

41st Special Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
7/26	-	Hollandia	Beaufort	(Activated in ice filed with 15 (Sp) 1st Sec and 19 Sp 1st Sec
8/29	-	Hollandia New Base Sum	Comserv 7th flt see 260558 Doc.	present location & assignment

Formed in field at Hollandia from 15th (Sp) 1st Sec. and the 19th (Sp) 1st Sec. 41st TB (Sp)

- 2-7-45 -- 41st (SP) established from C.B. Special Detachment TRIM composed of $\frac{2}{3}$ of 15th (Sp) and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the 19th (Sp). Comserv 7th flt will assign a complement to the 41st (Sp) and reduce the complement of the 15th (Sp) and 19th (Sp) accordingly. (CNO conf. ltr Op30-2CK14-rc over (SO)P15-5 over Doc. 151123 over Ser. 035830 to Comserv 7th flt dtd 23 Jan '45).
- 2-13-45 - 1 Dec '44 report of the 15th (Sp) 1st Sec. and the 19th (Sp) 1st Sec. (Combined report) - Total of 35 off. and 994 men on board both units. The two units were merged on 26 Nov '44 for operational and administrative purposes under the title. USNGB (Special) Detachment, TRIM.
- 4-24-45 - 1 Mar '45 report of (Sp) Detach TRIM (15th (Sp) Sec 1 and 19th (Sp) Sec 1) - Draft of 65 men expected to arrive immediately after 1 Mar '45. End by Comserv 7th flt states that since date of report, the two sections of this (Sp) Detach have been combined to form the 41st (Sp).
- 5-29-45 - 1 May '45 report of the 41st (Sp) - located at Hollandia. the 41st (Sp) was formed 1 Apr '45 consisting of the 15th (Sp), Sec. 1 & the 19th (Sp), Sec. 1.
- 6-25-45 - 1 Jun '45 report of the 41st (Sp) - located at Hollandia.
- 7-23-45 - 1 Jul '45 report of the 41st (Sp) - located at Hollandia.
- 8-24-45 - 1 Aug '45 report of the 41st (Sp) - located at Hollandia. 28 men transf'd for leave and reassignment. On 15 Jul, 343 men were transf'd to U.S. for leave. On 23 Jul, 239 men were rec'd aboard from the former base co #5.
- 10-1-45 - 1 Sept '45 report of 41st (Sp) - no info as to location.

Location - Hollandia

41st CB (Sp)

- 11-19-45 - Comservpac is requesting the inactivation of 41st(Sp). Inform Comservpac when inactivation is completed. (Comservpac ltr ser 5721 dtd 5 Nov'45 to Comphilesefran).
- 11-23-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 41st(Sp) - location not stated. This report states that the 41st(Sp) was inactivated as of 31 Oct'45. 461 men transferred to U.S. for leave & reassignment. 93 men transferred for discharge. 131 men transferred to Comservpac for further assignment.
- 12-3-45 - 41st(Sp) was inactivated(date not given). (Comservpac restr ltr-61 undtd to BuPers).

INACTIVATED

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFF.</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Mar'45	32	963	MoR
1 Apr'45	30	1018	BNP625 & R
1 May'45	27	1011	BNP625 & MoR
1 Jun'45		1008	BNP625
1 Jul'45	28	994	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45	27	844	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		805	BNP625

41ST SPECIAL BATTALION

Formed at Hollandia, New Guinea, on Nov. 26, 1944, the 41st Special was created by the merger of one half of the 15th Special and one half of the 19th Special under the title of USNCB Special Detachment TRIM. On April 1, 1945 the unit was redesignated as the 41st Special. On July 15 a detachment of 343 men were transferred to the States for leave and reassignment. Eight days later a group of 239 men were received aboard from Base Company Five. The outfit was located at Hollandia when the Nips surrendered.

formed and deactivated in the field, the Forty-first Special Naval Construction Battalion may rightly be called "The Battalion Which Never Saw Home." Commissioned on 1 April 1945 at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, the 41st was made up of the personnel of the first sections of the 15th and 19th Special NCB's and its early history is really that of those two units.

The 15th special, after training at Camp Peary, Va., was commissioned 18 July 1943. Ordered to Camp Parks, Calif., the battalion was there split into two sections. Section One, under Lt. Cdr. G.J. McMullen CSC(3) USNR, went to Camp Rousseau at Port Moresby where during the latter part of October, 1943, the unit's stevedore gangs put into practice the knowledge they had gained on the training ship at Camp Peary, at the same time winning commendation from the Port Director for work well done and lessons well learned.

November 14 found 93 men and three officers embarking aboard the S.S. Paul Revere for overseas duty. Six days later the balance of Section One boarded the M.S. Brastagi and sailed for the Southwest Pacific.

The trans-Pacific voyages were accomplished without incident until Ata Island of the Tongas group was sighted. Both vessels arrived at Gladstone, Australia, in early December, from there to be conveyed to Townsville. After 33 days in the harbor at Townsville both ships sailed in convoy for Milne Bay, Papua, New Guinea, where during the first week of February, 1944, the 15th Special CB, Section One, established quarters ashore, thereby becoming the first stevedore battalion to arrive at what was then Admiral Kinkaid's and General MacArthur's furthest advanced base in the war against Japanese aggression.

While still living aboard the Revere and Brastagi 15th stevedores began working ships in the harbor, relieving NSD personnel who had been performing stevedore duties until then. During the battalion's 100 days at Milne Bay over 58,000 tons of ammunition, provisions, supplies and equipment of all types were moved by the 15th Special CB stevedores. Among the ships worked were several former Chinese river boats, Kaiser Wilhelm's World War I yacht "Merkur", numerous tankers, a large dry dock, transports, landing craft and naval auxiliaries.

May 4 the battalion was aboard the Francisco M. Quinones and at sea once more as part of the "Cub Ten" base unit and the 24th Construction Regiment, bound for Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea. After stops at Gro and Lingsak Bays, the Quinones and her 28 convoy sister-ships "leap-frogged" Jap-held Wewak, Madang, and neighboring areas to arrive at Humboldt Bay on June 5.

While some gangs commenced stevedoring activities immediately, others were occupied with the task of clearing wire entanglements, filling in slit trenches and fox holes left by the Japs on "Pancake Hill", the battalion's temporary campsite. Highlights of those early days at Hollandia were the departure of the Leyte-Samar invasion supply fleet and the "eruption" of a former Jap ammunition dump close by the Pancake Hill camp.

Both Admiral Kinkaid's and General MacArthur's headquarters were at Hollandia at this time and the work of supplying the Philippines and related operations was directed from there. Stevedores of the 15th Special NCB played a vital part in maintaining a steady flow of material to those advanced operational fronts.

Upon his detachment from command of Cub Ten, Capt. Edward C. Holden, Jr., D-K USNR, despatched a letter giving "commendation of the 15th Special Battalion for meritorious service" to Lt. Cdr. McMullen. "I wish to convey to you, each and every officer and man in your command, my congratulations and commendation on the excellent manner in which the 15th Special Battalion has functioned while a part of Cub Ten and of Naval Base 3115. You have established for all time a record of achievement in the discharge of vessels based on tonnage and man-hours," the letter said in part.

In mid-August 1962785 the battalion was ready to move into new quarters, built

y the 113th MCB on a mountainside overlooking Hollandia Valley and Challenger Cove. By this time the early confusion and excitement had subsided. The stevedores settled into a steady routine of maintaining supply lines and meeting operational deadlines. Meanwhile a second Navy dock was completed in the cove.

As the fighting "up above" got further and further ahead of schedule tonnage demands on the 15th Special increased in proportion. Help was needed if tonnage demands were to be met. The First Section of the 19th Special was ordered to Hollandia from their base at Finschhafen in the Australian Mandate.

The 19th Special Battalion, like the 15 Special a "mixed" outfit of negro and white personnel, was commissioned 27 November 1943 after receiving special stevedore training at Camp Peary, Va. Christmas Day found the 19th enroute to Camp Thomas, Davisville, R.I. Ten days later the battalion sailed southward from Narragansett Bay aboard the Navy Transport U.S. Cape Bon. Joining convoy at New York, the Cape Bon continued southward to the Panama Canal via Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba.

The journey through the canal and across the Pacific was without incident beyond the excitement of a mid-ocean landfall at Pitcairn Island and a nerve-tensing four hour period of engine failure in the middle of the Coral Sea. Milne Bay was reached on 23 February 1944. The 19th Special Battalion and the Cape Bon, after a week in Milne Bay, sailed for Finschhafen via Buna. Arriving in Langemak Bay 6 March 1944, the 19th was the first stevedore battalion at that base and, so far as can be established, the second on New Guinea.

Wreathed from the Japs only a few months before, Navy 722 and Base "F", as the Army installations in the Finschhafen area were known, was still deep-in-aud and "organized confusion". A temporary tent camp was raised on land cleared for NSD buildings.

Stevedoring activities commenced immediately while work details hacked out a camp area from the jungle on the south shore of Langemak Bay. On 10 June 1944, shortly after the battalion moved into its "permanent" camp (built by 19th personnel without delaying any stevedore activities) the battalion was split into two sections. Section Two under Lt. Cmdr. Hermann T. Anderson (CEC) USNR, until then Executive Officer of the 19th, was detached for duty at Woendi Island and eventually to participate in the Leyte-Samar operations.

