

# 44<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

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*Historical  
Information*



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



44th C.B.

NGTO - Norfolk  
ABD - Hueneme  
Ready Date - 30 Jan'43  
Left ABD - 27 Feb'43  
Destination - Lien #1 Com7flt Manus

LOG

- 12-24-42 - Ordered to Gulfport 30 Dec FFT Hueneme account congestion at Hueneme.
- 12-30-42 - Transferred to Gulfport FFT Hueneme when space is available there.
- 1- 9-43 - Transferred from Gulfport to Hueneme.
- 1-14-43 - Arrived ABD, Hueneme.
- 2- 8-43 - Departure from Hueneme delayed until after 21 Feb.
- 3- 3-43 - 44th departed 27 Feb'43.
- 5-11-43 - The 44th CB is located at Espiritu Santo. (ComNavBasesSoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr dtd 5-11-43)
- 7-14-43 - 1 Jun'43 report of 44th CB - 44th CB embarked Hueneme 27 Feb'43 and arrived destination, Base EBon, Espiritu Santo, 18 Mar'43.
- 3-16-44 - 1 Mar'44 report of 44th CB - located at Espiritu Santo.
- 5- 5-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 44th CB - Subject batt has been transferred as part of 5th Reg to 4th Brig. in SoWesPac.
- 5-17-44 - 44th CB is located at Manus. (AES 5/16/44)
- 5-27-44 - 1 May'44 report of 44th CB - Embarked from Espiritu 4 Apr'44 and arrived at Manus 17 Apr'44. (Operated approx. 13 mos. at Espiritu). Arrived Espiritu

44th C.B.

- 18 Mar'43. (5th Reg. Mar'44 report) Operations secured at Espiritu 18 Mar'44 preparatory to moving to new base.
- 6-26-44 - 44th CB is located at Manus as of 31 May'44. (Comservfor7flt Sec. ltr A-9 over Ser. BP-001407 to Dirpadocks dtd 8 Jun'44)
- 7- 7-44 - 44th CB is located at Selisia Plantation, Manus. (ComServFor7flt Sec. ltr A-9-4 over Ser. 00673 to Budocks dtd 14 Jun'44)
- 7-18-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Lorengau, Salesia Plantation, and Seeadler Harbor on Manus Is.
- 8-15-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Lorengau, Salesia Plantation, Seeadler Harbor on Manus.
- 8-19-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Manus.
- 8-25-44 - 44th CB located at Manus - Data of SoPac as of 1 Jul'44:  
Arrived Espiritu Santo Apr'43  
" Manus Apr'44
- 8-29-44 - Scheduled return date to U.S. of the 44th C.B. changed to 1 Dec'44. (Com7flt Sec. disp. 210103 NCR 951 to Cincpac dtd 21 Aug'44)
- 9-14-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Manus.
- 10-18-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Manus. Endorsement by Comservfor7flt states that the Batts of the 4th Brig. are to return to the SoPac area upon completion of the present assignment in the Admiralty Islands. Report endorsed by 5th Reg. (Due to return to Sopac about 1 Dec'44 - Comservfor7flt Mon.RepSec 1Sep'
- 10-24-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Manus.
- 11-8-44 - 44th CB is located at Manus and is in the 5th Reg. It is estimated that the 44th CB will be released bout 15 Nov'44 to return to the SoPac area. (Comservfor7flt Sec. ltr A9-4 over Ser BP-001882 to Budocks dtd 12 Oct monthly report for Sep'44)

- 11-17-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of 44th CB - operating at Manus. 26 men were received on board during Oct.
- 11-29-44 - 44th CB is located at Manus. (Comserv7flt Sec Disp to CNO 150133 NCR 18921 dtd 24 Nov'44)
- 12-28-44 - The 44th CB is located at Manus - estimated to be released early in Nov'44 for x return to the Sopac area. (Comserv7flt Sec. report for Oct'44 dtd 20 Nov'44).
- 1-1-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of 44th B - located at Manus. Was detached from the 5th Reg. on 3 Dec'44.
- 1-12-45 - CMB Manus requested to order the 44th, 46th and 57th CB's to proceed and report to Noumea and to the 17th Reg. for staging. Request that this entire movement be expedited. (Comsopac Sec. disp to Com7flt and CMB Manus 080326 dtd 8 Jan'45).
- 1-13-45 - Comserv7flt estimates ~~that~~ the 44th CB to be returned to Sopac area in Dec'44. (Comserv7flt Sec report for Nov'44 dtd 15 Dec'44)
- 1-26-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 44th CB - Contemplates moving to Noumea.
- 1-30-45 - Steps will be taken to obtain one regular and one Special batt from the West Coast to permit the return of the 44th, 46th and 57th CB's for rehabilitation. (Cincpac Sec. disp to Comsopac 180059 dtd 18 Jan'45).
- 1-30-45 - Orders which assigned the 44th CB to the 17th Reg. modified - The 17th Reg. is ordered to detach the 44th CB upon its arrival at Noumea to proceed to the U.S. OinC 44th CB ordered to transfer all men who departed U.S. subsequent 31 Jan'44 to the 17th Reg. for further assignment. Transportation for the 44th CB to be available immediately upon arrival of unit at Noumea. (Comsopac Sec. disp to 44th CB, CMB Manus and OinC 17th Reg. 220544 dtd 22 Jan'45).

#### 44th C.B.

- 2- 2-45 - The 44th CB was detached from the 5th Reg. on 2 Dec'44. (1 Jan'45 report of the 5th Reg.)
- 2-7-45 - The 44th CB departed Noumea 27 Jan'45 bound for San Francisco with 15 officers and 791 men. (Comserv7flt Sec. disp to Dirpaddock's San Fran 292345 dtd 30 Jan'45).
- 2-13-45 -- CMB Manus Sec. ltr 00243 dtd 31 Jan'45 to Senior Officer present 44th CB - hereby detached from NB Manus to proceed to the U.S. (To be carried with 57th CB).
- 2-22-45 -- The 44th CB reported at Noumea 26 Jan'45. (17th Reg. 2nd End. (on Manus orders dtd 16 Jan'45) dtd 26 Jan'45 to OinC 44th CB).
- 2-22-45 -- The 44th CB consisting of 15 officers and 790 men arrived Parks from Overseas 10 Feb'45. (Parks TWX 122125 Feb'45 to Bupers).
- 2-28-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 44th CB - then at Manus.
- 2-28-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 44th CB - Batt was detached from NB Manus on 16 Jan'45, embarked on 17 Jan'45, arrived at NB Noumea on 26 Jan'45 and reported to the 17th Reg. 132 men were transferred to the 17th Reg. FFA; the remaining personnel embarked on 26 Jan'45 enroute U.S.
- 3-5-45 -- Parks directed to inactivate the 44th CB upon their return from rehabilitation leave. Personnel will be used for form new units or as replacements to Comserv7flt (Bupers ltr Pers-2122D-CGC/lm (Conf) to Parks dtd 1 Mar'45).
- 4-11-45 - The 44th CB (members remaining at Manus) hereby detached from NB Manus to proceed to U.S. End. 3 states that they reported to Parks on 18 Feb'45. (CMB Manus Sec ltr P16-3 over Ser 00243 dtd 31 Jan to Sr off. 44th CB)
- 4-12-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 44th CB - located at Camp Parks as of 1 Apr. Main body of batt, consisting of 791 men and 15 off., departed Noumea 27 Jan'45 and arr'd Par 10 Feb'45. 2nd echelon, consisting of 5 men and 1 off., left Manus 1 Feb'45 and and arr'd Parks 18 Feb'45.

44th C.B.

5- 3-45 - The 44th CB inactivated on 30 Apr '45. (Parks TWX 012330 May '45 to Bupers)

INACTIVATED

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Jul '44	35	985	MoR
1 Aug '44	33	983	MoR
1 Sep '44	30	974	R & MoR
1 Oct '44	30	968	MoR
1 Nov '44	25	969	MoR
1 Dec '44	27	945	MoR
1 Jan '45	26	937	MoR
1 Feb '45	16	796	MoR
15 Feb '45		795	BNP625

44th Construction Battalion (INACTIVATED)

HH<sup>th</sup> C.B. Page 2

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
2/23	-	Oerke	Beufcker memo 2/17	Returned US 2/10/45. See ready date 5/11: no assignment.
3/15	-	"	Beufcker memo 3/9	Returned US 2/11 being activated.
Aug report shows inactivated.				

