

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133

Historical Information



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



Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 **NMCB 133**

On September 17, 1943, the original Naval Construction Battalion 133 was commissioned at Camp Perry, Williamsburg, Virginia. After seven months training at Davisville, Rhode Island; Gulfport, Mississippi; and Port Hueneme, California, NCB One-Thirty-Three was ready for action.

The battalion adopted the Kangaroo as its symbolic mascot and "Kangaroo Can Do" as its slogan because the first scheduled deployment was to be to Australia. However, change being inevitable, Naval Air Station, Honolulu, became the first deployment site. One-Thirty-Three was tasked with expanding and improving the air station. The work involved raising the level of the airfield and building seaplane docks, fuel tanks and buildings. The finished airfield became one of the largest and busiest in the Pacific Theater.

The invasion of Iwo Jima began February 19, 1945. NCB 133 accompanied the invasion force, with two taskings: to secure the beaches after the first assault troops went ashore and to serve as the shore party maintaining supply lines to the Marines on the forward battle lines. After the invasion began, NCB 133 was tasked with repairing the island's three bombed-out Japanese airstrips, which were needed as soon as possible for use by Allied bombers. The Kangaroos were ashore by 4 p.m. on D-Day. Although the initial landing was relatively easy, the Japanese held their first line of defense and delivered murderous fire from their guns high on Mount Suribachi, and the entire beach was covered by mortar, artillery and machine-gun fire from the surrounding hills. The Seabees were in a position even more precarious than the Marines on the front lines; but they took what the enemy threw at them, and carried on the job of establishing and operating supply lines to the fighting men. When the Marines captured the first airstrip, the runway was sufficiently repaired to be used by light observation planes. On the same day, the order came to begin rehabilitating the second airstrip, which was to become the longest in the Western Theater.

After the first weeks, work went on day and night on the two airstrips. Until then, Japanese resistance had prevented the men from working after dark. The battalion encountered sniper fire and mortar attack until, and even after, the island was declared secure on March 15. During the 26 day battle for Iwo Jima, 133rd NCB suffered 245 casualties, with 3 officers and 39 enlisted killed in action and 12 officers and 191 enlisted wounded in action. This was the highest number of casualties of any Seabee unit in history.

In the five month period the battalion spent on Iwo Jima, over 100,000 tons of rock was crushed, over a million cubic yards of earth moved, 5,900 feet of drainpipe was laid, 4,000 feet of conduit was installed and 725 cubic yards of concrete was placed. As the war drew to an end, the battalion finished its work on Iwo Jima. The Kangaroo Battalion had sustained more casualties during their participation than any other construction battalion. The battalion was presented the Navy Unit Commendation for its part in the

battle Iwo Jima. Shortly thereafter, in December of 1945, with the general reduction in military strength following the end of World War II, NMCB 133 was decommissioned.

On August 12, 1966, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 was recommissioned in ceremonies aboard the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Mississippi. With Commander Edward H. Marsh at the helm as Commanding Officer, another proud and quality construction-filled chapter began for the battalion.

Upon completing military training in the fall and winter of 1966, the Battalion deployed to Da Nang, Vietnam. During their first deployment to Vietnam, projects for the Battalion ranged from construction of the second increment of a prisoner-of-war camp to building a staging area at Observation Point for rock being hauled to the Marble Mountain tank farm. NMCB 133 received its second Navy Unit Commendation for support of friendly forces during its deployment to Vietnam while attached to the Thirtieth Naval Construction Regiment.

Phu Bai was the site of the Battalion's second Vietnam deployment in 1968. The major project at Phu Bai was the monumental task of overlaying the Hue-Phu Bai airstrip with over 10,000 individual sheets of matting.

A third deployment was made to Vietnam in 1969. The Kangaroos were based at Camp Wilkinson, part of the Camp Eagle complex, about six miles southeast of Hue, the country's ancient imperial capitol. One of the major projects was the reconstruction of the 286-foot center span on the main highway bridge at Hue, badly damaged during the 1968 TET Offensive. The most extensive project undertaken by the Kangaroo Battalion was the upgrading and maintenance of some 70 miles of paved highway. They were also tasked with extending 96 culverts and repairing dozens of bridges.

With the Vietnam conflict winding down, NMCB 133 began a deployment of firsts. The deployment, which started the saying, "the sun never sets on 133", began with assignment to Guam, with dets at Bien Hoa, Vietnam, the Azores and the Aleutian Islands chain in Alaska.

Another deployment of firsts followed when NMCB 133 was assigned to Okinawa in 1972 as the first Atlantic battalion to serve as the Pacific Alert Battalion. Details spread over the entire Pacific Theater from Iwakuni, Japan to Oahu, Hawaii to Bien Hoa Province, Vietnam down to Subic Bay, Philippines.

NMCB 133 enjoyed its final "deployment of firsts" when it deployed to Europe in November of 1972. With the main body in Rota, Spain, details were assigned to Todendorf, Germany; Naples, Italy; Nea Makri, Greece; Souda Bay, Crete and Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. On Diego, Detail Chagos assisted in building the single largest project in Naval Construction Forces history, Reindeer Communication Station.

The battalion returned to Okinawa for a deployment in February 1974. Details journeyed to the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan. A hanger facility at Cubi Point Naval Air Station in

the Philippines was completed within 100 days by a detail from the battalion. The deployment to Okinawa was marred by great tragedy when Captain Thomas J. Mitchell, Commander of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment; Commander Leland R. Dobler, NMCB 133's Commanding Officer and Lieutenant Charles H. Jeffries, the Philippines Detail Officer-in-Charge were killed in an ambush by unknown assailants while inspecting the E-S Boundary Road project at Naval Base Subic Bay. Work on the project was halted for one week while the area was secured with the installation of additional security and radios. The project was then started back up and continued on schedule. LCDR Bruce L. MacCall, the battalion's Executive Officer, was temporarily assigned as the Commanding Officer. On June 8, 1974 CDR Richard A. Lowery was appointed the new Commanding Officer of the Kangaroos. The Okinawa deployment was completed and the battalion headed home to Gulfport on September 17th.

