

# 91<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

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*Historical  
Information*



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



91st CB

NCTC - Magruder, Davisville  
ABD - Hueneme  
Ready Date - 15 Jul'43  
Left ABD - 21 Sep'43  
Location - ~~Edur-98 - Milne Bay Finschafen~~  
Leyte-Samar

LOG

- 4-22-43 - 91st transferred to NCTC Davisville, by dispatch.
- 6-10-43 - 91st CB to Camp Parks from NCTC Davisville 15 Jun.
- 10- 5-43 - 91st CB departed ABD Hueneme 21 Sep'43. (RHD)
- 12- 6-43 - 1 Nov'43 report of 91st CB - arrived destination 21 Oct'43.
- 12-29-43 - 91st CB is at Milne Bay. (Sec NB166/A1-1 5455 Com7flt to Budocks dtd Nov'43)
- 2-15-44 - 1 Jan'44 report of 91st CB - under projects at (a) Destroyer Repair Base, Ladava Mission Area, (b) Hilimoi Hosp., Hilimoi Mission, (c) Amphibious Base, Stringer Bay, (d) Administration Area, Naval Base, Navy 717.
- 5- 6-44 - 1 Mar'44 report of 91st CB - operating at Ladava Mission Area, Hilimoi Mission, Gilli Gilli, and Dowa Dow.
- 5-13-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 91st CB - operating at Ladava Mission, Hilimoi Hosp, Gilli Gilli, Dowa Dowa and Modewa - Milne Bay. 1st End. sent through 12th Reg.
- 6- 3-44 - 1 May'44 report of 91st CB - operating at Milne Bay.
- 6-16-44 - 91st CB is temporarily assigned to 12th Reg. from 19th Reg. (Brisbane). (Comserfor7flt spdltr to Navy 134 Ser. 00639 dtd Jun'44 - Call #10179)
- 6-28-44 - 91st CB is located at Ladava, M.B. as of 31 May'44. (Comserfor7flt Sec. ltr. A-9

91st C.B.

over Ser. BP-001407 to Dirpaddock dtd 8 Jun'44)

- 7- 7-44 - 91st CB temporarily with 12th Reg. from the 19th Reg. at Ladava. 1 Co. to move to Mandang approx. 1 Jun., 1 Co. to move to Palm Is., 1 Co. to move to Finschafen 15 Jun'44. (Comservfor7flt sec. ltr A-9-4 over Ser. 00673 to Budocks dtd 14 Jun'44)
- 8-23-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 91st CB - Co. C departed 8 Jun'44 for work at Mandang, New Guinea. Co. B, consisting of 175 men, departed 14 Jun'44 for work at Palm Is. Australia. Rest of batt operating at Gilli Gilli.
- 10-5-44 - 91st CB ordered to report by letter to the 19th Reg. (Rest. Disp. 261003 NCR 39380 from Comserv7flt to CNB Biak and CNB Milne)
- 10- 7-44 - 91st CB reported for duty with CNB Finschafen. (Conf. ltr. NCB91/P16-3 over Ser 375 from OinC 91st CB to CO USNAB, Finschafen dtd 12 Sep'44)
- 10-24-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 91st CB - This batt has been temporarily detached from the 19th Reg. and assigned temporarily to CNB Finschafen. The 1 Sep'44 distribution of men is as follows: 763 men at Finschafen, 105 men at Madang, N.G., 169 men on leave in Australia. Estimated date of completion of assignment in Madang is 1 Oct'44.
- 10-24-44 - The 91st CB has two companies at Finschafen. One Co. at Palm Is. and a detachment of 250 men at Alexishafen. The company at Palm Is. arrived Brisbane for leave 2 Sep'44. 150 men of the detachment at Alexishafen departed on 25 Aug'44 to rejoin the batt at Finschafen. Early in Sep'44 the 91st CB was completely detached from the 19th Reg. and assigned to CNB Finschafen. (Comserfor7flt mon. report for Aug'44 to Budocks Ser. BP001815 Secret dtd 12 Sep'44).
- 10-26-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of the 19th Reg. - Co. "B" was sent to Palm Island in July; Co. "C" sent to Madang, N.G. Remainder of batt moved to Finschafen. Endorsement by

91st C.B.

