

# 31<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Regiment

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*Historical  
Information*



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



- 8-8-44 - CNO conf. ltr Op-30-20K14-UOT over (SC)P16-5/ND14 over Ser. 01186730 to the Distribution List dtd 1 Aug'44 authorizes the establishment of the 7th and 8th Brgs. and 31st through 37th Regs. The 31st Reg. to be under the 2nd Brg. consisting of 99th CB, 112. CB and 123rd EB. Effective when directed by CincFOA.
- 11-15-44-The 31st Reg. assigned to the 2nd Brg. under the command of HANCB to be composed of the 74th, 112th and 123rd CB's. (ComSerForPacFlt Sec. ltr 55-CKW/apk over Ser. 001008 to CNO dtd 4 Nov'44.)
- 11-21-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 31st Reg. - Consists of the 74th, 112th, and 123rd CB's.
- 12-28-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of 31st Reg. - As of 1 Nov'44, was composed of the following batts: 74th, 112th, and 123rd. Report endorsed by 2nd Brigade.
- 1-3-45 - The 31st Reg. consists of the 74th and 123rd CB's. (ComSerForUSPacFlt Sec. ltr Ser. 55-CKW/apk over Ser. 001389 to CNO dtd 18 Dec'44).
- 1-4-45 - The 112th CB ordered detached from the 31st Reg. to proceed and report to the 6th Brg. for duty. (HANCB conf. ltr HAB-06-HCB/mv over P16-4/00/MM over Ser. 7781 dtd 7 Dec'44 to CinC 112th CB).
- 1-10-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 31st Reg. - located at P.H. Consisted of the 74th, 112th, and 123rd CBs as of 1 Dec.
- 2- 6-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 31st Reg. - Report endorsed by 2nd Brg. and H.A.B. Covered comments on the 74th and 123rd CB's.
- 2-7-45 --The 31st, 34th Regs and the 28th (Sp) to be outfitted at Pearl. (Dirpacdocs Pearl Sec. disp to Dirpacdocs San Fran 300314 dtd 30 Jan'45).
- 2-13-45 --2nd Brg. Sec. ltr Ser. 087 dtd 27 Jan'45 to CinC 31st Reg. - ordered to proceed on snips to a verbally designated place in the Pacific area. Upon arrival to report to the 2nd Brg. for duty.

Location - Leyte-Samar31st Regiment

- 6-27-45 - CNO records are incomplete as to the composition of the 31st and 34th Regiments which were to form a part of the CB organization at Leyte. It is assumed that these Regiments are still required in that area and will be composed of 3 or more batts. If this is not the case, CNO should be requested to inactivate subject regiments. (CNO conf ltr ser 0251730 dtd 22 June to COM7flt)
- 7-25-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 31st Reg - located in Samar area. Comments re the 91st, 96th and 127th CBs. Report via the 2nd Brig.
- 7-27-45 - The 31st Regiment hdqtrs located at Guiuan, Samar. (COT 7th Flt Sec Rep for June)
- 8-11-45 - The 31st Regiment assigned to Olympic Operation. (Com7flt report on CB Organization in Leyte-Samar area ser 04296 dtd 26 July to CNO)
- 8-21-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 31st Reg - located at Leyte-Samar. Comments on the 91st, 96th, and 127th CBs. Report via 2nd Brg.
- 8-30-45 - Remove from alerted status my 192321 July of higher classification following CB units:--2nd Brig staff, 12th & 31st Reg staff. Also desire to inactivate following units:--12th & 31st Regs. (Comservpac sec spltr ser 272049 Aug'45 to Com7th Flt).
- 9-14-45 - Inactivation of following unit at Samar approved:--12th & 31st Regs., etc. (Cincpo conf spltr ser 032474 dtd 7 Sept'45 to Comservpac).
- 9-24-45 - 31st Regt. staff in process of inactivation. (CinC, Comdr Samar sec disp 300727 Aug'45 to ComConstTroops, Philseafon).
- 9-28-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 31st Reg.-- located in Samar area. report via
- 11-6-45 - 31st Reg. inactivated as of 17 Oct'45. (Comservpac restr ltr ser 118-2-61 dtd 17 Oct'45 to BuPers).

INACTIVATED

Location - Pearl Harbor Samar 31st Reg.

