1st Special Naval Construction Battalion

Historical Information

"Construimus, Batuimus"
"We Build, We Fight"

NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND

1st C.B. (Special)

NCTC - Camp Peary
ABD - 1st Echelon 7 Jan'43 - Hueneme
2nd Echelon 31 Jan'43 - Hueneme
Ready Date -
Left ABD - 4 Feb'43
Location - Cactus Guadalcanal

2nd Embarkation(1st Sec)
NCTC - (Parks)
ABD - Hueneme
Ready Date- 15 Feb'45
Left ABD - 6 Mar'45
Location - Noumea

LOG

12-12-42 - Orig. of Special Betts proposed at 1009 men; HQ 180 Men plus 4 Stevedore Co's of 5 platoons (instead of 6 as in CB's), 208 men. (Comdr. Bolles)
12-20-42 - 1st Special to go out in 2 echelons, first on 2 Jan - approx 506 men, 15 officers.
1- 2-43 - 1st Echelon entrained for Hueneme, 15 off. and 506 men.
1-25-43 - 2nd Echelon entrained for Hueneme, 11 off. and 506 men.
1- 2-43 - 18 off. and 500 men aboard - enroute Hueneme.
1- 7-43 - Arrived Port Hueneme.(1st half)
1-21-43 - Second half arrived Hueneme.
2- 4-43 - Embarked and departed Bevy-Fold.
3- 5-43 - Second half 1st C.B. (Sp) embarked from Hueneme for Bevy-Fold.
5-11-43 - 1st (Sp) is located at Guadalcanal. (ComNavBasesSoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr. dtd 5-11-43)
6- 1-43 - 1 May'43 report of 1st (Sp) - Men aboard 3 ships during enemy activity and assisted in repelling attack.
8- 4-43 - 1 Jul'43 report of 1st (Sp) - 297 men and 2 off. from 4th (Sp) on detached duty with 1st (Sp). 1st (Sp) reports air raid 16 Jun'43.

1st C.B. (Special)

9- 1-43 - 1 Aug'43 report of 1st (Sp) - operating at Guadalcanal.
3-30-44 - 1 Feb'44 report of 1st (Sp) - operating at Guadalcanal.
4-11-44 - 1 Mar'44 report of 1st (Sp) - operating at Guadalcanal.
5-30-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 1st (Sp) - 140 men will be assigned to bring up complement from CD 2171 upon 1st (Sp) arrival at next duty station.
6-16-44 - 1st CB (Sp) arrived at Lunga Point, Guadalcanal 27 May'44. (WRK)
7-28-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 1st (Sp) - This batt on leaving New Zealand reported back to Guadalcanal instead of going to new duty.
8- 9-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 1st (Sp) - operating at Guadalcanal.
8-21-44 - 1st (Sp) to be detached from duty 15 Sep'44 to return to U.S. when transportation is available. 100 men rec'd subsequent to 15 Sep'43 to be assigned to 6th (Sp). (Comseronsopac Sec. Disp. 180940 NCR 9189 19 Aug'44 to CNB Guadlacanal)
8-25-44 - 1st(Sp) located at Guadalcanal - Following info from Data of SoPac as of 7/1/44:
Arrived Guadalcanal - Mar'43
" Auckland - Apr'44
" Guadalcanal - May'44
8-31-44 - 1st (Sp), located at Guadalcanal, ready to sail to U.S. 15 Sep'44 with 32 off. and 550 men. (Comseronsopac Sec. Disp. 272110 NCR 6134 Aug'44 to CNO)
9- 9-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 1st (Sp) - located at Guadalcanal. This activity divided into 4 companies, two of which are stevedore.
9-15-44 - 1st (Sp) is located at Guadalcanal. (CNB Guadalcanal Sec. Disp. 042252 NCR [illegible] to Comseronsopac dtd 13 Sep'44)
10- 9-44 - 1st (Sp) arrived Parks from overseas 1 Oct'44 with 23 off. and 610 men. (CNO [illegible] Oct'44 from Parks)

1st (Sp) S.E.

10-18-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 1st (Sp) - During Aug., was located at Guadalcanal. 25 men were transferred to the 11th (Sp) on 7 Sep'44. 100 men were transferred to the 6th (Sp) on 21 Aug'44.

