

37th Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



37th C.B.

<u>1st Embarkation</u>		<u>2nd Embarkation</u>	
NCTC	- Davisville	NCTC	- (CBRD Parks)
ABD	- Davisville	ABD	-
Ready Date	- 18 Dec'42	Ready Date	- 15 May'45
Left ABD	- 14 Dec'43	Left ABD	- 19 Jun'45
Destination	- EPIC Ondonga - Green Is.	Location	- Okinawa

LOG

- 8-28-42 - 37th CB to leave NCTC Davisville on 2 Dec. for ABD Davisville. (Budocks ltr to CNO dtd 28 Nov'42)
- 12-13-42 - Departed ABD Davisville for Army Base, Norfolk.
- 12-17-42 - Sailed from Norfolk.
- 1-20-43 - Arrived White Poppy - to be assigned Base development.
- 5-11-43 - The 37th CB is located at Noumea. (ComNavBasesSoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr. dtd 11 May'43)
- 2-25-44 - 37th CB is out of the 15th Regiment as of 17 Jan'44. (AES)
- 3- 5-44 - 37th CB arrived at Munda 12, 14, and 17 Sep'43 - 3 echelons.
- 3-23-44 - 37th CB operating at Green Is. according to unofficial report. (Yeo. Wolf newspaper accounts)
- 5- 6-44 - 22nd Reg. report of 1 Mar'44 - 37th CB located at Ondonga pending movement to Green Is.
- 5-17-44 - 37th CB is located at Green Is. with 22nd Reg. (AES 5/15/44)
- 5-27-44 - 37th CB report of 1 Mar'44 - Staged at Ondonga for movement to Green Is.
- 6- 3-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 37th CB - operating at Green Is.
- 6-14-44 - 1 May'44 report of 37th CB - operating at Green Is.

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- 7-13-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 37th CB - operating at Green Is.
- 8- 5-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 37th CB - operating at Green Is. According to 2nd endorsement by Comseronsopacfor, the 37th CB has been ordered to prepare for movement in the near future to a rear area for rest and rehabilitation. End. dtd 17 Jul'44.
- 8-21-44 - The 37th CB is to be returned to the U.S. as soon as transportation is available. Personnel rec'd subsequent to 1 Sep'43 to be assigned to the 47th CB at Munda. (Comseronsopac Sec. disp. 180908 NCR 9469 to CMB Green Is. dtd 19 Aug'44)
- 8-25-44 - 37th CB located at Green Island - Following data of SoPac as of 1 Jul'44:
 - Jan'43 - Arrived Noumea
 - Aug'43 - " Guadalcanal
 - Sep'43 - " New Georgia
 - Feb'44 - " Green Is.
- 8-31-44 - 37th CB, located at Green Is., ready to sail to U.S. with 17 officers and 993 men. (Comseronsopac sec. disp. 272110 NCR 6134 28 Aug'44 to CNO)
- 10-12-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 37th CB - operating on Green Is., Solomons.
- 11-1-44 - The 37th CB of 15 officer and 964 men arrived Parks from overseas 26 Oct'44. (Parks 272315 TWX OCT'44 to Budocks).
- 1-11-45 - 1 Oct'44 report of the 37th CB - Batt was officially secured of all work details at Green Island on 1 Sep'44 awaiting transportation to the U.S. Ordered to transfer all enlisted personnel who arrived in the area subsequent to 1 Sep'43 to the 47th CB at Munda.
- 1-13-45 - The 58th and 71st CBs are at Guadalcanal - to substitute for the 37th and 27th CBs respectively. (Comservpac Sec. Disp to AdCominpac 110201 dtd 11 Jan'45)
- 1-30-45 - The 37th CB is scheduled for BIVE. CNO suggest they stage at Saipan. (CNO Sec. disp. to Cincpac 181821 dtd 18 Jan'45).