In April 1975, NMCB 133 departed Gulfport for a deployment to the Caribbean area. The main body was based at Camp Moscrip, Roosevelt Roads, and Puerto Rico. From that base, details were sent to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; the Azores; Bolivia and Yap Island in the Pacific. Starting off with a bang, the men of 133 picked up the turnover baton from NMCB 5 on a \$3.5 million BEQ Project. The BEQ project was the largest single job ever accomplished by Seabees in the Atlantic. In September, tropical storm Eloise ripped through the western part of Puerto Rico, causing serious flooding. To assist in the recovery effort, NMCB 133 mobilized a disaster evaluation team to aid in assessing the damage.

NMCB 133 returned to homeport in December 1975. During the homeport period, the battalion won the first annual Marksmanship Trophy from the Commander, Construction Battalions, U. S. Atlantic Fleet Seabee battalions.

In June 1976, the Kangroos arrived on Diego Garcia, marking the first time since the Vietnam conflict that the battalion deployed as a complete unit. The major construction effort on Diego Garcia was the extension of the existing airfield and expansion of the parking apron. Twice during the deployment, in August and again in November, battalion personnel had to help in the off-loading and back-loading of the supply ship USS TRANSCOLORADO. During the November visit, NMCB 133 set records in both off-load and back-load of 3, 627 and 477 tons respectively.

NMCB 133 returned to homeport after this 8-1/2 month deployment to Diego Garcia in February 1977. The homeport was shorter than usual, five months, instead of the usual six; but the battalion completed all necessary training and worked on numerous homeport projects. In May, the battalion mounted-out a modified Air Detachment, comprised of 71 men, aboard nine C-141's and one C-5 to participate in a joint service amphibious exercise called Solid Shield 77.

The battalion departed in mid-July 1977 for deployment to Rota, Spain, with details at Sigonella, Sicily; Nea Makri, Greece; and Souda Bay, Crete. The major tasking in Rota, included a MUSE cold iron project, Pier 2 fender repairs, repairs of a small craft berthing area, construction of a GSE shed, a calibration lab renovation, 12 new BEQs at the

Seabee Camp, and numerous other projects. On the night of January 5, 1978, due to information received of a possible terrorist threat, the battalion demonstrated its rapid response capability as Naval Station Rota set a maximum readiness condition. Within 18 minutes, the Battalion Reaction Force was standing by, fully armed and ready to deploy. The alert was terminated the following morning.

March 1978 saw the beginning of another homeport period for the Kangroos. Homeport projects included repairs to the Navy Home's swimming pool in Biloxi, construction of the Rifle Range road at Camp Hill, and earthwork for the NAVOCEANO Building in Gulfport. NMCB 133 took an active role in three change of command ceremonies during the homeport period. Captain McHugh relieved Captain Taylor as Commanding Officer of 20th Naval Construction Regiment; Captain J.P. Jones, Jr. at COMCBLANT was relieved by Captain Fraser; and Commander Gene Davis was relieved by Commander George Fraunces as Commanding Officer of the battalion.

The 1978-79 Puerto Rico deployment began on September 15 with the main body returning to Camp Moscrip at Roosevelt Roads Naval Air Station, with detail sites at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Eleuthera in the Bahamas; Antigua in the West Indies; Keflavik, Iceland; Diego Garcia in the B.I.O.T; Yap in the West Caroline Island Territory; the island of Vieques, only twelve miles from Puerto Rico; and Sebana Seca, just outside the city of San Juan.

Among the battalion's accomplishments were the completion of all Seabee work at three deployment sites, and the completion of the huge Roosevelt Roads commissary store. A major accomplishment involved the Air Detachment mount-out, in only 75% of the allotted time, while work continued at all project sites. This earned the Kangroos praise for its accomplishments by COMCBLANT.

In November 1979, the Kangroos deployed to Diego Garcia. The battalion began work at a scorching pace with projects like the Air Force Ammunition Storage Facility; the Petroleum, Oils and Lubricants pumphouse; BEQs 9, 10, and 11; BOQs 4 and 5; and the Navy High Explosives Facility. Other projects included the Air Operations Reclosure Building, Alfa Company shops rehabilitation and the Pier Causeway Project. On top of the regular work, the Navy Supply Ship USNS BRONSTROM arrived on November 29th and unloading procedures started on the same day.

The battalion was chosen Best of Type in the Atlantic Fleet for fiscal year 1980 for their labors in Diego Garcia. The Kangroos went on to win the coveted Peltier Award, symbolic of the best Seabee battalion the Naval Construction Force. In a ceremony conducted on May 21, 1981, Captain Herbert H. Lewis, Commanding Officer of NMCB 133, accepted the Peltier Award on behalf of the entire battalion. The winning of the Peltier Award was to be repeated to historical proportions by the battalion during the 1980's.

On January 15, 1981, the battalion relieved NMCB 5 as the Pacific Alert Battalion upon their deployment to Guam. In addition to the main body site of Guam, details were sent to

Diego Garcia, Midway, Palau and Yokosuka, Japan. In February, the Kangroos were tasked by COMCBPAC to mount-out its 89 man Air Detachment. The battalion succeeded in meeting its 48-hour deadline and received an overall grade of "excellent" for the exercise. The largest projects undertaken and completed during the deployment were the EOD Road project and the Naval Magazine Gym Project.