11-27-44 - 1st (Sp) Section one arrived Hueneme from Parks 18 Nov'44.(Hueneme conf. disp to CNO 221900 NCR 811 dtd 22 Nov'44).

12-6-44 - 1st (Sp) with 23 officers and 401 men departed Parks for Hueneme 17 Nov'44. (Parks TWX 182155 Nov'44)

2- 1-45 - 1st (Sp) scheduled for BIVE. (CNO Sec Disp to Cincpoa 181821 dtd 18 Jan'45)

2- 1-45 - 1st (Sp) ready for shipment to Cincpoa on 15 Jan'45. (Cominch Sec Disp to Cincpoa 211829 dtd 21 Jan'45)

2- 1-45 - CNO will arrange to lift the 1st (Sp) and 85th CB now ready for Sopac in lieu of the 36th (Sp) and 86th CB which will not be ready until Mar'45. (CNO Sec Disp to Cincpoa and ComWesSeaFron 252120 dtd 26 Jan'45)

2- 1-45 - Comply Comsopac 260032 - substituting 1st (Sp) and 85th CB in accordance my 252120. (CNO Sec Disp to ComWesSeaFron 262129 dtd 26 Jan'45)

2-7-45 - The 36th CB (Sp)will be split into equal sections for assignment to Noumea and Espiritu S.(Comsopac Sec. disp to CNO & Cincpoa 260032 dtd 26 Jan'45) Note: The 1st (Sp) is to be used in lieu of the 36th (Sp) - see CNO Sec. disp 252120 Jan'45.

- - - - - -

1st (Sp) 1st Sec.

2-7-45 - CNO confirms the assignment of the 1st (Sp) 1st Sec. to Noumea and the 2nd Section to Espiritu S.(CNO conf. disp to Cincpoa and other 301555 dtd 31 Jan'45). Ready at Hueneme 15 Feb'45.

3-10-45 -- CNO Sec. dispt to Cincpoa Pearl and Comservpac 071802 Mar'45 - If loading ships at Pearl cannot be accomplished thru other means, suggest diversion of 1st (Sp) from Sopac or one of the BIVE (Sp).(Ref: Comservpac 052043 which urgently requested a CB (Sp) to replace the 28th (Sp) at Pearl).

Location - Noumea 1st (Sp) 1st Sec.

3-14-45 - The 1st (Sp) 1st Section with 13 officers and 528 men departed Hueneme 6 Mar'45 for overseas.(Hueneme conf. disp to Bupers 081919 Mar'45).

3-17-45 - Cincpoa Pearl Sec. disp to CNO 150031 Mar'45 - Impossible to devert the 1st (Sp) from Sopac as suggested, as they have already departed the West Coast.

4-17-45 - 1st (Sp) CB half unit located at Noumea. (CNB Noumea to Comseronsopac Sec Disp 032210 dtd 12 Apr'45)

4-18-45 - 1st CB (Sp) was split into two sections on 5 Mar'45. (Recap sheet of 31 Mar'45)

4-18-45 - 1st (Sp) Sec. 1 located at Noumea. (Address on muster roll of 31 Mar'45)

5- 8-45 - 1st (Sp) Sec. 1 is located at Noumea. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)

5-24-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 1st (Sp) Sec 1 - located at Noumea.

6-8-45 - 1st (Sp) Sec 1 included in units earmarked and ready later but no destination assigned. (Comsopac sec disp 290535 May'45 to Comservpac)

6-28-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 1st(Sp),Sec.1 - located at Noumea.

7-20-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 1st (Sp), Sec 1 - located at Noumea.

8- 2-45 - Cancel my 272337. Request 1st (Sp) CB complete with tent camp and F-1 Comp be shipped to Lingayen to arrive by 15 Sep and that Comserv7flt be advised of mounting point and availability date. (Comservpac sec disp 310309 July to Comsopac)

8-18-45 (?) - 1 Aug '45 report of 1st (Sp) 1st Sec. The battalion was relocated to a camp area at Normandy on 3 July '45. (This must be an error!)

