

# Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 71

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## *Historical Information*



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





## THE HISTORY OF U. S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SEVENTY-ONE

First commissioned on 28 April 1943, NMCB-71 made a conspicuously outstanding war record during WWII, culminating in the Navy Unit Commendation Award for its part in the Okinawan invasion and subsequent operations. The original SEVENTY-ONE played no small role in creating the Seabee "Can Do" legacy.

Decommissioned in December 1945, NMCB-71 existed only in the memories of those who served with her and of those she served until her number was announced late in the summer of 1966 as one of the battalions which would be recommissioned to meet the challenges of increase hostile activities in Southeast Asia.

U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 71 was recommissioned on October 4, 1966 at Davisville, Rhode Island and completed two deployments in Vietnam.

Some of its major accomplishments, in the Chu Lai area, were construction of numerous ready service magazines, a heliport, hospital, 8,000-seat amphitheater, rock crushing plants and a variety of storage and hangar buildings. In addition, SEVENTY-ONE deployed five Seabee Teams in the Mekong Delta; providing assistance to the Vietnamese people by building bridges and refugee housing, repairing hospitals and training Vietnamese craftsmen.

For its work for the 30th Naval Construction Regiment, the battalion was awarded a second Navy Unit Commendation.

NMCB-71 deployed to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico in May 1969. As the alert battalion of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet, NMCB-71 was tasked with maintaining the readiness capacity to mount-out with 48 hours notice.

In August 1970, the battalion deployed to the U. S. Navy Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. One of SEVENTY-ONE's "firsts" included the operations of the dredge "Seabee II". Construction of a \$1 million Enlisted Men's Club of sophisticated concrete design and a Marine Barracks complex of 53 Baby Butler Huts provided challenges in quality construction training.

The deployment also saw details in Sicily, Greece, and Ethiopia erecting communication antennas and facilities. SEVENTY-ONE also completed the construction of the Ammi Lift Dock and successfully lifted a destroyer to dry-dock position at Davisville, Rhode Island.

During the homeport period following the "GTMO" deployment the battalion was at Melville, Westerly and in Davisville, Rhode Island constructing trailer parks, rehabilitation of the Marine Corps Barracks and erecting a Health Center. The battalion simultaneously deployed to Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory and Antarctica during September and October 1971, with two Seabee Teams deployed to Vietnam. The main body arrived at McMurdo Station, Antarctica in early October and commenced work on a variety of projects including a firehouse and telephone exchange, a communications transmitter building, POL lines, a helicopter pad, a quay extension, an incineration facility and a berthing complex. In November, a detail was sent to New South Pole Station and in December another detail was sent to commence work at Siple Station. The main body redeployed to homeport in late March 1972. Nearly half the battalion was still deployed to Diego Garcia in support of project "Reindeer Station" and returned to Davisville in June of 1972.

Deployments in the latter part of 1972 saw the main body again on the Antarctic Continent for DEEP FREEZE 73 and two dredge teams working alternately at Andros Island in the Bahamas. The Antarctic deployment resulted in the completion of the Siple Station project, erection of a Geodesic dome and other structures at the South Pole, and completion of numerous projects in the McMurdo area.

Homeport training was undertaken and a number of projects which exercised the battalion's construction skills and also provided a new beach facility at Calf Pasture Point, construction in support of the Navy Relief Carnival, night lighting for the main athletic field, and an extension to the target repair facilities at Camp Fogarty, as well as extensively improved road and drainage facilities at the military Training area.

In October 1973, the battalion deployed its main body to the Antarctic Continent to continue the previous season's work on the New South Pole Station complex. DEEP FREEZE 74 also involved construction of an addition to the McMurdo Station power plant and the installation of two 500 KW generators, plus numerous repair, minor construction and support functions for the scientists and naval personnel involved in the United States Antarctic Research Program. SEVENTY-ONE provided personnel, not on the main deployment site, to assist various activities in the Davisville area and in November 1973 deployed a detachment to Gaeta, Italy, to undertake construction of a recreation project in support of fleet personnel in the European area.

The DEEP FREEZE 74 deployment saw NMCB-71 set numerous Antarctic construction records. Project M-92, Addition to the Diesel Generator Plant in McMurdo proceeded without a hitch and was turned over to the Commander, U. S. Naval Support Force, Antarctica on February 1, 1974 as scheduled. At the South Pole, things went so well that the battalion completed not only all the DF-74 construction, but essentially all the DF-75 construction as well.

The months of April, May and June of 1974 saw the redeployed battalion staging to make its transition from the "Ice" battalion back to a normal land oriented battalion, and on April 12, LCDR G. A. ZIMMERMANN relieved LCDR W. H. KAY, JR., as SEVENTY-ONE's Commanding Officer. Military Training was conducted, a number of asphalt paving jobs in the Davisville area were completed and extensive preparation for the upcoming deployment to Bermuda was initiated.

The month of July saw NMCB-71 change homeports to Gulfport, Mississippi. The battalion again conducted Military Training and performed asphalt paving work to prepare for U. S. Naval Air Station, Bermuda's main runway overlay project. The battalion was in Gulfport for only 8 weeks before it deployed to Bermuda. During this extremely busy and hectic homeport period, the battalion experienced a personnel turnover of 67 percent.

MCB Seventy-one (Davisville)

Reestablished at Davisville, Rhode Island	4 Oct 66
Chu Lai, Vietnam	Apr 67 - Oct 67
Chu Lai, Vietnam	Apr 68 - Oct 68
Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico	May 69 - Jan 70
Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	Aug 70 - Apr 71
Antarctica	Oct 71 - Feb 72
Antarctica	Oct 72 - Feb 73
Antarctica	Nov 73 - Feb 74
Bermuda	Sept. 74 - May 75

MCB 71 was transferred to NCBC, Gulfport, MS, in July 1974, and decommissioned at Gulfport in July 1975.

MCB Seventy-one

*Disestablished on 1 July 1975*

U.S. NAVAL



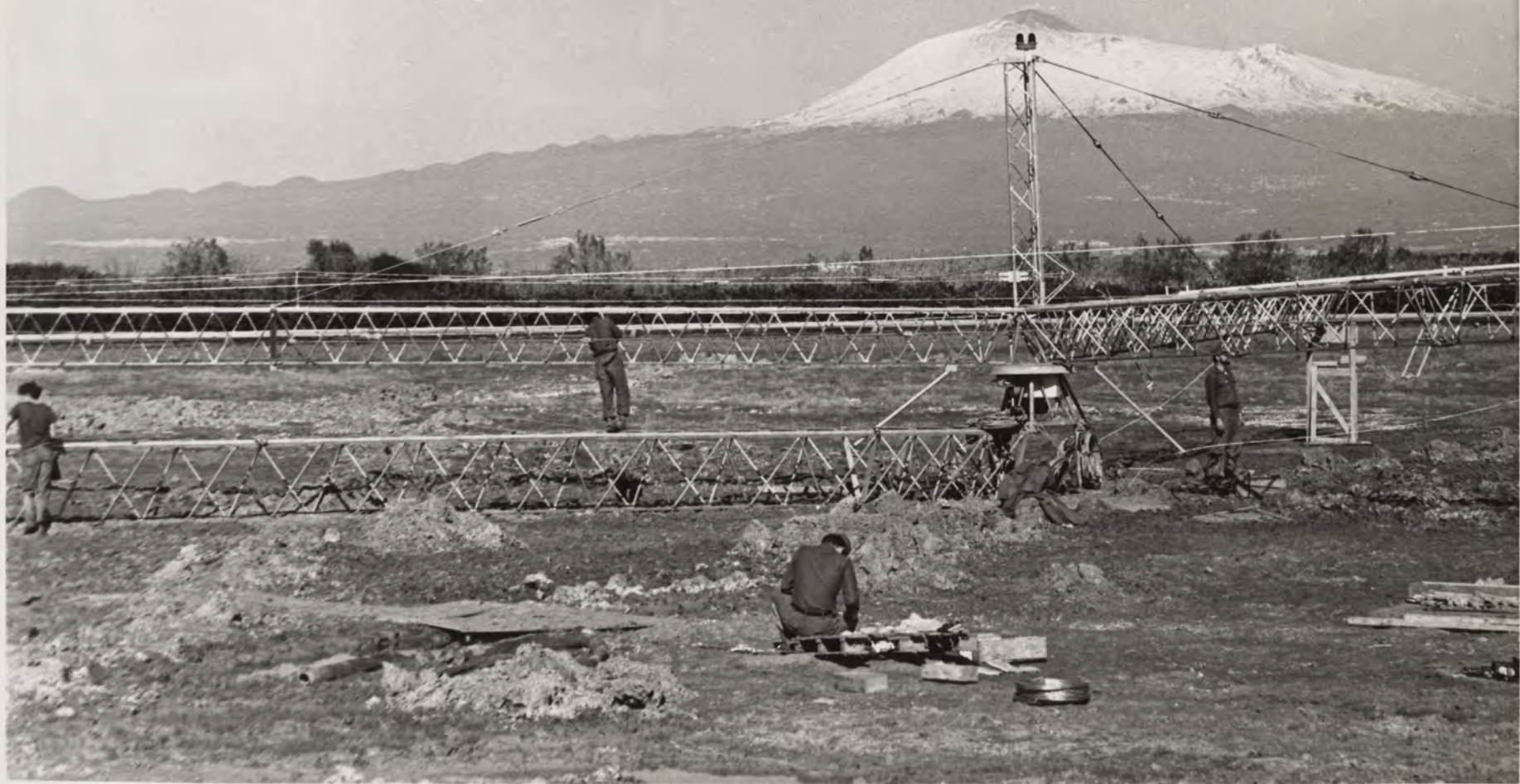
MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION













SITE OF THE FIRST  
AND ONLY

**NUCLEAR  
POWER PLANT**

IN THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT

