

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

---

*Historical  
Information*



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



Date	Organization	Location	Reference
6/3/44	-	Kwajalein	-
			Left U.S. 1943
7/19	-	Roi, Namur	C.B. report 1 July
		Namur Is. - Sape	Com Man halls Sub area sec. Act disp. 250849 July.
9/14	-	-	Com Man halls Sub area sec act. disp. 012101 September.
			Delete S A P 4.
9/14	-	FRAY	Com 14 sec act. disp. 043215 Aug.
11/13	-	FRAY	Com 14 sec act disp 7th Bng 062243 7100.
1/20	-	4	Com 14 sec act disp delete 7th Bng 112205 Jan.
2/13	-	DIVA	Team sec act disp. added. 830621 F-16.

109th C.B.

NOTC - Peary  
 ABD - Hueneme  
 Ready Date - 6 Oct'43  
 Left ABD - 24 Nov'43  
 Location - ~~Aceon-21-Roi, Marshalls (Kwajalein)- Guam~~ Guam

LOG

- 7-22-43 - Budocks requests transfer of the 109th CB from Peary to Davisville on 28 Jul'43. (Budocks ltr to CNO dtd 22 Jul'43)
- 8-30-43 - Budocks requests transfer of the 109th CB to Parks on 6 Sep'43. (Budocks ltr to CNO dtd 30 Aug'43)
- 10-12-43 - CNO orders transfer of the 109th CB to Hueneme on 15 Oct'43. (Conf. disp. 121405 NCR 5836 dtd 12 Oct'43 from CNO to Parks)
- 12-9-43 - 109th CB left for embarkation point 24 Nov'43. (RFD)
- 3-24-44 - 109th CB is located at Roi, Marshalls (Kwajalein). (Comairpac Sec. Disp. 221904 Mar'44 to Cincpac)
- 4-20-44 - 324 men and off. of the 109th CB arrived in Kwajalein Lagoon on 2 Feb'44. 109th CB operated at Roi and Namur on Kwajalein. (7 Mar'44 activities report from Cinc 109th CB to Budocks)
- 5-29-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 109th CB - operating in Marshalls.
- 5-29-44 - 1 May'44 report of 109th CB - expects to complete work on Marshalls by 1 Jun'44.
- 6-22-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 109th CB - operating at Roi-Namur Is. - estimated completion date is 10 Jun'44.

109th C.B.

- 8-26-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 109th CB - located at Roi-Namur. Batt has been alerted and was secured on 25 Jun'44 except for 50 men and 2 off. to remain for loading equipment when cargo space becomes available.
- 8-30-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 7th Reg. - 109th CB arrived at 7th Reg. on 17 Jul'44 from Kwajalein. 60 men were transferred from the 74th CB to the 107th CB. Special pontoon detachment formed with 1 officer and 18 men.
- 8-30-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 109th CB - operating at Moanalua Ridge and Waikiki.
- 10-23-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 109th CB - operating at Moanalua Area. Report endorsed by 7th Reg.
- 11- 4-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 109th CB - operating at Moanalua, Oahu. Report endorsed by 33rd Reg.
- 11-15-44 -- The 109th CB is assigned to the 33rd Reg. (Conserved oflt Sec. ltr 55-CKW/epk over Ser. 001008 to CNO dtd 4 Nov'44).
- 11-16-44 -- The 109th CB is located at Pearl Hbr. (Com 14 Sec. disp to CNO 062243 NCR 15886 dtd 11 Nov'44).
- 12-13-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of 109th CB - Report endorsed by 33rd Reg. and HANCB.
- 12-13-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of 62nd CB - 62nd CB relieved of duties by the 109th CB.
- 1-4-45 - 109th CB ordered detached from the 33rd Reg. to proceed and report to the OinC of the 5th Brg. (HANCB conf. ltr HAB-06-HCB/mv over P16-4/00/MM over Ser. 7784 dtd 7 Dec'44) to OinC 109th CB).
- 1-13-45 - The 103rd and 109th CBs have loaded aboard ship for forward movement. (Dirpac-docks Ser 00540 Sec ltr to OinC 5th Brg. dtd 23 Dec'44)
- 1-16-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the ~~109th~~ 33rd Regiment - The Pontoon Detachment of the 109th CB, consisting of 1 officer and 17 men, returned to the batt from a forward area.