8-22-45 - Comseronsopac shows 1st (Sp) Sec 1 and 2 ready date 1 Sep'45 - destination Saipan. To arrive by 15 Sep. To be combined (both sections) before departing. (Comseronsopac Sec Rep on Redeployment of Naval Personnel dtd 1 Aug'45)

8-31-45 - When 1st Sp, 1st Sec. arrives Espiritu Santo detach Sec 2 of 1st Sp & combine two sections into one administrative unit. Direct them to proceed as single unit to Lingayen & report CNB that base. OinC. 1st & 2nd Secs. are designated OinC & Exec. Off. respectively. (Comservronsopac sec addltr ser 00-94 dtd [illegible] to CNO & others).

Location - ~~Noumea~~ Kyushu, Japan 1st (Sp) 1st Sec.

8-31-45 - 1st Sp directed to report Com7thFlt FFA to Com5thPhibForces instead of CNB, Lingayen. (Comservronsopac sec spdltr ser 00897 dtd 24 Aug'45).

9- 6-45 - 1st(Sp) 1st Sec. report of Sept'45. 1st(Sp), 1st Sec. detached from Navy on 25 Aug'45 for forward movement.

9- 7-45 -1st(Sp) with 12 officers & 445 men departed Noumea 1 Sept'45 for Lingayen via Esp. Santo. (Comgensopacbacom sec disp 010310 to CNB, Lingayen Gulf).

9-11-45 -1st(Sp), Sec 1 detached from Noumea 25 Aug'45. Further report to CO, Ma-1 for transportation to Esp. Santo & upon arrival report to OinC, 1st(Sp), Sec 1 for further transportation. (1st(Sp), Sec 1 sec ltr ser 379 dtd 25 Aug'45).

10-19-45 - 1st(Sp) at Espritu Santo Departed 5 Sept'45. Destination is Lingayen. Sec. 1 combined with sec. 2 at Santo into one administrative unit. (ComserSodPac sec ltr ser001076 dtd 1 Oct'45 to Comservpac).

10-29-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 1st(Sp)- 1 off. & 50 men from Sec. 1 embarked at Noumea,N.C. on 26 Aug'45. 12 off. & 449 men from Sec. 1 embarked at Noumea on 31 Aug'45 & were joined by 16 off& 488 men from Sec. 2 from Sec. 2 at Espiritu Santos. The two sections were consolidated on 4 Sept'45 into one unit. Arrived Lingayen on 16 Sept.'45. Departed Lingayen 21 Sept'45 & arrivad Sasebo, Kyushu, Japan.

11-28-45 -1 Nov'45 report of 1st(Sp) - location not stated. 246 men transferred for discharge 4 off. & 222 men from 31st(Sp) have been billeted with the 1st(Sp).

12-19-45 -1 Dec'45 report of 1st(Sp) - located at Sasebo, Kyushu, Japan. 152 men rec'd from 31st(Sp), Sec. 2. 147 men transferred to U.S. for discharge.

Location - Kyushu, Japan 1st (Sp)

1-31-46 - 1 Jan'46 report of 1st(Sp) - location not stated. 127 men transferred for discharge 87 men rec'd as replacements.

3-1-46 - 1 Feb 46 report of 1st(Sp) - - location not stated.

3-14-46 - Comservpac states inactivation of 31st CB and 1st(Sp) considered essential and requests CG 2nd MarDiv to advise earliest dates units can be inactivated. (Comservpac disp 122101/Mar to CG 2nd MarDiv).

3-28-46 - 1 Mar 46 report of 1st(Sp) - located at Kyushu, Japan.

4-2-46 - Comservpac orders inactivation of 1st(Sp) CB. Enlisted pers. with 18 mos. overseas to be returned to US, others to 31st CB. (Comservpac disp 291839 March to ComGen 2nd MarDiv & 31st CB).

5-3-46 - 1st(Sp) CB inactivated on 15 April 1946. Men not eligible for discharge transferred to 31st CB. (OinC ltr Ser 357 dtd 15 Apr 46 to CNO).

INACTIVATED

NCTC - (Parks)
ABD - Hueneme
Ready Date - 15 Feb'45
Left ABD - 6 Mar'45
Location - Espiritu Santo

2-7-45 - The 36th (Sp) will be split into equal sections for assignment to Noumea and Espiritu S.(Comsopac Sec. disp to CNO & Cincpoa 260032 dtd 26 Jan'45).
2-7-45 - CNO will arrange to lift the 1st (Sp) and 85th CB now ready for Sopac in lieu of the 36th (Sp) and the 86th CB which will not be ready until Mar'45.(CNO Sec. disp to Cincpoa and ComWesSeaFron 252120 dtd 26 Jan'45).
2-7-45 - CNO confirms the assignments of the 1st (Sp) 1st Sec. to Noumea and the 1st CB (Sp) 2nd Sec. to Espiritu S. ready at Hueneme 15 Feb'45.(CNO conf. disp to Cincpoa and other 301555 dtd 31 Jan'45).
3-10-45 - CNO Sec. disp. to Cincpoa Pearl and Comservpac 071802 Mar'45 - If loading ships at Pearl cannot be accomplished thru other means, suggest diversion of 1st (Sp) from Sopac or one of the BIVE (Sp).(Ref: Comservpac 052043 which urgently requested a CB (Sp) to replace the 28th (Sp) at Pearl).
3-14-45 - The 1st (Sp) 2nd Section with 12 officers and 509 men departed Hueneme 6 Mar'45 for overseas.(Hueneme conf. disp to Bupers 081919 Mar'45).
3-17-45 - Cincpoa Pearl Sec. disp to CNO 150031 Mar'45 - Impossible to devert the 1st (Sp) from Sopac as suggested, as they have already departed the West Coast.
4-17-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 1st (Sp) 2nd Sec. - No information re location. A large percentage of the personnel including OinC reported aboard this activity at the beginning of the month.

Location - Espiritu Santo 1st (Special) - 2nd Sec.

4-18-45 - 1st CB (Special)was split into two sections on 5 Mar'45. (Recap sheet of 31 Mar'45)
5- 8-45 - 1st (Sp) 2nd Sec. is located at Espiritu Santo. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)
5-24-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 1st (Sp) Sec 2 - located at Espiritu Santo.
6-9-45 - 1st (Sp) 2nd Sec.at Santo included in list of activities earmarked and ready later but no destinations assigned. (Comsopac sec disp 290535 May'45 to Comservpac)
6-14-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 1st (Sp) Sec 2 - located at Espiritu Santo.
7-20-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 1st (Sp) Sec 2 - located at Espiritu Santo.
8- 2-45 - Cancel my 272337. Request 1st (Sp) CB complete with tent camp and F-1 Comp be shipped to Lingayen to arrive by 15 Sep and that Comserv7flt be advised of mounting point and availability date. (Comservpac sec disp 310309 July to Comsopac)
8-20-45- 1 Aug'45 report of the 1st (Sp) Sec 2 - located at Espiritu Santo.
8-22-45 - Comseronsopac shows 1st (Sp) Sec 1 and 2 ready date 1 Sep'45 - dest Saipan. To arrive by 15 Sep. The 2 sections to be combined before departing. (Comseronsopac Sec Rep on Redeployment of Naval Personnel dtd 1 Aug'45)
8-31-45 When 1 Sec of 1st Sp arrives, detach 2nd Sec of 1st Sp & combine two sections into one administrative unit. Direct them to proceed as single unit to Lingayen & report CNB that base. OinC, 1st & 2nd Secs., are designated OinC & Exec.Off., respectively. (Comservronsopac sec spdltr ser 00994 dtd 23 Aug'45 to CNO & others).
9-31-45 - 1st Sp directed to report Com7thFlt FFA to Com5thPhibForces instead of CNB, Lingayen. (Comservronsopac sec spdltr ser 00997 dtd 24 Aug'45 to CNO & others).
9-12-45 - 1st(Sp), Sec 2 with 16 officers & 488 men departed Esp. Santo aboard APA 132 for Lingayen. Noumea was previous destination. (Comdr. of Esp Santo sec disp [illegible] Sept'45 to Comnavbases, Lingayen).

Location - Espiritu Santo 1st (Special) - 2nd Sec.

9-18-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 1st(Sp), 2nd Sec. Located at Espiritu Santo.

10-19-45- 1st(Sp) at Espiritu Santo departed 5 Sept'45. Destination is Lingayen. Sec. 1 combined with sec. 2 at Santo into one administrative unit. (ComSerSodPac sec ltr ser 001076 dtd 1 Oct'45 to Comservpac).

See the card on 1st CB(Sp) - no longer operating as two sections.

