

Naval Construction Maintenance Unit 302

Historical Information



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



COMMAND HISTORY CBMU 302

Commissioned on 31 March 1967, CBMU THREE ZERO TWO was initially homeported in Cam Ranh Bay in the Republic of Vietnam. The unit was destined to establish a distinguished record of performance in Vietnam; it was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation (2 awards), a Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross, the Civic Action Medal, the Vietnamese Campaign Ribbon (11 campaigns), and the Vietnamese Service Ribbon. These awards and commendations were received for extensive accomplishments in construction and maintenance of runways, roads and shelters, as well as the Vietnamization Program. At one point during this period, CMBU 302 had over 1400 men assigned, making it the largest Seabee Battalion since World War II. The unit was the last battalion sized unit to leave Vietnam.

In January 1972, CBMU 302 completed withdrawing all detachments from Vietnam and deployed to CBC, Port Hueneme, California. By April of 1972 the unit's manning had been reduced to eight enlisted and one officer and the unit had a new homeport at Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. Since that time CBMU 302 has established a distinguished record of peacetime performance. The unit served the Subic Bay Naval Facility with construction, maintenance and contingency strike support and served the local Filipino community with disaster recovery assistance, civic action work and vocational education programs.

CBMU 302 is perhaps best known today for a record of reliable camp maintenance support. After establishing its camp support capabilities in Vietnam, the unit was called upon to establish a Seabee camp for the resident battalion detail at Subic Bay in 1974. This camp, Camp Jeffries, was dedicated on 26 February 1976, and with the exception of seven months in 1986, CBMU 302 maintained it until its closure in March 1992. In December 1975, CBMU 302 established a detail at Camp Cummins, Diego Garcia, to provide air conditioning, refrigeration, and electrical distribution maintenance. The unit disestablished the detail in February 1983 and has the distinction of having the longest continuous detail in Diego Garcia, with over seven years of service.

In addition to providing maintenance support in Camp Jeffries, the unit completed numerous projects in support of the U.S. Facility. Most noteworthy was the construction of tents, fencing and lighting system for "Project Newlife" at Grande Island in 1975. Though reduced in manning from a peacetime high of over 80 personnel to 45, the unit continued to make significant contributions to the quality of life of all those aboard the U.S. Facility.

CMBU 302's strike support mission was put to the test on four occasions in Subic Bay, and on four occasions the unit rose to meet the challenge. After smaller strikes in March 1979 and October 1983, the U.S. Facility endured major strikes of the local Filipino labor force in March 1986 and September 1990. The strikes lasted twelve and seven days respectively. The unit's personnel worked around the clock along side other NCF and PWC personnel to ensure that utilities support to the U.S. Facility continued unabated.

At every opportunity, the unit readily assisted the surrounding Filipino community. The cornerstone of COMUSNAVPHIL's civic action program, CBMU 302 completed projects of

every scope throughout Southern Luzon. Examples include roadways, water tanks and distribution systems, school houses, medical facilities, town halls and bridges. During times of disaster, the unit also answered the call. Clean-up and road cleaning operations were conducted in the local communities after typhoons and heavy rains in 1972, 1978, 1979 and 1985. In 1990, the unit disassembled a collapsed six-story college building at Cabanatuan, the result of a massive earthquake. Working around the clock, over a seven day period, the unit recovered the bodies of 137 victims. For its community assistance, the unit has received the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.

One of the unit's greatest challenges came in June of 1991, when Mount Pinatubo's volcanic eruption and the concurrent passing of Typhoon Yunya inundated the U.S. Facility with over eight inches of wet ash and sand. Throughout the storm, the unit dispatched search and rescue and engineering assessment teams. As the storm subsided, the unit began clearing roadways and the airfield, restoring water systems and cleaning and repairing the power distribution system. The unit's efforts over the following months were instrumental to the U.S. Facility's miraculous recovery from this disaster. A short time later, the unit moved into the local community repairing bridges and roofs and erecting temporary structures in the many evacuation centers. For its outstanding performance the unit was awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award.

July 1992 saw the end of a remarkable chapter in the unit's history and marked the beginning of its equally remarkable final chapter. With the expiration of the Joint Bases Treaty, the unit executed a permanent change of duty station from Camp Jeffries, Subic Bay R.P. to Camp Covington, Guam as part of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Philippines. The unit received the Navy Unit Commendation for its part in the Philippine withdrawal. Immediately upon arrival in Guam, the unit completed the total reconstruction of three badly damaged, deteriorated buildings to serve as temporary administrative and warehousing spaces while starting construction on new camp facilities. By far the unit's largest single project, the new camp facilities were completed and dedicated by RADM G. B. Estes, COMTHIRDNCB, on 27 January 1994.

CBMU 302 arrived at a critical juncture in Guam's history. The requirements for new construction to support the accelerated Subic Bay rollback process were nearing their peak and an unprecedented string of natural disasters was just about to begin. During the six months following its arrival on Guam, CBMU 302 assisted in the completion of new camp facilities for Explosive Ordnance Demolition Mobile Unit FIVE and provided rapid response disaster recovery capabilities for five typhoons (Omar - 28 Aug, Brian - 21 Oct, Elsie - 3 Nov, Hunt - 18 Nov, and Gay - 23 Nov 1992). The unit played a critical role in the massive island wide recovery efforts which followed including clearing island roads to reestablish vital transportation arteries, installing emergency generators, hauling storm debris from housing areas, and reconstructing numerous military and civilian facilities. The unit was assigned to strike, reconstruct, and ultimately secure "Camp Omar", a large tent city erected for the thousands left homeless by Typhoon Omar, as Typhoons Brian and Elsie bore down on families still housed in these temporary shelters. The unit received the Humanitarian Service Medal for its outstanding community assistance during recovery operations for Typhoon Omar.

In January 1993 CBMU 302 took on additional camp maintenance and Philippine rollback construction tasking when Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Forty, scheduled for deployment to Guam, was diverted to Somalia in support of Operation Restore Hope. In April the unit deployed to Saipan to establish a Seabee Base Camp of operation and begin construction of the American Memorial Park. In August of 1993, Guam was struck by an 8.2 magnitude earthquake and the unit again went into disaster recovery operations, assessing and repairing military facilities, school facilities, and constructing temporary classroom buildings.

Whether in maintenance, construction, disaster recovery, civic action, or military operations, the Seabees of CBMU 302 have consistently distinguished themselves by providing responsive, professional service to the fleet and the Nation. As circumstances and requirements have changed over the years, they have adapted to new missions and assignments, providing a strong example of the versatility and "Can Do" spirit which has made the Seabees famous. Throughout their history, from Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, to Camp Covington, Guam, they have remained true to these defining words:

BATTALION CREED

"The man who says it can't be done, usually finds himself being interrupted by a CBMU 302 Seabee doing it."

SUMMARY OF HOMEPORTS & DETACHMENTS

COMMISSIONED	31 MARCH 1967
NAVAL SUPPORT FACILITY CAM RANH BAY, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM	AUG 67 - JAN 72
CAMP JEFFRIES SUBIC BAY, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES	APR 72 - JUN 92
DETAIL - CAMP CUMMINS DIEGO GARCIA	DEC 75 - FEB 83
CAMP COVINGTON GUAM	JUL 92 - JUL 94
DECOMMISSIONED	22 JULY 1994

MISSION STATEMENT

The primary responsibility of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit THREE ZERO TWO is to provide engineering, maintenance, repair, and construction as directed by Commander, THIRD Naval Construction Brigade in support of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, Naval Station Guam and other Naval facilities as required. Additional requirements are to provide public works and utility system contingency support for theaterwide bases, accomplish routine camp maintenance of assigned facilities, conduct military and technical training, maintain a self defense capability, provide disaster recovery capability, and support civic action projects as directed.

SUMMARY OF UNIT AWARDS

Joint Meritorious Unit Award

Navy Unit Commendation with 2 bronze stars (3 awards)

Meritorious Unit Commendation with bronze star (2 awards)

Expeditionary Medal

National Defense Service Medal with bronze star (2 awards)

Vietnam Service Medal with 2 silver stars (11 campaigns)

Humanitarian Service Medal with bronze star (2 awards)

Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with silver star and bronze star (7 awards)

Overseas Service Ribbon with 2 silver stars and 4 bronze stars (15 awards)

Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation

Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Gallantry Cross

Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Civil Action

Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal



BATTALION

NAVAL CONSTRUCTION

MAINTENANCE UNIT

302



LALOR
U.S. NAVY
SEABEES

TUNNE
U.S. NAVY

THREX
U.S. NAVY

U.S. NAVY
SEABEES

U.S. NAVY
SEABEES
SEABEES



Fish of the month award

month of 1961

NAVY

SEABEES

NAVY

SEABEES



CBC



"HOME OF THE VIETNAM SEABEES"