- 2-13-45 - The 31st Reg. is available from Cincpoa for assignment to ULOD. (CWO Sec. ltr to distribution list Ser. 0039230 dtd 3 Feb'45).
- 3-29-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 31st Reg. - 74th and 123rd CBs attached.
- 4-16-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 31st Reg. - The 74th CB at Kaneohe and the 123rd CB at Barbers Pt. attached to this Reg.
- 4-30-45 - Comserfor7flt Sec Rep of 1 Apr'45 shows the 31st Reg. ordered from P.H. to Leyte-Samar area.
- 5- 4-45 - Sailing List of the 31st Reg. dtd 26 Apr'45 shows 3 off. and 7 men on bd. 2 off. not incl in the sailing list had proceeded to Samar in adv of reg movement.
- 5- 7-45 - Dirpadocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45 shows the 31st Reg. enroute to Samar. (
- 5-18-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 31st Reg - The 74th CB at Kaneohe & the 123rd CB at Barbers Point attached to 31st Reg. Report end by 2nd Brig.
- 5-4-45 - The 31st Reg ordered to report to 2nd Brg for duty. Reported aboard vessel for transp on 26 Apr'45; transp completed 17 May'45. Reported to CinC 31st Reg and 2nd Brg at dest on 17 May'45. (2nd Brg sec orders ser 087 dtd 27 Jan'45 to CinC 31st Reg and endorsements attached thereto)
- 6-4-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 31st Reg.-location not given. On 15 Apr'45 the 1st echelon of the 31st Reg comprising 2 officers departed old location & arrived new location on 17 Apr'45. On 26 Apr'45 the 2nd echelon comprising of 3 officers & 7 men completed the movement of the 31st Reg to its new location & reported on 17 May'45.
- 6-12-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 31st Reg. - located at Leyte Samar. The 74th and 123rd CBs were under adm control of the Reg. The 91st and 96th CBs were under the Reg for operational control. Report end. by 2nd Brg.



Narrative History of the  
Thirty-first United States Naval Construction Regiment

In the late summer of 1944, the Naval construction forces in Hawaii and throughout the 14th Naval District consisted of 37 Naval Construction Battalions administered by just three construction regiments under the 2nd United States Naval Construction Brigade. This structure had been established September 24, 1943 by the Chief of Naval Operations for the brigade to exercise administrative and operational control over the formerly unaffiliated 3rd, 7th and 8th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment, and their total of ten battalions.

Before the brigade was a year old the need for further reorganization became apparent. The number of battalions in the district had proliferated nearly fourfold and the administrative overburden on the three regiments and the brigade far exceeded the bounds of practicality. To alleviate the problem, two additional brigades, the 7th and 8th, and eight new regiments were established on September 18, 1944. At the same time the 2nd brigade was reorganized. All units were under the Hawaiian Area Brigades.

On September 15, 1944, the 31st United States Naval Construction Regiment was activated at Pearl Harbor, Oahu, T. H. , to become a subordinate organization under the 2nd brigade on its reorganization effective September 18. Commander Howard P. Potter, CEC, USN, officer in charge of the 3rd regiment, was designated as acting officer in charge of the 31st regiment on temporary additional duty. Battalions assigned to the new regiment were United States Naval Construction Battalions 74 and 112 on Oahu and NCB 123 at Midway Island.

The 74th, less one company, was performing a variety of construction and maintenance projects at Pearl City, in Honolulu, and at several sites in the Pearl Harbor area. NCB 112 and the other company of NCB 74

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were performing improvement construction on an airstrip and constructing other facilities on the Naval Air Station at Kaneohe, Oahu. The 123rd was performing construction and operating aggregate and concrete plants at the Naval Operating Base on Midway.

When Commander John R. Nealon, CEC, USNR, took over as the regiment's first permanent officer in charge on October 2, 1944, he found a young, but smoothly-functioning command. Throughout their remaining time in Hawaii, the regimental headquarters personnel provided overall supervision to construction projects already underway and marshalled the men, machines and materials required for new projects as they were assigned.

The main body of NCB 74, after turning over to the 7th Naval Construction Brigade the project of relocating an army camp and civilian housing at Pearl City, took on a variety of jobs including installation of a fire protection system at a lumber storage area, construction of an extension to an auditorium at Pearl Harbor, and building storage facilities at The Breakers at Waikiki. They reported completion in November of two Quonset huts, with installation of services and fixtures, at a children's hospital.

Meanwhile, NCB 112 and the attached company from NCB 74 had been building projects such as a radio station at Haiku, Maui; and, at Kaneohe, they completed a standby power plant for a Naval radio station, four ready-service ammunition magazines, four Quonset huts for training and educational facilities, and an air bomber school building.

