

50th Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



NCTC - Norfolk
 ABD - Hueneme
 Ready Date - 19 Feb'43
 Left ABD - 3 Mar'43
 Location - NAS-Maui - Pearl-Harbor, Midway -Oahu-Tinian

LOG

- 2- 4-43 - 50th CB transferred from Gulfport to Hueneme.
 2-13-43 - Arrived Hueneme from Gulfport.
 2- 8-43 - Tentative assignment - NAS Maui.
 3-20-43 - 50th CB is being sent to Midway to replace 5th C.B.
 5- 1-43 - 20 Apr'43 report of 50th CB - Embarked from San Fran 5 Mar.; disembarked at P.H. 10 Mar.; embarked from P.H. for Midway 30 Mar.
 6- 1-43 - 1 May'43 report of 50th CB - Arrived Midway Island 4 Apr'43 with 1018 men. 38 men and 1 GPO transferred from 5th CB to 50th CB.
 6- 4-43 - 3rd Reg. report - 50th CB with 27 officers and 1033 men, departed from P.H. 30 Mar'43 for Midway. This Batt relieved the 5th Batt who returned to P.H.
 6-24-43 - May Sec. report - 50th CB operating at Midway.
 8-30-43 - 15 Aug'43 report of 3rd Reg. - The 50th CB has 27 off and 1014 men at Midway.
 2-10-44 - 1 Jan'44 report of 3rd Reg. - 50th CB has 27 off. and 940 men at NOB Midway.
 4-20-44 - 1 Mar'44 report of 50th CB - operating at Midway.
 5-12-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 50th CB - operating at Midway.
 6-26-44 - 1 May'44 report of 50th CB - Being relieved by 123rd CB at Midway; at present both are operating jointly.

50th C.B.

- 7- 5-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 50th CB - operating at Oahu. 2nd Contingent of 50th CB arrived at Oahu 22 May'44.
 8- 5-44 - 1 officer and 17 men detached to OinC Pontoon Detachments 2nd Brig. for temp. duty. (OinC 50th CB ltr-50NCR-JSM/cb over Pl6-4/Pl6-4/00 Ser 1620 dtd 24 Jul'44 to subj. officer.)
 8-10-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 50th CB - operating at Moanalua Ridge, Waimalu, Iroquois Pt., and NAS Honolulu.
 8-30-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 50th CB - operating at Moanalua Ridge, Waimalu, Iroquois Pt., NAS Honolulu, Kewalo.
 9-13-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 50th CB - This batt has been outside the U.S. 18 months, 14 of which were on the Island of Midway.
 9-12-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 50th CB - operating on Oahu. Letter of commendation from the Commandant of the NOB states that this batt served at Midway from 5 Apr'43 to 17 May'44, when the last detachment of the Batt was returned to Oahu. Report was endorsed by 3rd Reg.
 10-27-44 - 50th CB ordered detached from the 3rd Reg. and 2nd Brig. and ordered to report to the 6th Brig. for duty in the Central Pacific. (OinC Hawaiian Area NC Brigs conf. ltr. HAB-06-HCB/fnf over Pl6-4/00/MM over Ser 6087 to OinC of the 50th CB dtd 27 Sep'44)
 10-27-44 - OinC of 6th Reg. has requested ships to transport the 50th CB to LIRP. (Dirpac-div P.H. Sec. ltr to OinC of 6th Brig. Ser CO375 dtd 13 Oct'44)
 11-17-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 50th CB - operating at Oahu during Sep'44.
 12-29-44 - The 50th CB is located at Tinian. (IsComTinian Sec. disp 010733 dtd 8 Dec'44 to several addressees).
 1-5-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 50th CB - location not stated. Report endorsed by the 29th Regiment. Enemey activities during Nov'44.

Location - Tinian

50th CB

- 1-15-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 29th Regiment - The 50th CB was detached from the 2nd Brg. on 24 Oct'44 and ordered to report to the 6th Brg., reporting on 19 Nov'44. 12 men and 1 officer were left at P.H. to accompany the Batt gear not shipped in the first movement. 17 men and 1 officer are still on temporary duty with pontoon detachments, 2nd Brigade. 50th CB is operating under the 29th Reg.
- 2- 7-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 50th CB - location not stated. Report endorsed by 29th Reg.
- 2- 9-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 29th Reg. - The 12 men and 1 off. of the 50th CB left at P.H. have arrived. The 17 men and 1 off. who were on temp duty with pontoon detachments, 2nd Brg. have ret'd to the Batt. This det. participated in the assault phase on operations against Angaur, having gone ashore on "D" day. The 50th CB has been assigned the waterfront construction as its major task at this base. Batt has been on duty outside U.S. since 3 Mar'43. .
- 3-3-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 50th CB - location not given. Report endorsed by the 29th Reg.
- 3-29-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 50th CB - located at Tinian. Report end. by 29th Reg.
- 4-25-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 50th CB - located at Tinian. Report end. by 29th Reg and 6th Brg.
- 5- 8-45 - The 50th CB is located at Tinian. (Dirpac docks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)
- 5-29-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 50th CB - location not given. Report end. by 29th Reg & 6th Brig.
- 6-5-45 - The 50th CB has been assigned to advanced base ARTU by CNO. (Comservpac sec ltr ser 002038 dtd 8 May'45 to CNO)
- 6-26-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 29th Reg. - It is expected that the 50th CB personnel will be ret'd home in small groups as rapidly as conditions permit and authorization is issued.

Location - Tinian

50th C.B.

- 6-28-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 50th CB - located at Tinian. 24 men returned to the U.S. for leave and reassignment during May'45. Report end by 29th Reg & 6th Brig.
- 7-31-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 29th Reg - The 50th CB recd 159 replacements in the last 3 mos.
- 8- 1-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 50th CB - located at Tinian. 100 men ret'd to States for leave and reassignment. Approx 74 replacements have been recd since beginning of rotation plan. Report via 29th Reg and 6th Brg.
- 8-29-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 50th CB - Report came via 29th Reg & 6th Brig. No info as to location.
- 9-24-45 - Comservpac directs CinC, 6th Brig to inactivate 50th CB. (Comservpac conf smaltr ser 05320 dtd 15 Sept'45 to CinC, 6th Brig).
- 10-4-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 50th CB - location not stated. Report via 29th Reg. & 6th Brg 90 men returned for rotation, 63 men transferred for discharge under the point system. 41 men were rec'd as replacements.
- 11-1-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 50th CB - location not stated. Report via 29th Reg. & 6th Brg
- 11-8-45 - 50th CB is detached from the adm. & operational control of the 6th Brig. & will report by ltr to CinC, 5th Brig. for adm. control. 50th CB will report to IsCom, Tinian. (ComMarianas ltr ser 12288 dtd 25 Oct'45 to CinC, 50th CB)
- 11-21-45 - 50th CB was inactivated on 31 Oct'45. (50th CB ltr dtd 4 Nov'45 to CinC, Naval Records Management Center, Los Angeles, Calif.).

INACTIVATED

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
30 Jun'44	29	1052	Recap.
1 Aug'44	26	1045	MoR
1 Sep'44	32	1045	MoR
1 Oct'44	29	1005	MoR
1 Dec'44	29	1055	BNP625 & MoR
1 Jan'45	29	1050	MoR
1 Feb'45	31	1044	MoR
1 Mar'45	30	1035	MoR
1 Apr'45	30	1026	BNP625 & MoR
1 May'45		992	BNP625
1 June	36	1027	BNP625 & R
1 Jul'45	30	930	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45	28	766	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		646	BNP625
1 Oct'45	24	388	BNP625 & R

50th Construction Battalion ('INACTIVATED')

DECLASSIFIED

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
5/31/44	-	Midway	-	Left U.S. March 1943
7/18/44	-	F. O. Albu	c. B. report 1 July 1944	
7/22	:	FR NY. P. H	Com 14 sec act disp 060609	
9/14	-	(LIRP (Union))	July Cinc poa sec left from Eniw 0800 58 Sept to Lirp. (1) battalion	
12/9	-	LIRP	To Com Yucca sec act disp. 010133 Dec	

ON THE MOVE, from Camp Bradford

we journeyed to . . .

