

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11

*Historical
Information*



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



Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Eleven NMCB-11

On August 12th, 11 NCB departed on a two week cruise for Island "X" in the Pacific, Pago Harbor Tutuila, and Samoa. Projects included 600,000 cubic yards of earth fill to form the base of the industrial area, creation of a command post, oil storage tanks, maintenance shops, taxiways and air strip extensions.

After hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of earth were moved, hundreds of bridges and docks constructed and all the work to erect an 11,000 man city, peace broke out and 11 NCB was formally decommissioned on December 1, 1945.

NMCB 11, also referred to as MCB 11, was recommissioned in July 1953 during the waning days of the Korean War as "The Newest Battalion in Existence" under the command of LCDR Allison Froman. By November, the Battalion had arrived at Cubi Point, Luzon, Philippines, under the command of LCDR James C. Castanes, and continued work on the removal of a mountain known as the rock. Some 2 million man-hours would eventually be spent to finish the project. Excess dirt and rock from the project was ideal for building and expanding the 10,000 foot runway on the base. NMCB 11 managed to set the record for the number of piles driven, for piers, in a single day.

The base at Adak, Alaska was severely damaged on March 9, 1957 by a 9.1 magnitude earthquake followed by three days of 7.0 or greater aftershocks. Runways and roads were devastated. One of the main roads suffered a 14 foot crack and two major bridges were destroyed. NMCB 11 arrived on April 6 to repair the devastation and repaired everything from piers to the base housing that had been demolished. All projects undertaken were successfully completed within the six month deployment.

In October 1959, the Battalion's main body boarded the USS General J.C. Breckenridge (AP-176) bound for Okinawa where they built permanent staging facilities for the U.S. Marine Corps. The facilities included five 100 x 400 foot warehouses, a pair of engineer shop buildings, a motor transport shop, one ordinance shop, a supply and administrative building, a central head, wash racks, retaining walls and electrical services.

On December 17, 1965, NMCB 11 was awarded the Battle Efficiency Award, commonly referred to as the Battle "E", for the fourth time in five years for its outstanding deployment to Okinawa. During this homeport the Battalion received 16 weeks of intensive training, two of which were spent in SERE training to include: counter-insurgency, foreign languages, blasting and quarrying and field communications. Three STAT Teams, 1103, 1104 and 1105, were deployed to Vietnam and Thailand with U.S. Army Special Forces. Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields served with Seabee Team 1104 at Dong Xoai, South Vietnam. On June 9, 1965 a Viet Cong Regiment attacked. After being wounded in the initial mortar attack he continued to supply ammunition to the firing line. Shields was wounded a second time and then carried a critically wounded soldier, Captain William N. Stokes III, to safety. In the early

morning hours of June 10, Shields volunteered to help First Lieutenant Charles Williams, the acting camp Commander, knock out a Viet Cong machine gun emplacement, located in a nearby school building. Under heavy enemy fire the two men were able to knock out the gun on the third shot from the 3.5 inch rocket launcher. While returning to his fighting position, machine gun fire struck Shields in his right leg nearly tearing it off. He managed to make it back to the headquarters building with the help from some fellow troops where he expired due to his wounds. Both First Lieutenant Williams and Petty Officer Shields received the Medal of Honor for the destruction of the machine gun emplacement. Shields was the only Medal of Honor recipient for the Seabees and the first awarded to the Navy in Vietnam. LTJG Frank Peterlin, CEC, USN and Equipment Operator Chief Johnny McCully received the Silver Star. The remaining men all received the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and Navy Unit Commendation. Steel Worker 2nd Class William C. Hoover was awarded posthumously.

In February 1966, NMCB 11 became the first battalion to be flown into the Vietnam's combat zone on a C-141 arriving at Camp Adenir, Danang East. After landing, they took over NMCB-9's expansion and improvement of the Naval Hospital constructing an x-ray building, fire station, generator building, several Quonset-type wards, and improving roads and parking areas. Other construction included drilling wells to blast and expand the Danang Harbor, keeping it clear for shipping, and completing a 420,000 gallon POL tank to hold jet fuel necessary for helicopters which were crucial in U.S. operations. While under enemy sniper fire, NMCB 11's Seabees built a Marine cantonment camp deep in hostile territory which included strong-back and tin roof buildings for berthing and other support facilities.

