

3rd Special Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



3rd C.B. (Sp)

<u>1st Embarkation</u>		<u>2nd Embarkation</u>	
NCTC	- McGruder	NCTC	- (1842 Parks)
ABD	- Hueneme	ABD	- Hueneme
Ready Date	- 15 Feb'43	Ready Date	- 15 Feb'45
Left ABD	- 10 Mar'43	Left ABD	- 20 Apr, 26 May, 8 Jun'45
Location	- Ebon - Espiritu Santo.	Location	- 8 Jun'45

3rd C.B. 2nd Sect. left 9 Apr'43

LOC

- 1-23-43 - Enroute Hueneme.
- 1-21-43 - Ordered transferred Hueneme for outfitting.
- 2-10-43 - Embarked from Hueneme for Ebon.
- 4- 8-43 - Second Section left Hueneme for San Francisco FFT to Lion 1.
- 5-11-43 - The 3rd (Sp) located at Espiritu Santo. (ComNavBasesSoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr dtd 5-11-43)
- 5- 5-43 - 1 May'43 report of 3rd (Sp) - 1st Detachment arrived at U.S. Naval Airbase Ebon March 25. Approx. 24,000 tons cargo unloaded up to 1 May'43.
- 4-11-44 - 1 Mar'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - Operating at Espiritu Santo.
- 5-11-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - operating at Espiritu Santo.
- 6- 3-44 - 1 May'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - operating at Espiritu Santo.
- 7-18-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - operating at Espiritu Santo.
- 8- 5-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - operating at Espiritu Santo.
- 8-21-44 - The 3rd (Sp) is to be detached to U.S. when transportation is available. Personnel rec'd subsequent to 15 Sep'43 to be detached and assigned elsewhere. (ComSeronsoPac Sec. Disp. 180931 NCM 9102 dtd 18 Aug'44 to CNB Espiritu Santo)

3rd C.B. (Sp)

- 9-25-44 - 3rd (Sp) is located at Espiritu Santo at which place they arrived Apr'43.
(Data of SoPac as of 7/1/44)
- 8-31-44 - 3rd (Sp), located at Espiritu Santo, ready to sail to U.S. 15 Sep'44 with 42 officers and 860 men. (ComSeronsoPac Sec. Disp. 222110 NCR 6104 28 Aug'44 to CND)
- 9- 7-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - operating at Espiritu.
- 10- 3-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 3rd (Sp) - Batt was relieved by the Army of pier operations and cargo handling as of 20 Aug'44; was secured 26 Aug. from instruction duty. This unit has a record of 18 months operations in the field. Waiting transportation to the States.
- 10- 9-44 - 3rd (Sp) arrived Parks from overseas via S.F. 30 Sep'44 with 18 off. and 888 men. (30TWX2129 Sep'44 from Parks)
- 10-28-44 - 3rd (Sp) embarked for U.S. on 14 Sep'44 and disembarked at S.F. 22 Sep'44.
(1 Oct'44 report of 3rd (Sp))
- 11-27-44 -- The 3rd (Sp) 1st Section arrived Hueneme from Parks 18 Nov'44 and one Section (leave personnel) from Davisville on 16 Nov'44. (Hueneme conf. dtd to CNO 221900 HCR 811 dtd 22 Nov'44).
- 2- 1-45 - The 3rd (Sp) scheduled for BIVE. Suggest they stage at Saipan. (CNO Sec Disp to Cincpoa 181821 dtd 18 Jan'45)
- 2- 2-45 - The 3rd (Sp) will be ready for shipment to Cincpoa on 1 Feb'45. (Cominch Sec Disp to Cincpoa 211829 dtd 21 Jan'45)
- 2-26-45 -- The 3rd (Sp) ready 15 Feb'45 for BIVE. (Cominch Sec. disp to Cincpoa 222134 Feb'45).
- 3- 8-45 -- The 3rd (Sp) is destined for BIVE. (Cincpoa P.H. Sec. disp to Cominch 040400 Mar'45).
- 4-26-45 - 1 off. and 14 men from the 3rd (Sp) departed Hueneme for overseas on 20 Apr'45. (Huen Conf Disp 240409 Apr'45 to Buyers)