Location - Guam

109th CB

- 1-17-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 109th CB - Location not stated. Report endorsed by the 33rd Reg., 7th Brg., H.A.B.
- 1-31-45 -- The 109th CB reported to the 5th Brg. 31 Dec'44 and assigned to the 26th Reg. 109th CB is located North East of Agat on Guam. (5th Brg. War Diary 1 Dec thru 31 Dec'44).
- 2- 6-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 26th Regiment - <sup>Approx 400 men of</sup> The 109th CB came ashore at Guam during the 28th, 29th, and 30th of Dec'44.
- 2- 7-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 109th CB - All projects secured 9 Dec'44, except Proj. #256, Brigade Officers Quarters, which was secured 12 Dec'44. Batt in transit 12 Dec to 12 Jan'45.
- 2-13-45 -- The 109th CB is located ag Guam. (IsComGuam Sec. disp to CNO 030621 dtd 8 Feb'45).
- 2-25-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 109th CB - location not given. Report endorsed by 26th Reg.
- 2- 3-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 109th CB - location not given.
- 4-10-45 -- The 109th CB is located NE of Agat (Guam) (5th Brg. War Diary 1 Feb to 28 Feb'45).
- 4-14-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 109th CB - located at Guam.
- 4-16-45 - The 109th CB is located NE of Agat, Guam and is attached to the 26th Reg. (5th Brg War Diary of 1 Apr'45)
- 5-19-45 - 1 May'45 report of 109th CB - location not given. Report routed via 26th Reg & 5th Brg.
- 6- 5-45 - The 109th CB has been assigned to adv base ARTU for road const by CNO. (Conserved sec ltr ser 002038 dtd 8 May'45 to CNO)
- 6-19-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Enlisted complement has recently been increased to a total of 1035. Report routed via 26th Reg & 5th Brig.

Location - Guam 109th C.B.

7-18-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 26th Reg and 5th Brg.

7-20-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 26th Reg states that the 109th CB received 23 men on board during Jun'45 to replenish vacancies in Battalion allowance.

8-21-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 26th Reg & 5th Brig.

9-19-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 109th CB. No info as to location. Report via 26th Reg & 5th Brig.

9-20-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 26th Reg. 41 men rec'd as replacements during Aug. 1945. 25 men rotated during Aug. 25 men rec'd over-age discharges.

10-18-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 109th CB - location not stated. Report via 40th Reg. & 5th Brig.

11-27-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 40th Reg. states that the 109th CB was detached from the 40th Reg. 15 Oct'45 & ordered to report to OinC, 35th Reg. This did not involve a change in location of the battalions headquarters.

12-6-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 109th CB - location not stated. Report via 26th Reg. 25th Brig. 109th CB was transferred from the 40th Reg. to the 35th Reg. as of 15 Oct'45.

1-29-46 - 1 Dec'45 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 35th Reg. & 5th Brig.

2-15-46 - 1 Jan 46 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 35th Reg. & 5th Brig.

2-20-46 - 1 Feb 46 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 35th Reg. & 5th Brig.

4-10-46 - 1 Mar 46 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 35th Reg. & 5th Brig.

4-15-46 - 1 Apr 46 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 35th Reg. & 5th Brig.

5-14-46 - 1 May 46 report of 109th CB - located at Guam. Report via 35th Reg. & 5th Brig.

Location: Guam  
Marianas Isl.