Between the years of 1967 and 1969, the "Lucky Eleventh" was deployed to Vietnam for four consecutive tours. In the early summer of 1967, NMCB 11 became the first battalion to be deployed to the Northern I Corps at the Dong Ha Forward Combat Base, Vietnam. The advanced party began construction at Camp Barnes on April 10 erecting berthing tents, stringing a barbed wire perimeter, and laying a pipeline for a new galley. Upon the main body arrival, construction commenced on a permanent area for Fleet Logistic Support Unit (FLSU) One at Dong Ha including a cold storage unit, administration and communication facilities, and a cantonment camp. Projects also included runway reconstruction and airfield lighting at Khe Sanh, helicopter revetments and parking pads, and numerous tasks supporting construction and militaristic activities. NMCB 11 also constructed more than twenty 50' observation towers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). During the deployment, the Battalion received 138 attacks involving rockets, ambushes, snipers, and mines sustaining 64 WIA and 5 KIA.

From May 1968 to January 1969, NMCB 11 was deployed to Camp Rhodes, Quang Tri, Vietnam. The focus on the deployment was roadwork involving new construction, repair, and maintenance for National Routes 1 and 9. The Battalion constructed 7.5 miles of new road and built 4 bridges spanning 40', 80', 160', and 392'. The largest task was the Minimum Essential Requirements (MER) project which was geared toward the improvement of living conditions for combat units. The NMCB 11 Seabees built over

2000 structures consisting of tropical huts, shower facilities, and galleys reaching a total cost of \$1.7 million (present day cost of \$90 million).

The last of the four deployments to Vietnam for NMCB 11 was from June to December 1969. About two-thirds of the Battalion was deployed to Camp Haines, Hue-Phu Bai, Vietnam (located at Camp Evans cantonment camp) while the other third went to Okinawa and Guam. Vietnam construction primarily consisted of roadwork and bridgework. While working with NMCB 5 to ready and pave a four mile stretch of new road, NMCB 11 crushed more than 10,000 tons of rock each week to support road projects in Vietnam. Typhoon Cora hit Okinawa in August 1969 damaging much of its infrastructure. Seabees acted quickly to restore utilities and repair damaged buildings and roads. In the early morning hours of 07 August 1969, an Army mortar platoon was laying down some supporting fire when sparks from a mortar tube ignited a near by ammunition store. Seven NMCB 11 Seabees fought the fires and explosions including CM1 Milford Tognazzini who was killed in action by shrapnel from an exploding vehicle. Several others were wounded. CM1 Tognazzini was posthumously awarded the Soldier's Medal and the Purple Heart.

Shortly after the Battalion pulled out of Vietnam and Guam in early December, NMCB 11 was decommissioned in Port Hueneme on 15 December 1969, leaving behind a legacy of contingency construction and support.

NMCB 11 was recommissioned on 14 September, 2007 in an attempt to meet the overwhelming demand for Naval Construction Forces (NCF) throughout the world. Classified as the first "SMART Battalion", NMCB 11 is leading the way with many of the new initiatives and changes being implemented to improve NCF operations.

NMCB 11 returned from its first deployment in almost 40 years in August of 2009. The 'Bees of 11 went above and beyond the expectations of their Higher HQ's in multiple AOR's during their deployment to Africa, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Cuba, Jamaica, Romania, Ukraine and several other locations in support of Operations' Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

MCB Eleven

Mobile Construction Battalion Eleven was commissioned at Port Hueneme 14 September 1953. In little more than a month the members of the battalion found themselves at Subic Bay in the Philippine Islands working on the gigantic Navy base at Cubi Point. The battalion spent one year working on a variety of buildings, a fuel pier pipeline and fueling station.

MCB Eleven was next deployed to Kodiak, Alaska after returning to their home port for the normal period of leave and training. Here they repaired buildings, roads, piers and docks before leaving the homeport and another assignment, this time to Kwajalein in the Marshalls.

The battalion returned to Port Hueneme and after four months departed for Adak, Alaska where the Seabees worked on runways and repairs to buildings. MCB 11's next deployment, was to the Philippines where the Seabees built a dam, a fuel farm and roads.

The battalion then deployed to Guam to construct housing and other facilities. On 24 June 1959 they returned to Hueneme, and four months later they were off to Okinawa. MCB ^{Eleven} 11 worked on facilities for the Marines and found time to inaugurate a "People to People" program consisting of school construction and playground facilities for the Okinawans.

In November 1959 a detachment of the battalion went to Midway to prepare landing fields for the Gooney birds in the hope that the birds use them instead of those of the Naval Air Station. In 1960 they went to Okinawa again, but the next deployment was to Guam, Marianas. On Guam and Saipan MCB ^{Eleven} 11 worked on housing, a water tank, a civilian hospital and other projects. The next deployments were to Guam but in 1962 members of the battalion saw Midway, Kwajalein and Eniwetok before heading for the homeport. In December they went back to Guam, this time to clear the debris and repair the damage wrought by Typhoon Karen.

In December 1963 MCB Eleven was designated the Pacific Alert Battalion and deployed to Okinawa. On Okinawa the battalion worked on various facilities and one detachment participated in joint amphibious maneuvers off Taiwan with the Navy of the Republic of China. The battalion remained on Okinawa until August 1964 when it returned to California.

In 1965 MCB Eleven flew to Okinawa to relieve MCB Nine. The battalion encamped at Camp Kinser and worked on facilities at Camp Hansen for the Marines.

In 1966 MCB Eleven flew to Danang East, RVN to work on numerous construction projects there. In 1967 the battalion again went to Vietnam where its camp was at Dong Ha. The camp came under enemy attacks and the battalion suffered a number of casualties. During this deployment MCB ^{Eleven} it operated at Khe Sanh, Gio Linh, Cua Viet and Lang Vei.

In May 1968 Commander H.K. Hartell led his battalion to Quang Tri where once again the Seabees took up their tools to support the combat troops in Vietnam.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Eleven

1953 - To ~~1969~~ 1969

- 15 Jul 53 U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Eleven was established at the Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.
- 14 Oct 53 The battalion left Port Hueneme for Cubi Point, Philippine Islands.
- 31 Oct 53 to 10 Nov 54 The battalion was employed at Cubi Point, Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. They constructed temporary facilities that were used for barracks, shops and warehouses. They cleared the sites for the construction of seaplane parking areas, roads, and buildings. In addition, they did camp maintenance and operated a quarry.
- 6 Mar 55 to 5 Sep 55 The battalion was employed at the U.S. Naval Station, Kodiak, Alaska where they did maintenance, repair and rehabilitation work at the Naval Station.
- 26 Oct 55 to 6 Oct 56 At Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, the battalion worked on the construction of 175 units of concrete block family housing.
- 6 Apr 57 to 17 Oct 57 The battalion was employed at the U.S. Naval Station, Adak, Alaska. They seal-coated, paved, repaired and rehabilitated a runway. They also assisted Naval Station personnel in repair work necessitated by an earthquake and tidal wave.
- 4 Feb 58 to 24 Jun 58 MCB Eleven constructed a dam, a fuel farm and roads at Cubi Point, Subic Bay, Philippine Islands.

- 28 Sep 58 to 10 Jun 59 The battalion was employed at Guam, Mariana Islands. They constructed naval housing, magazines and support facilities at the Naval Magazine. They also operated a batch plant at Fadian Point.
- 31 Oct 59 to 20 Jul 60 MCB Eleven was at Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands. During their employment there, the battalion built permanent staging-out facilities for the U.S. Marine Corps. The construction was primarily of precast, heavily reinforced, concrete units.
- 30 Nov 60 to 7 Aug 61 The battalion was employed at Guam, Mariana Islands. They constructed dependent housing at various military installations and completed work on an ammunition storage facility at the Naval Magazine.
- Dec 61 to 20 Jul 62 MCB Eleven was employed at Midway Island. Their work was mostly rehabilitating and remodeling buildings, structures, and waterfront facilities.
- 2 Dec 62 to 22 May 63 The battalion was scheduled to go to Sangley Point, Philippine Islands. However, at the last minute, a change was made and the battalion was sent to Guam, Mariana Islands, to assist in the clean-up operations after Typhoon Karen. The battalion removed debris, dismantled damaged structures, and rehabilitated and constructed buildings and waterfront facilities. In April, Typhoon Olive passed close to Guam, interrupting work and causing damage to battalion projects and facilities. This set the battalion work schedule back ~~one~~ week.
- 4 Dec 63 to 13 Aug 64 Mobile Construction Battalion Eleven was the Alert Battalion assigned to Camp Kinsar, Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands. The battalion was responsible for operation and maintenance

of Camp Kinser. In addition, they worked on military pipeline construction, waterfront facilities, road rehabilitation and well drilling.