- 10-26-44 - (1 Aug'44 report of 19th Reg. Cont.)- Comservfor7flt states that the 91st CB should be sent to a temperate climate for rest and rehabilitation upon completion of present assigned projects.
- 10-27-44 - 91st CB reported to the 19th Reg. for duty by the OinC 91st CB conf. ltr NCB (91)/P16-3 over Ser 390 to OinC 19th Reg. dtd 5 Oct'44.
- 11-8-44 - 91st CB in the 12th Reg. and located at Finschafen. Has a detail of 100 men at Alexishafen, N.G. 165 men were retained in Brisbane after leave for work. (Comservfor7flt Sec. ltr A9-4 over Ser BF-001882 to Budocks dtd 12 Oct'44 monthly report for Sep'44)
- 12-12-44 - The 91st CB is hereby detached from the 19th Reg. and shall proceed and report to CO, NABU 4 for temp. duty with the 12th Reg. Batt should be ready to load by 12 Dec'44. Personnel at Brisbane and Alexishafen will remain behind and be sent forward at a later date. (Comserv7flt Sec. Disp. to CNB Finschafen 080801 dtd 9 Dec'44)
- 12-18-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 91st CB - During Sep'44, operated at Finschafen and Madang, New Guinea. Expect projects to be completed by 15 Oct'44. Report endorsed by 19th Regiment.
- 12-28-44 - 91st CB is located at Finschafen. One Co. was at Alexishafen until 5 Oct'44 and returned to Finschafen. 165 men is on a detail at Brisbane. (Comservfor7flt Sec. report for Oct'44 dtd 20 Nov'44).
- 1-3-45 - 1 Nov'44 report of 91st CB - located at Finschafen. Report endorsed by the 19th Regiment. 270 men at Brisbane who have had their leave and are awaiting transportation to Finschafen.

91st CB

- 1-12-45 - Lt.(jg) Beal ordered to take charge of 3 officers and approx 140 men of Co. "B" Detachment of the 91st CB and proceed to Milne Bay for temp duty pending first available transportation to the port in which the 91st CB maybe. (NOB Staging and Receiving Barracks 134 conf. ltr P16-4/00(159589) over Ser. 399 to Lt.(jg) Beal dtd 22 Dec'44).
- 1-13-45 - 91st CB at Finschafen - to leave Finschafen approximately 12 Dec'44 for Leyte. 144 men and 4 officers have been in Australia. 75 men are going to Alexishafen to roll up that base. (Comservfor7flt Sec Report for Nov'44 dtd 15 Dec'44)
- 2- 7-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 91st CB - located at Finschafen during Nov'44. Report endorsed by the 19th Regiment.
- 2-13-45 - The 91st CB is assigned to Samar. (CNO Sec. ltr to distribution list Ser. 0039230 dtd 3 Feb'45).
- 2-14-45 - The 91st CB departed Finschafen 15 Dec'44 for Samar. A detachment of 75 men left Finschafen 24 Dec'44 to go to Alexishafen to roll up the base. (Comservfor7flt Sec. report for Dec'44 dtd 15 Jan'45).
- 2-15-45 - The 91st CB is located at OSSO-ULOD. (Leyte). (Comserv7flt Sec. disp to CNO 020659 dtd 9 Feb'45).
- 3-14-45 - Comservfor7flt conf. spdltr to CNOB Leyte Gulf Ser. 0375 dtd 2 Mar'45 - the 91st CB is hereby detached from its presently assigned duties. Shall report to CNOB Leyte Gulf for duty with Commander Const. Forces Leyte-Samar.
- 3-22-45 - Comdt NOB, Tacloban, Leyte orders the 91st CB to further report to the CO, NavSta, Guiuan, Samar for duty with the Const Forces headed by the Comdr Const Forces and Sr Brg Comdr. (Comdt ltr P16-3(1) over Ser 995 dtd 11 Mar'45 to OinC 91st CB)

91st C.B.

