

Reserve Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 24

Historical Information



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



Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TWENTY-FOUR
NMCB 24
"Dixie Doers"

NMCB-24 is one of twenty-three Seabee battalions, eight full-time and fifteen part-time. These twenty-three Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) combine with three Naval Construction Force Support Units (NCFSU), two full-time and six part-time operational Naval Construction Regiments (NCR), two full-time Naval Construction Brigades (NCB), and several other support and training units, to form the Naval Construction Force (NCF).

As a commissioned unit, NMCB-24 is full staffed with support personnel as well as construction ratings and would mobilize as a unit. It's mission, described in OPNAVINST 5450.46 (series):

To provide responsive engineer construction capability to Navy, Marine Corps, and other forces in military operations; to construction and maintain base facilities; to repair battle damage facilities; and to conduct defensive operations as required by the deployment situation.

1942-1945 The Navy first commissioned Naval Construction Battalion Twenty-Four (NCB-24) on 04 September, 1942 at NCTC Norfolk, Virginia, with Commander H. Roy Whitaker as Commanding Officer. After initial training in Gulfport, Mississippi and Port Hueneme, California, the battalion embarked for the Pacific Theatre where it began its outstanding service during World War II. NCB-24 saw action at New Caledonia, lie Nou, Guadalcanal, Rendova, and Munda Island. After a short 30-day leave, NCB-24 left San Francisco in May 1945 to return to war. On the night of 10 August, during an air raid alert, the battalion heard of the end of the war. On 01 December 1945, NCB-24 was disestablished on Okinawa.

1962 On 01 June, the Navy re-commissioned the battalion as a Reserve Naval Mobile Construction Battalion under the command of Commander Henry Phillips, who served through 1965.

1963 RINMCB-24 underwent organizational training at Davisville, Rhode Island. This first "Readiness Duty" (REDDU) was attended by 21 officers and 309 enlisted men.

1964 The battalion received its first military training during deployment at Camp Geiger, North Carolina. The training was a joint operation with RNEVICB-13 from New York. 1965 The battalion returned to Davisville for the 1965 REDDU period, developing its disaster recovery capability and improving technical skills.

1966 CDR. B.F. Berkaw assumed command in 1966 and served until 1967. The 1966 REDDU was at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina for military training.

1967 The battalion reported aboard the U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, under the command of CDR H.C. Russell. The REDDU consisted of construction work and military training, including an amphibious landing.

1968 The battalion's first deployment to CBC Gulfport took place, emphasizing military and construction skills training. This was also the battalion's first deployment following the establishment of the THIRD Naval Construction Regiment. Commodore Woodburn was the THIRD NCR's first Commanding Officer.

1969 The battalion returned to Gulfport, still under the command of CDR Russell. Training consisted of crew skills, rate training and basic military and leadership training.

1970 CDR C.R. Smith assumed command and Camp LeJeune hosted the battalion REDDU again, for two weeks of military training. The battalion concentrated on acquiring skills with various weapons.

1971 The first Regimental deployment took place. Along with RNMCB- 14, and under the operational control of THIRD NCR, the battalion deployed to the Advanced Base Camp (now Camp Hill) near Gulfport for technical, military, and operational training.

1972 The battalion received technical, military, and operational training at Gulfport.

1973 CDR H.M. Simpkins relieved CDR Smith. He took the battalion to Camp Talega, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California for REDDU. The Marine Corps provided training in weapons, communications and tactics.

1974 The battalion signed the Inter Service Support Agreement with Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama, for the battalion's Permanent Drill Site (PDS). It then submitted Special Project requests for construction of the facilities, and welcomed its first active duty staff member, CECS Swindle. Navy Base, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, provided the battalion Mainbody with construction projects for rate training. In addition, a 50-man detachment deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for construction projects.

1975 CDR P.W. Field assumed command of the battalion. Construction of the Permanent Drill Site on Redstone Arsenal began in earnest. The battalion deployed to CBC Gulfport, Mississippi for operational, military, and technical training. Detachments deployed to NAS New Orleans and the PDS for work projects.