7-14 Jan 65 to
17-20 Sep 65

MCB Eleven was employed at Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands. They constructed permanent facilities for the U.S. Marine Corps at Camp Hansen and prepared Camp Kinser for caretaker status. In addition, a 15-man detachment of equipment operators accompanied the amphibious force to Chu Lai, Vietnam, to assist in the debarkation of aluminum matting. These men were gone for approximately one month.

1-5 Feb 66 to
9-18 Oct 66

The battalion headquarters were at Danang East, Vietnam. The battalion built additions and improvements to a hospital including an X-ray building, a fire station, a generator building, parking areas, roads and building extensions. They also built cantonments for the U.S. Marine Corps, covered storage and supply areas for the Naval Support Activity, and drilled wells at various locations.

26 Apr-3 May 67 to
29 Nov-7 Dec 67

The battalion headquarters were at Dong Ha, Vietnam. The battalion enlarged the Dong Ha Combat Base with construction and relocation of cantonments; erected dry and cold storage areas; built earth dams; upgraded and maintained roads; and built helicopter revetments. Details from the battalion operated at Khe Sanh, Gio Linh, Cua Viet and Lang Vai.

8-15 May 68 to
17-23 Jan 69

The battalion headquarters were at Quang Tri, Vietnam. The battalion built a new seabee camp; upgraded, widened, re-surfaced and maintained roads; and, built storage areas, bridges and a fuel pipeline. For the Minimum

Essential Requirements Program, MCB Eleven constructed over 2,000 Southeast Asia huts for U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps units.

2 Jul 69
To date

The battalion headquarters are at Camp Evans, Hue, Vietnam. Projects assigned to the battalion include; building guard towers around the perimeter of Camp Evans, messing facilities for Army units, and a water supply system. In addition, they will upgrade and prepare roads for paving, and repair a steel railway bridge across the Song Bo River.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Eleven

Commanding Officers

*Lieutenant Fritz H. Hediger, CEC, USNR	15 Jul 53 -
*Lieutenant Commander Allison D. Froman, CEC, USNR	- 1 Sep 53
Commander James C. Castanes, CEC, USN	1 Sep 53 - 27 Sep 55
Commander John A. Dougherty, CEC, USN	27 Sep 55 - 17 Aug 57
Lieutenant Commander William R. Reese, CEC, USN	17 Aug 57 - Nov 57
Commander Harold F. Liberty, CEC, USNR	Nov 57 - 16 Feb 60
Commander John P. Williams, CEC, USN	16 Feb 60 - 2 Mar 62
Commander Paul J. Doyle, Jr., CEC, USN	2 Mar 62 - 16 Apr 64
Commander William W. Barron, CEC, USN	16 Apr 64 - 15 May 66
Commander William L. Wilson, CEC, USN	15 May 66 - 27 Jul 67
Commander William K. Hartell, CEC, USN	27 Jul 67 - 28 Jul 69
Commander Jack L. Godsey, CEC, USN	28 Jul 69 - To date

*LT Hediger and then LCDR Froman were acting Commanding Officer from the date the battalion was established until CDR Castanes reported with order as the commanding officer, 1 September 1953.

Awards

Navy Unit Commendation Vietnam
(As part of the Thirtieth Naval Construction Regiment)

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20 Dec 1969 - Disest. at Port Hueneme, CA

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Depart

DaNang RVN 9-17 Oct 1966

Port Hueneme 25 April-3 May 1967

Dong Ha RVN 29 Nov-7 Dec 1967

Port Hueneme 6-15 May 1968

Arrive

Port Hueneme 10-18 Oct 1966

Dong Ha RVN thru 3 May 1967

Port Hueneme Nov-Dec 1967

Quang Tri Combat Base May 1968

U S NAVAL
MOBILE
CONSTRUCTION
BATTALION

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CONSTRUCTION
IN
REPAIRS



U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION ELEVEN

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CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE













