Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 2

Historical Information

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

NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND

MCB TWO

AT CUBI POINT

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

The story of USN Mobile Construction Two at Cubi Point begins in the Spring of 1952. The Battalion sailed from Japan in February and upon reaching San Francisco split up—some went on leave immediately, others went to Port Hueneme to be discharged or take leave at a later date.

A large proportion of the Battalion personnel were reservists called back to duty as a result of the Korean emergency, and now their time had run out. New men began to arrive from the schools to fill the gaps left by the departed "Old Hands" and the Battalion took on a new look.

By Spring, MCB Two was up to strength again and reorganization was under way. The seasoned veterans of the Atsugi Project were the core around which the Battalion was rebuilt. CDR McFarland, who had led the unit at Atsugi, was relieved as Commanding Officer in March. CDR Charles C. Compton was his replacement.

Reorganization of the Battalion continued for two and a half months. The time was divided between Seabee training in the classrooms of NavScon at Port Hueneme and military training with the Marines at Camp Pendleton.

Meanwhile, an advance party, designated Detachment Two, was sent to the Philippines for survey work at the site of the Battalion's new job. The detachment returned to Port Hueneme prior to the Battalion's departure.

Back at Port Hueneme another detachment was being formed for a project on Midway Island. Detachment Able, under the command of LCDR Wade O. Crawford, sailed for Midway on June 2, 1952. The four officers and 150 men of Detachment Able

Arrival at Cubi Point

caught up with the main Battalion in the Philippines.

The remaining 12 officers and 464 men of MCB Two sailed for the Philippines aboard the USS MENARD APA 201 on June 9. The crossing was pleasant and the Battalion arrived at Subic Bay on the 29th.

Subic Bay is large and well protected, surrounded by forrested mountains. Most of the area is a Naval Reservation leased by the United States from the Philippine Government. On the south side of the bay, adjacent to the existing Naval Station is a hilly peninsula called Cubi Point. This was to be the new home of MCB Two, in addition to MCB's Three and Five which were there already. The job of the Battalions was to construct a new Naval Air Facility.

The Battalion debarked in the rain and was transported by trucks to Cubi Point. Tents had already been erected. They were floored with plywood and raised high above the ground. No time was lost in changing from dungarees to traditional Seabee greens and all hands made for the recreational building where a beer party, sponsored by MCB's Three and Five, was in progress.

The rainy season, which was well underway when MCB Two arrived, continued through September and was a new experience for most of the Battalion. They soon learned to live with it, however, and it became a common sight to see men swathed in rubberized parkas and trousers sloshing about in the mud and rain.

Soon after its arrival the Battalion was assigned its first job—the removal of the top ninety feet of Mt. Maritan, a rock mountain which was in the flight approach zone of the future airfield. The men began blasting the rock with great enthusiasm—even during the continuous rain.

The Battalion's second major project was the construction of a temporary tank farm for the storage of fuel oil, diesel oil, aviation gas and automotive gas. The project included the construction of thirteen 10,000 barrel steel tanks, a pipeline from the dock, booster pumping facilities and service rack. The site of the tank farm was in an existing swamp which necessitated the placing of about 750,000 cubic yards of truck hauled fill. MCB Two drivers worked three shifts a day for many months to complete the job.

The Battalion was next assigned its biggest project —the construction of the Ammunition Storage Facility. Due to the location of the Facility (deep in the jungle and four miles from the main camp area) a second living area had to be built for the men working on the project. An access road was to be built, but in the meantime all supplies, equipment and liberty-bound Seabees had to be transported across the bay in boats. Except on Sundays when they could get out to Camayan Point to swim, take pictures and

Works goes ahead at the tank farm

Inspection in the Philippines

meet friends, the men of MCB Two were pretty well isolated.

The Battalion was strengthened in August by the addition of old comrades from CBD 1802 and CBD 1803. With the men, the Battalion inherited the tasks of the detachments—the topographic survey of the Ammunition Storage Area and a preliminary road survey through the jungle to Camayan Point. These surveys were accomplished with the original personnel of CBD 1802.

The Battalion experienced its first typhoon late in October. The night was spent in the shop area to escape the hazards of falling limbs and flying debris. The shops were long on protection, but short on sleeping facilities. The lucky ones slept on the back seats of busses, others in storage bins and on work benches, and some on the floor.

Shortly after the second typhoon, the Battalion spent its first Christmas in the Philippines. To the men from the Northern states Christmas without snow seemed strange indeed.

While the main Battalion was busy at Cubi Point, Detachment Able was equally busy at Midway Island. The airstrip was resurfaced, old buildings were renovated and new ones constructed. On nearby Eastern Island the detachment erected a communications building.

