

40th Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEM</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
30 Jun'44	23	968	Recap.
1 Aug'44	23	1005	MoR
1 Sep'44	24	738	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'44		826	BNP625
1 Jan'45		1025	BNP625
1 Feb'45		1068	BNP625
1 Mar'45		1067	BNP625
1 Apr'45	26	1066	BNP625 & MoR
1 May'45		1058	BNP625
1 Jun'45	26	1054	Roster & BNP625
1 Jul'45	25	1045	Roster & BNP625
1 Aug'45	25	1024	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		876	BNP625
1 Oct'45	13	694	R & BNP625
1 Nov'45	11	597	BNP625 & R

40th Construction Battalion (INACTIVATED)

40th CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

8 Dec. 1942 From NCTC to ABD Davisville.
24 Dec. 1942 Embarked from Davisville.
3 Feb. 1943 Arrived Espiritu Santo.
27 Apr. 1943 Operating at Espiritu Santo.
12 Aug. 1943 Operating at Espiritu Santo.
20 Oct. 1943 Operating at Espiritu Santo.
31 Nov. 1943 Greater part of battalion arrived at Noumea.
15 Dec. 1943 } Arrived at Finschhafen N. G.
22 Dec. 1943 }
2 Mar. 1944 538 men, 13 officers arrived with 1st ech. of 17th Regt. at Los Negros (Momote Airstrip)
9 Mar. 1944 }
13 Mar. 1944 } Balance of Regt. arrived (17th Regt. rept. Mar.)
30 Mar. 1944 }
1 Apr. 1944 Monthly Rept. - at Manus
8 May 1944 Balance of Regt. at Manus
31 May 1944 Located at Los Negros, Admiralty Is. (conserfor 7 flt. sec. ltr A-9, ser. BP-001407 to Dirpadocks 8 Jun. 1944)
22 July 1944 Operating at Manus, Admiralty Is.

40th C.B.

1st Embarkation

NCTC - Davisville
 ABD - Davisville
 Ready Date - 24 Dec'42
 Left ABD - 24 Dec'43 FFT *Bermuda Espiritu Santo.*
 Destination - ~~Alaskan Sector~~ *Neumea Finschafen Manus*

2nd Embarkation

NCTC -
 ABD - Parks
 Ready Date - 20 Jan'45
 Left ABD - 1 Feb'45
 Location - ~~Saipan~~ Okinawa

- 11-6-42 *Batt. Commissioned.*
 12-8-42 *Transferred NCTC. to ABD LOG Davisville. PT*
 12-1-42 - 40th CB, consisting of approximately 27 officers and 1079 men, to be transferred from NCTC Davisville to ABD Davisville on 8 Dec. (Budocks ltr to CNO dtd 1 Dec'42)
 12-24-42 - Departed Davisville FFT. *27 officers 1022 men.*
 1-20-43 - Proposed Espiritu Santo - Enroute Lion 1.
 4-1-43 - Arrived Espiritu Santo 3 Feb'43.
 5-11-43 - The 40th CB is located at Espiritu Santo. (ComNavBasesSoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr. dtd 5-11-43)
 2-14-44 - Oct & Nov report of 40th CB - orders were received 13 Nov'43 to move to a new base. Greater part of batt. arrived Noumea 30 Nov'43.
 2-18-44 - 1 Jan'44 report of 40th CB - located at Finschafen, New Guinea. The 40th CB arrived Finschafen in two groups - 15 and 22 Dec'43.
 3-15-44 - 1 Feb'44 report of 40th CB - operating at Finschafen.
 5-17-44 - 40th CB is at ~~Manus~~. (AES 5/16/44) *Los Negros, Admiralties.*
 6-2-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 40th CB - operating at Manus. "
 6-7-44 - 338 men and 12 officers of 40th CB arrived with 1st Echelon of 17th Reg. at ~~Manus~~ *Los Negros.* 2 Mar'44. The balance of Reg. arrived 9 Mar, 13 Mar, and 30 Mar'44. (17th Reg. Mar'44 report)

provided corrections by Mr. Laumman

40th C.B.

- 6-22-44 - 1 May'44 report of 40th CB - Landed at Hyane Harbor 2 Mar'44 with 12 officers and 338 men. Rehabilitated the Momote Airstrip with 46th and 78th CBs.
 6-26-44 - 40th CB is located at Los Negros as of 31 May'44. (Comservfor7flt Sec. ltr A-9 over Ser. BP-001407 to Dirpadocks dtd 8 Jun'44)
 7-22-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 40th CB - operating at ~~Manus~~ *Los Negros, Admiralties.*
 8-10-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 40th CB - operating in Admiralties.
 8-17-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 17th Reg. - 250 personnel received by 40th CB from CD 2178 and 2199 were ordered transferred to ABCD Manus effective when the 40th CB leaves this area. *(These personnel returned with The Batt. to Noumea)*
 8-21-44 - 40th CB to be returned to U.S. when transportation is available. Personnel rec'd after 1 Sep'43 to be assigned to 18th Reg. for disposition. (Comseronsopac Sec. Disp. 180848 NCR 8916 dtd 18 Aug'44 to CNB Noumea)
 8-25-44 - 40th CB located at ~~Manus~~ - Following data of SoPac as of 1 Jul'44:
 Arrived Espiritu Santo Dec'42
 " Finschafen ~~Dec'43~~
 " ~~Manus~~ *Los Negros* Mar'44
 8-31-44 - 40th CB, located at Noumea, ready to sail to U.S. with 22 officers and 715 men. (Comseronsopac Sec. Disp. 272110 NCR 28 Aug'44 to CNO)
 9-9-44 - 40th CB departed from Noumea 5 Sep to San Fran. (Comseronsopac disp. 060550 NCR 2702 to Dirpadocks S.F.) *21 Officers. 736 men*
 9-15-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 40th CB - then located at Noumea. Completed all work at ~~Manus~~ *Los Negros* 18 Jul'44 and departed for Noumea 21 Jul'44)
 9-25-44 - 40th CB arrived Parks 18 Sep'44 with 21 off. and 736 men. (19TWX2304 Sep'44)
 9-26-44 - Above are on overseas leave until 23 Oct. (23TWX2353 Sep'44 from Parks to Budocks)

40th C.B.

- 9-25-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 40th CB - Expected to secure from project on 2 Sep'44.
- 9-30-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 17th Reg. - The 40th CB secured all work in this area on 14 Jul'44 and were detached from this base on 20 Jul'44.
- 11- 4-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 18th Reg. - 40th CB reported to the 18th Reg. on 1 Aug'44. 263 men were transferred to the 18th Reg. for further assignment.
- 11-21-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 18th Reg. - The 40th CB was detached from the Regiment on 2 Sep'44.

- 1-12-45 -- The 40th CB assigned to Cincpoa - given Jan'45 priority for Saipan shipment. request that Parks make the 40th CB ready by 20 Jan'45 - must depart from Parks before 2 Feb'45. (CNO Sec. disp to Parks and Comweseafron 081945 dtd 9 Jan'45).
- 1-17-45 -- The 40th CB is assigned to Cincpoa to go to Saipan for duty pending further transfer to final destination. (CNO Sec. ltr Op30-2CK14-UOT/rc over (SC)P16-5 over Ser. 0013930 to Budocks, Busanda and Parks dtd 11 Jan'45).
- 1-17-45 -- The 40th CB scheduled to ship ETD 30 Jan'45. (Com 12 Sec. disp to Cincpoa 130056 dtd 13 Jan'45).
- 1-20-45 -- The 40th CB is assigned to BIVE (CNO Sec. ltr Op30-2CK12-UOT over (SC)P16-5 over Ser. 0019030 to distribution list dtd 15 Jan'45).
- 1-30-45 -- The 40th CB is to leave the West Coast for Saipan. (Comservpac Sec. disp to CNO 212311 dtd 22 Jan'45).
- 2- 8-45 - The 40th CB left the U.S. 1 Feb'45 with 26 officers and 1068 men. (Parks Sec Disp to Bupers 020015 dtd 2 Feb'45)
- 3-8-45 -- According to Dirpacdocks San Fran 15 Feb'45 report the 40th CB is located at Saipan.