Location- Okinawa

3rd C.E. (Special)

- 6-6-45 - The 1st echelon of the 3rd (Sp) departed Hueneme 26 May'45 for overseas with 26 off. and 964 men. (Hueneme conf disp 291702 May'45 to Burers)
- 6-14-45 - The 2nd echelon of the 3rd (Sp) departed Hueneme 8 Jun'45 for overseas with 3 off. and 85 men. (Hueneme conf disp 091717 Jun'45 to Burers)
- 9-10-45- 12th Brig, 53rd Reg & 54th Reg all activated 1 Sept'45. Regs & Batta in 12th Brig as follows:-47th Reg-3,4,11,13,23,27,36(? disp jumbled) Sp battn. 53rd Reg-148 CBs. 54th Reg-137 & 139 CBs. (CNOB, Okinawa conf disp 010254 Sept'45 to Cincpac, P.).
- 9-23-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 3rd(Sp) - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Reg. Transferred to U.S. for discharge under the point system.
- 1-3-46 - 1 Dec'45 report of 3rd(Sp) - located at Okinawa. Report via 47th Reg. 3rd(Sp) departed U.S. on 20 Apr'45 & arrived Okinawa 27 May'45. this was an advance ech. of 1 off. & 14 men. The main ech. with 26 off. & 964 men departed U.S. 26 May'45 & arrived 6 July'45. The rear ech. departed U.S. on 8 June'45 & arrived Okinawa on 27 July'45.
- 1-31-46 - 1 Jan'46 report of 3rd(Sp) - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Reg.
- 3-6-46 - 1 Feb 46 report of 3rd(Sp) - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Reg.
- 4-3-46 - Comservpac orders NOB Okinawa to inactivate 3rd(Sp). (Comservpac disp 0221117 April to NOB Okinawa).
- 6-7-46 - Inactivation of 3rd (sp.)CB completed 14 May 1946. (Commandant, NOB, Navy #3256 spdltr. to Comservpac dtd, 17 May 1946)

3 Special

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
6/19/44	-	Espirites Santo EBOA	CB report 1 June	Left U.S. Mar. 1943.
7/2/44	-	-	Combaroboa sec. disp. 180936 aug.	det'd present duty .5 Sept. return 9.5 first available transportation
7/2	-	-	Com Nau Base Santo conf disp. 042205 sept.	Delete EBOA (clearing soon)
7/14	-	(U.S.)	Combaroboa sec. disp. 172305 sept.	Embarked Santo 14 Sept.
10/11	-	Camp Banks	Bufocho memo 10/2.	retained 28 9/29 re-marked by Cinpoa
10/14	-	Camp Banks (Hueneke)	CNO conf disp 171645 Oct	about 11 AM to camp to Hueneke - re-marking.
11/23	-	Hueneke	Hueneke CNO disp. 281900 Nov.	Arrived Hueneke. 1 Section from Camp Banks on 18 Nov. 1 Sec. from Davisville 16 Nov. Binn - Bufocho memo 12/23

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Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
1/17	-	Hueneke	CNO sec. 101845 to Cinpoa Jan.	7th of not available - suggest sub 1st or 2nd of examined Binn.
2/7	-	(Binn)	CNO conf serial 048430 Feb.	Ready Hueneke 2/15 - and Binn Probable Mar ship
4/24	-	-	Bufocho memo 3/2.	available April 1949.
5/12	-	(Binn)	CNO conf disp 240409 April	departed Hueneke 20 April (part)
5/15	-	-	CNO Sec. disp. 071935 May	Alert priority - Being ship Binn May or early June.
5/15	-	-	Bufocho CB memo 9 June.	2nd sub. stack 25 -