NMCB 133 returned from Guam in September 1981. During homeport, the battalion set base records in overall class attendance, Disaster Recovery and Rapid Runway Repair Exercises, and earned the 1981-82 Commander, Construction Battalions, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Marksmanship Trophy for qualifying 538 of 547 shooters at the Camp Hill rifle ranges. When the six-month homeport period ended, NMCB 133 was ready to deploy to Europe and assume its role as the Atlantic Alert Battalion.

Moving into Europe in March 1982, NMCB 133 hit the ground running and did not stop until the deployment's final day. In Rota, Spain, 27 projects were undertaken and 24 were completed. The two biggest projects were the Naval Station Overhead Electrical Distribution Project and the Camp Mitchell Monument/Camp Improvement Project. Details at Sigonella Sicily; Nea Makri, Greece; Souda Bay, Crete; and Holy Loch, Scotland also completed major taskings.

Not long after the battalion returned home from Europe, they began to reap well deserved awards. On November 12, 1982, NMCB 133 was presented with the Construction Battalions, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Best of Type Battle "E" Award and the Excellence in Retention Award for fiscal year 1982. In February 1983, the Kangroos received the Peltier Award for their FY 82 performance. The battalion's deployment to Europe was described as one of the best ever to Europe.

The 1983 homeport included eight projects providing hands-on training for 133 Seabees, seven were completed with a zero punchlist. Two of these projects were the Lucedale Baseball Park Project and the R60 Steel Shop. For the second year in a row the battalion won the Commander, Construction Battalions, U. S. Atlantic Fleet Marksmanship Trophy.

From April through October 1983, NMCB 133 was deployed to Puerto Rico. The main body faced 15 major projects, completing 11 of them. Details at Yap Island, Andros Island, Bermuda, Guantanamo Bay and Vieques Island also tackled a wide range of projects with excellent results. The Station Theater Renovation Project in Puerto Rico showed just what the Kangroos were capable of, going from a minor rehabilitation job to a major renovation tasking. With their "Can Do" spirit, the theater crews put in extra effort to get the job done. With the completion of the project, the battalion requested and received a private showing of the first movie viewed in the "new" theater, "The Fighting Seabees" with John Wayne.

On June 15, 1983, Camp Moscrip was the site for a historic change of command. Captain Dorwin C. Black was relieved by CDR Andrew A. Kannegieser as Commanding Officer

of NMCB 133. CDR Kannegieser became the first Limited Duty Officer (LDO) to command a battalion in Naval Construction Force history.

The Kangroos returned to Gulfport in October 1983. In November, the battalion, was selected as the Atlantic Fleet Naval Construction Force Best of Type Battle "E" winner for fiscal year 1983, marking the second straight year the battalion received this honor. Captain James B. Caughman Jr., Commander, Construction Battalions, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, presented the award to the battalion in ceremonies on December 10.

During the homeport period, NMCB 133 again won the Retention Award and the homeport Marksmanship Trophy, once more capping it all off by being named recipient of the Peltier Award for exceptional performance. On March 9, 1984 Rear Admiral William M. Zobel Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers, presented this coveted award to the Kangroos for their fiscal year 1983 performance.

The 1983/84 homeport period was tackled with the same spirit and determination, which had become the Kangaroo trademark. Homeport projects included the construction of a pavilion at the South Mississippi Retardation Center, which was opened on March 1; a concrete extension to the C-141 mock-up ramp used for Air Det training; new sand and gravel pits for the 20th NCR shop area; a 140 foot long, 20 foot high beam for the Gulfport Police Department pistol range; and the construction and assembly of a new playground at the CBC, Gulfport Child Care Center.

In May 1984, the battalion headed off to the deployment site of Okinawa, Japan. Detail sites were located at Sasebo; Iwakuni; Yokosuka; Adak, Alaska; and Yap Island. With the "Orient Express" in full gear, the men began work on many challenging projects. Most notable were the Futenma Taxiway project, the largest asphalt job taken on in recent years by any Seabee battalion; the Kinser Roof Project, where over 81,000 feet of roof was installed; and the White Beach Baseball Field Project, which called for the installation of 60' concrete light poles. By the deployment's end, there was hardly a camp on the island of Okinawa which had not benefited in some way from the Kangroos' expertise.

On October 20, 1984, CDR Kannegieser received word from Captain Caughman of COMCBLANT that the battalion again won the Atlantic Fleet Naval Construction Force's Best of Type/Battle "E" Award for fiscal year 1984. By winning the award, the Kangroos put their name in Naval Construction Force history books, becoming the first battalion ever to win three consecutive Battle "E" Awards. It also marked the battalion's fourth "E" in five years. The award was presented to the battalion on January 9, 1985 following their return to Gulfport.

The homeport period was another one of awards, with the battalion winning the annual Golden Anchor Award for excellence in retention. On May 31, 1985, the battalion was presented with their third Peltier Award in three years, another historic event for the Naval Construction Force. In commending the battalion and summing up their selection

for the Peltier Award, CDR Andrew A. Kannegeiser said, "It's been pure balance across the battalion. Your dedication to the mission, your ability to stumble occasionally and then recover with added strength, and the pride you have in our battalion has paid off once again." CDR Kannegeiser was himself to become the recipient of a personal honor when he became the first LDO in the Civil Engineer Corps to attain the rank of Captain.

With a history making homeport behind them, the battalion prepared to deploy to Europe. In June 1985, the main body headed for Rota, Spain while details set out for Sigonella, Nea Makri, Naples, Holy Loch and Souda Bay. A small eleven man detail was also sent to the American Embassy in Algeria.