Section One remained under the command of Lt. Cmdr. (Now Cmdr.) Robert Arthur D-M USNR, who had been Officer-in-Charge of the entire battalion until that time.

During March, April and May of 1944 the 19th Special Battalion moved between 15,000 and 20,000 tons of cargo monthly, thereby setting an all-time record in the New Guinea theater of operations.

Helping supply Seventh Fleet units in the New Guinea-New Britain waters and Army groups of the Huon Peninsula-Saidor sectors of New Guinea was the task of Section One of the 19th. Working both Navy and Army ships the unit earned commendation from Brig. Gen. Frayne Baker, commander of Base "F". In a letter to the commander of Navy 722, which was directed by the Commander Service Force, Seventh Fleet, to be placed in the jackets of all personnel of the unit, Gen. Baker said,

"I would like to commend the Commanding Officer of the 19th Spec. CB, his officers and his men for their cooperation, effort and work while at this base.....Officers and men established a pattern of productive efficiency which provided a comparable target for our own port battalions."

On 25 November 1944 the 19th's First Section embarked aboard the S.S. John Cabot and two LCI's for Hollandia, where it joined the 15th Special's Section One to form "Stevedore Detachment (Trim)".

Lt. (now Lt. Cmdr) J.J. Reggie, Jr. (CEC) USNR was named Officer-in-Charge, both Lt. Cmdr. McMullen of the 15th and Lt. Cmdr. Arthur of the 19th having received change of duty orders shortly before that time.

ntil the former 19th Special personnel could construct quarters for themselves on an adjoining mountainside, they doubled up with the 15th group in the Mt. Jarrecoh camp.

Landing craft of all descriptions, "C" type cargo ships, tankers, FS and APC ships, "Liberties" and other craft were worked by the 41st Spec. CB, ~~and~~ as the Stevedore Detachment (Trim) was designated after 1 April.

From December 1944 through August 1945 the combined units handled 153,000 tons of cargo often in operations involving transfer of material from ship to lighter and then to shore and other ^{by} time-consuming methods.

The shipping bottleneck at Hollandia was broken by the combined efforts of the 41st Special's personnel, and the "turn-around" period of war shipping shortened there upon war's end. That their work was well-done is attested in a letter, copies of which Commander of Service Forces, Seventh Fleet, ordered filed in each man's service jacket. The letter, from Bernard H. Shelton, Field Representative of the War Shipping Administration for the South and Southwest Pacific Areas, to Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, commends the men of the 41st Special Battalion and other units attached to Navy 3115 for "the whole-hearted cooperation given the United States War Shipping Administration."

ever under fire, but seldom resting, the officers and men of the 41st Special NCB performed a job which perhaps does not win medals, but does help win wars.

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ITINERARY OF THE 41ST (SPECIAL) CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

- 26 Nov 1944 - This battalion formed in the field from C. B. Special Detachment TRIM composed of one-half of 15th Special and one-half 19th Special. These two units merged on this date for operational and administrative purposes under title USNCB (Special) Detachment TRIM. Located Hollandia.
- 1 Apr 1945 - Name changed to 41st Special U. S. Naval Construction Battalion. Composed of 15th (Special) Sec. 1 and 19th (Special) Sec. 1.
- 15 Jul 1945 - 343 men transferred to U. S. for leave and reassignment.
- 23 Jul 1945 - 239 men received aboard from former Base Co. 5.
- 2 Oct 1945 - Located Hollandia.

NOTE: This itinerary has been authenticated by the Officer-in-Charge of the 41st (Sp) Construction Battalion.

2 October 1945.

Chronology of Naval Construction Battalion 41 (Special)

- 26 Nov 44 At Hollandia, New Guinea, the 15th Special Naval Construction Battalion (First Section) and the 19th Special Naval Construction Battalion (First Section) were merged for operational and administrative purposes under the title United States Naval Construction Battalion (Special) Detachment Trim.
- 23 Jan 45 Detachment Trim was redesignated Naval Construction Battalion 41 (Special).
- 1 Apr 45 The 41st Special Battalion held a redesignation ceremony at Hollandia.
- 15 Jul 45 343 men from the battalion were transferred to the United States for leave and reassignment.
- 23 Jul 45 239 men were received by the battalion from former Base Company 5.
- 31 Oct 45 Naval Construction Battalion 41 (Special) was inactivated at Hollandia, New Guinea.



**NO
LOGO
AVAILABLE**