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Jul'44	28		Recap.
1 Aug'44	29	903	BNP625 & MoR
1 Sep'44	30	911	BNP625 & MoR
1 Oct'44	18	878	MoR
1 Nov'44		704	BNP625
1 Jan'45		877	BNP625
1 Feb'45		791	BNP625
1 Mar'45		899	BNP625
1 Apr'45		974	BNP625
1 May'45		1030	BNP625
1 Jul'45	32	1072	Roster & BNP625
1 Aug'45	31	1062	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45	28	1045	BNP625 & R
1 Oct'45	25	949	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45	26	771	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'45	25	940	BNP625 & R
1 Jan'46	31	1284	BNP625 & R
1 Feb'46	21	962	R & BNP 625
1 Mar'46	27	878	BNP 625 & R

3rd Construction Battalion (Special) (INACTIVATED)

History of United States

Naval Special Construction Battalion 3

During the late summer and fall of 1942, it became apparent that Seabees would be needed to play yet another vital role in the Allied war effort. Since the war was being fought on distant fronts, separated from the United States by thousands of miles of ocean, vast quantities of food, ammunition, equipment, and other material had to be transported by ship. The lack of trained personnel to unload these ships at their overseas destinations constantly hampered the smooth flow of material to the advanced bases and combat zones. Even with adequate numbers of experienced men, cargo handling at advanced bases remained a difficult and dangerous job. After all, nothing presented a better target for the enemy than a ship in the midst of unloading operations. Thus it was that the Seabees were called upon to perform this desperately needed work. Authority for the organization of a number of special duty battalions, composed of men and officers qualified in cargo handling, as well as in routine construction, was granted on September 18, 1942. Recruitment of suitable personnel began immediately.

On January 16, 1943, United States Naval Special Construction Battalion 3 was officially established at the United States Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia with Lieutenant Commander William H. Yost, USCGR, as officer-in-charge. Enlisted men and officers were detached from the training center and were assigned to the battalion. Within days the battalion was on board a train enroute to Port Hueneme, California. On January 31, they arrived at the Advance Base Depot Receiving Barracks, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California. It was there that they underwent advanced military and technical training that would prepare them for their first overseas deployment. By March the battalion, fitted out with all the necessary equipment, was ready to mount out.

Espiritu Santo

On March 9, 1943 the battalion began departing for its first tour of overseas wartime duty. The first echelon, consisting of approximately 750 officers and enlisted men, sailed from Port Hueneme aboard the SS Del Brasil. Their destination was the island of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. Espiritu Santo, the site of a major Army and Navy operating base, had brought United States bombers 400 miles closer to the Japanese positions on Guadalcanal and then provided a staging area for the Allied invasion of the other Solomon Islands. The ship arrived at the United States Naval Advanced Base on Espiritu Santo on March 25.

The battalion began cargo handling operations on the following day, Its work consisted mainly of unloading and loading the vessels waiting in the harbor. The cargoes handled were mostly heavy equipment, various types of rolling stock, quonset hut material, gasoline, cement, food, and small quantities of general cargo, including some explosives. The 3rd Special Seabee detachments worked continuously, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

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Although the men of the battalion were already performing their assigned mission of cargo handling, they as yet lacked proper living quarters. Given the damp, humid, tropical environment, with its torrential rains, a permanent camp with adequate living and messing facilities was essential to the well being of the men.

Only the ninety-seven men of Headquarters Company could be spared for camp construction; the rest were urgently needed as stevedores. For this reason, the men of Headquarters Company joined forces with the men of United States Construction Battalion 57 and began constructing quarters for the 3rd Special Battalion.

At first, an attempt was made to erect tents, but the torrential rains, normal for that time of year, washed these out almost as soon as they were staked down. Large volumes of water, sufficient to wash sea bags away, coursed through the camp area. The only solution was to erect the tents on raised platforms. As work progressed on more permanent quonset huts, the tents were gradually abandoned.