In August, CDR Richard E. Brown relieved CAPT Kannegieser as Commanding Officer in a change of command ceremony at Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain. Battalion projects in Rota included a brig addition at the Rota Naval Station and construction of a Family Service Center and Hazardous Waste Facility. Together, the main body and detail sites completed some 60 construction projects during a seven month deployment. Of note, Det Algiers, North Africa received a citation from the American Embassy for construction of a Public Access Control Facility, the first such project in the State Department's worldwide security enhancement program. The battalion was also awarded the Golden Anchor Award for retention for the second consecutive year.

In April 1986, NMCB 133 was awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation for service in construction and training operations from 1 January 1982 to 31 December 1985. The battalion also won the CBLANT Marksmanship Trophy for the 1984/85 training cycle for excellence in pistol and rifle qualifications. This was the fifth consecutive year NMCB 133 earned the trophy.

On August 28, 1986, the battalion started an eight and a half month Caribbean deployment. The main body deployed to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, while details were sent to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Andros Island, Bahamas; Vieques Island; and the Panama Canal Zone. Projects included a waterfront services building, MK-30 maintenance building, USO gameroom and telephone center, rehabilitation of a BEQ, and new seawalls, sidewalls and piers for the Naval Station marina in Roosevelt Roads.

Unique operations during the Caribbean deployment included Operation Northstar, a mount-out exercise which split the battalion into three units, an air det, air echelon and sea echelon. The main body detached a water well drilling team to Honduras to develop three new potable water wells for U. S. forces training there. The battalion also sent a joint team with members from NMCB 4, on South Africa training cruise on board USS Harlon County (LST-1196). The cruise traveled over 21,000 nautical miles in 58 days and promoted U.S. relations in this region. Projects completed included renovation work at an orphanage in Lagos, Nigeria and at a training center for the blind in Dschange, Equatorial Guinea.

The Kangroos were selected as the Atlantic Fleet Naval Construction Force's "Best of Type" winner for FY 86. This was NMCB 133's fifth Battle "E" in seven years.

In June 1987 CDR H. Bruce St. Peter relieved CDR Brown as Commanding Officer. In October 1987 the battalion deployed to Okinawa, Japan with dets in Adak, Alaska; Yokusuka and Iwakuni, Japan; and a civic action team at Yap Island in the Federated States of Micronesia. The battalion completed 31,500 man days of construction work on 35 projects at these sites. A 92-man air detachment spent three weeks in South Korea for exercise "Team Spirit 88". An eleven man detail also spent 90 days aboard USS Barbour County (LST 1195) on a South Pacific Representational Cruise. Humanitarian Service medals were awarded to this det for their rescue and relief efforts rendered to victims of Cyclone "Anne" in the Solomon Islands in January, 1988.

The battalion was again named the Atlantic Fleet's Best of Type mobile construction battalion for FY88, it's 6th award in 9 years. During the 1988 homeport, NMCB 133 renovated a lighthouse beacon, created a parking lot for an area elementary school and placed high water marks on poles throughout the Long Beach, Miss, area. The battalion also performed in a superior fashion on contingency camp, bailey bridge, and water tower building exercise. Finally, NMCB 133 was named recipient of the Peltier Award for FY 88.

In 1989, the battalion deployed again to Rota, Spain for seven months. Details were dispatched to Bermuda; Edzell and Holy Loch, Scotland; Thurmont, Maryland; and Cartagana, Spain. The main body and detail sites completed 48 assigned projects and several discretionary projects. Major operations included an amphibious landing exercise held jointly with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and Spanish Marines, "PHIBLEX-89". Two successful deployments for training were also conducted at Puerto Castilla, Honduras and Andoya, Norway.

Upon returning to Gulfport in July, the battalion changed Commanding Officers, as CDR St. Peter was relieved by CDR Donald B. Hutchins. The battalion's homeport training cycle was interrupted in October when a 110 man detachment was sent to Charleston, S.C. to conduct disaster recovery operations following Hurricane "Hugo".

1990 began with yet another deployment, this time to the Western Pacific. Guam was the main body site and details were sent to Midway Island; Palau in the Federated States of Micronesia; Subic Bay, Philippines; and Diego Garcia. On Guam the major tasking was the 64,000 square foot Fleet Hospital Storage Facility which was effectively completed during the deployment. This facility involved one of the battalion's largest monolithic vertical concrete pours in recent years by the crew of Delta Company. Also of significance on the deployment: helo pad work at the Guam Naval Magazine; runway aprons at Midway Island; and a child care center at NAVCAMS Westpac, Guam. Other major operations during this deployment included an air detachment mount-out and deployment to Tinian Island during "Kennel Bear 90-1" and the detachment of a 100-man detail to American Samoa in February for two months to provide humanitarian relief and electrical repairs on the island in the wake of Typhoon "Ofa".

During the Battalion's turnover to NMCB-40 in Guam, Operation Desert Shield commenced, whereupon the Battalion assisted NMCB-40 in making preparations to

mount-out to Saudi Arabia. The battalion returned to homeport in August 1990, where it began training for the upcoming Rota deployment. Several battalion evaluations occurred in homeport in anticipation of the Battalion deploying to Puerto Rico to occupy Camp Moscrip, which had been vacated following NMCB-7's re-deployment to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield/Storm. However; when a Reserve battalion was mobilized to Puerto Rico, the battalion reorganized for their deployment to Rota.

NMCB 133 deployed to Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain from March to October 1991 with details deployed to Sigonella, Sicily; Souda Bay, Crete; Edzell and Holy Loch, Scotland; Thurmont, MD; and Moron, Spain. A 45-man detail deployed early to Moron, Spain in February to help NMCB-1 build two ammunition storage areas and surrounding berms in support of the Gulf War.

After a month in Spain, the Battalion re-deployed to Sikh, Iraq from April to June for Operation Provide Comfort. The Battalion proved its operational readiness by mounting out the Air Det and then loading main body equipment aboard a Norwegian cargo ship bound for Iskenderum, Turkey. The 400-mile personnel and equipment convoy from Iskenderum to Zakho, Iraq was the longest inland convoy operation conducted by a Seabee battalion since the Vietnam War.

While assigned to the Army's 18th Engineering Brigade in Iraq, the Air Det repaired a bombed out runway at Sirsenk, Iraq which later became a logistical support hub for Coalition Forces and United Nations relief efforts. While elements of the main body operated crucial water wells and produced electrical power for use by Coalition Forces, Kangaroos kept numerous Coalition Force vehicles up and running. Seabees erected tent cities, drilled water wells, and repaired mountain roads to expedite resettlement of Kurds to their homes. Exercise Display Determination further tested Battalion contingency abilities when a Kangaroo detail built a Harrier pad at Celibolu, Turkey and simulated a raid at Kesan, Turkey.

In addition to its accomplishments in Iraq and Turkey, NMCB-133 completed work on 39 assigned deployment projects, totaling over 30,100 mandays of construction effort. Battalion projects in Rota included the repair of a sanitary sewer at the Navy Lodge, base photo lab rehabilitation work, the construction of a 1,671 square foot ARFCS, a facility at the Rota air terminal, replacement of the primary power distribution system at Camp Mitchell, demolition of an operational storage addition, and the construction of a 40 foot by 60 foot general storage warehouse and a 4,000 square foot housing office. In September 1991, CDR Douglas F. Elznic relieved CDR D. B. Hutchins as Commanding Officer in a change-of-command ceremony conducted at Camp Mitchell, Rota, Spain.

During the 1991-1992 homeport period, the Battalion executed their training schedule in preparation for the Guam deployment. As part of the military training, the battalion qualified 561 of 562 personnel with the M-16A1 rifle, qualified 162 of 162 with the .45 caliber pistol. NMCB-133 also started and completed construction of a gazebo, celebrating the Construction Battalion Center's 50th anniversary. Other highlights included the selection of Kangaroo sailors as the Marvin Shields Award recipient, Sea

Sailor of the Year, Area Sailor of the Quarter and Area Non-Rated Sailor of the Quarter, and NMCB-133 basketball and volleyball teams taking first place in base-wide competition.

NMCB-133 deployed to Camp Covington Guam in May 1992, with a 30-man detail to Diego Garcia and a 13-man Civic Action Team to Palau. The main body in Guam was tasked with erecting 29 K-Spans and completing 21 pre-Engineered buildings to provide needed facilities for Philippine-based commands rolling back to Guam. Overcoming initial manufacturer problems caused by thicker steel required to withstand Guam's frequent typhoons, the Roo's reached full stride by July, completing one K-Span shell each week.

On 28 August, Typhoon "Omar" passed directly over Guam, with winds gusting at approximately 150 miles per hour. Although thorough preparations spared Camp Covington significant damage, the island itself suffered its worst devastation 15 years. Within hours of the typhoon's passing, the Kangroos of NMCB-133 were involved with disaster recovery efforts throughout the island. All routine tasking was put on hold as NMCB-133, augmented by tailored Air Dets from NMCB-40 in Port Hueneme and NMCB-7 in Okinawa, worked around the clock assisting in water distribution, restoration of power, rebuilding heavily damaged schools, and erection of large tent city at the Fleet Hospital site to house hundreds of homeless.

Despite constant power outages and four more typhoons (Brian, Elsie, Gay and Hnt), the Roo's completed 27 K-Span shells, 19 PEB's, finished a fire fighting training complex and renovated a 44,000 square foot diplomatic telecommunications service facility for the U.S. State Department. During the deployment, Alfa Company endured a particularly tough work schedule. The maintenance division turned over 319 pieces of heavy equipment and vehicles upon arrival in May and immediately instituted a comprehensive in-depth inspection/repair program. The cost of repair parts alone was \$930,000. Alfa Company also provided equipment support to more than 50 project sites, and there were never less than 12 continuously active sites. At the two quarry sites, crews excavated 26,000 cubic yards—enough to cover five football fields three feet high. The Orote Point quarry machinery required extensive repairs before being brought on-line as a production facility. The aggregate wash plant was completely rebuilt. After receiving a major overhaul, the asphalt plant produced its first batch in more than four years. Seabee reservists were integrated into operations at the Orote Point quarry and proved to be able teachers in quarry operations.

The 30-man Diego Garcia Det worked on six projects, including site work and erecting a 24 foot by 40 foot PEB, constructing a hazardous waste building and a 500 square-foot reinforced concrete emergency fuel distribution facility. The 13-man Civic Action Team at Palau worked on 18 projects, including the erection of a PEB and the installation of a bauxite cap on 16 miles of roadway.

NMCB-133 was awarded the Battle "E" for FY 92 Best of Type in the Atlantic Fleet in October. Later they were named recipient of the Peltier Award for FY 92.

In July 1993, the battalion deployed to Rota, Spain to begin their European deployment. Their 33,000 mandays of work resulted in a new NEX Gas Station/Convenience Store at Edzell, Scotland; NEX Mini-Mall at Sigonella, Sicily; renovation of the Carney Park buildings at Naples Italy; and dramatic improvement of the facilities at NSA Souda Bay. Added to this list was their construction of much needed infrastructure improvements in Turkey, Ghana, and Senegal. Quality and productivity were so impressive the Secretary of the Navy, during a visit, awarded 24 Navy Achievement Medals on the spot.

In September 1994, NMCB 133 deployed to Guam with Details deployed to Diego Garcia, San Diego, California and Chinhae, Korea. A Civic Action Team was deployed to Palau. DFT's were sent to Southwest Asia, Ban Chan Khrem, Thailand in support of exercise Gold Cobra '95, and El Salvador in support of Fuertes Caminos '95. The mainbody site in Guam completed several projects including Dental Clinic Addition, relocation of the Fleet Imaging Center, K-Spans for NCTAMS, and repairs to the earthquake damaged Victor Wharf. The DFT to Southwest Asia completed the overlay of 1 million SF of Aircraft Parking Apron with a rubberized coal tar emulsion and several other projects in support of Operation Southern Watch.

In December 1995 the Kangaroos deployed in Spain and soon found themselves deploying to the former Yugoslavia in support of operation "Joint Endeavor". An Air Det Heavy of approximately 200 Seabees was sent to build base camps for the Army in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and to renovate the NATO Commander's facilities in Sarajevo. The embark effort of Detail Juliet Echo included 1,120,000 pounds of cargo, 64 pieces of CESE flown on five C-17 and fifteen C-141 aircraft. Led by the Operations Officer, Detail Juliet Echo endured intense cold, rain and mud to build camps to support the troops of the US Army's 16th Corps Support Group in Croatia and the First Armored Division's Ready First Combat Team in Bosnia. This record setting deployment included successful details to Africa, Crete, Sicily, Italy, Great Britain, and Camp David and earned the Kangaroos the Battle "E" and the Navy Unit Commendation for FY95. This was the first NUC given to 133 for a peace time mission. NMCB-133 was awarded the pistol marksmanship trophy for FY95.

In January 1997, NMCB 133 was again traveling across the Pacific to Guam. The Detail sites for this deployment were San Deigo, CA; Lemoore, CA; Fallon, NV and Bangor, WA. At Mid-deployment an additional detail was sent to Bahrain to establish a permanent Naval Construction Force Detail Site. The Battalion supported USCINCPAC with a 14 person Civic Action Team deployed to the Republic of Palau, and an 8 person Tiger Team, deployed to both Palau and Kosrae. A DFT was also sent to Kenya, Africa.

In the final days of the deployment, the Roo's disaster recovery skills were put to the test when Korean Air Lines (KAL) Flight 801 crashed on final approach to the Guam International Airport. NMCB 133 personnel were among the first to arrive on the scene and begin the rescue operation. An access road was build into the crash site by 133 to facilitate the rescue and recovery efforts. NMCB-40 arrived about three days after the crash, for about a week thereafter, during turn-over, the search for bodies and crash

disassembly continued as a joint NMCB 133/40 operation. NMCB 133 continued to work on the site until a day before our departure, approximately 18 August.

The 1997/98 homeport period was packed with planning for NMCB-133's return to Bosnia. With the tasking and manning unknown until the last month of homeport, several Detail configurations were planned. FEX for this homeport period included a Bosnia training phase to simulate security threats and to train in convoy movements. During this homeport 133 also was named the recipient of the Golden Anchor Award for retention.

In early March 1998, the Kangroos returned to Rota, Spain with details in Sigonella, Sicily; Souda Bay, Crete; St. Mawgan, England; and Thurmont, Maryland. Also, 217 Seabees deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina to support Army peacekeeping operations. They constructed SEAHuts for 965 personnel, as well as accomplishing bridge repairs and force protection projects that significantly improved safety and quality of life in Bosnia. In all the Roos completed 70 projects and were the first Seabees to complete an entire deployment in Bosnia. Another high profile project was the completion of the Marathi Sewage Plant in Souda Bay. This project allowed for extended Carrier Battle Group visits to Souda Bay.

Upon returning from Spain NMCB-133 was once again tasked with Hurricane clean-up in Gulfport. The most visible homeport project was the restoration of the Ship Island Lighthouse which was over 100 years old. Once again the Roos were awarded the Battle "E", bringing the total to nine. This was followed by the prestigious Peltier award. As the homeport came to an end the Seabees prepared for their deployment to Guam with details in Lemoore, CA; San Diego, CA; Fallon, NV; Bangor, WA, Hawaii, Bahrain, and Carat. Also, Seabees will be deploying to Palau with the CAT team.

In December of 1999 the battalion returned to Gulfport to begin seven months of training and preparation for their upcoming July 2000 deployment to Rota, Spain. Highlights of this period included a highly successful Field Exercise, Operation Warthog, and several high visibility projects including the completion of the multiple battalion Ship Island Lighthouse that rebuilt a historic wooden lighthouse off the coast of Gulfport.

On July 4th, 2000, the battalion began its European 2000-2001 deployment by sending advance parties to Rota, and detail sites of Sigonella, Naples, Souda Bay, London, and Thurmont, Maryland. Immediately after arrival the battalion launched three very diverse and challenging Detachments for Training (DFT's). DFT Estonia went into northern Europe to work with host nation forces in rebuilding a soup kitchen, renovating an orphanage, a placing a Soviet era steel bridge over a river to connect two remote parts of the countryside. DFT Moldova went into the former Soviet bloc country to provide continuity, construction expertise, and quality control for an Army and Navy reserve and host nation effort in construction a two-story medical facility addition onto an existing orphanage. DFT Tunisia launched to the northern African nation to work alongside host nation forces in the construction of exercise related tasking to support the joint training exercise Atlas Hinge.

The Detail sites had significant contributions and challenges as well. At Det Sigonella two projects highlighted the efforts of the Seabees of NMCB 133. The Red Label Ordnance Apron project increased the capacity of the station to load operational aircraft and required the placement of more than 8000 cubic yards of concrete in a fourth month period. The NAS II MWR Expansion project involved cutting more than five acres of hillside into a three tiered recreational areas to accommodate tennis, soccer, and softball fields. In Souda Bay the Detail focused much of their efforts on the Marathi Pier in direct support of the Fifth Fleet. They expanded the usable pierside concrete apron and began work on a multi-purpose MWR facility to improve the quality of life of the sailors while in Souda Bay. On the naval station itself they improved the safety of the airfield by completing the taxiway and apron lighting project and by extending and expanding the perimeter fence. In Naples the small Detail focused their work at the recreational area that services local U.S. forces by improving a large head/locker room space, constructing a large pavilion, and by improving the electrical distribution in the area. In London the Det improved housing by adding front porches to 80 housing units. They also constructed a concession stand for MWR in the main housing area. Detail Thurmont worked on several projects to improve the quality of life at Camp David including a large multi-function facility and the renovation of several cabins.

In Rota the battalion was fully tasked as well. Highlights included the complete renovation of the Spanish-American friendship club, Hay Motivo. The grand re-opening of the facility was attended by the Spanish Chief of Naval Operations. The battalion also constructed a 160 foot concrete boat ramp for use by MWR, Environmental, and Spec War. The job was unique as the tides ranged fourteen feet and the last 30 feet of the boat ramp had to be poured underwater as it was always below the water level. Other projects included improving the drainage on the airfield and at the front gate, the renovation of the Spec War facility, the placement of a new steel girder and panel roof on top of an existing flat roof barracks, construction of improved automatic security gates around the airfield, the installation of security fences and systems around the reservoir, and the construction of a multipurpose outdoor court for MWR. Additionally, in direct support of multiple construction projects the battalion completed more than 800 mishap free crane lifts.

All in all the battalion completed more than 38,000 mandays of tasking and 44 tasked projects at 10 sites around the world. In February of 2001 the battalion returned to Gulfport for what would be the last 14 month cycle in the NCF.

The homeport of 2001 was a fast paced and challenging period punctuated with several highlights. Included was Operation Rolling Thunder, called by the 20th Naval Construction Regiment the most successful homeport field exercise in years. Also of note was the change of the deployment cycle from 7 months of homeport and 7 months of deployment to 10 months of homeport and 6 months of deployment. NMCB 133 would be the last battalion affected by the change, however, as they would still complete the current seven month homeport and would be the last battalion to deploy for seven months when they left for Guam in September 2001. The final highlight of homeport was the change of command at 0900 on 20 July 2001 when CDR Katherine L. Gregory was relieved by CDR Douglas G. Morton.

In September 5th the battalion launched advance parties to the main body site in Guam and Detail sites in Diego Garcia, Bahrain, San Diego, Hawaii, Lemoore, Fallon, El Centro, and Camp Pendleton. With the battalion split with the Main Body still in Gulfport and the Commanding Officer and Command Master Chief enroute to Guam and held up in Hawaii the tragic events of September 11th 2001 unfolded. The battalion was finally able to fully deploy all its personnel on 19 September.

With the war on terrorism unfolding the battalion still had a mission to do and went about its business. A detachment for training in support of Operation Bright Star in Egypt was sent forward for eight weeks of highly successful MPF and construction exercise with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit and host nation forces.

The battalion next geared up for a series of movements unprecedented in the NCF. First, NMCB 133's Augment unit was recalled to active duty from New York and surrounding areas and 75 personnel were brought forward to Guam to plus up the manning in anticipation of potential operations to support the war on terrorism. Then, as a ripple effect of the deployment schedule changes due to Itempo, the battalion had to man up an 89 person Air Det sized unit to take over the main body site in Puerto Rico in December since it would no longer be manned by a full battalion. Next came the turnover of Diego Garcia mid-deployment as the Det site shifted from being a Guam supported Detail site to being on supported out of Okinawa. Finally in this personnel shuffle, NMCB 5's Augment unit which had also been recalled in September to support NMCB 5 in Okinawa was moved to Guam to plus up 133 in its myriad of operations when NMCB 5 rolled back to Pt Hueneme in December 2001.

The battalion also faced the environment head on when a magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit Guam in October causing light damage and Supertyphoon Faxai rolled of the northern edge of Guam in December.

In mid-November the call came for the battalion to provide direct support for Operation Enduring Freedom and an Air Det Heavy was stood up as U.S. Marine led coalition force for offensive operations in Afghanistan. Organized under Brigadier General Mattis, the 1st MEB commander out of Pendleton, the Air Det Heavy went in country on 28 November as Task Force 58.5 with the Operations Officer as the Air Det Heavy OIC being a direct report to the commanding general. The Air Det was organized in two elements, the small lead element of 27 Seabees to go to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Rhino to maintain a dry lake airstrip and provide rudimentary contingency construction and the remainder of the Air Det Heavy to follow on into Kandahar to help establish a permanent operating base by providing Rapid Runway Repair (RRR) and contingency construction.

Change being inevitable, the operation unfolded differently than was planned. The small group of Seabees from NMCB 133, eventually a total of 56 who went in country, were able to support both operations including a three week period when both sites were in operation.