Location- Okinawa

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- 3- 1-45 - Early lifting required for the 34th CB now ready at Hueneme. Propose substituting this batt for the 37th or 85th CB. (CNO Sec Disp to Cincpoa Pearl & Advance Hdq., Bupers & Budocks 261651 Feb'45)
- 3- 6-45 - In view of Huen. 011818, not desired to substitute 34th CB for 85th. Propose substituting 34th for 37th. Requests Cincpoa's advice. (CNO conf disp 031031 to Cincpoa)
- 3-8-45 -- Cincpoa concurs in substitution of the 34th CB for the 37th.(Cincpoa Sec. disp to CNO 070156 Mar'45).
- 3-10-45 -- The 37th CB is substituted for the 34th CB.(CNO Sec. disp to ComWesSeaFron and Bupers 071847 Mar'45).
- 3-23-45 - 37th CB ready for CenPac 15 May'45. (Cominch Sec Disp to Cincpoa P & Adv Hq 201905 Mar'45)
- 6-8-45 - 37th CB, approx 25 off. and 1082 men, scheduled to depart Parks for overseas 18 Jun'45. (CBRD Parks sec ltr dtd 31 May'45 to CifOffinCom Parks)
- 6-25-45 - The 37th CB, consisting of 25 off. and 1069 men, departed Parks for overseas on 19 Jun'45. (CBRD Parks sec disp 212038 to Bupers)
- 7-23-45 - The 37th CB is assigned to the 11th Brg and 37th CB effective 10 July. (COT APO 331 sec report on assignment of CB units ser 897 dtd 10 July)
- 10-1-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of 37th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg. & 11th Brig. It arrived Okinawa on 24 July'45.
- 10-6-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 37th CB - location-Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg. & 11th Brig.
- 11-1-45 - CNOB, Okinawa requests authority to inactivate 37th CB. (CNOB, Okinawa conf disp 261516 Oct'45 to Comservpac).

Location - Okinawa

37th CB

- 11-8-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 37th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg. & 11th Brig. 283 replacements rec'd from the 7th CB.
- 11-19-45 - Comservpac approves inactivation of 37th CB. Advise Comservpac when inactivation is completed. (Comservpac ltr ser 5722 dtd 5 Nov'45 to CNOB, Okinawa).
- 12-5-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 37th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg. 178 men transferred to U.S. for discharge.
- 1-8-46 - 37th CB was inactivated on 1 Dec'45. (OinC, 37th CB ltr ser 696 dtd 26 Dec'45 to CNCT, Okinawa)
- 1-28-46 - 1 Dec'45 report of 37th CB - located at Okinawa.

INACTIVATED

<u>Date</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Notes</u>
3/6	-	3 (Prime)	Cno Comd. disp 031931 Mar.	Japanese sub- stitute 34th for 37th.
3/7	-	"	Cincpac Pearl Sec. 070156 Mar	031931. Concom Sub. 34th for 37th.
3/8	-	"	Cno sec disp 071847 Mar.	Modify OH&H30. C B 34 substituted for 37th. Request Change ready date 37 to 15 May.
3/15	-	"	Quafach memo 3/9.	Ready Order 5/15. Cincid Prime- Available May 15/49.
5/12	Enroute to	(Prime) Advanced	Cno sec disp 071935 May	Assid priority- being shipped Prime may 1/ early June.

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Jul'44	27	986	R & BNP625
1 Aug'44	27	986	R & BNP625
1 Sep'44	28	965	R & BNP625
1 Oct'44	15	965	MoR
1 Nov'44		336	BNP625
1 Dec'44		324	BNP625
1 Jan'45		909	BNP625
1 Feb'45		811	BNP625
1 Mar'45		1129	BNP625
1 Apr'45		1070	BNP625
1 May'45	25	823	BNP625 & R
1 Jun'45	25	820	BNP625 & R
1 Jul'45	25	1069	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45	25	1067	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		942	BNP625
1 Oct'45	18	961	R & BNP625
1 Nov'45	22	789	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'45	11		R
1 Jan'46	2		R

THE STORY OF THE FIRST MISSION OF THE 37TH BATTALION

The 37th United States Naval Construction Battalion was commissioned in October 1942, composed as a typical construction battalion of men who, as civilians, ranked from skilled tradesmen to professional engineers in construction fields, Commander C. A. Whyte as Officer-in-Charge. To develop the necessary rapid transition from civilian to military life, enlisted men, as naval recruits, were taught the rudiments of drill, seamanship, and naval regulations, traditions and customs at Camp Endicott, Rhode Island, while officers were being indoctrinated at Norfolk, Virginia.

Soon after commissioning, the battalion departed from Camp Endicott for Norfolk to prepare for embarkation from the United States. In December, the battalion boarded the S. S. GEORGE CLYMER, while all types of construction equipment were being loaded aboard ships to accompany the battalion. On the 17th the small convoy steamed out through Hampton Roads, taking the battalion on its first mission.

In the Caribbean Sea, the convoy encountered a raging storm, a severe initiation for the men on their first ocean voyage. Since the time was during the height of Nazi submarine attacks in the Caribbean, further excitement was experienced when a U-boat surfaced and crash dived ahead of the convoy.

Christmas day the convoy reached the Panama Canal Zone, where the men received an introduction to the abominable tropical climate. Native scenery and operations of Canal locks were of interest.

Two weeks later aboard the GEORGE CLYMER, King Neptune conducted initiation ceremonies to the "Shellback Society" for the many men who were making their first crossing of the equator.

After 34 days of sailing, the sounding of general quarters indicated the convoy was at last entering the mine fields protecting the harbor at Noumea, the port and principal city of the French island of New Caledonia. After disembarking, the battalion camp was established several miles north of Noumea proper. In February, C Company was detached from the body of the battalion when it was ordered to Ile-Nou to construct an aircraft engine overhaul base. While in New Caledonia, the 37th Seabees completed such projects as the Naval Supply Depot at Megenta Bay, Naval Ammunition Depot, MOB No. 5 and MOB No. 7 hospitals, and the remodeling of a French barracks building for Com SoPac Headquarters, all of which entailed an enormous amount of earth moving, roadwork, erection of buildings, and utility systems. Shortages of required materials and spare parts for equipment called for exercising typical Seabee ingenuity to complete the projects within the limited scheduled time.

In August of 1943 the battalion reassembled and was

brought to full complement in preparation for the move "up front." On the 28th the battalion loaded aboard the USS PINCKNEY, an auxiliary hospital ship, and the liberty ship STEPHEN M. WHITE and sailed for Guadalcanal, where a temporary storage yard and camp of pup tents was established. It was there that the battalion experienced its first Japanese bombing, although it was minor. Due to the scarcity of water, the value of training in water discipline aboard ship was realized.

On the 11th of September, the battalion commenced loading operations aboard LST's and LCI's, destination, Ondonga, New Georgia.

One LST and one LCI proceeded directly for the landing at Ondonga, which was hampered by the running aground of the LST. The remainder of the battalion landed at Munda where gear and supplies were transferred to smaller landing craft to facilitate the landing at Ondonga.

Ondonga was a large natural obstacle to construction—dense jungle growing from a mud bog. Although the battalion was subjected to bombing and artillery fire for three weeks, two greater elements to combat during construction were the mud and limited time. In conjunction with the 82nd Seabees, the battalion, by February, had completed 20 miles of roadway, two fighter strips complete with several miles of taxiways, hard stands, and revetments, gun emplacements and control tower, sawmill and several camps. Building airstrips and roads required the removal of all mud to the natural coral surface, then filling to grade with compacted crushed coral. While at Ondonga, the battalion also salvaged a PBV flying boat which had been damaged by landing in shallow water. Lt. Commander Young became "Skipper" of the battalion, succeeding Commander Whyte, who was promoted to Officer-in-Charge of the 22nd Construction Regiment.

Following completion of new projects at Ondonga, the battalion loaded and embarked in three echelons for the invasion of the Green Islands. While en route, the convoy was attacked by Jap aircraft without casualty to the battalion. The first echelon of the battalion landed on Green immediately following the assault of the New Zealand Third Division, who were annihilating Japanese troops on the islands.

Fourteen days after landing, the first plane landed on a 5,000-foot fighter strip of coral. By July the dense jungle of Green Islands had been transformed into 40 miles of roadway, fighter strips, a 7,000-foot bomber strip with taxiways and hard stands, seaplane ramps, fuel docks, and camps for Army, Navy, and Marine units. Also erected was a large steel tower for a radar installation.