- 3-27-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 19th Reg. - During Jan, the 91st CB was assigned the construction of a Ship Repair Base at Manicani Is. Unit was orally detached from the 19th Reg. and attached to the 12th Reg.
- 3-30-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 91st CB - Unloading of LST's which transported the batt to Manicani Is. was completed on 3 Jan'45. End. by 19th Reg.
- 3-31-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 91st CB -  
2 Dec'44 - Batt alerted for forward move. 26 Dec'44 - Arrived Leyte  
15 Dec'44 - left Finschafen 28 Dec'44 - Left for Manicani Is.  
18 Dec'44 - arrived Hollandia 29 Dec'44 - Arrived "  
19 Dec'44 - Left Hollandia  
A detachment of 81 men and 2 off. were left behind to roll up base at Madang. This det. was scheduled to leave Finschafen on 23 Dec. A det. of 136 men and 4 off. are now at Brisbane on tempdu awaiting transp. to NAEU-4.
- 4-7-45 - The 91st CB reported on 14 Mar'45 to CDONavSta, Guinan, Samar - ordered to further report for duty with the Const. Forces. (1st end. on CNOB Leyte orders NS/P16-3(1) over Ser 1335 dtd 14 Mar'45)
- 4-13-45 - The 91st CB reported 14 Mar'45 for duty. Ordered to further report to 3rd Brg. for adm. purposes and to OinC 2nd Brg for operational duty. (Comdr Const Forces 2nd end on CNOB Leyte orders P16-3(1) Ser 995 dtd 11 Mar'45)
- 4-21-45 - The detail of the 91st CB finished roll-up at Alexishafen, N.G. and departed for Leyte Gulf on 28 Jan'45. (Comserfor7flt Sec Rep for Jan'45)
- 4-24-45 - The 91st CB reported on 3 Apr'45 to 2nd Brigade for operational purposes. (2nd Brig. ltr EL6-4/00/MM Serl:M-47 dtd 3 Apr'45. (4th end. to CNOB, Navy 3964, ordrs P16-3(1) dtd 11 Mar'45.)
- 4-27-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of 12th Reg. - located in Samar area. Attached to 19th Reg.

Location - Leyte-Samar (Manicani Is.) 91st C.B.

- 4-30-45 - The 91st CB is located at Manicani Is. (Comserfor7flt Sec Rep of 1 Apr'45)
- 5-1-45 - The 91st CB is located at Manicani Is. (Dirpacdocks P Sec Rep of 1 Apr'45)
- 5-8-45 - The 91st CB is located at Samar. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)
- 5-19-45 - 1 May'45 report of 91st CB - located at Samar. Report routed via 19th Reg & 3rd Brg
- 5-21-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 91st CB - located in Leyte-Samar area. End by 3rd Brg states that this unit is under the 3rd Brg for adm purposes only. End by 19th Reg.
- 5-22-45 - 1 May'45 report of 91st CB - located at Samar. Report routed via 19th Reg & 3rd Brg
- 5-29-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 19th Reg - As of 1 Apr'45 the 91st CB was under Administrative control of the 19th Reg.
- 5-30-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 91st CB - located at Samar. Report end. by 19th Reg & 3rd Brig. Sec.2.
- 6-4-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 2nd Brig - The 91st CB was transferred during Apr'45 to the operational control of the 2nd Brig pending arrival of the Batts assigned to the 2nd Brig.
- 6-15-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 91st CB - located at Samar. Co. B of the 127th CB was recently attached to this batt for opr control. Rec'd 26 men as replacements on 31 May'45. Report via 31st Reg and 2nd Brg.
- 7-20-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 91st CB - located at Leyte-Samar. Co. B of the 127th CB still attached to the 91st CB for subsistence. Rec'd 20 replacements during June. 36 men to be transfd in July for rehabilitation. Report via 31st Reg and 2nd Brg.
- 7-27-45 - The 91st CB is attached to the 31st Reg and 2nd Brg. Located at Guinan, Samar, constructing Ship Repair Facilities, galley and mess halls, water and elect distribution systems, warehouses; completed 1600-man barracks and messing facilities for enl men, pontoon wharf and Liberty ship wharf at Manicani. (CCT 7 Flt Sec Rep for June)

Location - Leyte-Samar

91st C.B.