1976 The battalion commissioned the PDS and moved its headquarters to the site. During REDDU at the PDS the battalion completed PDS construction, projects for Redstone Arsenal, and received some military training as well. A detachment traveled to Fort McClellan for heavy weapons training.

1977 Commander Paul C. Rosser relieved Commander Field as Commanding Officer. The battalion deployed to Camp Geiger, North Carolina, for military training. It sent detachments to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico for construction projects, and to Fort

Sherman, Panama Canal Zone for jungle warfare training and construction projects. The Reserve Naval Construction Force selected NMCB-24 “Best of Type” and awarded it the Perry Trophy for its outstanding performance in FY1977.

1978 RNMCB-24 deployed for technical training to Naval Construction Center, Gulfport, MS under the operational control of THIRD NCR.

1979 RNMCB-24 returned to Naval Construction Center, Gulfport, MS under the command of CDR R.L. Buckelew for REDDU and received military, operational and technical training.

1980 REDDU (Readiness Duty) became known as ACDUTRA (Active Duty for Training). RNMCB-24 deployed for ACDUTRA to Camp Shelby, MS for military training under THIRD NCR. At the Change of Command Ceremony, September, 1980, it was announced that, for the second time, RNMCB-24 had been selected “Best of Type” among the seventeen Reserve Construction Battalions. Former Commanding Officer, Captain C.R. Smith, presented the “Meatball” to CDR Richard L. Buckelew. CDR Richard Price relieved CDR Buckelew.

1981 RNMCB-24 deployed to Naval Construction Center, Gulfport, MS for technical training, crew skills, rate training, and military leadership training. On May 13, Rear Admiral P.R. Brown, CEC, USNR-R, Reserve Naval Construction Force Commander, FIRST RNCB, presented the Rear Admiral John R. Perry “Best of Type” Award for FY1980. In September, it was announced that RNMCB-24 had been selected Second Runner-Up for “Best of Type” for FY1981.

1982 RNMCB-24 deployed for Amphibious Warfare training to Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA for ACDUTRA under the command and control of THIRD NCR. In September, at the Change of Command Ceremony, it was announced that RNMCB-24 had been selected First Runner-Up for “Best of Type.” Commander Noah H. Long, Jr., CEC, USNR-R relieved Commander Price.

1983 ACDUTRA consisted of a 48-hour Air Detachment mobilization exercise at the PDS with continuity training for the entire battalion at the Naval Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, MS. In September, it was announced that RNMCB-24 had been selected First Runner-Up for “Best of Type)”

1984 A full AIRDET “Fly Away” of men, equipment, and supplies was performed. This exercise was known as Operation Green Stinger 84. While the Air Det was flown to Fort Benning at Columbus, Georgia, the entire battalion completed approximately 40 projects on the post while undertaking military training. At the Change of Command Ceremony at NAS Atlanta in September, the battalion was presented the Rear Admiral John R. Perry “Best of Type” Award for FY1984. Commanding Officer Long was relieved by Commander L.A. Kenny, CEC, USNR-R.

1985 Under the command of CDR Kenny, the battalion's operational deployment included detachments to Rota, Spain and Guantanamo, Cuba, with the Main Body going to Fort Benning, GA.

1986 The battalion deployed to CBC Davisville, RI for technical training and participation in a sea echelon exercise known as Operation Sea Dragon 86. This was the first time reserve Seabee battalion equipment had ever been lifted aboard a cargo ship with cranes and stowed, simulating an actual embarkation.

1987 Commander L.D. Battles assumed command. A military training ACDUTRA took place at Fort Jackson, Columbia, SC. In September, it was announced that the battalion had won the "Best of Type" Award for FY1987.

1988 The battalion deployed to NAS Pensacola, Florida in 1988 for operational construction projects. Achievement and recognition were high. The battalion was selected First Runner-Up for "Best of Type." Commander Gerauld Dickerson assumed command of the battalion. Technical training offered at CBC Gulfport was the primary ACDUTRA, with efforts concentrated on Sea Hut construction and Bailey Bridge training.

1989 CDR Dickerson was relieved by Commander James M. McGarrah in a Change of Command Ceremony held in July at the RSS (Readiness Support Site), formerly the PDS. Guests of Honor included Rear Admiral Paul C. Rosser and Captain Noah Long, both former CO's of the battalion. RNCB-24 was named "Best of Type" for FY1989. The Rear Admiral John R. Perry Award was presented at the Unit Commander's Conference held in Atlanta during November. Rear Admiral Paul C. Rosser, CEC, USNR-R, Reserve Naval Construction Force Commander, FIRST RNCB, presented the "Meatball" to CDR McGarrah.

1990 ACDUTRA became AT (Annual Training) and 1990 saw RNMCB-24 deployed to Fort Benning, GA for a full-blown Military AT, utilizing the battalion's own SMJ (Seabee Military Instructor) teams. The main focus was on individual military skills, basic tactics and crew served weapons, plus small unit operations with emphasis at the squad and platoon level. Anticipating activation due to events in the Middle East, AT was changed from April 1991 to October 1990. The battalion spent an extended twenty-day AT in Gulfport, receiving CBR training, communications training, and additional military training. On December 1, 1990, the unit was activated. A few days later, in the pitch black darkness of a 0430 muster for PT, CDR McGarrah read the message informing members of RNMCB-24 they had been selected "Best of Type" for the sixth time since the award had been inaugurated in 1977. They added a new honor in becoming the first battalion to win the title two years in a row. On 9 December, the battalion held an activation ceremony and officially became NMCB-24. On 13 December, the battalion advanced party landed in Saudi Arabia, becoming the first and only reserve Seabee battalion to be sent into Arab territory in support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

1991 In Saudi Arabia, NMCB-24 was headquartered at Camp Rohrbach, Al Jubail. Elements of the battalion were dispersed over a 250-mile area with the northernmost

detachment being at Camp Smith, Al Khanjar, on the Kuwait/Saudi Arabia border. This element of the battalion constructed a base camp, a 900,000 square foot Helicopter Operations Area, and two 6600' x 150' C130 airstrips. The detachment built and maintained major sections of the primary Military Support Routes (MSRs). The airstrips and MSR provided direct support to Marine Combat and Logistics operations during the ground war and for approximately one month of retrograde operations after the war. NMCB-24's Air Det consisted of 120 personnel deployed to King Abdul Azia Naval Base. The detachment completed 12 major projects, expending 4800 mandays of direct labor in support of the 3rd Marine Air Wing from December 1990 to March 1991. The main element of the battalion, stationed at Camp Rohrbach, completed projects at the Port of Jubail, numerous projects at Marine facilities, Army staging areas, and for the Saudi government. There were also projects in support of construction at Fleet Hospital 5 and Hospital 15. NMCB-24 completed 931 MEF projects and 86 internal camp improvements, utilizing 31,154 mandays of direct labor in support of the war effort. The battalion had an extremely productive and safe deployment. There was no loss of life, or any permanent injury caused by accidents on construction projects. On 25 April, the battalion Advanced Party boarded the aircraft for CBC Gulfport. By 30 April, the majority of the battalion personnel had completed separation procedures, traded their green ID's for pink ones, and returned to their homes and families. A few weeks later, during the height of parades and general "welcome home hoopla," the battalion learned that there would no longer be an RNMCB-24. It was NMCB-24 for good. The one service concept had taken another step forward.

The battalion was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation Medal. In addition, each member was authorized to wear the Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon and the Southwest Asia Defense Medal, and each was given the Kuwait Liberation Medals by the governments of both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In July, Commander R.K. Alexander, CEC, USNR-R, assumed command of the battalion at RSS, Redstone Arsenal, AL.

1992 The battalion's annual training was divided among "AT" at Gulfport for technical training, and numerous construction details. These details included: two to Kaneohe Bay, HI; three to Barber's Point, HI; one to Pearl Harbor, HI; three to NAS Whiting Field, FL; seven to NRC Bessemer, AL; two to NRC Columbia, SC; and four to the battalion's RSS. The main construction effort was concentrated at NRC Bessemer, where the construction of CLLB-12 Readiness Support Site of three 40' x 100' PEB's, completely finished, was undertaken. For its efforts, NMCB-24 was named Runner-Up for East Coast "Best of Type," and the following individual awards given: two Bronze Star Medals, one Meritorious Service Medal, two Navy Commendation Medals, and 34 Navy Achievement Medals.

1993 The RNCF began the year with a major step forward in integrating all RNCF units with the active duty counterparts. As a result, the First Naval Construction Brigade was disestablished and the Second (former CBLANT) and Third (former CBPAC) Naval Construction Brigades formed. NMCB-24 was assigned as a Mission I (Ready Battalion)

and assigned OPCON under C17NCLANTFLT. The battalion's annual training duty consisted of construction details as well as Mainbody military training at MCB Camp LeJeune, NC. In September, NMCB-24 was named Runner-Up for "Best of Type," for the Second Naval Construction Brigade.

1994 On 9 October 1993, Commander J.M. Smith, CEC, USNR-R, relieved Commander Alexander, at the Change of Command Ceremony held at NAS Atlanta. The battalion is scheduled for a construction year, implementing the new FLEXDRILL initiative. The battalion rotated to a Mission II status to allow its personnel and resources to be dedicated to direct construction support for Atlantic Fleet commands. Females were integrated into the battalion during FY94. During FEX, males and females have alternate shower and separate berthing areas.

1995 In October, Commander I.R. Williamson, CEC, USNR-R, relieved CDR Smith. The battalion's AT concentrated on providing direct construction support at various Atlantic commands, including NSB Kings Bay, GA; NAS Whiting Field, FL; NAS Key West, FL; NAS Atlanta, GA; and NAB Little Creek, VA. This support effort resulted in a cost avoidance of over \$200,000 to the Navy, while providing outstanding training opportunities.

1996 Battalion operations centered on providing quality of life projects to both military and local communities. Major efforts were made during annual training to reduce Maintenance of Real Property (MRP) backlog at facilities such as NAS Key West. Roof repairs to the Chief Petty Officer's quarters and Public Works facilities resulted in \$40,000 in savings to the Navy. The highlight of community support was the recognition and outstanding support provided by NMCB-24's Det 1124 to the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics Games held after the Olympic games.

1997 In April the battalion participated in Operation Sharp Wedge 97 at Marine Corps Base, Camp LeJeune, NC. This exercise resulted in outstanding training opportunities for the battalion. In October, Commander John H. Miller, II, CEC, USNR-R, relieved CDR Williamson as Commanding Officer.

1998 Early in 1998, NMCB-24 Detachment 1324 personnel from Asheville, NC provided assistance to at least 350 families in Roan Mountain, TN following extensive flooding. Construction was started on a pre-engineered building for NAS Atlanta, at Marietta, GA, with cost savings of over \$400,000. Detachment personnel received outstanding training opportunities working on this project. Construction projects conducted by NMCB-24 personnel at NSB Kings Bay, GA, again resulted in a cost savings to the Navy of \$200,000. In July, the Air Detachment conducted a modified Green Stinger operation, testing battalion capabilities by moving equipment from the RSS in Huntsville, AL, to Camp Atterbury, IN.

1999 February saw changes to the staff at the RSS. CMCS (SCW) James Radford reported aboard as the new RSS Supervisor, relieving UTCS (SCW) Tom Treece, who retired. In May, the NMCB24 Main Body went to MCB Camp LeJeune, NC for field

exercise training, as part of Operation Sharp Wedge. In June each detachment sent personnel to the RSS to compete in the annual THIRD NCR Equipment Operators Rodeo, hosted by NMCB24. In July of 1999, the Air Detachment conducted an AIRDET Exercise with an actual flyaway, in conjunction with the Air Force, prepping, loading, and moving equipment and personnel from Redstone Arsenal to Ft Campbell, Kentucky, and returning.