1st CB Special

DECLASSIFIED

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
6/19/44	—	Guadalcanal	CB report 1 June.	Left U.S. Feb. 1943.
7/2/44	—	—	Comlenorlopac sec disp. 180940 Aug.	detd 15 Sept. return to US first available transportation.
7/20	—	(U.S.)	Comlenorlopac sec disp. 172305 Sept	embarked Guadal 13 Sept.
1/30	—		Guadal sec act disp. sep 200755.	Delete D.A.L.
10/11	—	Camp Parks	Bu Docks memo 10/7.	returned US 10/1 Earmarked by Cinpac Tentative ready date 1/1/45.
1/28		(Hueneme)	Cno Conf disp. 271511 Oct.	About 15 Nov. transfer to Hueneme.
11/23	—	Hueneme	Hueneme Conf/disp 221900 Nov.	arrived Port Hueneme. Act sec from Davis. 11/21 one sec from Park on 11/18.

1st CB Special

DECLASSIFIED

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
2/30	—	Hueneme	Comindo sec disp. 211730 dec	request left from W. Coast to Pearl during January. Bine (Bu Docks memo 12/15
1/31	—	—	Cno Conf. 301555 Jan.	Confirms assignments Sec 1 — Epic } ready 2/1st Sec 2 — Ebon } Hueneme Probable mar. Shpg.
4/14	—	1/2 - Epic	Noumea Sec disp 032210 april	added
4/14	—	1/2 - Ebon	Santo Sec act disp 062115 April	

HISTORY OF THE FIRST SPECIAL U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

"In the fall of 1942 it became apparent that the Navy would be forced to organize special battalions of stevedores to handle the mountains of freight which had to flow over open beaches in the Pacific. The nature of the Pacific war made stevedoring at the advance bases as hazardous and difficult as construction. An unloading ship was a prime target for the enemy. Then all the normal difficulties of unloading were multiplied by the absence of piers in the forward islands. We had no piers for two reasons; there had been no time to build them; and until an island is made secure from enemy attack it is foolish to build piers, since they will only be destroyed by enemy bombs. This meant that when a freighter arrived at a place like Guadalcanal, she had to anchor offshore and unload her cargo onto heaving barges; then the barges ran to the beach, where the cargo had to be handled again onto trucks. This ship-to-shore process doubled the normal amount of stevedoring." 1.

"The CEC designated the stevedore battalions "Special" battalions and rushed plans for their creation. As with the first construction battalions, the need was so urgent that there was little time to train the first "Special". We had moved into Guadalcanal, and if that battle was to won we had to have men who would stick with those ships and unload them in spite of bombs, shells and weather.

To form the First Special Battalion, the CEC simply grabbed 95 men with stevedoring experience who had enlisted for service with the construction battalions, added 900-odd others who knew something about rigging and handling barges and small boats, and rushed the group to the Pacific where they were joined by the Second, Third, and Fourth Specials." 2.

The First Special U.S. Naval Construction Battalion was commissioned at Camp Bradford, Norfolk, Va., 16 December 1942. Lt. Comdr. W. T. Powers was Officer in Charge. The unit moved to Camp Peary, near Williamsburg, Va. on 17 December 1942. While at Camp Peary the battalion received training in advanced military and in stevedoring operations. In the latter part of December half the men were transferred to form the nucleus of the Second Special U.S.N.C.B. The remaing approximate 500 became known as the First Echelon of the First Special U.S.N.C.B. The First Echelon left Camp Peary for Port Hueneme on 1 January 1943. The time at Hueneme was spent in outfitting the unit and in military drill. Some of the personnel were granted a five day leave while at Hueneme.

The First Echelon left the U.S. on 3 February 1943 aboard the MS DAY STAR and SS TURNER. This Echelon, along with the 46th U.S. N.C.B. formed a part of Cub Two under the command of Commander Rochester.

The First Echelon, after a layover of approximately four weeks at Espiritu Santo, arrived at their destination of Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands on 21 March 1943. The battalion lived in pup

- -

1. "Can Do" by William Bradford Huie, page 171.
2. "Can Do", pages 172-173.

tents and ate C rations for several days while a camp was being constructed. Camp construction was necessarily slow as the stevedore companies were immediately put to work unloading ships and only a small percentage of the men were used on camp construction.

