

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3

*Historical
Information*



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



Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 Command History

Beginning in the summer of 1942, the 3rd U.S. Naval Construction Battalion played an important part in the building of bases in the Southern Pacific. One of the first Seabee units commissioned during World War II, the 3rd NCB was called upon to perform its job, not as a unit, but as a group of autonomous detachments that participated in a number of combat operations during the Marshall Islands campaign.

After reuniting in 1944, the battalion left Noumea May 22 to return to Camp Parks, Calif., where on July 12, it was ordered disbanded and then subsequently decommissioned Aug. 16, 1944.

The Battalion was re-activated on July 15, 1950 at Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, Calif. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE worked briefly at Amchitka, Alaska and in October 1951, they arrived in the Philippine Islands where they spent the next 5 1/2 years building Naval Air Station, Cubi Point.

The following four years were spent on Okinawa, Japan constructing Marine Corps Air Facility Futema. The Battalion's next major construction job was an airstrip at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, after which THREE served on Okinawa and Guam.

In May 1965 NMCB THREE made its first of three visits to Da Nang, Vietnam constructing more than 500 facilities for the Marine Corps. NMCB THREE's second and third tours in Vietnam took them to Chu Lai and Gai Le.

In November 1971, NMCB THREE was deployed to Guam to start construction of a new Seabee camp. The Battalion lived up to its "Better Than Best" motto by constructing enough permanent facilities to have the dedication of Camp Covington on May 4, 1972.

In February 1975 the Battalion deployed to Diego Garcia, a British territory in the Indian Ocean. THREE contributed to the massive construction effort undertaken by the Naval Construction Force.

NMCB THREE was named "Best of Type" in 1976 and winner of the Peltier Award for providing emergency repairs for all military commands while continuing its normal construction projects throughout the Marianas Islands in the aftermath of Super-Typhoon Pamela.

From April 1977 to August 1982, the Battalion divided into two "teams" (Blue and Gold) that rotated between Port Hueneme and Camp Shields, Okinawa. The Battalion was named "Best of Type" and awarded the Battle "E" in 1978, 1980 and 1981.

In March of 1983 the reunited Battalion deployed for the first time to Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain where it was again named "Best of Type" in the Pacific Fleet. From 1983-1989 the Battalion made routine deployments to the European and Pacific Theaters and

was again named the "Best of Type" in the Pacific Fleet and Peltier Award winner for FY 1987.

In October 1989, while completing a homeport field exercise, the Battalion deployed its Air Detachment from Fort Hunter Liggett, California to the San Francisco Bay area to provide earthquake recovery assistance. The Air Det repaired severely damaged utilities at Naval Air Station Alameda and Naval Station Treasure Island.

In January 1990, THREE returned to Rota. The Air Detachment was dispatched for disaster recovery operations in North Africa where they repaired flood-damaged rail lines, significantly aiding in Tunisia's economic recovery.

In March 1991, THREE deployed to Guam and provided Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with Typhoon Owen disaster recovery assistance in Yap. THREE also cleared runways and repaired utilities at Naval Air Station Cubi Point in support of Operation "Fiery Vigil" following the eruption of Mount Pinatubo.

NMCB THREE returned to Guam in July 1993, sending a Civil Action Team to Palau and a short-term detail to Saipan to help make preparations for the 50th Anniversary of World War II. Again, the disaster recovery specialists repaired facilities, utilities and schools following the worst earthquake to shake Guam in more than a century, measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale.

In September 1994, NMCB THREE embarked upon a 14-country, four-continent deployment. Seabees supported the United Nations protection force operation "Provide Promise" by maintaining the U.S. Hospital at Zagreb, Croatia as well as installing surveillance equipment in Baghdad, Iraq.

In November 1995, NMCB THREE deployed details to stateside U.S. military installations for the first time and ended a chapter in Seabee history of Seabee occupation of Diego Garcia.

In January 1997, the Battalion's main body returned to Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain. THREE Bees broke ground in two Baltic locations new to Seabees, Estonia and Uzbekistan, where they provided construction support during "Operation Baltic Castle" and a U.S. Humanitarian Aid Program (HAP) "Operation Provide Hope." During this time period, THREE also won the "Silver Anchor" for its personnel retention programs.

On April 23, 1998, THREE participated in the exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT '98). This was the first time Seabees participated in a combined fleet and multinational exercise of this type.

In Rayong, Thailand, THREE completed the construction of a second story addition to the Camillian Social Center. The center provides a place for Aids victims during their last days.

The Battalion had the opportunity to show exactly how mobile they are when they received a call to action in 1998. A modified Air Detachment quickly deployed to Nairobi, Kenya, in support of "Operation Resolute Response." The detachment assisted in disaster relief efforts, structural repair and the recovery of evidence and classified material following the U.S. embassy bombing. Shortly after returning to homeport, THREE was awarded the, "Golden Anchor," for its outstanding personnel programs.

On May 15, 1999, NMCB THREE headed to Rota, Spain where shortly after arriving on station, the Battalion was called into action in support of Joint Task Force, "Shining Hope." THREE repaired roads in Northern Albania that were weakened by the steady flow of more than 800,000 Albanian refugees from Kosovo and years of neglect. Shortly after Detachment Albania left, the mission changed and the Battalion sent an advanced party of 43 personnel into Kosovo. Within two weeks, the battalion integrated Detail Albanian's 150 personnel with an additional 184 Seabees from Camp Mitchell. The mission was to build 64 Davidson style Southeast Asia Huts (SEAhuts) in 90 days for an Army base camp at Camp Monteith, Gnjilane, Kosovo. Maintaining 24-hour operations for nearly two months, THREE stayed on schedule and completed the initial tasking in 89 days. By the time the Battalion departed for homeport in December 1999, they had built more than 80 SEAhuts and constructed more than 40 acres of hardstand.

In December 1999, the Battalion returned home after a successful deployment that once again earned them the title "Best of Type" in the Pacific Fleet and the right to wear the coveted Battle "E".

During THREE's subsequent homeport, they aided in the recovery of Alaska Airlines Flight 261. Shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, THREE deployed to sites across three continents, including the main body in Rota, Spain; details in Thurmont, MD; Tidewater, VA; Naples; Sigonella; Souda Bay; and DFTs to the Republic of Georgia; Stuttgart, Germany; and Gabon, Africa.

With Camp Mitchell in Force Protection Condition Delta for the first time since the Gulf War, THREE deployed an Air Detachment in December 2001 in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM by constructing 130 Al Qaeda detention cells at Camp X-ray. The DET also constructed 65 SEAhuts for JTF 160 security forces, and cleared enough land to construct a 160-bed Fleet Hospital.

In December 2002, THREE deployed to Camp Shields in Okinawa, Japan, as well as 14 other sites across the Pacific and Southwest Asia. Despite changes in deployment schedules and preparations for "Operation Enduring Freedom" and later with "Operation Iraqi Freedom," NMCB THREE kept pace and met all of their operational goals.

After returning from the Okinawa deployment and completing a very successful homeport THREE was again tasked with providing support for both "Operation Enduring Freedom" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom II". In April 2004 the battalion started their Pacific deployment. THREE had the lead role in Task Force Sierra, a construction task force in support of several joint special operations commands.

Detachments in support of OEF were in both the CENTCOM AO and the PACOM AO. In all, NMCB THREE had personnel on the ground at 36 different locations around the world, including two main body sites (Guam and Iraq) and eight other primary detail/detachment sites. Command and control of the unit was a significant challenge due to geographic dispersion, reporting requirements to multiple higher-echelon commands and clients and constant, operationally driven changes in tasking. NMCB THREE consistently provided a full spectrum of timely construction and engineering services while maintaining the highest quality standards and constant focus on bringing every Seabee home safe.

In October 2004, the Battalion returned home after a successful deployment that once again earned them the title “Best of Type” in the Pacific Fleet and the right to wear the coveted Battle “E”. During the 10-month homeport THREE executed a Field Exercise and Desert Exercise in preparation for operations in Iraq. One month prior to deploying the Battalion received notification to establish a new main body deployment site, move the Rota, Spain TOA to Arifjan, Kuwait, and to field six convoy security teams.

In July 2005, with limited tasking information, THREE deployed to Iraq with a total of nine Iraq detachments, as well as detachments in Horn of Africa; Souda Bay, Greece; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Andros Island, Bahamas; Rota, Spain; Kingdom of Bahrain; Seychelles Islands. NMCB THREE was the first and only battalion to ever be tasked to operate six Convoy Security Teams (CST) continuously, while providing over 11,000 mandays of construction support to the SECOND Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF). THREE’S CST’S safely executed more than 130 successful convoy missions that escorted more than 2,200 TCN vehicles more than 21,500 miles through the dangerous streets of Iraq, resulting in 17 combat action ribbon awards.

In November 2005, NMCB THREE turned over with NMCB 133 in Fallujah Iraq and redeployed to Kuwait in order to setup mainbody operations in Kuwait to support of Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) and Area Support Group, Kuwait. NMCB THREE established the new Main Body deployment site from scratch while integrating over 145 personnel from NMCB 21, and 139 personnel from the Army’s 63rd Construction Support Element. NMCB THREE worked with the Army to develop a master plan for what is now the Seabee main body deployment site. While deployed to Kuwait, NMCB THREE successfully completed over 20,000 man days of tasking, and completed 58 tasked projects in direct support of the CFLCC mission.

In April 2008, NMCB THREE deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, providing support to FIRST Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) in Iraq and assuming control of Task Force Sierra for a second time. The Battalion supported I MEF as they pressed the remnants of Al Qaida and prepared the fledgling Iraq Security Forces to take control of that country’s defenses. Task Force Sierra again supported the tip of America’s spear as they aimed to kill or capture Al Qaida and Taliban insurgent leaders.

NMCB THREE is currently deployed to Camp Mitchell, Naval Station Rota, Spain, providing support to Commander SIXTH Fleet, with detachments in the Caribbean, Africa and Europe.

NMCB THREE's contingency construction and disaster recovery legacy has endured since World War II, and its Seabees have served with distinction, earning Battle Efficiency Award (Battle "E") for best Battalion in the Pacific Fleet in 1976, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1987, 1999, 2004 and 2007, along with Peltier Award for the best Battalion in the Navy in 1976 and 2007.

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