GULFPORT



HUENEME



HAWAII



"**T**HE Seabees have come forward as an institution more quickly than ever I knew one in the whole of our history."

These words to be spoken almost two years later by our Commander in Chief were subconsciously realized that bleak, rainy November morning in 1942 in Norfolk, Virginia, as the men who were to compose the 50th watched the dispatch with which their civilian status changed into that of Navy.

"All right, all right," barked the ubiquitous chief, "line up, line up, *YOU'RE IN THE NAVY NOW!*" How many times were we to hear and appreciate these words.

The men mustered that day for the most part were from the Mid-West, with Illinois holding the lead for states represented. Boarded on buses we were taken to Camp Allen, alma mater for earlier construction battalions.

Then came the transition—the sharp change in thinking and appearing like a civilian, to become an integral part of Uncle Sam's Fighting Seabees. In Navy terms it is indoctrination—the period in which Mr. John Q. Citizen, erstwhile peaceable, freedom loving citizen leaves his familiar standards of values and thought at home, and for a season his imagination and individuality take a back seat. Navy discipline becomes the order of the day. The exigencies of war can accomplish miracles.

Then things began happening. First the shearing—the haircut—cleanliness and sanitation is one reason, but for the mass of men it stands as a symbol, the last link with the old

life is severed and the realization that now you have entered a different world is thrust forcibly upon you. The great leveler—The Navy—was at work as tailored suits or rough-neck sweaters disappeared into the boxes to be shipped home. Individuality was swiftly replaced by uniformity and numbers.

Next day we went to Camp Bradford and there began learning the ways and life of the Navy Seabee.

For some the change was not too strenuous, for others it was a rugged ordeal. Quonset huts, heated with a two gallon a day oil ration, housed 18 to 20 men.

But we toughened and the training program, although rigorous, was beneficial, however few of us recognized it at that time when we underwent such unique experiences as "hitting the deck" in deep puddles on blustery, wintry days. Prior to enlistment few of us had gone in for much of this activity.

But "Boot" phase of existence was passing. Order and uniformity were accomplished as after three and a half weeks of preliminary training we prepared for the Battalion's commissioning. It was on November 18th, 1942, on a muddy parade ground, led by our officers who meanwhile had taken their training at Camp Allen, we had our first official parade and received our Battalion Colors.

Breaking of "Boot" meant liberty from 1700 until 0600 next morning in perhaps Norfolk or Virginia Beach.

We moved from "Boot" into the advanced area and by way of introduction, as we luggered our gear into the eight-man tents, we were greeted with a rousing snowstorm. In the bit-



ing cold, coal disappeared quickly. Then we foraged for wood. When we "hit the sack," instead of removing clothes, we piled on all we had. And we could always be assured of an exhilarating bath, it speeded circulation, theoretically the showers were hot.

As in "Boot," Marine and Navy instructors trained us in the same vigorous fashion. Here we had combat maneuvers in the dunes and woods. Leaping from Higgins' Boats into the shore waters of Chesapeake Bay was another stimulating activity.

On January 18, 1943, our training period finished, we entrained for Gulfport, Mississippi, and after a few days most of us were given nine day leaves. Back again we learned more of obstacle courses, long hikes—the art of war.

Port Hueneme, California, was our next stop on our way out to teach the Japs international manners and common decency. We arrived there February 12th and on March 2nd entrained for San Francisco.

Arriving there next day we boarded a converted peacetime Pacific liner. On March 5th a lone band played Auld Lang Syne as we shoved off to do the job for which we had been trained. At that time little did we realize that much water was to flow under the Golden Gate before we again saw the homeland.

Five days later we got our first sight of the Hawaiian Islands and fabled Diamond Head. In a little over three months from our arrival in boot camp we were overseas and on our way....