Location - Saipan, Okinawa 40th C.B.

- 4-23-45 - The 40th CB was in transit from 31 Jan'45 to 18 Mar'45. (Master Roll of 40th CB dated 31 Mar'45.)
- 5- 8-45 - The 40th CB is located at Saipan. Assigned Okinawa. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)
- 6-18-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 40th CB - located at Saipan. Departed San Francisco 2 Feb'45, arrived at Pearl Harbor 10 Feb'45, arrived at Eniwetok 5 Mar'45 & arrived at Saipan 18 Mar'45. Report routed via 42nd Reg & 10th Brig.
- 6-28-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 40th CB - located at Okinawa and Saipan. 2 off. and 49 men left Saipan for Okinawa 11 Apr'45. 1st echelon, consisting of 707 men and 19 off, left Saipan 20 Apr'45 and arrived at Okinawa 30 Apr'45. 2nd echelon, consisting of 298 men and 5 off, remaining at Saipan. Report via 42nd Reg and 10th Brig.
- 7-14-45 - 40th CB detached 1 July from the 42nd Reg. Ordered to proceed immediately and report to CinC 44th Reg for duty. (10th Brg sec orders ser 00134 dtd 1 July to CinC 40th CB)
- 7-18-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 40th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 42nd Reg & 10th Brig.
- 7-23-45 - The 40th CB is assigned to the 10th Brg and 44th Reg. effective 10 July. (CCT APO 331 sec report on assignment of CB units ser 897 dtd 10 July)
- 7-26-45 - The 40th CB reported to the 44th Reg on 1 Jul'45. (44th Reg Sec endorsement dtd 1 Jul'45 to CinC 40th CB)
- 8-14-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 40th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 44th Reg & 10th Brig.

Location - Okinawa

40th CB

- 9-25-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 40th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 44th Reg & 10th Brig.
- 10-17-45 - CNOB, Okinawa requests authority to inactivate the 40th CB. (CNOB, Okinawa conf spltr ser 0203 dtd 20 Sept'45 to Comservpac).
- 10-24-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 40th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 44th Reg. & 10th Brg.
- 10-30-45 - Comservpac approves the inactivation of the 40th CB. (Comservpac conf spltr ser 05522 dtd 6 Oct'45 to Cincpac).
- 11-14-45 - Comservpac directs Comdt. Okinawa to inactivate the 40th CB. Advise Comservpac when inactivation is completed. (Comservpac conf spltr ser 05659 dtd 23 Oct'45 to Comdt., NOB, Okinawa).
- 12-5-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 40th CB - location not stated.
- 1-31-46 - CNCT, Okinawa to CSP ser 6510 dtd 1 Dec'45 ltr states the 40th CB was inactivated on 28 Nov'45. (Dirwespacocks conf rpt dtd 10 Jan'46).

INACTIVATED

40TH UNITED STATES NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

The 40th United States Naval Construction Battalion was commissioned in November 1942 at Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island. Toward the end of December of that year, after several weeks of military and technical training, the battalion entrained at Davisville and headed southward. Christmas Day the new Seabees boarded a transport in the harbor of Norfolk, Virginia and two days later sailed for the Pacific Ocean.

On February 3, 1943, the 40th Battalion reached Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, where the U. S. Navy and Army were constructing a major operating base for use in the war against Japan. The battalion built a third bomber base at Luganville, complete with a runway, taxiways, and hardstands, and all of it was cut out of dense jungle. Also, it built a tank farm, warehouses, hangars, quonset huts, utility systems, and 15 miles of two-lane roads through the jungle.

With its projects on Espiritu Santo substantially completed, the 40th Battalion sailed on November 25, 1943, for Finschhafen in British New Guinea, by way of Noumea and Milne Bay, and arrived on December 15, 1943. Because Finschhafen was in the forward area, Seabees of the battalion got their baptism of fire and became confirmed foxhole dwellers. They built an Army staging area for 17,000 men, with camp and storage facilities, 14 LST loading ramps, and 15 miles of two-lane roads with several timber bridges.