Early in January, 1953, Commander Crawford and his men left Midway bound for the Philippines, first stopping off at Honolulu for a wonderful week-long liberty. Detachment Able arrived at Cubi late in January and were welcomed with a Battalion beer bust.

CDR Compton was relieved by LCDR L. W. Madsen in March. Everyone in the Battalion was sorry to see the popular commander go, but wished him well in his new Stateside assignment.

The month after LCDR Madsen assumed command the first plane landed on the newly paved airstrip, bringing Adm. Radford, CINCPACFLT, for an inspection of the various projects. The Admiral expressed great satisfaction with the progress made by the Seabees at Cubi Point.

The date of the long awaited Hong Kong trip arrived. The men of MCB Two were in high spirits

Ammunition Storage project

MCB TWO

as they boarded the ship that was to take them to the British Crown Colony. They arrived at Hong Kong on Monday and spent three glorious days touring, shopping, taking pictures, and admiring the slit skirts.

The rainy season was not far off. The men began to discuss the return to the States and thirty days leave. The sailing was finally set for June 24, and amid the cleaning, packing, and storing of equipment the time passed rapidly. The great day arrived and the Battalion boarded the USNS GENERAL HASE for the voyage home.

The Battalion returned to Port Hueneme after leave and settled down to six weeks of military training. Many men had returned to civilian life and the ranks were filled with new men from the schools.

Late in September the men of MCB Two again sailed for the Philippines and Cubi Point. At the end of the voyage they were met by their new Commanding Officer, CDR V. G. Stevens.

October was a month of intense activity. A detachment was sent to Sangley Point to complete the construction of twenty dependent housing units. In addition, the Battalion took on the formidable job of building a road to Camyan Point. Using the preliminary surveys made by CBD 1802, the surveyors ran a location survey. Parties were started from both Cubi Point and Camayan Point and worked toward a mid-point along the proposed road.

Meanwhile, the Battalion continued to work on the tank farm, ammunition storage area and ammunition wharf. Additional projects were assigned. A water supply system, running from the Naval Station at Subic Bay, had to be built. The system included two 750,000 gallon concrete reservoirs and an additional water system at Cubi Point with two 500,000 gallon concrete reservoirs.

BATTALION HISTORY

SECOND U.S. Construction Battalion

The SECOND Battalion was commissioned on 3 April 1942 at Camp Allen, Norfolk, VA. It was divided into the FOURTH and FIFTH Detachment. The FOURTH Detachment embarked at Norfolk and arrived at Upola, in the Samoan Islands, in May 1942. One unit of the Detachment was assigned to the FIFTH Marine Defense Battalion on Funafuti in April 1943. In July, the rest of the FOURTH Detachment moved to Tutila, also in the Samoan group. The unit that was sent to Funafuti rejoined the Fourth Detachment in January 1944.

The second half of the SECOND Battalion, known as the FIFTH Detachment, embarked from San Diego, CA and arrived at Tutila late in April 1942. Two months later, this unit moved to Wallis Island, where they remained for a year, then rejoined the rest of the SECOND Battalion at Tutila.

The entire manpower of the SECOND U.S. Construction Battalion ended their services without working or traveling as a complete unit. The Battalion, less than 116 men, arrived in San Francisco on 7 March 1944 to a tumultuous welcome as one of the first homecoming Seabee battalions. After this, the Seabees were transported to Camp Parks, Pleasonton, CA. The remaining men arrived at Camp Parks a month later.

Original plans called for appropriate leaves for the men, their reorganization, and re outfitting for another tour overseas. However, requirements for manpower by other outgoing battalions led to the decision to inactivate the SECOND U.S. Construction Battalion in June 1944.

U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TWO

Mobile Construction Battalion TWO, the first battalion to be commissioned (15 SEP 1950) after the start of the Korean War, deployed to Japan on October 1950. Its major effort was the construction of the U.S. Naval Air Station Atsugi to support operations in Korea. Detachments of the NMCB TWO built and repaired landing strips, taxiways, and parking aprons for the First Marine Air Wing operations at Pohang, Korea, and at Bofu, Japan, and ammunition storage facilities at Port Hueneme in February 1952.

After leave and refresher training, NMCB TWO was deployed to Cubi Point in the Philippine Islands for the deployment of the new Naval Air Station. They continued to work at Cubi Point for the next several years with annual rotation back to Port Hueneme. MCB TWO was decommissioned in August 1956.