HAWAII

was our home a few short weeks, then we sailed into the sunset and met our friends

the GOONEYS—



KINGS IN THE AIR—

To the coast dweller he resembles a large seagull, to the inlander a goose, but to one who ever called Midway "home" he will always be the Gooney he is—the most dignified, clumsy, comical and graceful of birds.

Utterly without fear the Gooney, or Laysan Albatross, approaches his human friend, bows politely and pauses momentarily awaiting the nod. Receiving none, he regards the intruder quizzically, shrugs his indifference and waddles away to join friends of a more understanding nature.

The take off into flight is among his most ludicrous antics. Earnestly grotesque he charges furiously into the wind, his huge triangular flapjack feet throwing out showers of white sand. Once in the air his magnificent gliding is unmatched. Here he is king.



CLOWNS ON THE GROUND

From October until August, Mr. and Mrs. Gooney anticipate, hatch and raise Junior. In his nest of cupped sand he bears a strong resemblance to an animated feather duster after a hard night.

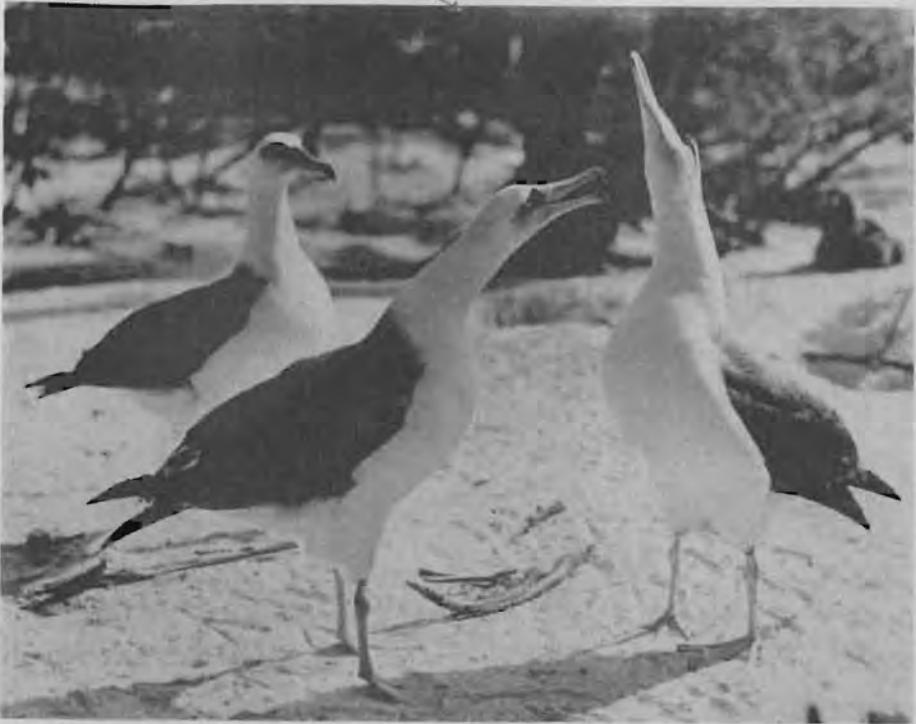
Papa and mama bring him squid and cuttle fish which they regurgitate. It is then that energetic, hungry Junior goes diving among the tonsils for his lunch.

At seven months he is ready to solo. His flight training method is simple. He just flaps his wings until Nature gets the idea.

In August the Gooney family decides nine months of Midway is enough. They must leave or perish.

Young and old they take out to sea. No one is quite certain where they spend their "leave" which ends about mid-October.

Family Group



Hatching Junior



Careful, There's Only One

THE DANCE

Ready . . . Set—



Junior Hatched



Egg to Gooney—Nine Weeks

Your first impression of the dance is that it had its inception in the nut house, but let months go by and you realize that here is pattern and rhythm.

It has infinite variations, but basically here is the routine.

Generally two, but it can be up to eight, partners take their positions two feet apart, bow several times and begin fencing with their long sharp beaks. As though on signal they pause, back up and with rivet gun speed chatter the lower and upper halves of their beaks together. Suddenly they stop, stand tip toe and give the world the Bronx cheer. Next they may be flatfooted, and as one dips a beak under a wing the other watches or waits, then imitates. More bowing and they are off again. Thousands of birds can be seen dancing every hour of the day.

Day in and day out, the estimated twenty thousand White Gooneys and the thirty thousand Blacks are going through their comical routines. No matter where you go on Sand or Eastern Islands of the Midway group they can be seen dancing their unusual, age old dance.

But Black or White, when *you* get so you thoroughly understand the dance and feel a consuming urge to participate you can be assured you have missed too many boats.

Black Gooneys



Fairy Tern



Midway's Loveliest

Although the Black Gooneys dance at a more rapid tempo than the Whites they do not have the friendly disposition. Unlike their cousins they are not comical but walk more like a vulture and although they appear tougher they generally lose in a fight. They nest near the water on the fringes of the Islands.

At night this sand burrowing bird, in appearance not unlike a large pigeon, howls and yells like an evil tempered Banshee. The ghoulish groans and screams of only a few birds are as spine tingling. All night long they keep up this racket, weird and eerie to all but the moaners. They like it. It's the love call.

Other Midway Birds, not so numerous, are the Bos'un, Booby, Rail, Frigate Bird, and Hawaiian Tern. Occasionally other species may visit but do not stay.

As the name might imply, the Fairy Terns, or Love Birds, are graceful snow white, jet eyed beauties. Seldom are they separated. They build no nest but lay the egg in the crotch of a branch. How the ball of white fluff that is the baby tern gets out of the egg and stays on the branch is the mystery.

The noisiest and most numerous are the black and white Sooty Terns—at full island muster 600,000. Streamlined and graceful fliers, their rapier pointed beaks can look forbidding when they hover in mid-air as you inspect their speckled gray chicks. They appear at sunset each day, fly in circling formations for weeks before landing to stay.

Moaning Bird



Sooty Tern



—and Noisiest

50th Naval Construction Battalion

Chronology

22 Nov 1942	Boot training, NCTC, Norfolk, Virginia.
18 Dec 1942	Commissioned (Presentation of Battalion Colors) Departed from NCTC, Norfolk, Virginia.
20 Jan 1943	Arrived ABD, Gulfport, Mississippi.
08 Feb 1943	Departed ABD, Gulfport, Mississippi.
13 Feb 1943	Arrived ABD, Port Hueneme, California.
02 Mar 1943	Departed from ABD, Port Hueneme, California.
05 Mar 1943	Embarked from San Francisco, California for overseas.
10 Mar 1943	Arrived Pearl Harbor.
31 Mar 1943	Departed from Pearl harbor.
04 Apr 1943	Arrived Midway Islands.
19 Apr 1944	1 st Echelon, consisting of 479 officers and men, departed from Midway Islands.
24 Apr 1944	1 st Echelon arrived on Oahu, T.H.
18 May 1944	2 nd Echelon, consisting of 443 officers and men, departed from Midway Islands.
22 May 1944	2 nd Echelon arrived on Oahu, T.H.
06 Aug 1944	One officer and seventeen men departed from Oahu to participate in the assault on Angaur on "D" day.
24 Oct 1944	Departed from Oahu, T.H. One officer and twelve men remained on Oahu as the Rear Echelon.
19 Nov 1944	Arrived on Tinian.
10 Dec 1944	One officer and seventeen men who participated in the assault on angaur rejoined the Battalion on Tinian.
09 Jan 1945	One officer and twelve men who were left on Oahu as the Rear Echelon rejoined the Battalion on Tinian.
15 Sept 1945	Directed to inactivate.

ITINERARY OF THE 50TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

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ITINERARY OF THE 50th NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (cont'd)

9 Jan 1945 One officer and twelve men who were left on Oahu
as the Rear Mohelon rejoined the Battalion on
Tinian.

1 Jan 1945 Still located at Tinian.

This itinerary has been checked and authenticated by the Officer-in-Charge of the 50th Naval Construction Battalion.