On February 29, 1944, advance elements of the U. S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division landed on Los Negros in the Admiralty group on a reconnaissance mission. Finding the island lightly held, the division's mission immediately became one of invasion and occupation. Consequently, that same day, the United States high command ordered reinforcements, and before nightfall the first reinforcements, including about one-half of the 40th Construction Battalion, left Finschhafen.

They landed on Los Negros during the morning of March 2, 1944, amidst heavy Japanese bombing and mortar and small-arms fire. Soon after unloading material, equipment, and supplies from the landing ships, Seabees of the 40th Battalion were rushed to front-line combat positions to reinforce Army

units defending the beachhead and the adjacent Japanese-built Momote airfield.

Later in the day, when the American forces had advanced across the runway, the Seabees began rebuilding the badly battered airfield while still under Japanese sniper fire from nearby coconut groves. Eight days after their initial landing, the Seabees had the airfield operating for United States and Australian military aircraft.

During the remainder of March, the other echelons of the battalion arrived. The entire battalion then completed the airfield and its auxiliary facilities and built roads and supply facilities. For heroism in combat and distinguished service on Los Negros, the 40th Naval Construction Battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

The 40th Battalion remained at Los Negros until July 21, 1944. Then it went to Noumea, New Caledonia, for rest and acclimation. After spending six weeks in building a large camp, it sailed from New Caledonia and headed for the United States mainland.

On September 18, 1944, the 40th Battalion arrived at Camp Parks in California, and the veteran Seabees immediately were granted 30-day leave. Afterwards the battalion was re-formed and brought up to full strength by replacements from all parts of the United States. Then came three months of intensive and advanced military and technical training, and once again the Seabees were ready for battle and for building.

The battalion left Camp Parks on February 1, 1945, and the next day sailed in convoy from San Francisco on transport Adabelle Lykes. After a two-week layover in the Hawaiian Islands, it arrived on March 18 at Saipan in the Mariana Islands and began preparing for the invasion of Okinawa Island.

The invasion of Okinawa began on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945. Some construction battalions went ashore as combat engineers with the assault troops, but because of limited beach capacity at the target, other battalions were scheduled to land in follow-up echelons as rapidly as shipping priorities permitted. Among the follow-up construction troops were the 40th Seabees, who were staged at Saipan on landing ships returned from the assault echelons. Between the 27th and the 30th of April, the first battalion echelons landed

on the east coast of Okinawa and developed their own beach. The remaining echelons landed during May.

Although the 40th Battalion was scheduled to immediately begin work on rehabilitating and expanding Chimu Airfield, the site was still in the heart of the battle zone and the work could not begin until May 6. The battalion built its camp near Chimu and was under Japanese attack from light mortar and small-arms fire through May. The Japanese also attempted to sabotage equipment and supplies with explosive charges. Frequent enemy contacts were made by Seabee reconnaissance survey parties and by Seabee outpost guards intercepting small enemy patrols and armed stragglers.

Upon the cessation of organized Japanese resistance on Okinawa, the 40th Battalion could exert most of its effort on building the airfield and working on base development projects. During the morning of July 1, one hundred United States planes arrived and Chimu airfield was put in operation on schedule. All the work was completed on the last day of the war.

Greatly diminished in strength because many Seabees had already left for the United States and demobilization in Operation Magic Carpet, the 40th Naval Construction Battalion was inactivated on Okinawa in November 1945. Thus the battalion ended three glorious years of building and fighting to defeat the Japanese on many islands of the Pacific Ocean.