Construction Battalion #109

10-15-47 - INACTIVATION. U.S. Pacific Fleet, Com. Marianas ltr(Restricted)  
In Accordance with Ref (a) & (b) not to all or needed, you are hereby directed to inactivate NCB 109 on or before 24 Oct 47. Transfer all CB personnel to CNOB for duty if not covered by directives of CB 109. Transfer of Battalion records, files & correspondence to CBD 1507, also all supplies, spare parts, tools equipment, etc to CBD 1507. Ref: (a) is ComServPac Conf ltr. ser. 0995 of 1 Oct 47. Ref: (b) is CNO conf. ltr, ser. 0239P415 of 2 Sept. 47.

10-23-47 INACTIVATION 23 Oct. 47.

(INACTIVATED)

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Jun'44	30	948	MoR
30 Jun'44		993	Recap.
1 Jul'44	31	953	MoR
1 Aug'44	31	989	MoR
1 Sep'44	33	976	MoR
1 Oct'44	33	948	MoR
1 Nov'44	28	923	MoR
1 Dec'44	27	910	MoR
1 Jan'45	26	976	MoR
1 Feb'45	25	977	MoR
1 Mar'45	25	975	MoR
1 Apr'45	25	980	BNP625 & R
1 May'45		966	BNP625
1 Jun'45	27	1020	BNP625 & R
1 Jul'45	28	1021	Roster & BNP625
1 Aug'45	26	984	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45	31	954	BNP625 & R
1 Oct'45	25	1073	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45	29	534	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'45	37	1056	BNP625 & R
1 Jan'46	41	1142	R & BNP 625
1 Feb 46	42	1326	BNP 625 & R
1 Mar 46	35	1307	BNP 625 & R
1 Sep 46	1		Roster
1 Dec. 46	1		Roster

109th Construction Battalion

(over)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>On Board</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Authority</u>
1 Jan.47	1		-	Roster
1 Feb.47	4		49	BNP 625 & R.
1 Mar.47	4		49	BNP 625 & R.

On Board

<u>Date</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Authority</u>
1-1-47	1	-	Roster
2-1-47	2	-	"
3-1-47	4	49	BNP 625 & Roster
4-1-47	9	172	" " "
5-1-47	4	189	" " "
6-1-47	3	222	" " "
7-1-47	5	259	" " "

C. B. #109



The present moment favors reminiscence on the career of the 109th Naval Construction Battalion to date. We have worn the Navy uniform for more than a year and have trained in four camps on the mainland. We have worked and relaxed on Island X and have reached a climax of hardship and achievement on Roi-Namur, key islet of the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands group. Now that we are again on Island X the tempo of our effort has decreased and we have leisure to recall the stages and major events of the past thirteen months. Our chief satisfaction springs from the fact that during the recent months we have played a not inconsiderable part in the symphony of the nation's striving after victory for the sake of peace and we have done so in the face of separation from home and its attendant loneliness, grueling labor under trying conditions, some injuries and even death.

The majority of the men of the 109th passed directly from boot into the Battalion without the privilege of a liberty. Yet Williamsburg, the administrative center of the Virginia settlement, lay only a few miles distant from Camp Peary. First assembled on 22 July 1943 in B-6 Drill Hall, the Battalion spent a week there and on the eve of moving listened to a brief address by its Officer in Charge, Lt. Comdr. J. S. Waldrep, who was promoted to Commander at Camp Endicott and detached from the Battalion after we had become settled on Namur. His reference to the grass at Camp Endicott and its proximity to Narragansett Bay awakened a general enthusiasm accentuated by our experience of the climate in Tidewater Virginia. Every recollection of close order drill and of mock skirmishing in the tick infested woods is set in the background of the hot breathless air of summer in Virginia near the sea. It was pure pleasure to inhale the bracing air of Rhode Island as we hiked through the pre-dawn darkness and the mist of the 29th of July.

This second camp was very near the ideal advanced training base for Seabees. We were occupied with every variety of training course, both technical and military. Many of us struggled over the obstacle course and practiced the refinements of Judo. A lingering trace of the Judo training could still be seen in the chow line on Roi where a couple of men might demonstrate the quickest surprise method for breaking an arm or back. Some of us trained in such subjects as field fortifications, automatic weapons, and chemical warfare. Most of us spent eight days on the rifle range with carbines. Our anti-aircraft team established a notable record. The 109th team was in competition with teams from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and also British and French units. Its success can be measured by the fact that it boosted the standing record from 397 to 610 hits, an increase of 213. Besides military training there were twenty-seven courses in technical subjects. Representative of these were courses in water purification, drafting, paintwork, heavy equipment repair and maintenance, fire fighting, signaling and mosquito control. Finally it was at Camp Endicott that the 109th first was granted liberty and





by reason of its location enjoyed the hospitality of New England and New York. During late August and early September the major part of the Battalion took a pre-embarkation leave, renewing the ties at home whose intimacy was enhanced by the prospect of impending service overseas.

On Labor Day, 6 September, three days before departure for the West coast, the 109th was reviewed, received its colors and paraded on the Camp Endicott drill field. The cross-country trip provided a vivid impression of the immensity and wealth of the land and of the vivacity and neighborliness of the civic units. One train section reached Camp Parks in Pleasanton Valley, California, on the evening of the 14th; the other two arrived early the next day. The training in Camp Parks continued that of Camp Endicott, though at reduced intensity. Military training consisted chiefly of hardening exercises which included three spirited, not quite bloodless battles on The Hill from which the unfortunate participant might roll down some fifty or more feet to the middle of a stream. Companies B, C, and D took part and won their respective contests with units from other battalions. The climax to the military training arrived with the issue of rifles and a day on the range. Recreational activities got into full swing in Camp Parks. Softball games were played among enlisted men, chiefs and officers. A military and a swing band practised on schedule; the latter began to produce sounds which though not primarily melodious, were satisfying to those that appreciate recent dance music. Also the opportunity arose for men to enroll in courses sponsored by the U. S. Armed Forces Institute.

The 109th moved once more on the 15th of October, this time to Port Hueneme, California, where a stay of about six weeks was divided between Camp Rousseau and the Advanced Training Depot or Splinter City. In Camp Rousseau we lived in small Quonset huts and received field gear and much heavy equipment. The A.T.D. was a busier camp. On 6 November the Battalion was present for the commissioning of Acors 21. There was training in special weapons and radio communication. Draftsmen and surveyors were fully occupied; many of us worked hard at Point Mugu in mastering landing operations from an LST and in constructing pentoon docks. Our last days ashore were replete with the excitement of imminent departure and we composed our last letters home from the security of a Stateside camp. On the 18th of November, somewhat less than half of the Battalion took a train to Oakland and boarded ship the following morning. All of us saw the outlines of our homeland fade from sight on the 22nd.

Though the voyage was uneventful in the usual sense of the word for many of us it was our initial opportunity for first hand experience of life on the rolling sea. For many of us too there was the novel misery of nausea at inconvenient moments. By Thanksgiving Day we had regained abdominal poise and the turkey dinner was a big event. The climax of the trip fell on the 1st of December when