The Second Echelon of the First Special U.S.N.C.B. was formed at Camp Peary, 17 January 1943. Lieut. L. K. Wood was Officer in Charge of the echelon. This unit left Camp Peary for Port Hueneme on 25 January 1943. Upon arrival at Port Hueneme the personnel were assigned to stevedore training and advanced military training and the unit was outfitted. No pre-embarkation leave was granted.

The Second Echelon of the First Special along with Aviation Repair Unit formed the Second Echelon of Cub 2 under Lt. Comdr. Parr as Commanding Officer. They embarked from U.S. on 4 March 1943 aboard SS MORMACWREN. After a layover of almost six weeks at Espiritu Santo the unit arrived at Guadalcanal 2 May 1943. Due to the fact that no tents were available on the island this echelon also lived in pup tents and subsisted on C rations for several days while their equipment was being unloaded and camp construction was going on.

The battalion equipment arrived at Guadalcanal 2 April aboard the SS LOUIS JOLIET. Before this equipment had been unloaded an aerial attack by a large number of Japanese planes forced all the ships to leave the harbour and return to Espiritu Santo. This delayed for about two weeks the arrival of necessary working equipment. At this time all ships were worked in the stream and cargo was brought ashore by pontoon barges and tank lighters.

"During the first three months in the Pacific the First Special handled 112,407 tons of cargo from 33 ships. During this time there were twenty-six air alerts and at least one very serious bombing raid." 3.

In August 1943 Commander Powers returned to the U.S. to take over a construction battalion and the command of the battalion was taken over by Commander William H. Yost. Commander Yost in time became Commander Cargo, Guadalcanal and Commander William C. Lamb became Officer in Charge of the First Special U.S.N.C.B.

The personnel of the battalion decreased due to fatigue caused by long and arduous work and tropical diseases, the most prevalent of which was malaria.

On 6 April 1944 the battalion was sent to New Zealand for a well earned "rest" leave. While in New Zealand the battalion personnel explored the country from one end to the other. The unit returned to Guadalcanal on 29 May 1944.

In early September 1944 a very happy communication was received. The text stated that the battalion was due to return to Uncle Sugar, where they arrived 1 October 1944.

While at Guadalcanal the battalion had received several letters of commendation both from the island command and from the masters of ships which they had worked, for work well done.

"Here is what the master of one transport wrote: "During our

- -

3. "Can Do", page 177.

emergency departure from Guadalcanal, we found ourselves critically short of men in the engine room. Through the kind cooperation of Lieutenant Curry and his men, we secured seven men who acted as oilers and firemen, who did a most excellent job of helping us in our need."

"'The master of a Liberty ship wrote: 'The manner in which the men of the First Special accepted duty during an attack on us by twelve enemy aircraft was unsurpassed. Gangs were organized as ammunition carriers, magazine loaders, and at fire stations. Some men took positions on the 20-mm. guns, some on the 3-inch gun, and some as corpsmen at the First Aid Station.'

Another master wrote: 'During the course of a raid, while enemy planes were forming for another dive on the ship, the First Specialists calmly removed broken booms and rigging from the hatches and lashed them to the deck for safety. During the night they stood guard watch, relieving the gun crews in order that they might be in best form when needed.'

Another skipper wrote: 'I wish to inform you that the stevedoring operation abord this vessel was as fine, if not better, than any civilian stevedoring that I have witnessed in my fifteen years' experience. The cargo was handled carefully and at the same time with maximum dispatch.'" 4.

Upon returning to the U.S. the personnel of the battalion was granted a thirty day leave. After completion of this leave the battalion was ordered to Port Hueneme for training and outfitting, arriving there on the 19 November 1944, with Lieut. Comdr. J. Kask as Officer in Charge. While at Hueneme the battalion took up the slack of civilian stevedoring operations and loaded ships leaving for forward areas. This work and training continued until 1 March 1945 when the battalion was split into two sections, the First Section being ordered to New Caledonia and the Second Section being ordered to Espiritu Santo to do stevedoring work in connection with the "roll up" of these two bases.

The Second Section with Lieut. Charles J. Price as Officer in Charge arrived at Espiritu Santo on the 18 March 1945. This section has among its personnel 185 members of the original First Special. The remainder being made up of new replacements from boot camp and personnel who have seen service in France as members of other C.B. Units, some of whom were in on the Normandy invasion.