For heroism displayed in rescuing a pilot from a wrecked

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
NAVY DEPARTMENT

THIRTY-SEVENTH U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION
Construction Battalion Replacement Depot
Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California. 32

CB/37
Serial - 246
KMW:h

3 May 1945

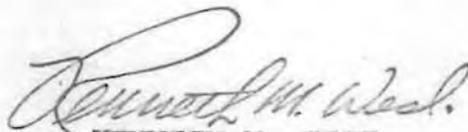
To: Chief of Naval Personnel.

Subj: Itinerary of 37th Naval Construction Battalion

Ref: (a) BuPers ltr. dated 18 April 1945 to OinC,
37th Naval Const. Battalion

Encl: (A) Itinerary of 37th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion

1. Enclosure (A) herewith summarizes the itinerary of the 37th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion from the date of commissioning to the present time as indicated in the Battalion's Log.



KENNETH M. WEST
Officer in Charge.

To Facilitate
Administrative Handling
Classification changed
from:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~RESTRICTED~~

For
Irvin S. Prosser
Comdr. CECV-1, USNR
Signature

ITINERARY OF THE 37TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

- 28 Oct. 1942 - Formed and commissioned at NCTC, Davisville, R. I.
- 2 Dec. 1942 - Transferred from NCTC, Davisville, R. I. to ABD, Davisville, R. I.
- 14 Dec. 1942 - Departed ABD, Davisville, R. I. for Army Base, Norfolk, Virginia
- 15 Dec. 1942 - Arrived Army Base, Norfolk, Virginia
- 16 Dec. 1942 - Departed Norfolk, Virginia for overseas.
- 18 Jan. 1943 - Arrived Noumea, New Caledonia
- 28 Aug. 1943 - 1st. Echelon (approximately 830 men) departed Noumea, New Caledonia
2nd. Echelon (approximately 250 men) departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 1 Sept 1943 - 1st. Echelon arrived Lunga, Guadalcanal.
- 3 Sept 1943 - 2nd. Echelon arrived Lunga, Guadalcanal.
- 11 Sept 1943 - 1st. Echelon (approximately 540 men) departed Lunga, Guadalcanal.
- 12 Sept 1943 - 2nd. Echelon (approximately 180 men) departed Lunga, Guadalcanal.
- 14 Sept 1943 - 3rd Echelon (approximately 360 men) departed Lunga, Guadalcanal.
- 12 Sept 1943 - 1st. Echelon arrived Ondonga, New Georgia.
- 13 Sept 1943 - 2nd Echelon arrived Munda, New Georgia.
- 15 Sept 1943 - 3rd Echelon arrived Munda, New Georgia
- 13 Sept to 16 Sept. 1943 - 2nd and 3rd Echelons moved from Munda to Ondonga, New Georgia.
- 13 Feb. 1944 - 1st Echelon (approximately 250 men) departed Ondonga, New Georgia,

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Irvin S. Rosman
CIC-VC, USNA

Signature

Itinerary of the 37th Naval Construction Battalion Cont'd.

- 17 Feb. 1944 - 2nd Echelon (approximately 690 men) departed Ondonga, New Georgia.
- 21 Feb. 1944 - 3rd Echelon (approximately 140 men) departed Ondonga, New Georgia.
- 15 Feb. 1944 - 1st. Echelon arrived Green Islands.
- 19 Feb. 1944 - 2nd. Echelon arrived Green Islands.
- 24 Feb. 1944 - 3rd. Echelon arrived Green Islands.
- 4 Oct. 1944 - Departed Green Islands for United States.
- 26 Oct. 1944 - Arrived San Francisco, California.
Arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.
- 1 May 1945 - Still located CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, Calif.

The foregoing is certified to be the correct itinerary for the 37th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion during period indicated.

Kenneth M. West
 KENNETH M. WEST
 Officer in Charge.

Inactivated 1 December 1945

To Facilitate
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 from:

CONFIDENTIAL
 To: **RESTRICTED**
 Irvin S. Postmussen
 Comdr. CRC-101, USNR
 Signature

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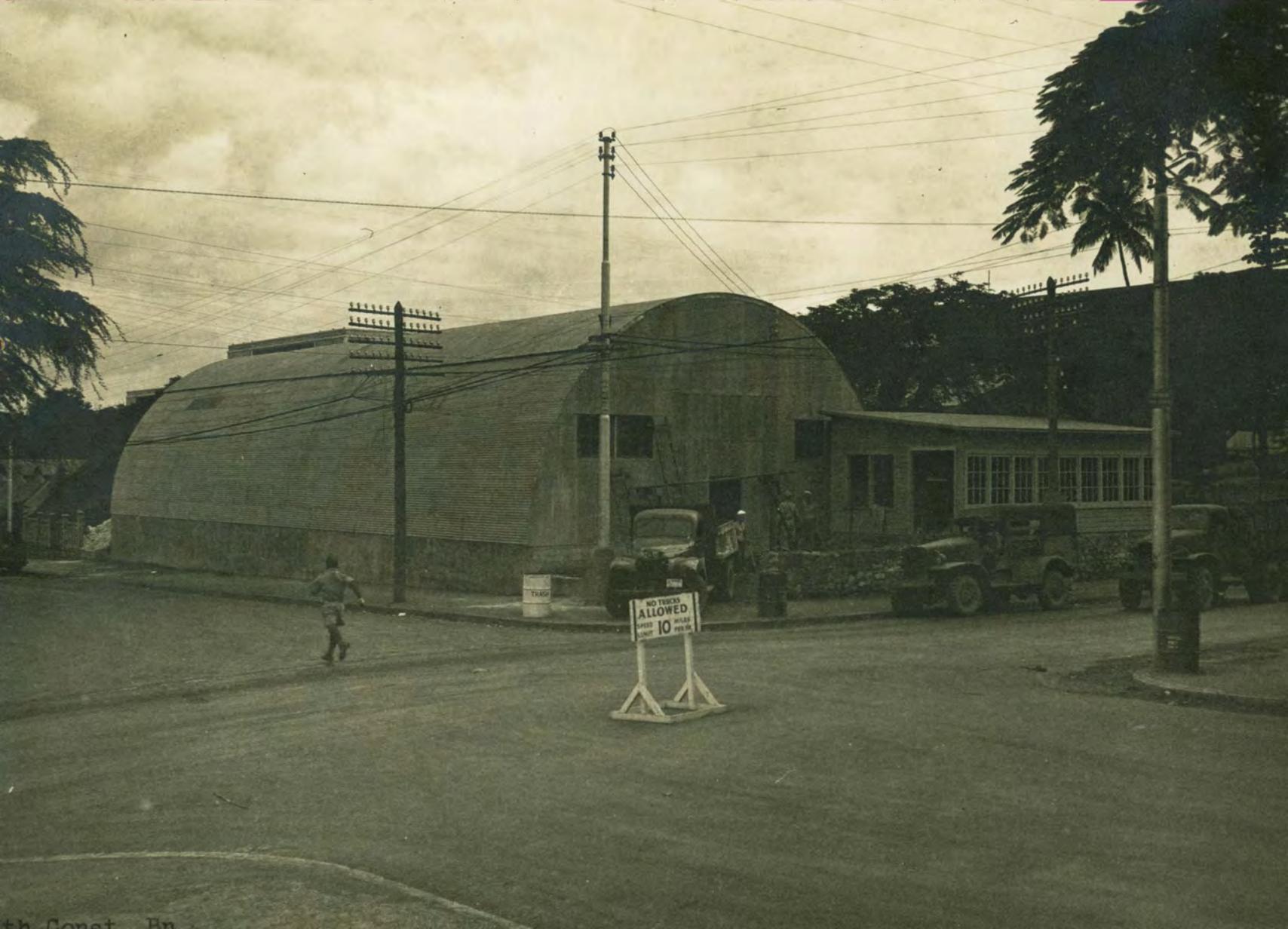


USNOB



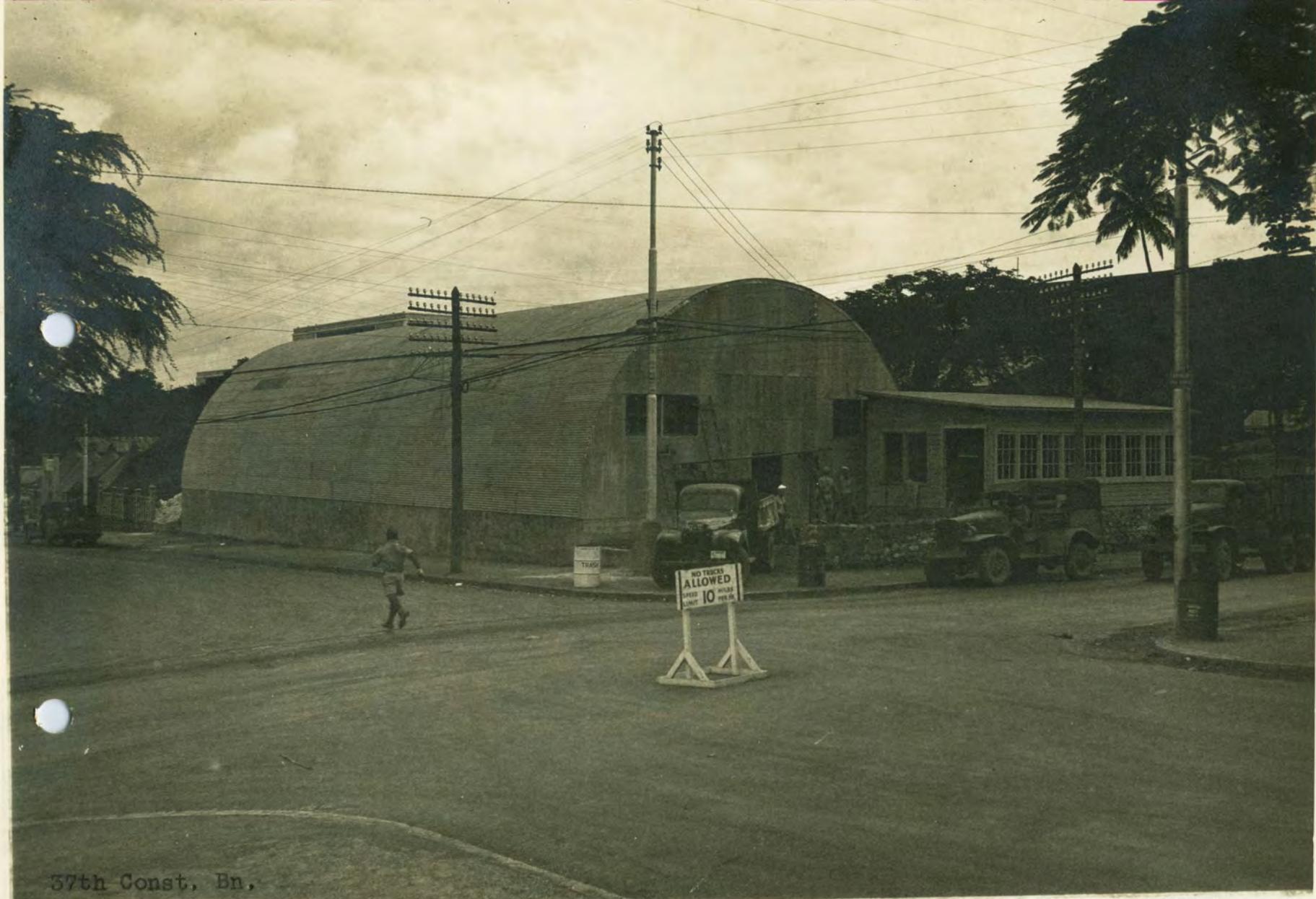


Guy Derrick
in 40' Launch
for Sono buoy work



NO TRUCKS
ALLOWED
SPEED LIMIT
10
MILES
PER HOUR

TRASH



37th Const. Bn.

126-8

Noumea, New Caledonia

May 10, 1943

Cryptograph Building and Storehouse, looking northwest