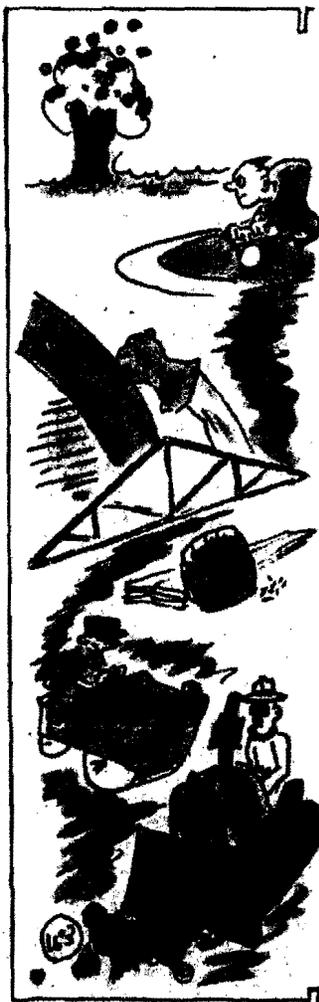


the rough outlines of Molokai Island appeared thru the mist as the sun rose and later we rounded Koko Head and Diamond Head and slid into the channel to Pearl Harbor. By the next day work parties were busy readying our Quonset hut quarters at Iroquois Point and on the 5th the bulk of the Battalion came ashore. The stay in this camp was busy but fascinating. We did much earth moving and clearing of wooded areas. Warehouses were erected. Special machinery slated for use on Island X was assembled and tested. Draftsmen worked on plans for camp and area layout for our future base. Two issues of our newspaper appeared. For the first time we encountered the zealous and exacting labors of the censors. Liberty on every fourth day enabled us to appreciate the natural and cultural phenomena of Oahu - the Nuuanu Fall, the pineapple and cane plantations, the misty and smilit patches on the mountains, the many gorgeous rainbows, the University of Hawaii, the reserve and dignity of the territorial population. Directly after the holidays, which were as pleasant as circumstances allowed, we set to at readying ourselves for the biggest move so far. Scuttlebutt pointed toward the Marshalls. On 23 January some of us boarded LST's and a few left to land with the second wave of Marines. Most of us departed on the 28th.

In the early morning light of 6 February (Stateside time) a dim rise of land appeared low on the horizon. As the ships slowly swung around Roi-Namur to enter the world's largest lagoon we singled out the broken palms, the battered blockhouses, a great radio building, two wrecked hangars; and the dust of ruin hung over the dry yellow islands. The men traveling by LST had arrived in time to witness the terrible shelling and bombing which converted the Japanese strongholds to shambles and rendered the heavy blockhouses useless. By the afternoon of the 8th, when the majority of us landed on the beach east of the pier of Namur, quiet reigned over the desolation of a once neat comfortable Japanese air and submarine base - All the properties of a swift successful invasion thrust lay plain in sight - the heaps of supplies near the beach, the furrows and craters in the soil, crushed shelters and pillboxes, pitted runways and makeshift stacks and tents set up in ditches. The sickening sweet smell of death covered the area. Heavy equipment operators drove their machines over the strip, sea water was being distilled and purified, surveyors labored in the field, a messhall was rising, and details tended to the disposal of Japanese bodies.

Though from April on the 109th Camp was placed in a comfortable area on Namur and we welcomed the benefits of recreation, improved meals and floored tents, our memories of this base have their center in two things, the work put out during the early part of our stay and the searing climax of the bombing on 12 February 1944. Because of its sheer variety and intensity of pitch that work cannot be pictured in detail. All the operations of base construction from scratch went on simultaneously. Essential services, construction





of messhalls, hospital units and command posts, tent erection, earth leveling and clearing, blasting and transportation of coral from the sea, grading and packing of the coral on the strip, drafting and surveying and engineering - these and others proceeded at top speed and through long wearing hours in the heat and dust of the islands. Activities carried on every hour of the day though we lived on K and C rations and slept in pup tents and foxholes for two weeks. The total effort was focused on the strip which though still incomplete, was ready to receive a damaged Liberator toward dusk on the 10th. Alerts prior to that announcing the raid had prepared us for what might come and foxholes had been dug among the tents, in open spaces and along the beach. Many knew the real thing had arrived as they crouched in foxholes with friends and heard the ominous roar of hostile motors. A few moments later, amid the boom of ground defense guns, the sharp hiss of falling bombs was heard, the deafening explosions, and the patter of fragments on our helmets. From then till dawn there was a continuous blaze ranging here and there over the island and an unbroken series of explosions from the dump near the center of Roi. As a concussion wave collapsed the nearest tents and the fire came toward us we dashed to trenches on the beach and lay there painfully conscious of the fragments whistling over our heads or clattering on the empty oil drums alongside. Gradually the noise and peril subsided. As the sun rose the Battalion assembled and an hour later the work resumed.

On the 13th of July the 109th again set foot on Island X. For many of us the trip had taken 18 days. Going aboard on 26 June, three companies had traveled to Majuro and then back to Roi-Namur where the remaining companies joined them on the 2nd of July. In our new camp we have a welcome relief from the urgency of life on Roi-Namur. The reduced intensity of the work program allows us to take stock of our achievements and to reflect on our painful memories. It is gratifying to know that the 109th has met successfully the rigors of an assignment in a forward area, that it has performed a vital construction job in the advance toward Tokyo, and that it has left behind it an important air base on territory which was only recently an enemy stronghold. Also we think of the losses sustained through enemy action on 12 February. Some of us were injured that morning and three lost their lives. We hope for the complete recovery of the wounded. As to the three who passed away, in whose honor these pages are inscribed, we remember them as associates and friends, and having known them we trust in their present repose. It was inspiring to know them and their spirit of service, which we would do well to honor and to emulate.

Ed. Note: The foregoing map and history have been cleared for publication by the 14th Naval District. The following pictures of Roi-Namur are Official Navy and Marine Photos, released by CINCPac.



ITINERARY OF THE 109th NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

Administrative Control  
Classification changed  
1988

- 28 July 1943 The 109th CB ordered from Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va., to NCTC, Camp Endicott, Davisville, R.I.
- 9 Sept. 1943 Departed Camp Endicott.
- 15 Sept 1943 Arrived Camp Parks, Shoemaker, Calif.
- 15 Oct. 1943 Departed Camp Parks, Shoemaker, Calif., for ABD, Port Hueneme, Calif.
- 15 Nov. 1943 1 Officer and 1 man embarked at Port Hueneme, with ship carrying heavy equipment.
- 19 Nov. 1943 1 Officers and 222 men departed Port Hueneme, for embarkation point.
- 22 Nov. 1943 27 Officers and 795 men, embarked at Port Hueneme, Calif.
- 22 Nov. 1943 Both echelons departed from U.S.
- 22 Nov. 1943 1 Officer and 1 man, arrived at Oahu, Hawaii.
- 1 Dec. 1943 Entire Battalion arrived at Oahu, Hawaii.
- 22 Jan. 1944 324 Officers and men embarked from Oahu, Hawaii, Iroquois Point.
- 28 Jan. 1944 Remainder of Battalion embarked from Oahu, Hawaii.
- 2 Feb. 1944 324 Officers and men arrived at Kwajalein Lagoon.
- 6 Feb. 1944 Remainder of Battalion arrived at Kwajalein. Operated on Roi-Namur, Islands of Kwajalein Atoll.
- 25 June 1944 Battalion alerted and secured except for 2 Officers and 50 men to remain and load equipment.
- 2 July 1944 Battalion embarked from Roi-Namur, except 2 Officers and 50 men.
- 3 July 1944 2 Officers and 50 men embarked from Roi-Namur.
- 13 July 1944 Battalion arrived at 2nd Naval Construction Brigade Headquarters, Oahu, Hawaii.
- 1 Aug. 1944 Battalion operating under 3rd Naval Construction Regiment, 7th Naval Construction Regiment and 33rd Naval Construction Regiment of 2nd Naval Construction Brigade and was quartered at Moanalua Ridge, Oahu, Hawaii.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

To:

Vina S. Persmussen

Classification

Signature

**DECLASSIFIED**

ITINERARY OF THE 109TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

12 Dec. 1944      5 Officers and 302 men embarked from Oahu Hawaii.  
15 Dec. 1944      15 Officers and 450 men embarked from Oahu Hawaii.  
17 Dec. 1944      4 Officers and 78 men embarked from Oahu Hawaii.  
20 Dec. 1944      2 Officers and 151 men embarked from Oahu Hawaii.  
28-29-30 Dec.      Approximately 400 men and Officers went ashore  
1944                    on Guam to set up camp facilities.  
12 Jan. 1945      Entire Battalion located on Guam under 5th Naval  
                         Construction Brigade, 26th Naval Construction  
                         Regiment.

Certified a True Copy

*M. B. Eichenlaub*  
Enr. (CEC), USNR

To Fed/War  
Administrative Req. Only  
Classification changed  
from:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

To: RESTRICTED

LYNN S. HANCOCK  
Signature