The battalion was assigned to the camp formerly occupied by C.B.M.U. 538. The camp is a quonset hut camp in a very nice location. This was very fortunate as the equipment sent out with the battalion was very incomplete, no tools or rolling stock were included in the original shipment. As the personnel of the First Special was nearly twice as large as the former occupants of the camp it was necessary to make several additions to the camp. Tools for this work were drawn from Public Works and Naval Supply Depot. Some rolling stock

- -

4. "Can Do", pages 173-174.

was drawn from Public Works to fill in until the battalion equipment arrived. Reefers were not sent out and electrical generating equipment sent out was insufficient both of these items were furnished by Public Works.

A chapel, several quonset hut living quarters, a supply warehouse and many small construction projects were completed to make the camp adequate for the personnel and equipment.

The S.S. WILLIAM GREY, carrying the battalion equipment, arrived at Espiritu Santo 1 April 1945. The battalion began its stevedoring activities on this base at that date by unloading our own equipment. Many of the personnel were untrained in this type of work and as they had joined the battalion just a few days before our departure from the States, it required a few weeks of working together before a substantial degree of stevedoring efficiency was attained.

The battalion was assigned to work Alhena Landing and Pier Five but stevedoring work has also been done at Piers Two and Three, Pier Four and Seven, the two LST beaches and in the stream. Since starting work on 1 April 1945 until 30 June 1945 this activity has worked seventeen small craft and thirty-five ships, loading 31,787 tons and discharging 11,177 tons.

Some stevedoring equipment inthe battalion complement was found to be insufficient, this included lift jitneys and dock tractors. Some of this type of equipment has been secured from units on the island.

Recreation for the battalion is provided through movies, library and athletics. Movies are shown every night in the Mess Hall and are well attended. Inter-battalion softball games provide a great deal of good natured rivalry. Games are hard fought but a source of pleasure to all. Before leaving the states a pool table was purchased from Welfare Funds. This piece of equipment is one of the most popular forms of recreation. The library, though small, is stocked with technical, historical and fiction books and is extensively used by men off duty.

The battalion left the U.S. approximately 4% under complement and due to medical and overage transfers since arriving at this base is now approximately 7% under complement.

Personnel in Sick Bay due to minor injuries and sickness averages approximately 4%. This leaves the personnel available for work about 11% below complement. Through the sacrifice of all but urgently needed work in each company we have been able to maintain the original number of gangs.

To offset this loss of personnel additional replacements have been requested.

DECLASSIFIED-DOD. DIR. 5200.9, 27 Sept. 1958

RESTRICTED

ITINERARY OF 1ST NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (SPECIAL)

First Tour of Duty

2 Jan 1943	1st Echelon of 1st CB (Sp) left Camp Peary for Port Hueneme.
7 Jan 1943	1st Echelon arrived at Port Hueneme.
25 Jan 1943	2nd Echelon left Camp Peary for Port Hueneme.
31 Jan 1943	2nd Echelon arrived at Port Hueneme.
4 Feb 1943	1st Echelon embarked for Guadalcanal. No date of arrival - sometime in March.
5 Mar 1943	2nd Echelon embarked for Guadalcanal. No date of arrival-- sometime in March.
11 May 1943	1st CB (Sp) located at Guadalcanal.
1 Jul 1943	Monthly Report for July states that 2 officers and 297 men from the 4th CB (Sp) are on detached duty with 1st CB (Sp). 1st CB (Sp) operated at Guadalcanal until it went to Auckland, New Zealand for rest and rehabilitation.
Apr 1944	Went to Auckland, New Zealand.
27 May 1944	Arrived Lunga Point, Guadalcanal.
15 Sep 1944	Departed Guadalcanal for U.S.
1 Oct 1944	1st CB (Sp) with 23 officers and 610 men arrived Camp Parks. On 21 Aug 1944, 100 men were transferred to 6th CB(Sp). On 7 Sep 44, 25 men were transferred to 11th CB (Sp).

