OIC of the 13th NCB.

The battalion celebrated Christmas at Camp Parks in 1943 and remained there through the winter of 1944 and on into the spring. On 3 May the battalion departed from Camp Parks for Port Hueneme, California. After reoutfitting at Hueneme, they set sail aboard the U.S.S. Pennant for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, arriving on 16 June.

Second Tour of Duty: Hawaii and Tinian

At Pearl Harbor the men of the 13th NCB were quartered at Moanaulua Ridge, where they built a substantial part of their own camp. They were assigned to duty at the John Rodgers Airport, between Pearl Harbor and Honolulu. Their projects consisted of every type of construction, starting with the moving and demolition of houses for airport expansion. The structures the men were assigned to build were all large: an 1800-man galley and messhall, a ship's store, barracks, cold storage houses, a laundry, and a theater. The battalion also built a runway at the airport, and the experience working with coral would prove useful later. At the shore line the battalion did a large amount of work in connection with constructing seaplane ramps. The electricians put in power and communications lines and built substations. A new type of large quonset-hut barracks with two decks was developed and built. When the battalion completed their assignments at John Rodgers, they received commendations from the commanding officer of the Naval Air Station.

On 29 September the 13th NCB boarded the U.S.S. Adair for a long voyage to Tinian, the Marianas Islands. On 8 October they reached Eniwetok and remained there for 11 hot days, finally arriving at Tinian on 24 October after 26 days at sea.

In the fall of 1944, Tinian was being developed into a huge air station, principally a home base for B-29's that were slated to strike at the Japanese Empire. The harbor facilities at Tinian were small, and all cargo had to be

lightered ashore in LST's and LCM's. The Seabees could either unload their own cargo ships or wait their turn. The men of the 13th NCB set about unloading with any available boats and then commenced building their camp. As their equipment and construction materials came ashore, they immediately went to work building the air field.

The battalion reported to the 30th Naval Construction Regiment, of which CDR Jonathan P. Falconer, CEC, USNR, of Seneca Falls, New York, was regimental commander, and to the 6th Naval Construction Brigade, of which Commodore (then Captain) Paul J. Halloran, CEC, USN, of Teaneck, New Jersey, was brigade commander.

Building the Tinian air base was a huge project, involving the moving of millions of yards of dirt and rock, a good portion of which had to be blasted loose. The project called for the continuous operation of men and machines. Because the overall strategy for Tinian required a very tight construction schedule, several battalions had to work as a unit to meet their deadlines. In many instances the men's individual skills could not be utilized, and they were forced to learn new skills to fit themselves for the task at hand. One of the principal functions of the 13th NCB proved to be the operation, maintenance, and repair of the heavy equipment and trucks. The quick way that the carpenters, plumbers, and ordinary seamen adapted themselves to new skills proved again the adaptability and resourcefulness of American construction men.

Considered as a construction job, the work on Tinian would have been a huge undertaking even in the continental U.S. Nonetheless, such a project could not have been completed more expeditiously at home. More than 6,000 miles from the source of supplies, with limited facilities for unloading materials, the Tinian base was a miracle of construction. Every deadline was met ahead of schedule. At no time did any Seabee construction project delay the Army's strategic plans.

In addition to the large amount of work on runways and taxiways completed by the 13th NCB, the men built service areas, drainage structures for the airport, parts of several tank farms, and gasoline lines for the airplanes. Out of salvaged Japanese steel they built flak towers for the Marines' anti-aircraft guns. Working around the clock, they built a control tower in only seven days. The engineering

organization, in addition to their many other duties, completed a topographical survey of the northern third of the island, identifying every installation and geographical feature. When any men could be spared from the airport construction, the men of the 13th NCB also built their own camp of over 100 quonset huts, together with a mess hall, shops, theater, stores, warehouses, and a chapel. Sanitary measures and cleanliness were constantly stressed, and there was no disease: The number of men sick at any one time was negligible. In spite of the dangerous work and the speed of construction, careful indoctrination of all hands held job accidents to a minimum.

More than any other job the men of the 13th Naval Construction Battalion have completed in their long tour of duty, the work on Tinian showed immediate results. The goal was to get B-29's off the ground with a load of bombs for Tokyo, and to keep them flying. The 13th NCB had a part in achieving this goal and played its part with skill, energy, and distinction.

Written by an officer of the 13th NCB,
spring 1945.

Revised by the NAVFAC Historian's Office,
December 1986.

THIRTEENTH U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

CORRECTED ITINERARY

First Tour of Duty

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13 Jul 42 Formed at NCTG, Norfolk.

15 Aug 42 Departed ABD, Hueneme for overseas. (Embarkation point Bremerton, Washington, 18 Aug 42).

26 Aug 42 Arrived Dutch Harbor

28 Mar 43 Echelon of 2 officers and 22 men to Akutan, Alaska.

5 Apr 43 Echelon of 20 men to Akutan, Alaska.

29 Jun 43 Echelon of 20 men returned to Dutch Harbor from Akutan

30 Jun 43 A detachment of 45 men departed Dutch Harbor for the U.S. Approximate date of arrival unknown.

14 Jul 43 Echelon of 24 men returned from Akutan, Alaska (including 2 officers) rejoined battalion

14 Aug 43 Departed Dutch Harbor for U.S.

19 Aug 43 Arrived U.S.

Second Tour of Duty

9 Jun 44 Departed ABD, Hueneme for overseas destination. (Approximately 60% of men on their second tour of duty)

16 Jun 44 Arrived Pearl Harbor

29 Sep 44 Departed Pearl Harbor for Tinian. Rear echelon of 4 officers 166 men remained at Pearl Harbor.

24 Oct 44 Arrived Tinian

19 Nov 44 Rear echelon of 19th CB arrived Tinian and rejoined³³ battalion
Battalion operating at Tinian.

7 May 1945.

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY
OF ITINERARY

A.P. Carmichael

Administrative Stamp
CONFIDENTIAL
RESTRICTED
To: Levin B. Cummings
Com. U.S. Navy

DECLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

PLAN ITINERARY OF THE 13TH CB (SP)

- 2 Oct 1943 - Transferred from NCTC, Camp Peary, to Gulfport, Miss.
- 31 Oct 1943 - Transferred from Gulfport to Fort Huenehe.
- 27 Nov 1943 - First echelon arrived Pearl Harbor. Date of departure from States unknown.
- 2 Jan 1944 - Second echelon arrived Pearl Harbor.
- 1 Mar 1944 - Battalion operating at Oahu.
- 1 Jun 1944 - First echelon left Iroquois Point.
- 18 Jun 1944 - Second echelon left Iroquois Point.
- 27 Jul 1944 - First echelon arrived Guam.
- 10 Aug 1944 - Second echelon arrived Guam. Was detained at Eniwetock where it engaged in stevedoring operations.
- 1 Aug 1945 - Located Guam.

NOTE: The above itinerary is based on information available in the C.B. Operations Section of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

4 September 1945

To Facilitate
Administrative Handling
Classification changed
from:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

To: RESTRICTED

Irvin S. Rowntree

Confidential

PLAIN COPY

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4 September 1945.

13th Naval Construction Battalion

Chronology

13 Jul 1942	Formed at NCTC Norfolk, VA.
15 Aug 1942	Departed Advance Base Depot, Port Hueneme, CA, for overseas. Embarkation point Bremerton Washington, 18 Aug 1942.
26 Aug 1942	Arrived at Dutch Harbor.
28 Mar 1943	Echelon of 2 officers and 22 men go to Akutan, Alaska.
05 Apr 1943	Echelon of 20 men goes to Akutan, Alaska.
29 Jun 1943	Echelon of 20 men return to Dutch Harbor from Akutan.
30 Jun 1943	A detachment of 45 men departed Dutch Harbor for the U. S. Approximate date of arrival unknown.
14 Jul 1943	Echelon of 24 men return from Akutan, Alaska (including officers) and rejoined the battalion.
14 Aug 1943	Departed Dutch Harbor for the U. S.
19 Aug 1943	Battalion arrived in U. S.
09 Jun 1944	Battalion departed Advance Base Depot Port Hueneme, CA, for overseas destination. (Approximately 60% of men on their second tour of duty.)
16 Jun 1944	Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Operated at NAS Honolulu on Oahu and at Keehi Lagoon, Honolulu.
29 Sep 1944	Departed Pearl Harbor for Tinian. Rear echelon of 4 officers and 166 men remained at Pearl Harbor.
24 Oct 1944	Arrived at Tinian.
19 Nov 1944	Rear echelon of 13 th CB arrived at Tinian and rejoined battalion. Battalion operating at Tinian.
10 Jun 1945	Battalion secured and moves into military training program.
17 Jul 1945	Battalion reported for duty with 37 th Regiment on Okinawa.
05 Dec 1945	13 th Naval Construction Battalion inactivated on Okinawa.

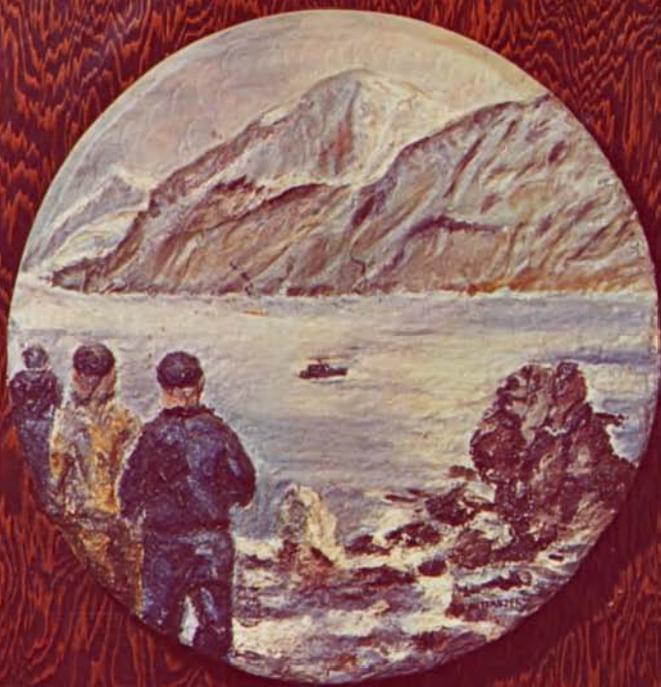
13th Naval Construction Battalion

Commanding Officers

Lieutenant Commander Charles E. Tackels, CEC, USNR	13 Jul 1942 – 24 Apr 1943
Lieutenant Emory G. Singletary, CEC, USNR	24 Apr 1942 – 14 Oct 1943
Lieutenant Commander Harold W. Hartman, CEC, USNR	14 Oct 1943 – 06 Apr 1944
Lieutenant Commander Allan R. Carmichael, CEC, USNR	1 May 1944 – 05 Dec 1945?

13

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION



BATTALION











14th C.B.
SICKBAY