

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7

*Historical
Information*



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



Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7 Command History

The history of NMCB SEVEN is indeed quite interesting. It is a story that begins at the very origin of the U.S. Navy "Seabee". The history of the Seabees dates back to the beginning of America's involvement in World War II when Rear Admiral Ben Moreell, then Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks was authorized to organize Construction Battalions in support of the long march to Tokyo and Berlin.

The name, "Seabee" evolved from the pronunciation of the initials "CB" for Construction Battalion. United States Naval Construction Battalion (NCB) SEVEN, one of the original ten battalions authorized, was commissioned on June 17, 1942 at the Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Allen, Norfolk, Virginia, under the command of Commander Julius L. Piland, Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve.

During World War II, SEVEN saw deployments to Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides; Iroquois Point, Hawaii; Marianas Islands and Okinawa, Japan, during which the battalion constructed a fighter field, bomber fields, numerous docks and piers, two hospitals, communications towers, military camps, bridges, warehouses, ammunition magazines and island infrastructure support for the advancing U. S. Marine forces.

From 11 August 1942 - 20 November 1943, at Espiritu Santo, the Battalion constructed a fighter field, bomber fields, 12 docks, two hospitals, 19 communications towers, 42 miles of road, eight camps for military units, two bridges, 71 warehouses and 31 ammunition magazines. SEVEN was decommissioned for the first time on 30 October 1945 in Okinawa.

On August 22, 1951, NMCB SEVEN was commissioned for a second time at the U. S. Naval Yards and Docks Supply Depot in Davisville, Rhode Island, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Robert F. Smart, Civil Engineer Corps, U.S. Naval Reserve.

During the Korean War, NMCB SEVEN had two deployments to Port Lyautey, French Morocco (Oct. 1951 to March 1952 and Jan. to June 1953), and one deployment to Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba (May to Oct. 1952). At Port Lyautey, SEVEN's main construction projects involved a Naval Air Station, a communications station, and an ordnance facility. At Guantanamo Bay the battalion constructed barracks, jet-fuel tanks, and a perimeter security road. Like other Atlantic Fleet Seabee battalions, NMCB SEVEN never deployed to the Pacific Ocean area during the Korean War era. The five Atlantic Seabee battalions were all deployed to U.S. naval bases at various locations in the Caribbean; at Argentia, Newfoundland; and at Port Lyautey.

From May until December 1954, the battalion returned to Port Lyautey and worked on roads, a ready-issue magazine, drainage for a tank farm, barracks construction and rehabilitation, repairs and maintenance of quarters, and Seabee camp rehabilitation. From February 1955 to October 1955, at Argentia, Newfoundland, the battalion

constructed 45 units of a Department of Defense housing project, a civilian dormitory, and an extension to an airfield runway.

From February through August of 1956, the battalion was employed at Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. They worked on a road construction project, constructed two buildings, and rehabilitated four buildings.

In 1957, a battalion detachment worked on construction at a naval facility at Barbados, British West Indies.

From October 1957 until August 1959, MCB Seven set a record by remaining deployed to three isolated islands in the West Indies, completing single-handedly the largest construction project undertaken by a peacetime Atlantic Fleet construction battalion. This project, consisting of two complete Coast Guard LORAN Stations stands today as but one testimony to the past accomplishments of NMCB SEVEN. After returning to her homeport in Davisville, Rhode Island, in September 1959, SEVEN was deployed to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

From January through October 1960, the battalion worked on a replacement housing project, security fencing, a pier extension, pipelines, and roads. Returning from Puerto Rico after a successful deployment, SEVEN was deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, leaving a small detachment at Roosevelt Roads to set up an asphalt plant and repair roads.

In 1961, the battalion was ordered to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in support of the base's ground defense force. In addition to the defense mission, NMCB SEVEN, together with her sister battalion NMCB FOUR, constructed more than 20 miles of perimeter roads and other base facilities in record time. They also constructed 20 structures for enlisted men and a two building community center as well as making improvements to the Seabee camp.

From January through July 1962, NMCB SEVEN was in Rota, Spain. The battalion completed an 86 man barracks, shops and office buildings for Navy Air Squadrons. SEVEN also worked on roads, erosion control, and soil stabilization.

From October 1962 through July 1963, NMCB SEVEN was again employed at Guantanamo Bay Cuba on Project Might. This project improved the defenses of the Guantanamo Naval Base during the missile crisis.

At Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico from November 1963 through April 1964, the battalion replaced the fender system on station piers and repaved roads. A detachment at the Ammunition Depot, Vieques Island, built roads, converted a warehouse into a barracks, and rehabilitated ammunition magazines. In addition, a detachment at the Underwater Demolition Team training Facility at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, SEVEN completed numerous rehabilitation and repair projects.