44th C. B.

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
5/31/44	-	Espintu Santo	-	Left U.S. Feb 1943.
6/12/44	-	Las Neguas	Burlocke C.B. report - May 1944.	
7/19	-	Manus	C.B. report 1 July.	
7/25	-	Manus	Com 7 ch Jet sec disp. 200215 July.	Date release - Manus Nov. 1.
9/14	-	Manus	Com 7 ch Jet sec disp. 210103 Aug.	Date release Manus revised - Sec. 1.
11/25	-	Manus	Com 507 ch Jet sec act disp. 150133, Nov.	
1/9	-	(Noumea)	Com 507 ch Jet sec disp. 080326 Jan.	Request proceed Jagham report Noumea - 17 ch regt for staging.
1/23	-	(US)	Com 507 ch Jet sec disp. 220544 Jan.	Modify 080326. upon arrival Epi. detach. for return US - (except per. leaving US. after 31 Jan 1944).

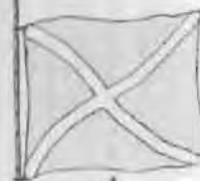
## THE 44TH SEABEES

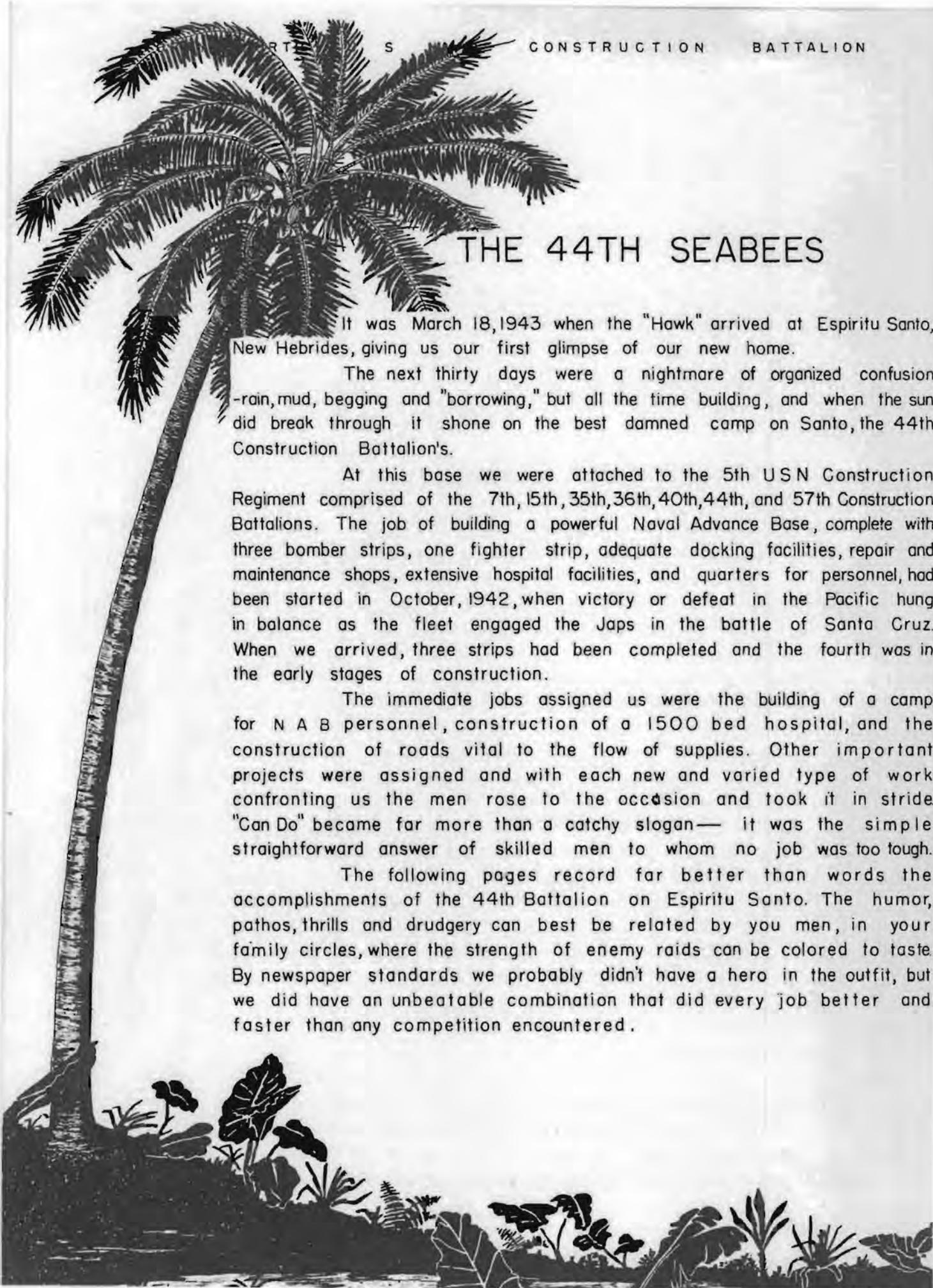
November, 1942, witnessed the first signs of life of the Forty-fourth U. S. Naval Construction Battalion. It was then that construction men from all sections of the country put aside the tools of their trades and traveled to Camp Bradford, Virginia, to undergo "boot" training in preparation for overseas duty with the SEABEES. For most of the men the real sufferings of war were experienced in the ensuing month. Such small things as sea voyages and bombings were "breathers" compared to "boot."

On December 2, 1942, the Battalion was commissioned and placed in the capable hands of Lt. Comdr. Dole F. Thomson in an impressive ceremony at Camp Bradford, Virginia. The next three months saw the Battalion in training at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia, Camp Holliday, Gulfport, Mississippi and Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California. With each move a smoother functioning outfit moved closer to its ultimate destination, Island "X," in the Southwest Pacific.

Early in February 1943 the first of the three ships which were to carry the equipment and personnel of the 44th Battalion, left Port Hueneme. February 27 was the sailing date of the S.S. "MORMACHAWK", carrying the main body of troops and the remainder of the equipment. The "Hawk" pointed her bow southwest and we took that last, long look at "home" until.

The equator was crossed on March 7 with appropriate Neptune ceremonies, and on March 14 we lost that day we all looked forward to recovering....





## THE 44TH SEABEES

It was March 18, 1943 when the "Hawk" arrived at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, giving us our first glimpse of our new home.

The next thirty days were a nightmare of organized confusion - rain, mud, begging and "borrowing," but all the time building, and when the sun did break through it shone on the best damned camp on Santo, the 44th Construction Battalion's.

At this base we were attached to the 5th USN Construction Regiment comprised of the 7th, 15th, 35th, 36th, 40th, 44th, and 57th Construction Battalions. The job of building a powerful Naval Advance Base, complete with three bomber strips, one fighter strip, adequate docking facilities, repair and maintenance shops, extensive hospital facilities, and quarters for personnel, had been started in October, 1942, when victory or defeat in the Pacific hung in balance as the fleet engaged the Japs in the battle of Santa Cruz. When we arrived, three strips had been completed and the fourth was in the early stages of construction.

The immediate jobs assigned us were the building of a camp for N A B personnel, construction of a 1500 bed hospital, and the construction of roads vital to the flow of supplies. Other important projects were assigned and with each new and varied type of work confronting us the men rose to the occasion and took it in stride. "Can Do" became far more than a catchy slogan— it was the simple straightforward answer of skilled men to whom no job was too tough.

The following pages record far better than words the accomplishments of the 44th Battalion on Espiritu Santo. The humor, pathos, thrills and drudgery can best be related by you men, in your family circles, where the strength of enemy raids can be colored to taste. By newspaper standards we probably didn't have a hero in the outfit, but we did have an unbeatable combination that did every job better and faster than any competition encountered.

## 44<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

### Chronology

- 01 Dec 1942 Battalion formed at NCTC, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 02 Dec 1942 Battalion moved to Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- 30 Dec 1942 Battalion departed Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia for ABD, Gulfport, Mississippi.
- 31 Dec 1942 Battalion arrived ABD Gulfport, Mississippi.
- 09 Jan 1943 Departed ABD Gulfport for ABD, Port Hueneme, California.
- 13 Jan 1943 Arrived ABD, Hueneme, California.
- 11 Feb 1943 1<sup>st</sup> Echelon consisting of 2 officers and 2 enlisted men departed ABD Hueneme, California on S.S. John Marshall, arriving at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides on 04 March 1943.
- 17 Feb 1943 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon consisting of 1 officer and 24 enlisted men departed Port Hueneme, California, on SS John Wise, arriving at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides on 14 March 1943.
- 27 Feb 1943 Main body of Battalion consisting of 24 officers and 1050 enlisted men departed Port Hueneme, California on SS Mormachawk for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.
- 18 Mar 1943 Main body of Battalion arrived at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.
- 01 Apr 1944 1<sup>st</sup> Echelon consisting of 2 officers and 50 enlisted men departed Espiritu Santo for Manus on SS George Elliott, arriving at Manus 15 April, 1944.
- 03 Apr 1944 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon consisting of 2 officers and 24 enlisted men departed Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides on SS Chief Charlot arriving at Manus on 17 April 1944.
- 03 Apr 1944 3<sup>rd</sup> Echelon consisting of 1 officer departed Espiritu Santo, N.H. on SS Jean Chateau, arriving at Manus on 17 April 1944.
- 04 Apr 1944 Main body of Battalion consisting of 27 officers and 943 enlisted men departed Espiritu Santo, N.H. for Manus Island on USS President Monroe.
- 17 Apr 1944 Main body of Battalion arrived at Manus Island. Battalion detached from 5<sup>th</sup> USN Construction Regiment 02 December 1944 and ordered to report to CNB Manus for duty. Reported to CNB 03 December 1944. Detached from CNB Manus 16 January 1945 and ordered to report to 17<sup>th</sup> USN Construction Regiment at Noumea.
- 18 Jan 1945 Main body of Battalion consisting of 24 officers and 920 enlisted men departed from Manus Island.
- 26 Jan 1945 Main body of Battalion arrived at Noumea. Battalion detached from 17<sup>th</sup> USN Construction Regiment 26 Jan 1945 and ordered to return to United States.

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44th USN CONSTRUCTION BATTALION  
Camp Parks, California

NAVAL PERSONNEL  
NAVY DEPARTMENT  
RECEIVED

29 March 1945

1945 APR 5 PM 2 51

20E  
21L

**From:** Officer in Charge (Acting), 44th USN Construction Battalion.

**To:** Chief of Naval Personnel.

**Subject:** Itinerary of 44th USN Construction Battalion.

**Reference:** (a) Chief of Naval Personnel ltr. Ser. Pers-2122B-CEG/rc dated 28 Feb. 1945.

**Enclosure:** (A) Itinerary of 44th USN Construction Batt.

1. In compliance with reference (a), enclosure (A) is submitted herewith.

*R. B. Durant*  
R. B. DURANT

5 copies

To Facilitate  
Administrative Handling  
Classification changed  
from:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

To: RESTRICTED

Irvin S. Rasmussen  
Comdr. CEC-V(S), USNR  
Signature

44th USN CONSTRUCTION BATTALION  
Camp Parks, California

ENCLOSURE (A)

**DECLASSIFIED**

Itinerary of the 44th U. S. Naval Const. Battalion

1 Dec. 1942 Battalion formed at NCTC, Norfolk, Virginia.

2 Dec. 1942 Battalion moved to Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va.

30 Dec. 1942 Battalion departed Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va. for ABD, Gulfport, Mississippi.

31 Dec. 1942 Battalion arrived ABD Gulfport, Mississippi.

9 Jan. 1943 Departed ABD Gulfport for ABD, Port Hueneme, Calif.

13 Jan. 1943 Arrived ABD, Hueneme, California.

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17 Feb. 1943 2nd Echelon consisting of 1 officer and 24 enlisted men departed Port Hueneme, Calif., on SS John Wise, arriving at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides on 14 March 1943.

27 Feb. 1943 Main body of Battalion consisting of 24 officers and 1050 enlisted men departed Port Hueneme, Calif. on SS Mormachawk for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.

18 Mar. 1943 Main body of Battalion arrived at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.

1 Apr. 1944 1st Echelon consisting of 2 officers and 50 enlisted men departed Espiritu Santo for Manus on SS George Elliott, arriving at Manus 15 April, 1944.

3 Apr. 1944 2nd Echelon consisting of 2 officers and 24 enlisted men departed Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides on SS Chief Charlot arriving at Manus on 17 April, 1944.

3 Apr. 1944 3rd Echelon consisting of 1 officer departed Espiritu Santo, N. H. on SS Jean Chateau, arriving at Manus on 17 April 1944.

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Classification changed  
from

**DECLASSIFIED**

To: **RESTRICTED**  
Irvin S. Dagginnern  
Cor. 7-2-44  
Signature

44th USN CONSTRUCTION BATTALION  
Camp Parks, California

ENCLOSURE (A)

**DECLASSIFIED**

- 4 April, 1944 Main body of Battalion consisting of 27 officers and 943 enlisted men departed Espiritu Santo, N.H. for Manus Island on USS President Monroe.
- 17 April, 1944 Main body of Battalion arrived at Manus Island. Battalion detached from 5th USN Const. Regiment 2 December 1944 and ordered to report to CNB Manus for duty. Reported to CNB Manus 3 December 1944. Detached from CNB Manus 16 January 1945 and ordered to report to 17th USN Construction Regiment at Noumea.
- 18 Jan. 1945 Main body of Battalion consisting of 24 officers and 920 enlisted men departed from Manus Island.
- 26 Jan. 1945 Main body of Battalion arrived at Noumea. Battalion detached from 17th USN Construction Regiment 26 Jan. 1945 and ordered to return to United States.
- 27 Jan. 1945 Main body of Battalion consisting of 15 officers and 791 enlisted men departed Noumea for United States.
- 1 Feb. 1945 2nd Echelon consisting of 1 officer and 5 enlisted men who had been left at Manus with Battalion equipment departed Manus for United States.
- 10 Feb. 1945 Main body of Battalion arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.
- 18 Feb. 1945 2nd Echelon consisting of 1 officer and 5 enlisted men arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.

Certified correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

*R. B. Durant*  
R. B. DURANT  
Lt., CEC, USNR  
OinC (Acting)

To Facilitate  
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**DECLASSIFIED**

To: Irvin S. Rasmussen  
Comdr. CEC-V(1), USNR

Signature

DECLASSIFIED

ITINERARY OF THE 44TH U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION, CONT'D.

- 17 Apr 1944 - Main body of Battalion arrived at Manus Island. Battalion detached from 5th USN Const. Regiment 2 December 1944 and ordered to report to CNB Manus for duty. Reported to CNB Manus 3 December 1944. Detached from CNB Manus 16 January 1945 and ordered to report to 17th USN Construction Regiment at Noumea.
- 18 Jan 1945 - Main body of Battalion consisting of 24 officers and 920 enlisted men departed from Manus Island.
- 26 Jan 1945 - Main body of Battalion arrived at Noumea. Battalion detached from 17th USN Construction Regiment 26 Jan 1945 and ordered to return to United States.
- 27 Jan 1945 - Main body of Battalion consisting of 15 officers and 791 enlisted men departed Noumea for United States.
- 1 Feb 1945 - 2nd Echelon consisting of 1 officer and 5 enlisted men who had been left at Manus with Battalion equipment departed Manus for United States.
- 10 Feb 1945 - Main body of Battalion arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.
- 18 Feb 1945 - 2nd Echelon consisting of 1 officer and 5 enlisted men arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.
- 30 Apr 1945 - Inactivated.

NOTE: This itinerary has been checked and authenticated by the Officer-in-Charge of the 44th Naval Construction Battalion.

Date: 15 October 1945.









44th U.S.N. CONSTRUCTION BATTALION  
FIFTH CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT  
*Official Navy Photograph*