Reserve Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TWO

RNMCB TWO was established on 1 April 1962 under the command of CDR Paul F. Dreyer, CEC, USNR-R. Seabee divisions assigned to form the Battalion were:

12-1	Treasure Island, CA	12-14	San Jose, CA
12-2	Treasure Island, CA	12-15	Vallejo, CA
12-3	Hayward, CA	12-16	Santa Cruz, CA
12-4	Alameda, CA	12-18	Concord, CA
12-10	San Rafael, CA	12-19	San Mateo, CA
12-11	Hunters Point, CA		

Reserve Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TWO was reorganized in July 1968 to include Seabee divisions from RNMCB TWENTY-EIGHT. RNMCB TWENTY-EIGHT was transferred to the Eight Naval District and headquartered in Texas.

Until December 1973, the Battalion drilled at its permanent site at Naval Air Station, Alameda, CA. In December 1973, the drill site was relocated to Naval Support Activity, Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA. The eleven detachment drilling sites were at Naval Reserve Centers located in the following cities:

0102	Fresno, CA*	0702	Monterey, CA*
0202	Salt Lake City, UT*	0802	Ogden, UT*
0302	Hunters Pt., S. F., CA	0902	Reno, NV*
0402	Stockton, CA*	1002	Sacramento, CA*

0502	Vallejo, CA	1102	San Jose, CA
0602	Alameda, CA		

* Formerly RNMCB TWENTY-EIGHT

In April 1976, RNMCB TWO requested, via the chain of command, that the battalion be consolidated into fewer detachments to improve communications and command management. The consolidation was approved by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and became effective 1 November 1976. After consolidation, the detachments are as follows:

0102	Fresno, CA	0502	Reno, NV
0202	Salt Lake City, UT	0602	San Jose, CA
0302	Treasure Island, S. F., CA	0702	Pacific Grove, CA
0402	Sacramento, CA	0802	Ogden, UT

The following table gives a summary of the training history of RNMCB TWO, RNMCB TWENTY-EIGHT, and the merged battalion, RNMCB TWO.

Record of dual Battalion's ACDUTRA:

February 1963: Organizational evaluation as unit operating under actual field conditions at CBC, Port Hueneme, CA.
RNMCB 2: CO: CDR P. F. DREYER XO: LCDR R. M. HAMILTON
RNMCB 28: CO: CDR W. M. SAMRZICH XO: LCDR W. J. MELLISH

April 1964: Evaluation of the Battalion's military readiness covering individual, team, and unit combat training including an overnight tactical exercise at MCB, Camp Pendleton, CA.
RNMCB 2: CO: CDR P. F. DREYER XO: LCDR R. M. HAMILTON
RNMCB 28: CO: CDR W. M. SAMRZICH XO: LCDR W. J. MELLISH

February 1965: Operational construction training including erection of an advanced base tent camp. Evaluation of the Battalion's capability to function as a construction unit at CBC Port Hueneme, CA.
RNMCB 2: CO: CDR R. M. HAMILTON XO: LCDR J. W. MURRAY
RNMCB 28: CO: CDR W. M. SAMRZICH XO: CDR A. H. TOUSLEY

February 1966: Amphibious training and exercise in ship-to-shore operations and battalion movement at PhibBase, Coronado, CA
RNMCB 2: CO: CDR R. M. HAMILTON XO: LCDR J. W. MURRAY
RNMCB 28: CO: CDR W. J. MELLISH XO: LCDR S. S. SARKISIAN

March 1967: Individual combat, guerrilla and special weapons training. Re-evaluation of the Battalion's military readiness at MCB, Camp Pendleton. CA.
RNMCB 2: CO: CDR R. M. HAMILTON XO: CDR J. A. KIRKLAND
RNMCB 28: CO: CDR W. J. MELLISH XO: LCDR J. FISHER

February 1968: (RNMCB 2) Field training in the specialized operational construction crew and individual skills required of active duty battalion at CBC, Gulfport, MS.
(RNMCB 28) Combat zone construction military experience and construction projects at NAD, Hawthorne, NV.
RNMCB 2: CO: CDR J. A. KIRKLAND XO: LCDR J. MADISON
RNMCB 28: CO: CDR W. J. MELLISH XO: LCDR R. M. PETERSON

Record of RNMCB 2's ACDUTRA:

February 1969: Intensified and expanded training and instruction specialized crew and individual skills and project construction at CBC, Gulfport, MS.
CO: CDR J. A. KIRKLAND XO: LCDR J. WATKINS

March 1970: Instruction in military skills with a concentration of instruction on small unit leadership and firing capability at MCB, Camp Pendleton, CA.
CO: CDR R. M. PETERSON XO: LCDR R. W. MUIT

February 1972: Operational and military training at CBC, Gulfport, MS.
CO: CDR J. B. STOUTAMORE XO: LCDR D. W. MOORE