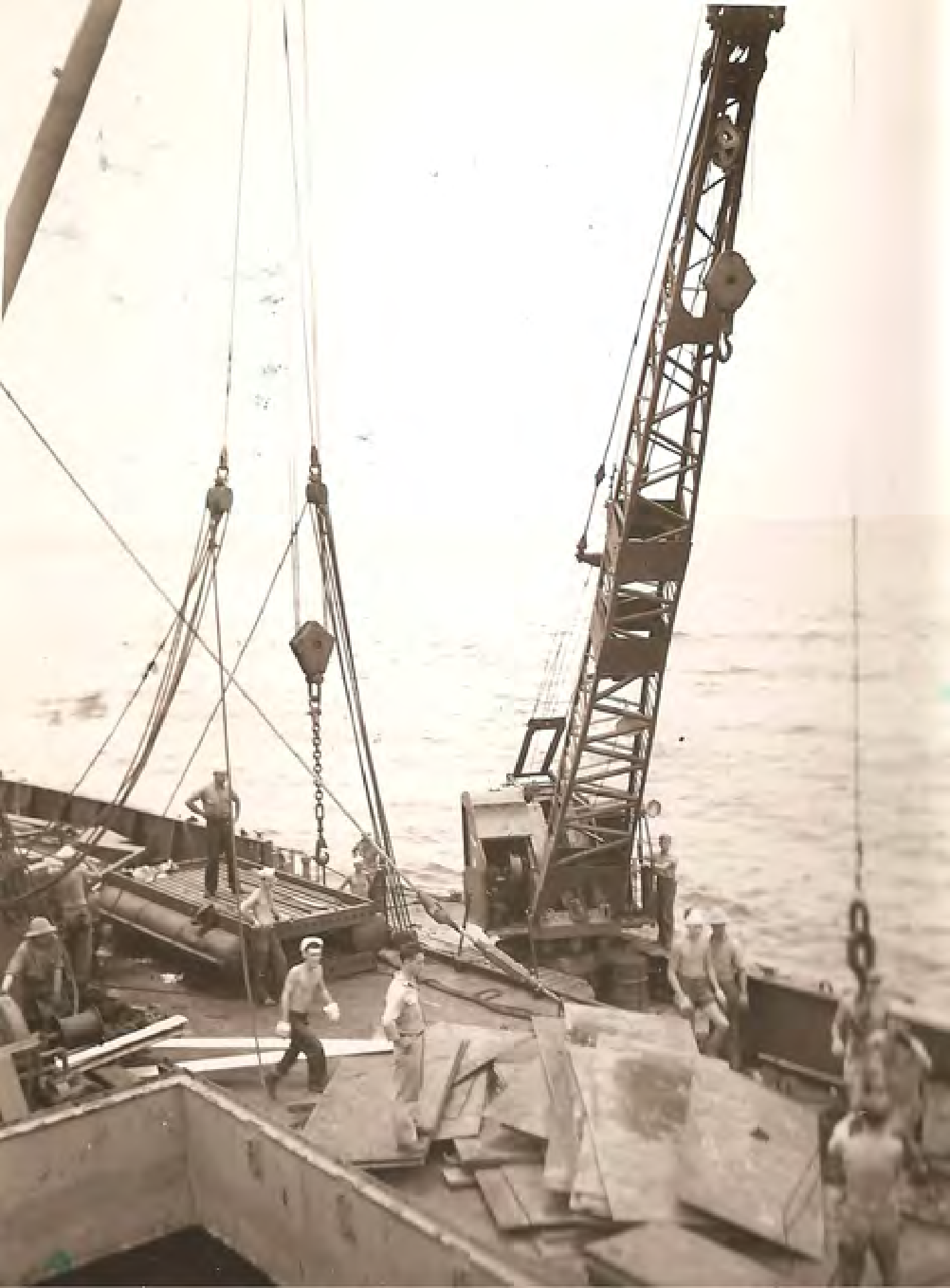
HISTORICAL RECORD

Return to HISTORIAN
Bureau of Yards and Docks

Second Tour of Duty

6 Mar 1945	1st CB (Sp), 1st and 2nd Sections, departed for overseas. 1st Section destined Noumea, 2nd Section destined Espiritu Santo. Dates of arrival not known.
1 Sep 1945	1st Section departed Noumea for Lingayen via Espiritu Santo combined with 2nd Section at Espiritu Santo.
5 Sep 1945	Battalion departed Espiritu Santo.
16 Sep 1945	Arrived Lingayen.
21 Sep 1945	Departed Lingayen for Saseba, Kyushu, Japan. Time of arrival unknown.

NOTE: The above itinerary is based on the records available in the CB Operations Section of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

15 October 1945.

NO LOGO AVAILABLE