On November 16, NCB 74 turned over their uncompleted projects to the 3rd regiment and moved to Kaneohe to join with their other company and NCB 112 in the construction operations there.

When on December 7, 1944, NCB 112 was detached from the 31st regiment and assigned to the 6th U. S. Naval Construction Brigade, they turned over to

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NCB 74 their uncompleted projects, including an incinerator, a Public Works office building, an office building for a CASU (Carrier Aircraft Service) Unit), and a commissary building for the 14th Naval District. Also underway were a control tower; aircraft wash racks; two junior bachelor officers quarters, with mess halls and galleys; seaplane ramps with winches, pads and services; and a barracks for BOQ mess attendants.

At Midway, NCB 123 completed an addition to a radar building and installation of an air conditioning plant for the Naval Operating Base. There then after dismantling an aggregate plant and a concrete batching plant, the battalion departed for Pearl Harbor in mid-December. There they were promptly employed in constructing a 10-unit civilian housing project at nearby Ewa, as well as operating Pearl Harbor base facilities including a concrete plant, a black top plant and a quarry.

Shortly after the turn of the year, the 31st regiment was alerted for movement to a forward area, but it was not until April 15, 1945 that Commander Nealon and his executive officer, Lieutenant Vivian W. Sills, CEC, USNR, left Oahu by air as the advance echelon of the regiment, leaving Lieutenant Peter T. Bennett, CEC, USNR, the regiments operations officer, <sup>as</sup> acting/officer in charge.

Commander Nealon and Lieutenant Sills landed April 17 at Guiuan, Samar, Philippine Islands, where they reported to the 2nd brigade, which had moved there from Pearl Harbor late in March. Again, as at Pearl Harbor, the regiment's lot was to take over as their principal assignment a project already well-underway--the Naval Ship Repair Base at nearby Manicani Island. Manicani proved to be a tiny, reef-fringed, jungle-matted islet just two by two-and-a-half miles in oval shaped dimensions. Like its larger neighbor, it had passed through the Japanese occupation and <sup>the</sup> liberation relatively unscathed.

Already at work on the Ship Repair Base were NCBs 91 and 96, both part of the 19th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment of the 3rd brigade, but under operational control of the 2nd brigade, with Commander Richard C. Hollyday, CEC, USNR, acting as project manager. Commander Nealon relieved Commander Hollyday of this duty, and the project continued on that basis until the arrival a month later of the regiment's rear echelon and the 123rd NCB.

The Ship Repair Base project included: a temporary 1600-man camp with all facilities (and later a 6,000-man permanent camp with commanding officer's quarters, BOQ, galleys and heads); two large timber wharves; several jetties and other ship service facilities; large timber shop buildings and warehouses; nearly a hundred 40x100 foot Quonset huts for shops and storage; a 100-bed hospital; a fire-fighting school; a signal tower; complete fuel tank farm and services; water development, distribution and supply; power plants and electric distribution; telephone, radar and communications facilities; sewers; 212-mile road system; camps for the battalions; base athletic and recreational areas; a 4000-seat movie theater; chapels; clearing of large areas of jungle land and surfacing of large open-storage areas.

In addition to these conventional facilities, there were countless projects necessary for equipping and proper functioning of a ship repair base; including the erection and operation of huge floating drydocks, and channel blasting and dredging.

The rear echelon of the regiment, accompanied by NCB 123, departed Pearl Harbor on April 26, 1945 aboard the SS Crockett (APA 148). The regiment's other battalion was detached and remained on Oahu awaiting further assignment. The Crockett arrived in Philippine waters May 16, disembarked the regiment's rear echelon at Manicani on the 17th, and offloaded the

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123rd at Samar on the 18th of May.

NCB 123 was destined for reassignment to another regiment; for for the time they remained under the administrative control of the 31st but reported to the 33rd regiment for operational control.

In an extensive redistribution of forces on May 28, NCB 123 was detached from the 31st regiment, which at the same time received three new units--NCB 91, NCB 96 and NCB 127---<sup>and</sup> one section (200 men and three officers) of Construction Battalion Detachment 1053 for operational purposes only .

The reorganization also marked the relief of Commander Nealon and Lieutenant Sills, who were replaced by Commander Bradford M. Bowker, CEC, USNR, as acting officer in charge, and Lieutenant Commander H. W. Hartmann, CEC, USNR, acting executive officer. Commander Bowker's permanent appointment was effected June 25, but that of Lieutenant Commander Hartmann was cancelled by a change of orders and he was succeeded by Lieutenant R. B. Alexander, CEC, USNR, as acting executive officer.

NCB 127 had arrived at Samar May 21, and after assignment to the 31st regiment, two of its companies joined with NCB 91 and NCB 96 at the ship repair base on Manicani, half of one company remained on a Naval Ammunition dump project on Samar, and the balance of the battalion was ordered to Homonhon Island. There the men completed a 250-man camp and all other installations for a large communications unit, after which they reported to Manicani on July 22.

<sup>a.</sup> During August, a detachment of 90 men was sent by the 127th to B<sup>l</sup>angiga, Samar, to build a 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> mile road for a sawmill project.

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The CBD 1053 section had arrived at Manicani April 7 and immediately commenced assembly then operation of two Advance Base Sectional Docks and a Yard Floating Dry Dock. This unit was also given the task of building a garbage <sup>barge</sup> for the ship repair base and of constructing six buildings for ABSD-1.

The newly-organized regiment's operations were destined to be brief, although Commander Bowker was able state before transferring to another assignment on August 14, 1945 that "to date, the entire Ship Repair Base itself can be considered 90% complete." Commander Louis R. LaPorte, CEC, USNR, took over as acting officer in charge of the 31st regiment on that date.

Orders to commence inactivation were issued September 13, 1945 by the Officer in Charge of Construction, Guiuan; and on November 20th the 31st U. S. Naval Construction Regiment was officially inactivated by order of the Officer in Charge, 7th U. S. Naval Construction Brigade.

## Thirty-First Naval Construction Regiment

15 Sep 44 The Thirty-First Naval Construction Regiment was activated at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, as a part of the Second Naval Construction Brigade. Commander Howard P. Potter, CEC, USNR, Officer in Charge of the Third Naval Construction Regiment, was given additional duty as acting Officer in Charge of the 31st Naval Construction Regiment.

The Regiment was comprised of the 74th, 112th, and 123rd Naval Construction Battalions. The 74th, and 112th Battalions were situated on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, and the 123rd Naval Construction Battalion was situated on Midway.

At the time of activation, the 112th Naval Construction Battalion and one company of the 74th Naval Construction Battalion were working on the runways and facilities at the Kaneohe Naval Air Station. The remainder of the 74th personnel was distributed over the island doing miscellaneous cleanup jobs.

The 123rd Naval Construction Battalion was doing construction work on Midway Island while awaiting shipment to Pearl Harbor.

20 Sep 44 Lieutenant Peter T. Bennett, CEC, USNR was assigned as Operations Officer of the Regiment. He was the first man permanently assigned.

6 Oct 44 Commander John R. Nealon, CEC, USNR, reported as Officer in Charge of the Regiment.

Nov 44 The remainder of the 74th Naval Construction Battalion transferred to Kaneohe to work with the 112th Naval Construction Battalion. Both Battalions were working on landing strips and facilities.

7 Dec 44 The 112th Naval Construction Battalion was detached from the Thirty-First Regiment and was assigned to the Sixth Naval Construction Brigade on Tinian, Mariana Islands.

The 74th Naval Construction Battalion took over the entire Construction operation at Kaneohe Naval Air Station.

The 123rd Naval Construction Battalion had arrived at Pearl Harbor from Midway. The Battalion began construction on a housing project and took over the operation of Pearl Harbor base facilities, such as the concrete mixing plant, the black top plant, and the stone quarry.

These two battalions continued working on these projects throughout their stay on Oahu.

27 Jan 45 The Regiment was alerted for shipment to the Philippine Islands.

15 Apr 45 A first echelon of the Regiment, comprising 2 officers (Commander Nealson, Officer in Charge, and Lieutenant Sills, Executive Officer), departed from Hawaii. It arrived at Guuan, Philippine Islands on 17 April 1945.

26 Apr 45 The remainder of the staff, three officers and 7 enlisted men, left Pearl Harbor on the SS Crockett. They arrived in the Philippines 16 May 1945.

Naval Construction Battalion 123 sailed on the same ship.

Naval Construction Battalion 74 remained behind and sailed at a later date for Okinawa for assignment to a new regiment.

April through Sept. 1945.

For details of the Regiments operation in the Philippines, see the enclosed xerox copy of the historical report covering this period.

17 Oct 45 The Thirty-First Naval Construction Regiment was officially inactivated.



**NO  
LOGO  
AVAILABLE**



**NO  
PHOTOS  
AVAILABLE**