February 1973: Military training and defensive tactics at CBC, Gulfport, MS.
CO: CDR J. B. STOUTAMORE XO: LCDR D. W. MOORE

February 1974: Military instruction in individual and crew served weapons, small arms qualifications, small unit defensive tactics, and leadership, and a Battalion tactical march and night defensive exercise at MCB, Camp Pendleton, CA.
CO: CDR R. L. WARNICK XO: LCDR D. W. MOORE

January 1975: Operational construction projects and individual and crew technical training.
CO: CDR R. L. WARNICK XO: LCDR D. W. MOORE

April 1976: Technical training, operational construction projects and crew served weapon training at CBC, Port Hueneme, CA.
CO: CDR J. R. COLLINS XO: LCDR D. W. MOORE

April 1977: Advanced military training concentrating on small unit leadership and including a CPX and a three day FEX at MCB at Camp Pendleton, CA.
CO: CDR J. R. COLLINS XO: LCDR J. M. PICKRELL

April 1978: Operational construction projects, individual and crew technical training, and an air detachment (AIR DET) exercise at CBC, Port Hueneme, CA.
CO: CDR D. J. SIFFERMAN XO: LCDR T. L. BRANCH

1979: Construction Project for MCB Camp Pendleton and heavy weapons training, for select personnel at Camp Pendleton, CA.
CO: CDR D. J. SIFFERMAN XO: LCDR T. L. BRANCH

1980: Classroom and on the job training projects at CBC, Gulfport, MS.
CO: CDR R. J. WALTERS XO: CDR (SEL) T. L. BRANCH

1981: Nine, two-week, DET's deployed from 02 JAN 1981 through 09 MAY 1981, off loading, erecting, maintaining, disassembling, repack and reloading, the Fleet Hospital Test Module at the deployment site at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, CA.
CO: CDR R. J. WALTERS XO: LCDR J. T. SLAUGHTER

1982: Exercise the operational readiness of the Battalion under a simulated tactical situation (FEX), using crew served weapons and developing communications skills at Camp Pendleton, CA.
CO: CDR J. H. PICKRELL XO: LCDR J. T. SLAUGHTER

1983: Exercise and job training projects conducted in the desert at Camp Wilson at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twenty-Nine Palms, CA.
CO: CDR T. L. MULINIX XO: LCDR McAULEY

1984: Training and schooling at CBC, Gulfport, MS.
CO: CDR T. L. MULINIX XO: LCDR FURAKAWA

1985:	AIR DET exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twenty-Nine Palms, CA. CO: CDR T. L. BRANCH XO: LCDR G. MOIR
1986:	TACON Exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twenty-Nine Palms, CA. CO: CDR CDR T. L. BRANCH XO: LCDR G. MOIR
1987:	CBC, Port Hueneme, CA. CO: CDR: CDR DELWICHE XO: LCDR STARR
1988:	Operation Green Stinger at Hunter Ligget, Alameda, CA. CO: CDR CDR DELWICHE XO: LCDR J. WONG
1989:	CBC, Port Hueneme, CA CO: CDR CDR J. VICKERMAN XO: LCDR J. WONG
March 1990:	Operation Wooden Fist at CBC, Port Hueneme, CA. CO: CDR J. VICKERMAN and CDR J. NAGASHIMA XO: LCDR J. WONG and LCDR T. ORTEL
March 1991:	Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twenty-Nine Palms, CA. CO: CDR J. NAGASHIMA XO: LCDR T. ORTEL

Record of NMCB 2's ACDUTRA:

March 1992:	Operation Sea Dragon at CBC, Port Hueneme, CA. CO: CAPT J. NAGASHIMA XO: LCDR T. ORTEL

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The FIFTH Naval Construction Regiment (NCR) which provides operational control of NMCB-2 and NMCB-18, is scheduled for decommissioning in August 1992. At that time, NMCB-2 will be under the operational control of FIRST NCR. Before October 1993, NMCB-2 is also scheduled for decommissioning. Detachments will be assigned to NMCB-17, with the exception of 0302 and 0602. A new CBMU unit is scheduled to be commissioned in the coming months, with personnel from 0302 and 0602 being assigned before October 1993.

The coming year will be a period of transition for the men of NMCB-2, and once again the Battalion will be placed in the history books until needed again. The spirit of the Battalion will live on in the memory of those who have served under its command and in those blessed with the knowledge of its history of proud service when called into action.

Smooth sailing and fair winds to the men of NMCB-2, in the coming year and beyond, as we look to the future and face the challenges of a changing Navy and NCF. Many thanks to the dependents and loved ones who have given endless support to the current and past members of the Battalion.

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