A system of construction priorities for the new camp was developed. The mess hall, hospital, and living quarters were of course given the highest priority. Unfortunately, a serious shortage of material and equipment, coupled with the previously mentioned adverse weather conditions, created many difficulties and slowed construction progress considerably. During the first four weeks, it was not unusual for the men of the 3rd Special Battalion and Naval Construction Battalion 57 to work knee-deep in mud. Material and equipment shortages resulted from the late arrival of much of the battalion's gear. While some equipment had been shipped with the first echelon, the much needed remainder was either late in arriving or, if it had arrived, did not possess a high priority on the unloading schedule.

The mess hall, completed on May 9, was the key building in the camp. Built in the shape of a horseshoe and located in a palm grove for camouflage purposes, it could seat approximately 300 men and 40 Chief Petty Officers. Now that the battalion had its own messing facilities, a more efficient watch system was established. The battalion was divided into three sections which worked six hours and then had twelve hours off. The men were fed before and after duty in their own mess hall. This procedure enabled the battalion to continue its work without the need for meal breaks. It also made possible a rotation of watches so that no one section had prolonged night duty.

By May 29 camp construction had progressed sufficiently enough so that the battalion's hospital area, consisting of a dispensary, operating room, and two 20 bed wards, went into service. By June 5, with the exception of a few minor details, the camp was complete. It consisted of a mess hall, hospital area, enlisted quarters, officers mess and quarters, a chapel, a warehouse, and a few other miscellaneous buildings.

On April 21, 1943, the first section of Pier 4, the first real pier in the harbor, was completed. Operated exclusively by the 3rd Special Battalion, the first section of this pier allowed one ship at a time to berth, and be loaded or unloaded after the fashion of a normal United States stevedoring operation. The other three "piers" worked by the 3rd

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Special Battalion were little more than jetties. As ocean-going ships could not dock at them, cargo was first transferred onto barges and then transported to these jetties for unloading. The second section of Pier 4 was completed on August 26. The pier was then 1,000-feet long and could berth two ships simultaneously.

During this period, the cargo being handled consisted of large quantities of general supplies which required sorting. A sorting shed was built at the foot of Pier 4 during September and October 1943 to facilitate the operation. In September the battalion received a 75-ton capacity floating crane. Although assigned to the battalion for operation and maintenance, the crane was supposed to be used in support of ship repair units, dry docks, and other waterfront activities as well as for handling heavy cargo.

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The men of the "Roarin' Third," as the battalion came to be known on Espiritu Santo, celebrated Christmas of 1943 by throwing a party on Christmas Eve. Free beer, coke, sandwiches, and coffee were available. A band played for the men's enjoyment, and even Santa Claus visited them. To complete the festive atmosphere an ersatz Christmas tree was assembled out of odds and ends.

During February 1944, in addition to their routine duties, the men of the battalion engaged in a little extra curricular activity. They assisted in the salvage of a PBV amphibious patrol bomber that had been beached with a damaged hull.

In June, a two-story dock office was completed, thus greatly increasing the efficiency of dock management. The dock officer then was afforded an all around view of the piers, the sorting area, and the lines of trucks that hauled cargo away from the piers to the supply dumps.

In July, port operations reached their zenith with a monthly total of 112,039 tons handled and a daily average of 3,614 tons. This exceeded all previous monthly records for port tonnage by 13,000 tons, and was an increase of approximately 4,000 tons from the "Roarin' Third's" previous monthly high. The high volume handled was made possible by the close

cooperation of all units handling cargo. These units included the Army Quartermaster Battalion that did the trucking and the Naval Supply Depot that received the cargo and unloaded it from the trucks at the warehouses.

During July, the Army increased its responsibility for stevedore operations. At this time it took over complete responsibility for Pier 2, which previously had been worked by the 3rd Special Battalion. Thus the battalion's responsibility was reduced to the operation of Pier 4, the 75-ton floating crane, and the landing-craft beach at which Tank Landing Ships, Tank Landing Crafts and Infantry Landing Ships were berthed.

align ✓ An accurate record of the cargo handled by the 3rd Special Battalion exists only for Pier 4, although the battalion also handled cargo on other piers in the beach area. From April 21, 1943 until August 20, 1944, the 3rd Special Battalion unloaded 473,732 tons and loaded 186,604 tons onto the 201 ships that berthed at Pier 4. Altogether, the battalion handled a total of 649,976 tons of cargo on Pier 4 alone.

Finally, after 17 months the 3rd Special Battalion's tour on Espiritu Santo drew to a close. On August 20, 1944, the battalion turned over all its cargo handling operations, with the exception of the 75-ton floating crane, to the U.S. Army Port Battalion U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 542 assumed responsibility for the operation of the crane.

Camp Parks and Camp Rousseau

On September 14, 1944, the 3rd Special Battalion departed from Espiritu Santo for the United States aboard the USAT M/S Perida. On September 29, the battalion disembarked at San Francisco. That same day it was transported to the United States Naval Construction Battalion Replacement and Recuperation Center, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California for reforming and leave. On November 17, after a month's rest, the battalion departed from Camp Parks for Port Hueneme, California. It

arrived at the Advance Base Depot Receiving Barracks, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California on November 18. There it underwent a period of military, technical, and stevedoring training in preparation for its next overseas employment. Part of this stevedoring training was practical application. The men of the battalion, many of them newly assigned and without stevedoring experience, worked the Port Hueneme piers, unloading and loading the ships that supplied their comrades overseas.

During the battalion's stay at Camp Parks and Camp Rousseau, many of the original officers and men were reassigned to other units or released from active duty. Two hundred experienced men were transferred to the Advance Base station force to help operate the Port Hueneme piers. All told, some five hundred "green" second-class seamen were assigned to replace the experienced men who were transferred. Relatively few of the men who were on the first overseas tour to Espiritu Santo went on the second tour to Okinawa.

Okinawa

On Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, United States invasion forces landed on the beaches of Okinawa. The fighting was fierce and organized enemy resistance did not end until June 21. On April 20, only twenty days after the invasion began, an advance detachment of the 3rd Special Battalion, consisting of one officer and fourteen men, departed from Port Hueneme for Okinawa.

The main body continued its training at Port Hueneme until May 26, when a first echelon, consisting of 980 officers and men sailed for Okinawa. On June 8, a second echelon, consisting of the remaining 88 officers and men of the battalion, sailed from Port Hueneme for the same destination.

Upon their arrival on Okinawa, the Seabees of the 3rd Special Battalion immediately started cargo handling activities. Just as on Espiritu Santo, the battalion worked twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

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In the early days of the occupation, cargo-handling work was primarily a beach operation. During August the battalion provided 36 stevedore gangs. Another 20 gangs provided by two logistic support companies were attached to the battalion shortly after its arrival in June. The logistic support company gangs were used on the beach, while the battalion's gangs worked on the ships. The battalion's gangs transferred cargo from the ships to lighters, ferried it ashore, and then the logistic support company gangs unloaded it. The 3rd Special Battalion operated one pontoon pier on the beach on a 24-hour-a-day basis and shared another on a 12-hour-a-day basis. Adverse weather conditions made cargo handling operations very difficult and on several occasions forced their complete suspension. Despite this difficulty the battalion managed to discharge 81,874 tons of cargo onto the beach during the month of August.

In order to efficiently carry out its cargo handling mission, the battalion had to be adequately quartered and fed. Thus camp construction was a matter of concern during the first weeks on Okinawa. By August 15, 1945, the battalion's quarters, main galley, and mess hall were completed. A motion picture facility was in the process of being built and future plans included the construction of a chapel. *align*

During the summer and fall of 1945, Okinawa was struck by a number of typhoons. One of these, Typhoon Louise which struck on October 9, caused severe damage to most of the American installations, but luckily the 3rd Special Battalion's losses were comparatively light. Only 30 per cent of its camp was destroyed, while some units suffered losses as high as 90 per cent. The battalion's camp was completely rebuilt by November 1.

~~X~~ The Japanese surrender in September, 1945, did not signal an end to the battalion's labors. Although a number of men with sufficient points for release from service left the battalion during the months immediately following the cessation of hostilities, the "Roarin' Third" continued its vital duties into 1946. During February and March of 1946, the battalion

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performed stevedoring, trucking, and pontoon barge operations. The 3rd Special Battalion was then under the cognizance of the Naval Supply Depot, Okinawa and, to a limited extent, Naval Supply Depot personnel were relieving the battalion of some of its stevedoring and trucking duties. By March 1946, seven competent stevedore gangs, composed of Okinawan civilians, were working the piers under the supervision of battalion personnel.

On April 30, forty of the battalion's enlisted men found themselves bound upon a new adventure. On that date they were transferred to the Receiving Station on Okinawa, and from there to United States Naval Construction Battalion 96 at Tsingtao, China. At that time there were four construction battalions and two special battalions in China to support the Third Marine Amphibious Corps. These units had been detailed to assist the Chinese government in the repatriation of Japanese troops.

Those that remained with the ^{3rd}~~4th~~ Special Battalion had nothing to look forward to but its disestablishment, because "Roarin' Third's" career was drawing to a close. Its work done, United States Naval Special Construction Battalion 3 was disestablished on May 14, 1946, on Okinawa. Thus ended 40 glorious and fruitful months of service and achievement for the 3rd Special Seabees.

ITINERARY OF THE 4TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (SPECIAL)

First Tour of Duty

- 20 Jan 1943 - Battalion formed at NCTC, Camp Peary.
- 12 Feb 1943 - Transferred to ABD, Port Hueneme, Calif.
- 9 Mar 1943 - Embarked for overseas duty.
- 9 Apr 1943 - Arrived Noumea.
- 4 May 1943 - Departed Noumea.
- 11 May 1943 - Arrived Guadalcanal (Koli-Point).
- 1 Jan 1944 - Moved to West Kukum - Tasafaronga area. (Guadalcanal)
- 20 Oct 1944 - Departed Guadalcanal for U. S.
- 7 Nov 1944 - Battalion arrived Camp Parks from overseas.
- 28 Dec 1944 - Battalion departed Camp Parks for Port Hueneme, Calif.
- 29 Dec 1944 - Battalion arrived ABRB, Port Hueneme, California.

Second Tour of Duty

- 2 May 1945 - Battalion departed ABRB, Port Hueneme, for overseas duty (Second Tour of Duty).
- 3 May 1945 - Battalion delayed enroute at R/S, Terminal Island, San Pedro, California.
- 11 May 1945 - Battalion Departed R/S, San Pedro, Calif.
- 17 Jun 1945 - Arrived Okinawa.

NOTE: The above itinerary has been checked and authenticated by the Officer-in-Charge of the 4th Naval Construction Battalion (Special).

25 October 1945

NAVY

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LAST CHANCE...
TO-DAY

and one to remember "Pearl Harbor" on!
December 7, 1941



*HOP ON THE
BOND WAGON TODAY*

**WAR BOND
SAVINGS**

*ARE SAFEST
GROW FASTER*



THIS PIER OPERATED BY...
THIRD SPECIAL
U.S.N.C.B.
THE FINEST IN THE PACIFIC
THE ROBBIE THIRD

THE SPECIAL SETTING
DOCK OFFICE

PUBLIC DOCK

NO PROSE

NO PROSE



3RD. SPECIAL MESS HALL
CLEANLINESS - ESSENTIAL
REMOVE YOUR HATS
WEAR A SHIRT & TROUSERS
KEEP YOUR PLACE CLEAN
THIS IS YOUR HOME



PALL MALL
AVALON
Old Gold
Raleigh
Chesterfield
A Light Smoke

MEAL
CORN
WHEAT
RICE
BEANS
CANNED
FRUIT
VEGETABLES

WITCH
HAZEL
EXTRACT

Butter
COUNTY

COLGATE
TOILET
PASTE

COLGATE
TOILET
PASTE

COLGATE
TOILET
PASTE

COLGATE
TOILET
PASTE

STAR
72-25
Injector

WITCH
HAZEL
EXTRACT

Handwritten notes and labels on boxes and papers stacked on the right side of the counter.

