

# Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40

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*Historical  
Information*



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



**Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FORTY**  
**NMCB 40**  
**"Fighting Forty"**

The Seabees' motto "We Build, We Fight" is no more exemplified than with US Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FORTY - the "Fighting FORTY."

Under the command of CDR I. S. Rasmusson, "Fighting FORTY" was established in October 1942 and quickly gained its reputation as one exemplifying valor and devotion in time of war, hard work and humanitarian endeavors in time of peace.

This reputation was initially dramatized by its heroics at Los Negros Island, in the Admiralties.

On March 2, 1943, an advance party of NMCB FORTY landed. Its task was to rehabilitate the Momote airstrip which was captured by the U. S. Army only two days before. A Japanese counterattack took place on March 3 and 4, 1943. FORTY's Advance Party was ordered into the defense perimeter. Under sprays of enemy fire, Seabees scooped out 300 yards of runway and taxiway. "Fighting FORTY" performed their mission but was left with nine dead and 47 wounded after two nights and three days of fierce battle.

In November 1945, FORTY was disestablished and remained so for 21 years. In February 1966 the Battalion was reestablished for duty at Chu Lai, Vietnam, under the command of CDR Ben L. Saravia.

After successfully completing its base operations support mission for the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force, FORTY returned to the U. S. In August 1967 where it received the "Battle Efficiency" pennant for its outstanding support effort.

In October 1967, FORTY began its second Vietnam deployment. A major highlight for NMCB FORTY during this period was construction of a complete medical facility for the Republic of Korea Army detachment in Quang Ngai.

After three highly successful deployments to Vietnam, FORTY's wartime operations were completed and the Battalion turned their talents to more peaceful operations.

Peacetime construction continued for 20 years until August 1990 when FORTY was once again called upon for their wartime construction expertise. The entire Battalion, under the command of CDR J. R. Doyle, was mobilized to the hot sands of Saudi Arabia to support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. During the troop build-up, FORTY spurred visions of old as they set about moving over 1,000,000 cubic yards of sand, constructing two Ammunition Supply Depots, maintaining 200 miles of desert road, as well as providing critical construction support for U. S. And Allied installations in the theatre.

With the arrival of the first nine-man team on December 10, 1992, NMCB FORTY provided construction support to the forces of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. After the January 24, 1993, arrival of the Battalion's main body, the in-country strength was over 500 personnel. NMCB FORTY was also able to apply some of its efforts to provide direct assistance to the Somalians by building and repairing schools and orphanages.

During the last two deployments Fighting FORTY continued its proud tradition, under the command of CDR R.E. Cellon. While deployed to Spain the battalion provided invaluable support to the U. S. Forces supporting Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While deployed to Guam the crash of Korean Airlines flight 801 and Super typhoon Paka provided further opportunities for NMCB FORTY to demonstrate its excellence, and the necessity of a well trained, immediate action construction force.

From the Pacific Islands during World War II, to the jungles of Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, the scorching sands of Somalia and beyond, NMCB FORTY stands guard in a world that challenges freedom. The heroic spirit and "Can Do" cry of Fighting FORTY is perpetuated in its Seabees today.

In August 1990, after Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, "Fighting FORTY" was called from its deployment site in Guam to support the First and Second Marine Expeditionary Forces in Saudi Arabia. FORTY participated in the II MEF bed-down—the largest multi-battalion contingency operation in twenty years. In 36 days Seabees placed over 20,700 cubic meters of concrete and built six separate camps to house 25,000 Marines. In support of Marine Air Group SIXTEEN, NMCB FORTY prepared 1.5 million square feet of aircraft parking, fueling taxiways and maintenance hangar pads.

With the arrival of the first nine-man team on December 10, 1992 and the subsequent arrival its main body the following month, NMCB FORTY provided expeditious construction support to the forces of OPERATION RESTORE HOPE in Somalia. "Fighting FORTY" aided the Somalis through the construction and repair of schools and orphanages.

Midway through its 1996 European Deployment, NMCB FORTY was redeployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina in support of OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR. Mount-out and embarkation via ship, rail, line-haul, and air was complex. Back working along side the U.S. Army, NMCB FORTY planned and operated with the Army's First Armored Division Implementation Force (IFOR) to close and disestablish fourteen base camps. All operations in the formidably hostile environment of the Bosnia Posavina Corridor were done tactically with weapons at the ready. Logging over 256 tactical convoys covering more than 220,000 vehicle miles within a 75-day operation, FORTY completed the camp disestablishments and provided contingency construction support for nineteen critical force sustainment projects—enabling enforcement of the Dayton Peace Accord.

In 2003, “Fighting FORTY” added once again to its rich history through its support of OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. Home ported in Port Hueneme during the hostilities phase, NMCB FORTY aided its sister battalions deployed to Southwest Asia through massive embarkation operations to send nearly 9.6 million pounds of construction equipment from California to Kuwait to support ongoing combat operations. In August 2003, the “Fighting FORTY” Air Detachment redeployed from Okinawa, Japan directly to Southwest Asia to support ongoing global war on terrorism operations in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

In December 2004 the battalion deployed to the Pacific theater of operations. The battalion completed numerous construction projects at the main body site in Okinawa and other locations throughout Japan, including Atsugi, Fuji, Iwakuni, and Sasebo. There were also detail sites in Pohang and Chinhae, South Korea; Diego Garcia, and San Clemente Island. Within a month of deployment, a group of 50 Seabees responded to the devastating tsunami that struck Southeast Asia, conducting critical engineering assessments on government facilities and airfields. They also supervised the construction of tension fabric structures and supported runway working parties that delivered relief supplies to the people of Indonesia. Additionally, the battalion participated in the Deployment-for-Training (DFT) Cobra Gold, promoting interoperability between the nations’ military components. Finally, the battalion deployed Seabees in support of a Joint Task Force exercise, New Horizons 2005, to provide humanitarian construction and engineering operations for the nation of Panama.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 deployed a number of Seabees to Indonesia where they arrive on Jan. 11 2005 to join the ranks of U.S. military troops providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the wake of the massive devastation that had resulted in the deaths of more than 150,000 people and displaced a million more. Over the next few weeks, NMCB 40 was likely to deploy more Seabees forward to affect humanitarian assistance for the people of Indonesia.

In September 2005, “Fighting FORTY” conducted humanitarian relief, clearing, and construction operations for the citizens of greater New Orleans, Louisiana and Gulfport, Mississippi following the devastation brought on by Hurricane Katrina. Under arduous conditions and with limited resources, NMCB 40 employed resourcefulness, ingenuity, and technical expertise to provide immeasurable relief and accelerated recovery in the affected region,

In April 2006, “Fighting FORTY” deployed to Guam and Southwest Asia, brilliantly executing peacetime and contingency construction operations around the globe, including operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in support of OIF, and detail sites in Guam; Whidbey Island, Washington; Palau; Thailand; and aboard the USNS Mercy. In the end, the battalion completed over 42,000 mandays of safe, high quality construction throughout the Pacific and Central Command Theaters of Operation, resulting in a combined cost savings of over \$14.8M.

In August 2007, "Fighting FORTY" mounted out to the CENTCOM, EUCOM, and SOUTHCOM theaters. The complexities of the battalion's deployment cannot be overstated, with sites located throughout Kuwait; the Horn of Africa; Andros Island; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Rota, Spain; Romania; Sao Tome; and Ghana. Despite the challenges associated with such dispersion of personnel and tasking, the battalion excelled, safely completing over 46,000 mandays of construction, camp maintenance service and combat service support on 91 projects, saving customers over \$16.2M. NMCB 40 again provided safe, high quality, timely construction, earning praise from supported commanders across the globe.

From the Pacific Island during World War II to the jungles of Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, the scorching sands of Somalia, the war torn areas of Bosnia, and back to the deserts of Southwest Asia, the Seabees of "Fighting FORTY" have stood ready to build and fight in a world that challenges freedom.