7 June 1945

15 Sept 1945 Directed to inactivate

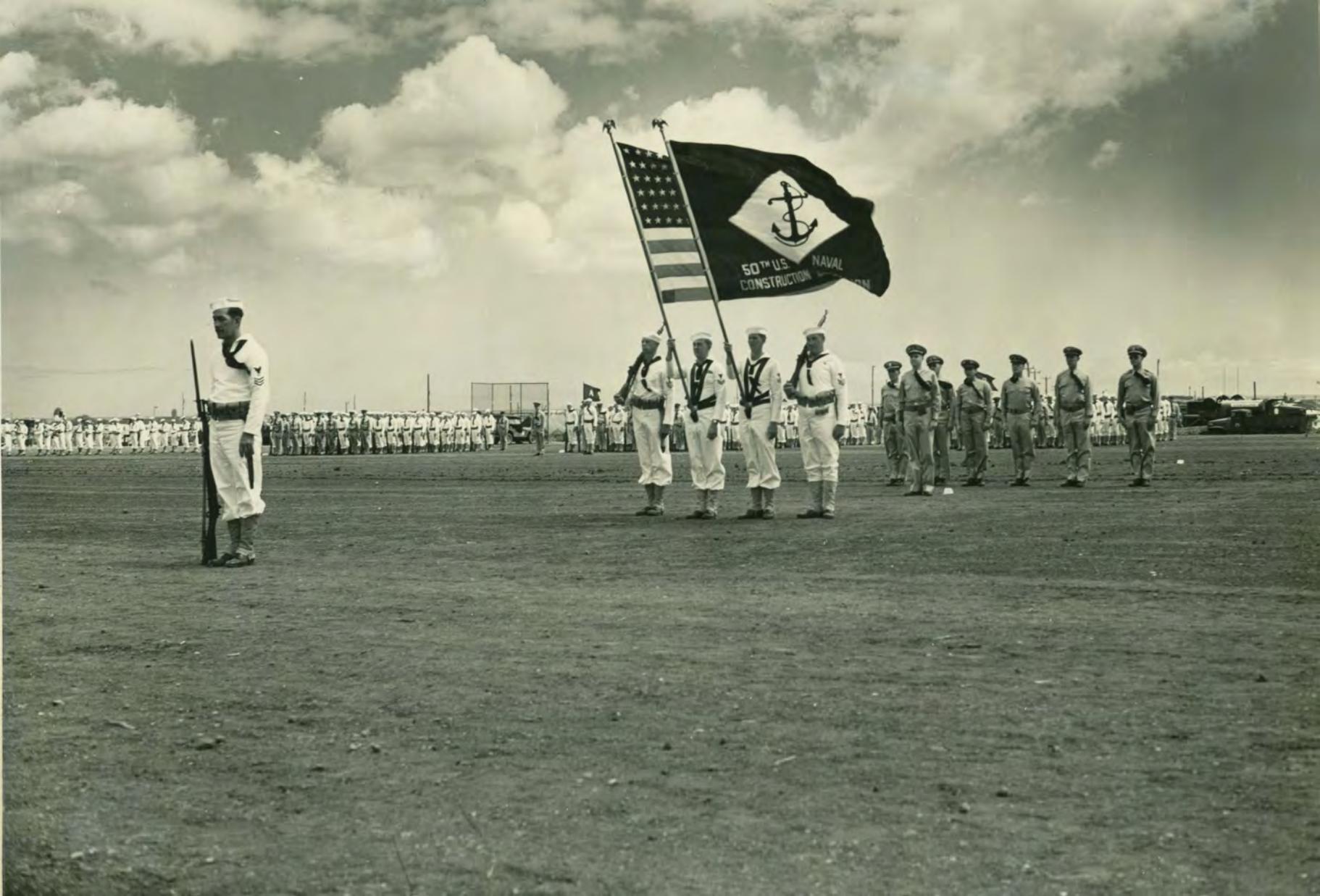












50TH U.S. NAVAL
CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT