

Naval Construction Maintenance Unit 301

Historical Information



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



BATTALION HISTORY

Although the first Construction Battalion Maintenance Units were formed during the fury of war in autumn of 1942, all maintenance units had been decommissioned by the end of that decade.

The Korean conflict once more signalled the need for Construction Battalion Maintenance Units. Again, by 1956, after having served honorably and well in Korea, all maintenance units were deactivated.

After a lapse of eleven years, the need arose for maintenance units, this time in Southeast Asia. Mobile Construction Battalions were used to support Army and Marine Corps forces in the Republic of Vietnam, but with the vast construction effort underway, it was found that CBMU's were necessary. Thus, CBMU 301 was born.

December, 1966, signalled the birth of CBMU 301 as Naval personnel were detailed to the Thirty-first Naval Construction Regiment, Port Hueneme, California, for the formation of the Battalion. CBMU 301 was officially established on March 31, 1967, at the Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme.

Formal commissioning ceremonies were held on April 7, 1967 with Lieutenant Commander Henry A. Holmes, CEC, USN, the first commanding officer, receiving the unit colors from the commissioning officer, Rear Admiral E. T. Reich, Director, Logistic Plans Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

The CBMU 301 advance party left the United States on May 17, 1967 for Naval Support Activity, Danang. Cargo and rolling stock followed by sea and air. CBMU 301 deployed to Dong Ha, Quang Tri Province, and by June 24, 1967, CBMU 301 had established its main camp.

After the camp was completed, the men of 301 turned to, commencing maintenance operations in accordance with assigned missions.

At Dong Ha approximately 200 Seabees of CBMU 301 were tasked with airfield maintenance and with caring for internal roads, Navy and Marine cantonments, the electrical distribution system, and the Utility Landing Craft (LCU) off-loading ramp on the Dong Ha river.

Although the battalion was at this time deployed at Dong Ha, details from the main body were sent to Khe Sanh, An Hoa, Cua Viet, and Quang Tri. The performance of duty by CBMU 301 Seabees during the heroic defence of Khe Sanh while that vital combat base was under siege claimed the life of SW2 Edward C. Adams when an enemy artillery round exploded in the area in which he was working on April 16, 1968. Six weeks earlier, BU1 Charles O. Spillman died when a Marine helicopter in which he was riding to deliver mail to the detail at Khe Sanh crashed after being struck by enemy fire. February 28, 1968.

On June 3, 1968, Commander W. E. Burdick relieved Lieutenant Commander H. A. Homes as Commanding Officer of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301.

On May 22, 1969, Commander J. B. Groff relieved Commander W. E. Burdick as Commanding Officer. At this time, the main body camp had been established at Quang Tri with Detail Delta being disestablished and Detail Bravo established at Dong Ha.

Flag officers who attended the change of command ceremony were Rear Admiral E. P. Bonner, Commander, U. S. Naval Support Activity, Danang; Rear Admiral J. G. Dillon, Commander, 3rd Naval Construction Brigade; and Brig. General R. Fuller, Assistant Division Commander, Third Marine Division.

The work of CBMU 301 went on through the hot summer months, with job assignments as great as ever, hampered by breakdowns, supply problems, and the ever-present wind, which drove the sand before it, hindering men and their machines.

Typhoon Doris struck on September 2, 1969 and called forth greater efforts from the Seabees of CBMU 301. As calls for aid poured in from the combination of military units supported by 301, men worked around the clock to repair the typhoon damage.

The announcement that the Third Marine Division would leave Vietnam, and of Mobile Construction Battalion 74's reassignment to Danang left CBMU 301 with a new set of problems in addition to those usually faced by the unit.

Personnel from the already hard-working unit had to abandon purely Seabee-type assignments to go mess-cooking, and to man a perimeter sector of Quang Tri Combat Base. The "Can-do" spirit and hard work of the Seabees of CBMU 301 continued to get the job done: the perimeter was manned, the chow improved, and maintenance tasks were completed, with all hands doing their best and carrying on while awaiting word of the future of the Battalion.

In October the word finally came: CBMU 301 would close down its detail at Dong Ha and redeploy to the Chu Lai enclave south of Danang. There the Battalion would acquire the Public Works missions in Chu Lai, thus absorbing a number of personnel already stationed at Chu Lai who were familiar with the operations, meanwhile, losing men to other commands because their rates and rating were to be in excess of the requirements at Chu Lai. CBMU 301 would also take over the work of the RMK-BRJ organization—quarrying granite, rock crushing, and producing asphalt and concrete.

The months of October through late January found an ever-increasing number of 301's Seabees at Chu Lai, and an ever decreasing number at Quang Tri, a minimum number of men left to carry out continuing obligations, complete those tasks already underway, and pack up and move battalion vehicles, machines, tools, records, furnishings, and all other implements necessary to day by day Seabee tasks.

From the CBMU 301 Quartermaster's Log Book, 4 February 1970: "0830: CBMU 301 Main Body with 40 men departed for Chu Lai. 1500: CBMU 301 Main Body arrived Chu Lai. No further entries this log."

The big move was over and now began the task of adapting to a new goal, carrying out a new mission and as 301 celebrated its third anniversary on March 8, carrying out a much older tradition of proud Naval service.

At Chu Lai, the Battalion ran the mineral products division, including the quarry, rock crushers, and the asphalt and concrete plants. CBMU 301 was responsible for all Public Works missions on the base, furnishing electricity, water, and ice to U. S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps commands.

On April 24, 1970, Lieutenant Commander G. E. Krauter, formerly the Battalion Executive Officer, relieved Commander J. B. Groff as Commanding Officer, while Lieutenant J. W. King, former Operations Officer, became Executive Officer of CBMU 301.

Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301

- 31 May 67 Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301 was established at the Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California. Lieutenant Commander Henry A. Holmes, CEC, USN, was the commanding officer.
- 7 Apr 67 Formal ceremonies for the establishment of the unit were held at the Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.
- 17 May 67 The advance party left the United States for the Naval Support Activity, Danang, Vietnam.
- 22 May 67 A cargo flight departed for Vietnam with four men.
- 23 May 67 Rolling stock and cargo departed on the SS Seatrain Puerto Rico with three men aboard as watch standers of the equipment.
- 20-24 Jun 67 The main body personnel and gear left Port Hueneme for Vietnam in five increments. Soon after the main body arrived in Vietnam work was started on a permanent campsite at Dong Ha.

CBMU 301 was under the operational control of the Naval Support Activity, Danang. The unit acted as the Public Works Department of the Naval Support Activity for advance base maintenance and other public works functions in the I Corps area.

Headquarters for CBMU 301 were at Dong Ha. The primary mission of the main body was maintenance of Marine and Naval shore facilities, including the airstrip at Dong Ha. In addition, to the main body, three permanent details were formed.

Detail Alfa was at An Hoa. Its primary mission was airstrip maintenance with a secondary mission of providing maintenance support to United States Marine and Naval units.

Detail Bravo, at Khe Sanh, had a primary mission of airstrip maintenance and a secondary mission of maintenance support of United States Marine and Naval units in the Khe Sanh complex.

Detail Charles was at Cua Viet. Their primary mission was the maintenance of the landing craft unloading ramp and maintenance support of Naval units in the complex.

There were also many temporary details sent to various areas to make repairs on airfields and camps. These repairs were, in most cases, of a one time nature and when the repairs were completed, the personnel and equipment were returned to the main body at Dong Ha.

3 Jun 68 Commander William E. Burdick, CEC, USN, relieved Lieutenant Commander Henry A. Holmes, CEC, USN, as commanding officer of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301. During the change of command ceremony, CBMU 301s camp was formally dedicated as Camp Spillman, in honor of BU1 Charles O. Spillman, who was killed when the helicopter in which he was a passenger was shot down while flying into Khe Sanh.

Jun 68 Detail Delta was sent to Quang Tri. The details mission was the construction of a 100-man base camp for elements of CBMU 301s main body, maintenance of the Quang Tri runway, and operation of a sanitary land fill.

During this month, Detail Bravo moved from Khe Sanh to Landing Zone Stud at the Forward Operating Base, Vandegrift. Their primary mission was the maintenance of the facilities there.

Sep 68. Detail Bravo was recalled from the Forward Operating Base, Vandegrift to the main body at Dong Ha.

28 Mar 69 The main body of CBMU 301 moved from Dong Ha to Quang Tri Combat Base and Detail Delta was disestablished.

Detail Bravo was established at the Dong Ha Combat Base. They were responsible for maintenance of airfield facilities, public works and limited utility support for United States Marine and Army units at Dong Ha.

16 Apr 69 The Quang Tri camp of CBMU 301 was formally dedicated and named in honor of Steelworker Edward C. Adams, who was killed during an enemy artillery attack at Khe Sanh on 16 April 1968.

22 May 69 Commander James B. Groff, CEC, USN, relieved Commander William E. Burdick, CEC, USN, as commanding officer of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301 at their headquarters at Quang Tri, Vietnam.

Dec 69 Detail Delta was established and sent to the Chu Lai Combat Base to take over the mineral plant operation.

3 Feb 70 Camp Adams, Quang Tri Combat Base, headquarters camp for CBMU 301 was turned over to Pacific Architects and Engineers, representatives of the U.S. Army.

4 Feb 70 The main body of CBMU 301 moved from the Quang Tri Combat Base to the Chu Lai Combat Base.

- 15 Feb 70 The unit officially assumed Public Works responsibilities at Chu Lai.
- 24 Apr 70 Lieutenant Commander George E. Krauter, CEC, USN, relieved Commander James B. Groff, CEC, USN, as commanding officer of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301.
- 15 Jun 70 The headquarters camp of CBMU 301 at Chu Lai was dedicated and renamed Camp Wall in honor of Lieutenant Commander Willie C. Wall, the units former executive officer. Lieutenant Commander George E. Krauter, CBMU 301 commanding officer, officiated at the ceremony. A granite plaque and monument was unveiled by Commander Philip Oliver, Mobile Construction Battalion Seven's commanding officer.
- Jun 70 Detail Echo was established for the construction of Vietnamese Navy Dependent shelters at Danang.
- 1 Jul 70 The complete turnover of all equipment, shops and responsibilities for the public works at Chu Lai to the Army are scheduled for this date.

In addition, it is planned to send detachments to various locations in the I Corps Area to construct Vietnamese Navy dependent shelters.

Disestablished 30 October 1970







MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
No. 1000
Bldg. 1000