From October 1964 until April 1965, NMCB SEVEN worked at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

again. They constructed barracks for contractor personnel, rehabilitated a boat shed, constructed a recreation building at Leeward Point, repaired a road to the VHF/UHF radio station, replaced a sanitary sewer system, constructed a new recreation building, and rehabilitated several buildings in the Seabee camp. From July through November of 1965, the battalion was employed at Rota, Spain. NMCB SEVEN worked on the construction of 96 prefabricated homes for dependent housing for the U.S. Naval Station, Rota. The project also included streets, sanitary systems, water and utilities.

For its outstanding performance, NMCB SEVEN was selected “Best of Type” in the Atlantic Fleet and awarded the Battle Efficiency “E” for fiscal year 1965.

By 1966, NMCB SEVEN was again building and fighting, this time in the Republic of South Vietnam. From April through December 1966, the battalion headquarters was at Hue-Phu Bai, Vietnam. The battalion constructed cantonments for U.S. marine units, an airstrip and a causeway. They also built 44,000 cubic feet of cold storage space, towers and an electronic building for an Army communications unit, and portions of the Dong Ha combat base.

From June 1967 to January 1968, the battalion headquarters was located at camp Adenir, Danang East, Vietnam. The battalion worked primarily for the U.S. Naval Support Activity. This work included the Danang Recreation Center, public work complex, small-craft repair facility, covered storage facilities, and a station hospital. SEVEN also worked on roads, technical stores buildings, generator converter sheds and runway lighting.

From May 1968 through April 1969, the battalion was headquartered at Camp Barnes, Dong Ha Combat base, Vietnam. The battalion upgraded and rebuilt roads and bridges, constructed an ammunition supply point, replaced a pontoon bridge with a permanent bridge, built a fuel tank farm at Quang Tn and constructed housing for Marine and Army units.

From October 1969 through June 1970, the battalion headquarters was at Camp Shields, Chu Lai Combat Base, Vietnam. The battalion was assigned a top priority construction project. Nearly one-third of SEVEN’s men were sent to Landing Zone Baldy and Fire Support Base Ross, where they built more than 350 wood frame structures, including Southeast Asia huts, mess halls, clubs, showers and sanitation facilities. At other locations, SEVEN built gun pads, extended and resurfaced runways, erected watchtowers and wunder arch hangars and laid steel matting.

On 31 August 1970, NMCB SEVEN was again decommissioned, this time at Davisville, Rhode Island. U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion SEVEN (‘The Magnificent SEVEN’) was commissioned for a third time on August 1, 1985 onboard Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport, Mississippi, under the command of CDR C. David Binning, Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Navy.

The commissioning marked the first time in over 17 years that a new construction battalion had been brought on line. After commissioning, SEVEN began an intensive

homeport training program. Upon completion of that homeport period in December 1985, SEVEN made preparations for their first deployment as a newly commissioned battalion. SEVEN's main body deployed to Naval Station Rota Spain and six details to Bermuda, Greece, Crete, Scotland, Italy and Germany.

SEVEN returned to Gulfport for a very intensive four-month training program, adding Delta Company and the Air Detachment to its organization. Also in 1986, NMCB SEVEN's main body took on two major projects in Guam. A LORAN "C" Station was completed on time for the Coast Guard to provide vital navigational aid to ships and aircraft in the Pacific area and groundwork for a Fleet Hospital was started which included placement of more than 1,500 yards of concrete.

In Fiscal year 1987, NMCB7 was awarded the CINCLANTFLT Golden Anchor Award. On September 18, 1989, Hurricane Hugo ripped through the Caribbean Islands causing millions of dollars of damage and generating thousands of hours of disaster recovery work for NMCB SEVEN. The work that NMCB SEVEN accomplished to bring life back to normal for the people of the Caribbean Islands shows why they were selected as "Best of Type" for 1989 and were awarded the Peltier Award for the best active construction battalion in the Naval Construction Force.

On August 8, 1990, the Battalion was ordered to mobilize for redeployment to the Middle East in direct support of Operation, "Desert Shield." All details except for the Civic Action Team were immediately rolled back to Okinawa within a 72-hour period. On September 10, the Air Detachment departed Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, for the Middle East to begin setting up Camp Sierra India Bravo, followed by the Advance Party on September 29 and the Main body on October 10. A 25-man detail was sent to Administrative Support Unit Bahrain to perform construction support and Public Works' operations, and a 90-man detail was sent to Jubail, Saudi Arabia to assist in construction of a 15,000-man tent camp.

On 21 June 1991, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, with details at Antigua, Argentina, Andros, Bahamas, Bermuda, Panama, Vieques, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Iceland and Jamaica.

On 13 August 1992, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Okinawa, Japan, with details at Atsugi; Fuji; Iwakuni; Sasebo; Yokosuka; Adak, Alaska; Chinhae and Pohang, Korea; and Diego Garcia. A Civic Action Team also deployed to the island of Fiji.

In October 1993, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico with details at: Andros, Bermuda, Panama, Columbia, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Vieques, Key West, FL and Little Creek, VA. NMCB SEVEN's air detachment embarked for Haiti aboard the USS HARLAN COUNTY (LST 1196) as part of Joint Task Force Haiti.

In 1994, NMCB SEVEN's Deployment-for-Training (DFT) Colombia earned a Navy Unit Commendation for its work building riverine combat bases for Colombian Marines. In January 1995, NMCB SEVEN was recognized by the Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan for invaluable assistance rendered to the people affected by the great earthquake that struck the Hanshin and Awaji areas of Japan. SEVEN worked day and night as an invaluable part of the relief aid provided by the Government of the United States of America.

While deployed to the Caribbean in 1996, NMCB SEVEN fielded an unprecedented 14 details throughout the Caribbean, the United States, and Central America. Notably, Seabees from NMCB SEVEN took part in the United States mission in Haiti, performing humanitarian assistance work to improve the quality of life for Haitian citizens. Also, the Seabees closed out Panama as a detail site for Caribbean Seabees, reopened a detail site in Andros Island in the Bahamas and provided construction support to the 1996 Para Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

For three (3) consecutive fiscal years (FY94-96), NMCB SEVEN was awarded the CINCPACFLT Golden Anchor award.

From April to November 1997, NMCB SEVEN deployed to the Western Pacific with its Main Body at Camp Shields, Okinawa, Japan. In May 1997, DFT Thailand embarked with 36 Seabees to Uttaradit and Phitsanulok, Thailand as part of Joint Exercise, "Cobra Gold." NMCB SEVEN and reserve Seabees from NMCB FIFTEEN constructed two community facilities within 30 days.

From June 1998 to January 1999, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico and fielded details and detachments throughout the Caribbean and Central America. On September 23, 1998, Hurricane Georges fell on the Caribbean Islands, causing millions of dollars of damage and generating thousands of hours of disaster recovery work for NMCB SEVEN. In response to requests for support, generators and water trucks were taken to nearby cities and damage assessment teams were sent to the local islands.

A month after the cleanup of Georges, NMCB SEVEN rapidly deployed from Puerto Rico to Soto Cano Air Force Base, Honduras in support of Hurricane Mitch disaster relief efforts in Central America. Mitch left more than 10,000 people dead, destroyed communications, and wiped out roads leading to areas where thousands were reported missing. The Seabees deployed to conduct engineer reconnaissance, repair roads and bridges, clear debris and build base camps. NMCB SEVEN was the first element to arrive in Central America, taking part in their second humanitarian mission of the deployment.

During the period from 1999 to March 2000, NMCB SEVEN again deployed to Camp Shields, Okinawa, Japan with ten (10) detail sites around the Pacific Rim. Additionally, NMCB SEVEN Seabees participated in the Foal Eagle Exercise in Chinhae, Korea. From October 2000 to May 2001, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Camp Moscrip, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. With detail sites and Deployments for Training deployed throughout the southeastern United States, the Caribbean and Central America. NMCB SEVEN put in place over 35,000 man-days of quality construction. Major construction projects included a new USO Club building in Pascagoula, MS; a new berthing facility at Harvey Point, NC; a major Navy Exchange addition in Puerto Rico; and humanitarian and

exercise related construction projects at Union Island St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Belen, Honduras.

In March 2002, NMCB SEVEN embarked on its deployment to Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain with details and Deployments for Training deployed within the European Theatre, Central America, Africa, the Caribbean and along the U. S. Atlantic Coast.

Major projects completed were a security fence project at Naval Station Rota, Spain, a Detainee Camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, a Security Guard Post at Thurmont, Maryland, a Log Cabin at Camp Lejeune, a pre-engineered building at Norfolk, Virginia, a sports field at Sigonella, Italy, and a recreation center at Souda Bay, Crete. The battalion deployed at its wartime manning strength, augmented by reservists recalled to active duty to support an enhanced force protection construction mission in support of Operations “Enduring Freedom” and “Noble Eagle.”

In 2003, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The battalion supported Marine units by constructing roads and maintaining camps throughout Kuwait and Iraq. NMCB SEVEN supported combat operations by maintaining main and alternate supply routes and jointly constructing the longest ever NCF Mabey-Johnson span bridge at Az Zubidayah.

After the completion of major combat operations, NMCB SEVEN made significant contributions to the challenging battle to win the peace in Southern Iraq. In An Nasiriyah and Ad Diwaniyah the battalion won the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people by rebuilding their country. In a time span of just five (5) months, NMCB SEVEN renovated 36 schools, 3 banks, 4 water treatment plants, 2 fire stations, 2 power company facilities, 2 post offices, 2 bridges, an assisted living home, an agriculture department building, a railway station, an orphanage and 2 courthouses. NMCB SEVEN used a successful formula of leveraging Seabee construction efforts with Seabee managed Iraqi contractors thereby managing 29 different Iraqi contractors and employing as many as 1000 Iraqis daily. Finally, NMCB SEVEN executed the lion’s share of the NCF retrograde, effectively repairing, cleaning, packing and loading over 650 pieces of CESE and 250 containers.

For its extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against enemy forces from March — April 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, NMCB SEVEN was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

In October of 2004, NMCB SEVEN deployed to Guam, Iraq and associated detachments sites encompassing over 20 locations, 11 countries and three continents throughout the PACOM and CENTCOM areas of responsibility. The battalion proved their keen ability to support the warfighter during contingency operations and also provided peacetime construction at overseas bases. NMCB SEVEN seamlessly integrated 125 Reserve Seabees from NMCB SEVENTEEN in support of the strategic forces engaged in combat operations in Iraq, creating a stronger and more potent construction work force which undertook exceptionally demanding missions.

While forward-deployed, approximately 100 personnel embarked from the island of Guam to Sri Lanka to aid in the disaster-recovery efforts in the wake of a tsunami that devastated the region. Despite a very successful deployment, NMCB SEVEN suffered a great loss when BUC(SCW) Joel Baldwin was killed in late December 2004 during a suicide attack on a galley tent in Mosul, Iraq. Chief Baldwin was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

After returning home to Gulfport, Mississippi, NMCB SEVEN showed their outstanding ability to respond to any natural disaster and provide relief assistance. NMCB SEVEN stood up the initial response to Hurricane Katrina and were the first unit to provide disaster recovery. In the aftermath of Katrina, NMCB SEVEN was tasked with many key projects to assist the Mississippi Gulf Coast recover from the massive devastation. The battalion assisted the Coast Guard, the Gulfport Sheriff's Department and the Fish and Wildlife Commission gain access to water assets so they could conduct search and rescue operations. The scope soon expanded to include demolition of old buildings, clearing railroad tracks around the Port of Gulfport and building temporary shelters for fuel tanks.

In all, NMCB SEVEN removed 250 damaged trees, 3000 tons of steel and scrap metal and 600 tons of other debris. Another key project the Bees from SEVEN were tasked with was to get nine schools in the Biloxi, MS school district up and running again. Most of the work involved clearing debris and fallen trees to make school yards safe for the student's return. Their outstanding "Can Do" attitude and hard work allowed the schools to open much sooner than expected.

In another school-related project, NMCB SEVEN cleared and backfilled a heavily wooded, eight-acre area adjacent to De Lisle Elementary in Pass Christian, MS., This enabled the set up of over 40 portable classrooms that were used for the temporary elementary school, middle school and high school.

Bees from SEVEN also prevented possible biohazards in Jackson and Harrison counties when they helped two wastewater treatment facilities resume services before the local water systems were tainted by raw sewage. The magnificent performance of the battalion during fiscal year 2005 did not go unnoticed. NMCB SEVEN was selected as the Atlantic Fleet Naval Construction Force Battle Efficiency "E" winner.

U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion SEVEN has rightfully earned a reputation for excellence and professionalism. The proud tradition of its "Can Do" spirit is as much a part of NMCB SEVEN today as it was at inception. The officers, men and women of NMCB SEVEN look forward to maintaining the proud heritage of the MAGNIFICENT SEVEN in the years to come.



In selecting an emblem, NMCB SEVEN demonstrated what it considers its most important asset — the Seabee.

In the world of modern construction, the importance of machinery and equipment cannot be ignored. Important as they are, however, they still exist only to lessen the Seabee's labor.

It is the personnel of a Battalion — the Seabees who use this machinery, the Seabees who operate this equipment, and the Seabees who sit behind the drafting tables — who make their battalion stand above all others. It is these Seabees who give life and purpose to any battalion.

NMCB SEVEN used this theme in designing its emblem. In it, they portray the Seabee as the mainstay of the battalion. The Seabee stands out from all else. The qualities and capabilities of the Seabees involved in an operation cannot be overlooked. The ability of the Seabee to do a job, in peace or in war determines the success or failure of the mission. The construction of housing, roads, and airstrips are jobs for Seabees. The support of frontline defenses is a job for Seabees. Whatever tasks assigned, the Seabees of SEVEN did it — and did it well. Yes, NMCB SEVEN is proud of her Sea bees — and justifiably so.

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U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

CAN DO