Supporting the 15th MEU at Rhino, the 26th MEU at Kandahar, U.S. Special Forces at both locations, and coalition forces from Britain, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Turkey, Canada, and Norway the Seabees were the key to maintaining a forward Amphibious assault more than 450 miles inland from the supporting fleet through their expeditionary runway maintenance and repair work and contingency construction expertise. At Rhino, highlights of the operation included more than 800 sorties by C-130 and C-17 aircraft at a runway intended for light, single engine planes, dust control operations for Helos, and the construction of fighting positions and sanitation improvements. At Kandahar, the highlights included the temporary and then permanent repair of 29 bomb craters on the runway and taxiway, the construction of a 500 person detainee short term holding facility in less than 10 days, the creation of fighting positions, ordnance and fuel berms, the re-development of wells, and a myriad of smaller contingency construction taskings.

In a odd twist in Operation Enduring Freedom, the Detail that was sent to Puerto Rico in December sent forward its OIC and the bulk of its personnel to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to work in Camp X-ray building a detainee/POW camp to house Al-Qaida and Taliban fighters captured in Afghanistan. With the construction of the detainee camps at Kandahar and Gtmo, NMCB 133 provide cradle to grave service for terrorists caught in the war on terrorism.

In addition to all that was unfolding the battalion still had its original deployment mission to accomplish to fulfill and succeeded there as well. In Hawaii the Detail constructed several short fused Force Protection projects. In San Diego the Detail worked on a waterfront Oasis project and completed the high visibility Coronado electrical tie in project. At El Centro the small Det completed two large PEB warehouses and a helo pad. At Camp Pendleton the Detail worked on two ISTM training facility PEB's and the MOUT/MAC training area. In Fallon the Det build a supply warehouse and improved the airfield Fire House conditions. In Lemoore the Detail completed the work at 'Seabee Corner' and renovated the old NEX into the new Navy College Center. In the three months the Det was on Diego Garcia they worked on the BOSC Housing and constructed a very short fused AM2 Matting area critical to forward operations. In Bahrain, the Detail finished up work on Fleet Park and executed many short term construction projects in direct support of NAVCENT. Finally, the Detail in Puerto Rico took over caretaker status of Camp Moscrip marking the first time that a single battalion had manned two mainbody sites simultaneously.

As a result of 133's efforts during fiscal year 2002, the Battalion was selected by Commander, FIRST Naval Construction Division as the Atlantic Fleet Battle "E" Battalion and subsequently recognized as the best NMCB in the NCF when it was selected as the Peltier award winner for FY02, marking the 9th time that NMCB 133 has won this award.

Originally scheduled to deploy to Rota, Spain in February 2003, the Battalion altered its plans in January 2003 when it received orders to deploy to Southwest Asia (SWA) to support Central Command operations in combating the Global War on Terrorism. Upon

arrival in SWA in January and February 2003, 133 was called upon to support FIRST Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF) tasking and, along with many other NCF units, fell under the operational control of FIRST Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group.

The highlights of the Battalion's contingency construction efforts during this fast-paced and dynamic deployment included construction of a 14,000-person Enemy Prisoner of War holding area in southern Iraq, defense of two key Iraqi bridges, maintenance and improvements to Main Supply Routes in southern Iraq, repair of two 3,000 meter runways at an airfield in Al Kut, Iraq, and with support from other NCF and military units NMCB 133 was the lead element in the construction of a 210-meter pontoon bridge over the Tigris River. This pontoon bridge was the longest such bridge constructed by Seabees since World War II.

When the Battalion was not busy executing contingency construction tasking for IMEF, they were involved in revitalization efforts within Iraq. Highlights of these important civil military and humanitarian assistance projects included rehabilitating a British World War I cemetery that was home to soldiers who had fallen in combat with the Turks in the Mesopotamian conflict (1914-1918), repairs to multiple governmental facilities, and renovating Iraqi schools in Karbala and Al Kut. By the end of the deployment, NMCB 133 had ensured that 10 schools had power, lighting, fans, working bathrooms, a fresh coat of paint, windows, and doors; thus giving more than 3,000 Iraqi children the opportunity of an education!

The first-ever Naval Construction Force change of command in Kuwait occurred on 23 June 2003, when Commander Doug Morton by Commander Jeff Borowy as Commanding Officer during a ceremony at Camp Moreell.

In addition to operations in Iraq, the Battalion also conducted significant important operations in Kuwait. Here, NMCB 133 operated and maintained Camp Moreell, a 1,100 person Naval Construction Force camp, and supported the retrograde of Civil Engineer Support Equipment (CESE) and Table of Allowance (TOA) containers for shipment back to the United States or onto Maritime Preposition Force ships. In total, the Battalion prepared and cleaned over 1,100 of the 1,600 total pieces of CESE and repackaged over 100 TOA containers.

Adding to the complexity of a wartime deployment, NMCB 133 also supported SOUTHCOM in its area of responsibility where the Battalion completed a multi-service Deployment for Training to the Dominican Republic called New Horizons 2003 and also sent detachments to Andros Island and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

By any measure the 2003 SWA deployment added to NMCB 133 legacy, executing more than 45,000 mandays of tasking and participating in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, NMCB 133 added another action-packed chapter to its proud history.

In May of 2005, Commander Jeff Borowy was relieved by Commander Allan Stratman as Commanding Officer of 133.

Three months later, on August 29, Hurricane Katrina came barreling through the central Gulf Coast, taking with it many lives and causing catastrophic damage to the homes and businesses of countless residents. Within a day, the Seabees from the homeport Battalions of NMCB 1, 7, and 133 rushed out to clear roads so emergency workers could access hard hit areas. In the ensuing weeks, 133 provided extensive humanitarian aid around the area including the critical repair of lift stations, the cleaning and repair of government buildings and schools and the distribution of food, water and clothing to local residents in need.















