

# 7<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

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*Historical  
Information*



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



7th C.B.1st Embarkation

NCTC - Norfolk  
 ABD - Hueneme 18 Jun'42  
 Ready Date - 29 Jun'42  
 Left AHD - Sometime after 1 Jul'42  
 Destination - Straw Stack (Tuftrails)

2nd Embarkation

ABD - (Parks)  
 Ready Date - 1 Sep'44  
 Left ABD - 19 Dec'44  
 Location - Pearl Harbor Saipan  
 Okinawa

Log

- 6-17-42 - 7th CB detached from Norfolk 18 Jun'42.  
 7-3-42 - Destination changed from 14th ND to Straw Stack.  
 7-31-42 - 7th CB, while en route, ordered to report to CG, Defense Force, Samoa, for duty with Marine units in the Straw area.  
 8-22-42 - Orders requested for 75 addtl. men in lower ratings to report to 7th CB at the Straw Stack after outfitting at Hueneme.  
 10-3-42 - 175 seamen drawn from Norfolk for Straw Stack to be fully equipped and ready to sail 10 Nov.  
 1-31-43 - 865 men (or officers & men) of 7th CB reported on board at Button.  
 1-20-43 - 7th CB at Button doing General Base Construction work and maintenance.  
 3-8-43 - 180 Seamen including 10 welders left NCTC Peary for Hueneme FFT to 7th CB.  
 4-18-43 - 180 Seamen - 10 welder ratings departed from Hueneme as replacements.  
 5-11-43 - 7th CB is at Espiritu Santo (to be detached at later date). (ComNavBases SoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr dtd 5-11-43)  
 6-30-43 - 1 Jun'43 report - operating at Espiritu Santo.  
 12-21-43 - 7th CB arrived at Parks 20 Dec'43. (WKK)  
 1-6-44 - 7th CB arrived at San Francisco from overseas 13 Dec'43. (20 Dec'43 monthly rep.)

NOTC - Norfolk, 18 Jun'42  
 AHD - Hueneme, 29 Jun'42  
 Ready Date - 3 Jul'42  
 Left ABD - 19 Dec'44  
 Destination - Pearl Harbor Saipan  
 Okinawa

Location - ~~P.W.~~ Saipan

7th CB

- 12-4-44 - 1st Section of the 7th CB arrived Hueneme 29 Nov'44 from Parks. (Hueneme conf. disp to CNO 302006 dtd 1 Dec'44).
- 12-12-44 - 7th CB is booked to depart U.S. 21 Dec'44. (Com 12 Sec. Disp. to Comservpac 082352 dtd 9 Dec'44)
- 12-29-44 - 7th CB with 29 offs and 1101 men departed Parks for overseas destination as follows: 2 offs and 2 men via Hueneme 15 Dec'44 and 27 offs and 1099 men via San Fran 19 Dec'44. (Parks Sec. disp to Bupers 202020 dtd 21 Dec'44).
- 1-29-45 -- The 7th CB is located at Pearl Harbor with the 8th Brg. (Com 14 Sec. disp to CNO 112205 dtd 18 Jan'45).
- 1-29-45 -- The 7th CB to leave their present location at Pearl H. for Saipan. (Comservpac Sec. disp to CNO 212311 dtd 22 Jan'45).
- 2- 6-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 8th Brg. - The 7th CB reported to the 35th Reg. about 29 Dec'44.
- 2- 6-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 7th CB - No info on location. Report endorsed by 35th Reg.
- 2-17-45 - The 7th CB is located at Pearl Harbor. (Com 14 Sec. disp to CNO 081016 Feb'45).
- 3- 3-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 7th CB - Report endorsed by the 35th Reg., 8th Brg. and HAB.
- 4- 9-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 8th Brg. - 7th CB was secured from const work on 27 Jan'45.
- 4-19-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 7th CB - Moved from Advance Base Reshipment Depot, Iroquois Pt. during month of March. Advance party consisting of 5 officers & 222 men arrived in Saipan on 7 Mar'45 and the remainder of the unit consisting of 24 officers & 811 men arrived in Saipan on 18 Mar'45.
- 5-8-45 - The 7th CB is located at Saipan--staging for Okinawa. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)

Location - ~~P.W.~~ ~~Saipan~~ Okinawa

7th CB

- 5-17-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 35th Reg - 32 offrs & 1043 men of the 7th CB along with 35th Reg., & 14th & 21st CBs embarked during Feb'45 for staging at a forward area.
- 5-18-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of 7th CB - In transit to a forward area during Feb'45. Report end by 35th Reg & 8th Brig.
- 5-24-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 7th CB - located at Okinawa and Saipan. During April the greater portion of this unit moved from Saipan to Okinawa--shown as follows:  
20 Apr'45 - 1st group of forwd ech, consisting of 13 off. and 384 men, left Saipan and arrived Okinawa on 27 Apr'45.  
23 Apr'45 - 2nd group of fowd ech, consisting of 9 off. and 317 men, left Saipan and arrived Okinawa on 29 Apr'45.  
Remainder of unit, consisting of 7 off. and 319 men, remained at Saipan during month of Apr'45. Report routed via the 35th Reg and 8th Brg.
- 6-27-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of 7th CB - located at Okinawa. Rear echelon consisting of 7 offrs & 316 men left Saipan on 7 May'45 for Okinawa. Report routed via 35th Reg & 8th Brg.
- 7-23-45 - The 7th CB is assigned to the 11th Brg and 39th Reg. effective 10 July. (COT APO 331 sec report on assignment of CB units ser 897 dtd 10 July)
- 8-22-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 7th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg & 11th Brig.
- 9-11-45 - Inactivation of following CB units approved Comservpac disps 291935, 290051 & 290007 All Aug:- 4, 6, 7, 17, 20, 66, 74, 78 & 87 CBs - Okinawa. (Cincpoa conf spdltr ser 032559 dtd 4 Sept'45 to Comservpac).
- 9-24-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 7th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg & 11th Brg.
- 9-29-45 - Comservpac directs to inactivate the following CBs 4, 6, 7, 17, 20, 66, 74, 78 & 87. Inform Comservpac when inactivations are completed. (Comservpac conf spdltr ser 05174 dtd 11 Sept'45 to Comdt., NOB, Okinawa).

Location - Okinawa

7th CB

10-26-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 7th CB - location Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg. & 11th Brdg.  
7th CB was inactivated on 28 Sept'45. Men transferred to other units.

INACTIVATED

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

7/60 C(B. (waterfront) pag. 2

- 12/9 - Name Com 12 sec  
(P 74) 082352 sec personnel booked  
ETD - 21 dec.
- 12/21 - (Pearl Harbor) Rep center Calif departed for overseas  
Dec 202020 dec. at Banks - 15 and 19 dec.  
refd in 1000 sec  
Dec. 21 1945 sec
- 1/18 - FRA/ Com 14 sec act add - 8th Brig.  
disp. 112205 Jan.
- 2/13 - Col. Deaderick action against Japanese
- 3/12 - - Com 14 secret delete
- 4/9 - - Name Disp. 040153 Mar.  
Saipan sec 030318 added.  
April
- 9/24/45 - Name sec 212

5/30/44 - Camp Banks  
 (12-43) -  
 8/7/44 - (Hawaiian area) Cno Conf/disp. Ready Camp Banks  
 031525 Aug. 1 Sept. assigned  
 for waterfront  
 construction.  
 9/2 - 2nd NC Brigade Cno Conf/disp. report 2nd N.C.  
 9/19 - (Camp Banks) 081705-Aug Const. Brigade  
 Bullock memo Ready Camp Banks  
 5 Oct. 1 Sept assd P. H.  
 for waterfront.  
 10/20 - Camp Banks Bullock memo Ready depart camp  
 (P. H.) 14 Oct. Banks Sept 1. Shop.  
 priority number.  
 assd P. H. waterfront.  
 10/27 - (Oahuename) Cno conf/disp. about 5 Nov. transferred  
 962101 Oct. to Oahuename. (Nov 1944)  
 11/13 - " Cincopac sec 102153 assd Sec priority. (35th  
 also cominato 112137 esp being and this nov priority)

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Jul'44	31	1053	R & BNP625
1 Aug'44	30	1056	R & BNP625
1 Sep'44	30	1070	R
1 Nov'44		1059	BNP625
1 Dec'44		1073	BNP625
1 Jan'45	29	1082	MoR
1 Feb'45	29	1036	MoR
1 Mar'45	29	1037	MoR
1 Apr'45	29	1030	MoR
1 May'45		1020	BNP625
1 Jun'45	29	1016	BNP625 & R
1 Jul'45	29	1052	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45	32	1022	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		855	
		143 transients	BNP625
1 Oct'45	18		R
1 Nov'45	25		R

# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SEVENTH BATTALION

By RALPH G. FALLERT, YIC

Although it was not formally commissioned until the twenty-third day of June, 1942, the Seventh Battalion dates its real birth from an evening about a week earlier. On that occasion, acting for the first time as a unit, the

men assembled on the drill ground at Camp Allen, Norfolk, and there met their first commanding officer, the colorful Lieutenant Commander Julius L. Piland, whom most of the men had not seen until that moment, and their executive officer, the then Lieutenant Joseph H. Barker. The men who stood at attention that evening were but a week or two out of boot camp at Great Lakes or Norfolk, or both; and they hailed from practically every state in the Union.

A few days later the Battalion left for Port Hueneme in California, divided among three trains following different routes. After a five-day trip, uneventful but interesting, the trains rolled into Camp Rousseau—a dusty, somewhat disappointing place at first sight. The next three weeks were spent in training

and outfitting for the overseas assignment that all knew was due at any moment.

Finally came the awaited orders, and heavily steeped in the usual scuttlebutt, the Battalion entrained one afternoon for San Francisco, arriving there the following morning. After a few hours of waiting on the dock, the men boarded the liner, a President ship hastily and only partially converted into a troop carrier. The following morning at about 9 a. m., the ship sailed out of San Francisco Bay. Few, if any, aboard, realized how long it was to be before the Battalion would again see the Golden Gate.

For most of the day the ship was convoyed by a blimp and a D. E. There was probably no one who did not feel a peculiar loneliness when, late in the afternoon, the blimp made one last huge circle and faded into the distance where lay San Francisco and home.

For the next eleven days the men made the best of their situation. Some of the memories of the trip will always be unforgettable: The ceremonies during the crossing of the equator; the little swimming pool which had been filled with ammunition but which was quickly restored to its real purpose; the heat and the smell of

## LT. JOSEPH McCALL ROBERTS

Headquarters Company Commander

April 1944 to October 1944

The death of Lieutenant Roberts leaves a place in the Seventh Battalion organization which cannot be filled. He has created for himself a position of high esteem and honor in the minds and hearts of both officers and men.

Joseph McCall Roberts was born on October 4, 1913, in Nashville, Tenn. He attended the Nashville Public Schools and was graduated from the Nashville High School. In the fall of 1930 he entered Vanderbilt University to study Civil Engineering and secured the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in the Spring of 1934.

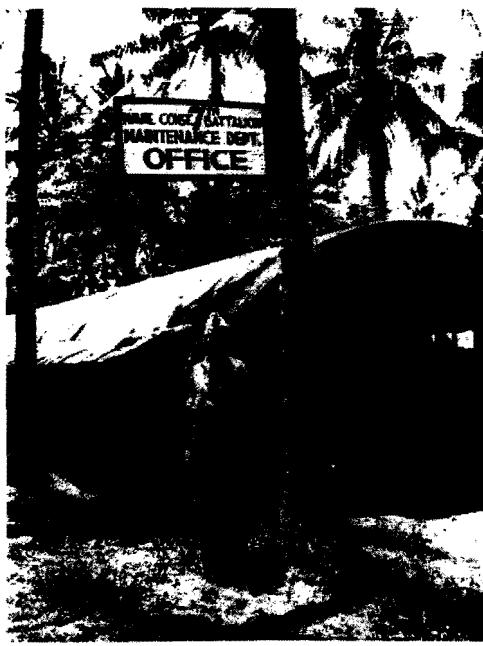
Following his graduation from Vanderbilt he became associated with the firm of Hart, Freeland and Roberts, Architects and Engineers. Here Lieutenant Roberts advanced to the position of Office Manager in the firm's Nashville Branch. Prior to his entering the Naval Service in December 1942, he was assistant Project Engineer on the construction of the \$25,000,000 Blue Grass Ordnance Depot in Richmond, Ky.

Lieutenant Roberts served with the 70th Naval Construction Battalion in Africa and in April 1944, joined the Seventh Naval Construction Battalion where he assumed command of Headquarters Company and the collateral duties of Construction Officer and Chief Censor.

Although his physical self is no longer with us, Joe Roberts will always be present in our memories. He has set an example of devotion, honor and loyalty which is in the highest tradition of the Naval Service.



LIEUTENANT ROBERTS



## QUONSET HUTS

Seabees have adopted the Quonset Hut as a type of construction peculiarly fitted to their needs. It is easily constructed, easily camouflaged and adaptable to all sorts of climate.



the improvised mess hall; the crowded deck arrangements; the salt water showers; all of the sights and sounds and sensations of a troop ship at sea, which were for most of the men an entirely new experience. The Seventh was the only body of men aboard, and the enforced idleness enabled them to become better acquainted.

And then, one morning, Samoa. The Navy planes roaring by in a gesture of welcome. The men were bursting with curiosity to see what it was all going to be like. The mingled feelings which were aroused by the first view of the inner harbor.

The ship docked about noon. That afternoon most of the men went ashore and had a look at the harbor of American Samoa—at Pago Pago. Undoubtedly that first look did much to divest the tropics of their Hollywood glamour. Not much was to happen in the next seventeen months to restore it.

That night, it rained. The ship was already being unloaded. The holds were open, winches grinding, booms swinging; and sleep, in the bunks which encircled the hatches on the first and second decks, was an impossibility except for brief periods. Samoa at that moment was not an attractive place to the men of the Seventh Battalion.

The ship remained a clangorous, hectic home for the following day and night. By the third morning, however, most of the men were assigned to some area of the island, and the real task of setting up began.

The assignment of the Seventh, it appears, was to take over and expand the work commenced sometime previously by civilian contractors, most of whom were returning to the States. The Seventh was to take over their installations and facilities, but not all of the Battalion could be accommodated in the barracks-like buildings left by the contractors. Company C, for example, went across the harbor and began converting a school building into living quarters.

After several days a good start had been made; the men were getting their feet on the ground; the more immediate problems were being solved, and the Battalion was well on its way toward doing a job. And then came the tremendous scuttlebutt! The Battalion was going to leave—to go much nearer the front! It seemed incredible that, having just arrived, the men were to pull up stakes. But it was true. Almost without knowing how they did it, they found themselves aboard ship again, eight days after sailing into the harbor of Pago Pago. The Battalion was divided between two ships with two newly-arrived units, the Sixth Battalion and Cub One, similarly divided. Accompanied by two freighters, and a cruiser as a convoy, the ships sailed out of Pago Pago, headed for Guadalcanal (?). The sea that morning was the roughest the men of the



The first week following the landing at Espiritu Santo was much like the bustle of the first day, but gradually a semblance of order began to emerge. Messing facilities were established, and later mess halls were built.

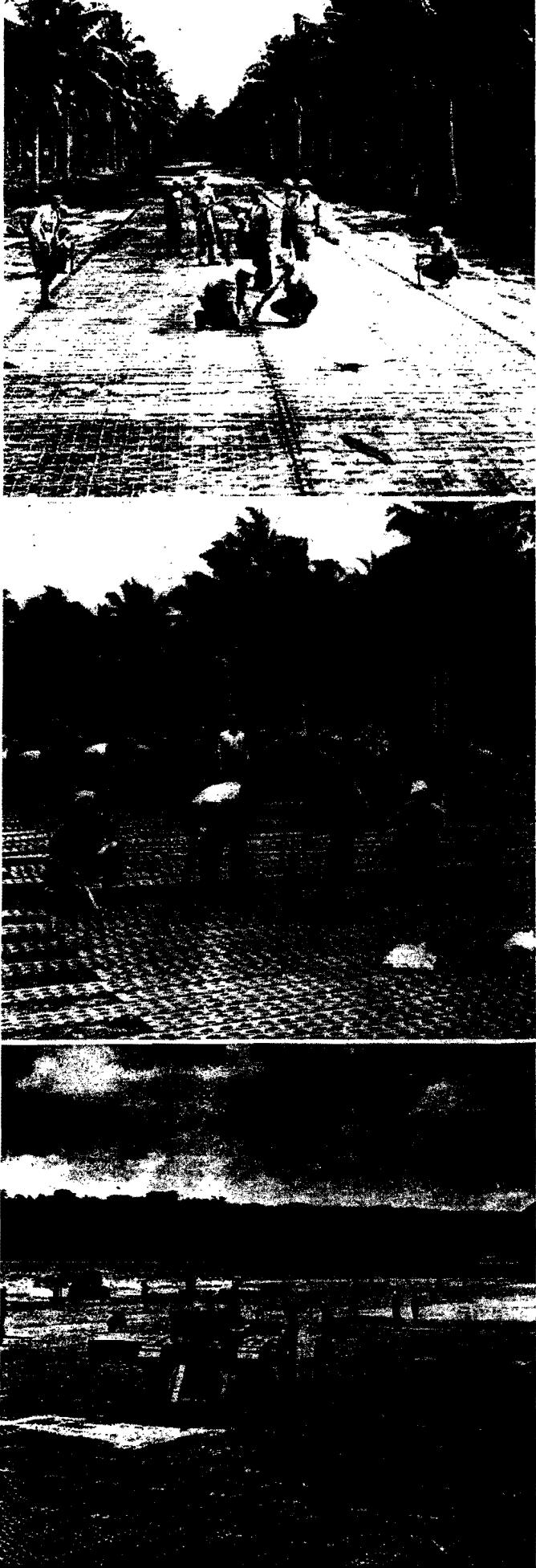
Seventh had experienced. The voyage was not as comparatively pleasant as the one aboard the xxxxxxx; the division of the battalions between ships, with the talk of a possible fusion of each ship's personnel into new battalions, introduced a certain restless note that had been absent before.

After four days of sailing, the small convoy entered Segond Channel between Espiritu Santo and Aore Island in the New Hebrides. Unloading operations were begun and carried out under considerable difficulty, due to lack of facilities. Painter's Dock, the only one available—a small coral and earthen installation—quickly disintegrated under the unwontedly heavy traffic, and aggravated the problems.

That first night, it rained—a cold, drenching downpour. There had been time to erect but few tents. Those who were without shelter built great coconut fires to dry and warm themselves, and slept as best they could in the open on army cots. Many of the men worked throughout the night on unloading operations. Others were still aboard ship. That first afternoon and night was one of confusion and disorder; its memory conjures up a picture of disarray, of a jumbled hodge-podge of every conceivable kind of paraphernalia; of

As this Seabee climbs a telephone pole erected by Nature, he recalls the many times he performed this task back home on his civilian job . . . sans the danger of a sniper's slug.





Seabees carry their roads and runways with them wherever they go. Not many days after occupying the island it was made accessible to the heaviest of land, sea and air traffic.

men working frantically to unload gear from small boats that threatened to swamp; of men working to clear the dock of its accumulating freight; of men deciding where things should be stowed, and shouting for someone to bear a hand; of men in coffee lines.

The hasty departure from Samoa, with the abandonment of much of the Battalion's gear there, had given birth to many problems of supply—of equipment and material shortages. The first week following the landing at Espiritu Santo was much like the bustle of the first day, but gradually a semblance of order began to emerge. Tents were set up so that all had shelter; messing facilities, although far from ideal, were established; a transportation system was started, and supply dumps began to spring up. By the end of the week the Seventh was well dug in and had begun its construction jobs in earnest.

From then on it was a story of improvement and progress and growth. Living conditions took on a more permanent character; in time platforms were built for the tents and even insect wire added. Mess halls were built and other facilities improved.

The one airfield which had been cleared when the Battalion arrived, was developed far beyond its original proportions. A fighter field, entirely, and a huge bomber field, largely, were constructed by men of the Seventh. A large dock and several smaller ones gradually came into being; mile upon mile of excellent coral-paved road; hundreds of quonset huts of all sizes; storage tanks; repair shops; every conceivable installation that could help make Espiritu Santo a complete base, grew up under the ingenious and tireless hands of the Seventh Seabees. At every turn was improvisation and invention, made necessary by the shortages and lack of equipment and material. The men of the Seventh proved themselves equal to the task.

And, of course, there was the purely human side. Who will forget the open-air theater, the cocoanut log benches, the sitting in pouring rain to watch a movie that meant scenes from home? Who will forget Joe E. Brown and the other visiting shows? Who will forget the trading with the natives for boars' tusks, beads or shells? The thrill of receiving mail? Who will forget that peculiar, indescribable feeling, when one awoke for the first time to the ominous sound of a shelling? Who will forget the thousand and one little entertaining, humorous things that happened among one's circle of friends in the tent or the chow-hall—the things whose memory acts like a kind of cement binding men into friendships that endure? During the latter part of May 1943, Commander Piland was relieved, and Lieutenant Commander Barker took over the command of the activity.

And who will forget his feeling of pride and sense of

accomplishment as he stood at the rail of the xxxxxxxx, homeward bound, and surveyed the results of those sixteen difficult months? Not the men of the Seventh Battalion! The trip home was a breeze to most as thoughts turned to home and Christmas. On December 13th the ship docked at San Francisco. 1943

After a fast-passing and all-too-short thirty days' leave, the boys returned to Camp Parks to work, train, and to be re-organized. In March 1944, Lieutenant Commander Day, formerly of the Sixth Battalion, assumed command of the Seventh upon the detachment of Lieutenant Commander Barker. A three months' refresher course in military training was completed, a month's course in the technical training department, and then work projects were started.

With each passing day the ranks were effected by transfers and replacements until just prior to ten days embarkation leave, early August, the battalion strength stood at some 1,080 men.

The work projects either completed or worked on by the men of the Seventh included the hostess house, the training ship, tennis courts, the WAVES Officers' barracks pontoon assembly, and others. These projects, while improving the Camp Parks area, also allowed the officers, chiefs and men to familiarize with one and the other, and to more or less size up the possibilities, capabilities, etc., of the battalion as a whole.

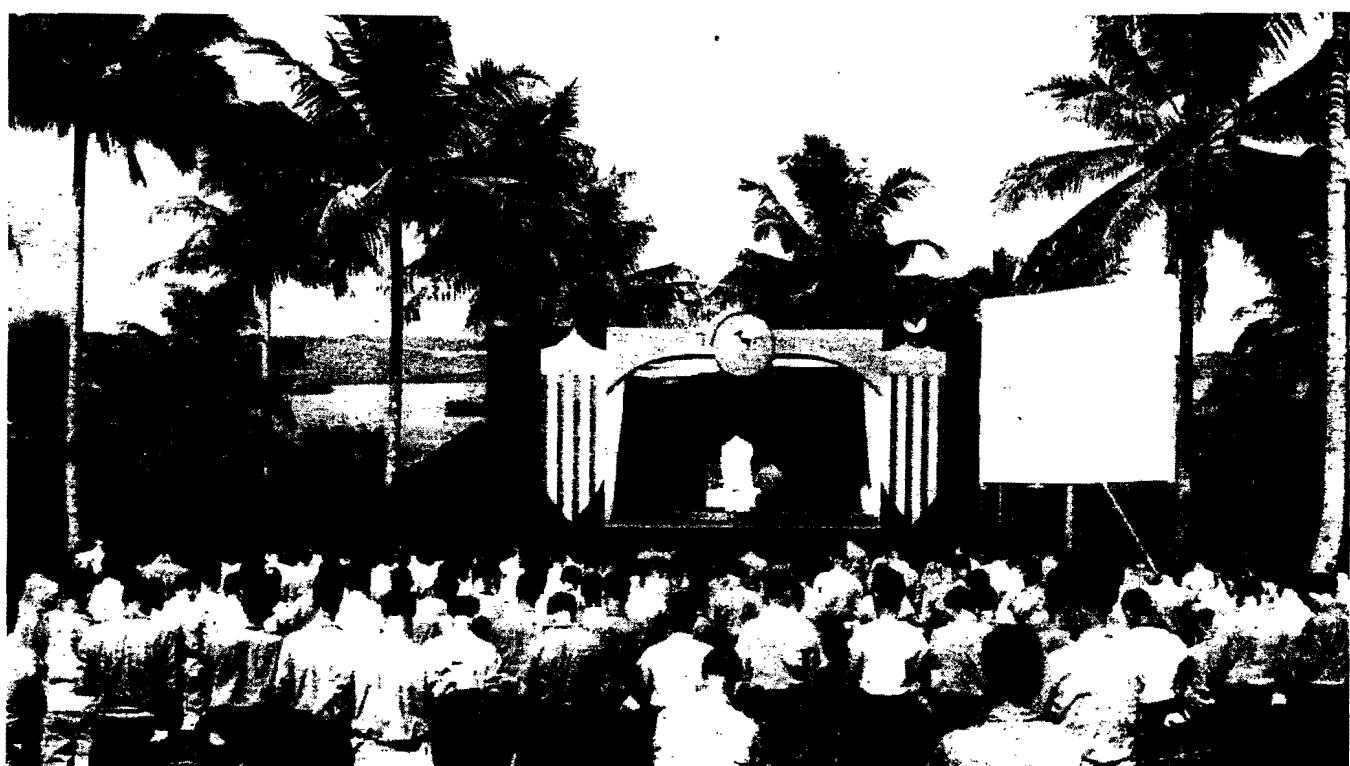
As this is written, the battalion is completely organized into a well-trained, hard-hitting, and efficient organization with a full complement of officers and men. Orders are being awaited with considerable enthusiasm for the next assignment of the Seventh!

## From cruise book of 7th NCB, published late in 1944.

Freedom of worship according to the dictates of conscience is one of the principles for which we work and fight. Open-air chapel services are held for Catholic, Jew and Protestant Seabees, each worshiping according to his faith.



Nature designed this double row of palms. Seabee ingenuity and love of beauty did the rest. It's a natural scenic highway about which the old-time Sunday driver well might prattle.



## SEVENTH BATTALION

Commissioned in the spring of 1942 the Seventh NCB left Norfolk June 18 and arrived at Hueneme June 23. The Battalion sailed July 17 from San Francisco with 22 officers and 902 men, reaching Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, on Aug. 11. The trip included stopovers at Pago Pago and Tutuilla in the Samoan Islands. After 16 months as Espiritu Santo, the Seventh returned to San Francisco on Dec. 13, 1943. A year later, Dec. 16, 1944, the Seventh, with 1,082 men and 27 officers, left Camp Parks for San Francisco and Pearl Harbor, reaching Pearl Dec. 29. In February 1945, the unit left in three echelons for Saipan, arriving in March. A few weeks later, the Seventh moved to Okinawa, where it was stationed at war's end.

Naval Construction Battalion 7 was established on 23 June 1942.

This is the date shown on the muster roll that the men were assigned to the battalion.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

### Chronology

18 Jun 1942	NCB 7 was commissioned in Norfolk, VA, and headed for the Advance Base Depot, Port Hueneme, CA with 22 officers and 917 men.
23 Jun 1942	NCB 7 arrived at Port Hueneme.
17 Jul 1942	The battalion departed San Francisco, CA for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides aboard S.S. President Monroe.
28 Jul 1942	NCB 7 anchored in harbor of Pago Pago, Tutuila, American Samoa.
05 Aug 1942	Embarked aboard U.S.S. Wharton with 15 officers and 465 enlisted men, and aboard the S.S. President Polk with 7 officers and 433 enlisted men, respectively.
06 Aug 1942	NCB 7 sailed from Tutuila for duty beyond the "Straw Area".
11 Aug 1942	NCB 7 arrived at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.
11 Aug 1942-20 Nov 1943	At Espiritu Santo, the battalion constructed a fighter field, bomber fields #s 1 and 2, 12 docks and piers, 2 hospitals, 19 communication towers and miscellaneous towers, 42 miles of road, 8 camps for military units, two bridges, 71 warehouses and 31 ammunition magazines.
20 Nov 1943	NCB 7 embarked aboard U.S.S. Wharton for the U.S.
13 Dec 1943-	The battalion arrived at Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California. 27 officers and 771 enlisted men began training and reorganizing as a waterfront construction battalion.
19 Dec 1944	
19 Dec 1944	NCB 7 sailed from San Francisco for Fray aboard the S.S. President Tyler with 27 officers and 1082 enlisted men.
29 Dec 1944-27 Feb 1945	The battalion was at Iroquois Point, Hawaii.
27 Feb 1945	
8 May 1945	The battalion, divided into echelons, sailed to Saipan.
27 Apr-30 Oct 1945	The last of the battalion arrived in Saipan, Mariana Islands. NCB 7 was employed on Okinawa. The battalion constructed a seaplane base, pontoon piers, causeways, and roads. They also did area clearance work for the Advance Base Construction Depot.
28 Sep 1945	All men were transferred to other units.
30 Oct 1945	U.S. Naval Construction Battalion 7 was inactivated at Okinawa.

**Officers in Charge**

<b>Commander Julius L. Piland, CEC, USNR</b>	<b>17 Jun 1942 – 13 Jun 1943</b>
<b>Lieutenant Commander Joseph H. Barker, Jr., CEC, USN</b>	<b>13 Jun 1943 – 18 Mar 1944</b>
<b>Lieutenant Commander Willard H. Day, CEC, USNR</b>	<b>18 Mar 1944 – 29 Sep 1945</b>
<b>Lieutenant Junior Grade Jack G. McGuire, CEC, USNR</b>	<b>29 Sep 1945 – 30 Oct 1945</b>