ITINERARY OF THE 40TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

Administrative Handling
Classification changed
from:

RESTRICTED

CONFIDENTIAL

6 November 1942	Battalion Commissioned at NCTC, Davisville, R.I.
8 December 1942	Battalion transferred from NCTC, Davisville, R.I. to AED, Davisville, R.I.
24 December 1942	Battalion departed from Davisville, R.I. for overseas duty.
25 December 1942	Battalion embarked for overseas duty.
3 February 1943	Arrived Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.
25 November 1943	Departed Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides in two echelons 1st Echelon - 25 Officers, 715 men 2nd Echelon - 4 Officers, 148 men
30 November 1943	1st Echelon arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
1 December 1943	2nd Echelon arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
2 December 1943	1st Echelon departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
5 December 1943	2nd Echelon departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
6 December 1943	1st Echelon arrived Milne Bay, New Guinea.
13 December 1943	1st Echelon departed Milne Bay, New Guinea.
15 December 1943	1st Echelon arrived Finschafen, New Guinea.
22 December 1943	2nd Echelon arrived Finschafen, New Guinea.
29 February 1944	1st Echelon consisting of 12 officers and 338 men left Finschafen, New Guinea.
11 March 1944	2nd Echelon consisting of 9 officers and 364 men left Finschafen, New Guinea.
28 March 1944	3rd Echelon consisting of 4 officers and 58 men left Finschafen, New Guinea.
2 March 1944	1st Echelon arrived Los Negros, Admiralty Islands.
13 March 1944	2nd Echelon arrived Los Negros, Admiralty Islands.
30 March 1944	3rd Echelon arrived Los Negros, Admiralty Islands.
21 July 1944	Battalion departed Los Negros, Admiralty Islands.
30 July 1944	Arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
5 September 1944	Battalion departed Noumea, New Caledonia.

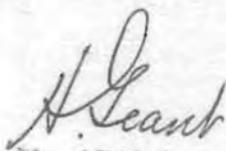
To: **RESTRICTED**
Lvin S. Rasmussen
Commander, USNR
Signature

ITINERARY OF THE 40TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

RESTRICTED

18 September 1944 Arrived Camp Parks, California
1 February 1945 Battalion departed Camp Parks, California for 2nd
tour overseas duty, destination BIVE via HODE.
18 March 1945 Arrived HODE

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY



H. GRANT
Lt. Comdr., CEC (S) USNR
Executive Officer
40th USN Constr. Battalion

To Facilitate
Administrative Handling
Class is changed
from:

CONFIDENTIAL

RESTRICTED

By: Irvin S. Rasmussen
Comdr. CECW 1 114111

Signature

40th Naval Construction Battalion

Chronology

- Nov 1942 The 40th Naval Construction Battalion was commissioned at Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island.
- Dec 1942 After several weeks of military and technical training, the battalion entrained at Davisville and headed southward.
- 03 Feb 1943 The 40th Battalion reached Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. The battalion built a third bomber base at Luganville.
- 25 Nov 1943 The battalion left Espiritu Santo and sailed for Finschhafen in British New Guinea and arrived December 15, 1943.
- 29 Feb 1944 One half of the 40th Construction Battalion left Finschhafen.
- 02 Mar 1944 Landed on Los Negros, Seabees of the 40th Battalion were rushed to front-line combat positions to reinforce Army units defending the beachhead and the adjacent Japanese-built Momote airfield.
- 21 July 1944 The 40th Battalion left Los Negros and went to Noumea, New Caledonia, for rest and acclimation. After spending six weeks in building a large camp, it sailed from New Caledonia and headed for the United States mainland.
- 18 Sept 1944 The 40th Battalion arrived at Camp Parks in California. Then came three months of intensive and advanced military and technical training, and once again the Seabees were ready for battle and for building.
- 01 Feb 1945 The battalion left Camp parks and sailed in convoy from San Francisco on transport Adabelle Lykes.
- 18 Mar 1945 The battalion arrived at Saipan in the Mariana Islands and began preparing for the invasion of Okinawa Island.
- Nov 1945 The 40th Naval Construction Battalion was inactivated on Okinawa.

40th Naval Construction Battalion

Officers in Charge

CDR Irvin S. Rasmusson, CEC, USNR

Nov 1942 - Oct 1944

LCDR Henry J. Rmbarger, CEC, USNR

Oct 1944 - Nov 1945



"THE FIGHTING 40TH"







11518 1743



9-28-43

FOY CB