- 8-13-45 - The 91st CB is assigned to the Olympic Operation. (Com7flt conf report on CB organization in Leyte-Samar area ser 04296 dtd 26 July to GNO)
- 8-21-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 91st CB - located at Leyte-Samar. Report via 31st Reg and 2nd Brg. Co B of the 127th CB is no longer operationally attached to this batt. Approx 35 men of the 127th assigned to this activity.
- 8-31-45 - Remove from alerted status my 192321 July of higher classification following CB units:--CBs 91, 129 & 142. Desire to inactivate following units:--CBs 91, 129 & 142. (Comservpac sec spdltr, ser 272049 Aug'45 to Com7thFlt).
- 9-24-45 - Present plans to leave 91st CB intact will nominate other units for inactivation in near future. (CinC, Comar Samar sec disp 300727 Aug'45 to ComConstTroops, Philseafon).
- 10-1-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 91st CB - Located in Samar area. Report via 31st Reg. & 2nd Brig.
- 10-29-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 91st CB - location not stated. Report via 2nd Brg.
- 12-7-45 - Comservpac reqs Comphilseafon to inactivate 91st CB. (Comservpac restr disp 060115 Dec'45 to Comphilseafon).
- 12-28-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 91st CB - location not stated. Report via 32nd Reg. & 2nd Brg.
- 1-3-46 - 1 Dec'45 report of 91st CB - location not stated. Report via 32nd Reg. & 2nd Brig.
- 2-5-46 - 91st CB reported inactivated since 31 Dec'45. (Comservpac 012101 Feb'46 disp to BuPers).
- 2-19-46 - 91st CB inactivated at Manicani Is., Samar, P.I., 31 Dec. 1945. Enlisted personnel transferred to 93rd CB. (1 Dec. conf. report).
- 7-8-46 - 91st CB inactivated 31 Dec. 45. at Manicani Is. Enlisted to 93rd CB. (Conf. ltr. from CinC to DireastPacDiv BuPers Serial Pers623 JMG/jhm dtd 31 Dec.)

INACTIVATED

## History of United States Naval Construction Battalion 91

On 22 April 1943, U.S. Naval Construction Battalion 91 was officially established at the U.S. Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Enlisted men and officers were detached from the training center and were attached and assigned to the battalion. Led by the Station Force band, the battalion marched to the training center's depot and boarded a train that departed for Davisville, Rhode Island.

On 23 April 1943, the 91st Battalion arrived at the U.S. Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island. At Camp Endicott, the men underwent extensive military and technical training. Under the stern supervision of Marine Corps instructors, they received training in close and extended-order drill, manual of arms, bayonet and hand grenade usage, commando course toughening, and rifle practice. Some of them attended special schools for instruction in diving, stevedoring, dock construction, advance base construction, and allied subjects.

Upon completion of the advanced training toward the end of May, the 91st Battalion received its colors at a full-dress review. Then many men went on a ten-day furlough. When it was reassembled in early June, the battalion was declared to be in a ready status.

On 15 June 1943, the battalion marched to the depot at Davisville, boarded a three-section train, and departed for California. These three train sections were supposed to be made up with Pullman sleeping cars, but instead they were made up with dilapidated and antiquated coach cars. Despite repeated promises enroute, no Pullman cars were forthcoming.

On 22 June 1943, after an austere and horrendous seven-day cross-country trip, the battalion arrived at the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Replacement and Recuperation Center, Camp Parks,

Shoemaker, California. Most of the men thereupon slept around the clock to recuperate. Three weeks were spent in further advanced military and technical training, but there was plenty of time for visits to nearby San Francisco.

Soon the battalion was on the move again. The men boarded a train on 12 July 1943 and headed south. The next day they arrived at the Advance Base Receiving Barracks, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California. Port Hueneme, about sixty miles north of Los Angeles, was a staging area for Seabees about to be sent overseas to Pacific Ocean destinations.

Both the men and the battalion were outfitted for overseas duty. They underwent further military and technical training. In addition, they moved some Coast Guard barracks from Oxnard to the shore and erected stran-steel warehouses on the base for the public works officer.

#### MILNE BAY, NEW GUINEA

On 10 August 1943, four officers and ten enlisted men of the 91st Battalion departed from Port Hueneme aboard the SS Nathaniel Currier. This advance party was escorting the bulk of the battalion construction equipment and supplies to Ladava on Milne Bay, New Guinea. The ship arrived at its destination on 20 September 1943.

The remainder of the enlisted men and officers, numbering over 1,000, left Port Hueneme on 21 September 1943 aboard the U.S. Army Transport Sea Witch and, after a very brief stopover in Australia, arrived at Ladava on 21 October 1943. The unloading of troops and cargo was completed five days after the landing. The advance party that had arrived on the SS Nathaniel Currier, in cooperation with a detachment of the 84th Construction Battalion, had built a galley and mess hall and had erected tents and installed sanitation facilities for 250 enlisted men and 30 officers.

The battalion established its headquarters at Ladava and was assigned to the Third Naval Construction Brigade. From 26 October 1943 until 9 July 1944 the battalion was engaged in the Milne Bay area on four major projects and numerous minor ones.

No enemy resistance was encountered at the time of the landings at Milne Bay or during the subsequent operations of the battalion. The existing installations at Ladava consisted of several framed buildings of native construction. One was altered to house some 20 officers, another for the post office, and still another for the offices of the Commander of the Naval Base. These buildings previously were part of the Ladava Mission. Several tents had also been erected for about 100 enlisted men, and the perimeter road around the camp had been started.

The administration area was located in a coconut grove at an elevation of four feet above mean high water. The top soil, consisting mostly of humus four feet in depth, overlaid a layer of sand soil. To stabilize this top soil for road construction, about two feet of gravel had to be dumped on it while ditches were dug on both sides of the road to lower the water level. The battalion proceeded forthwith to erect the remainder of the camp and began constructing the Naval Base. The real problem was drainage. Mud caused by the heavy rainfall was mitigated by extensive ditching to lower the water table in the subgrade. Lack of suitable fill near the road construction necessitated hauling gravel from a river bed about four and one-half miles away.

The water supply was pumped from a shallow well nearby. This yielded about 30,000 gallons per day, and the water needed a maximum amount of chlorination to make it fit for drinking purposes. Malarial control regulations were strictly enforced.

The Naval Supply Depot for the base was located at Gamadodo five miles across the bay and could only be reached by water transportation. There were no docks available on the Ladava site, but there were good



beaching facilities for landing craft and pontoon barges. The battalion assisted in the unloading of ships by means of pontoon barges and LCMs. About twenty-five percent of the battalion's complement was used at Ladava, and the men were employed for building docks, jetties, roads, electric and communication systems, warehouses, a hospital unit, and facilities for housing about 75 officers and 1,000 men. Also quarters, mostly of quonset huts, were built for a construction battalion maintenance unit.

Another detachment was detailed to construct a Destroyer Repair Base at Gohora Bay. This project consisted of numerous shops and warehouses, docks, jetties and roads. It also included housing facilities for 30 officers and about 1,000 men, and mostly consisted of quonset huts and some frame buildings. This base was about one-half mile from the Ladava Naval Base, was built under very difficult conditions, and presented many problems of drainage and fill. The land was originally under water at high tide and most of the fill had to be hauled five miles.

Still another detachment was put on a project to construct the Amphibious Base at Stringer Bay, located about four miles from Ladava. This work included the construction of warehouses, shops, and housing for about 800 men and 30 officers, a jetty 350 feet wide extending out to a depth of twelve feet of water, and roads, water facilities and electrification. The construction difficulties were negligible as a gravel bank was located within a thousand feet of the site of the work, and material for this construction was available. The site was high and relatively dry.

The remainder of the battalion was assigned to the construction of a 500-bed hospital at Hilimoi and housing for its officers, nurses, and corpsmen. During this construction, the 91st provided all the facilities for messing the hospital personnel. The working conditions at this place were good. Construction proceeded in accordance with the availability of material.

The work on all major projects at Milne Bay was substantially completed about 1 June 1944. The battalion then was alerted for forward movement and finally departed from Milne Bay for further duty at Finschhafen, New Guinea.

#### ALEXISHAFEN, NEW GUINEA

Company C of the 91st Battalion, consisting of 251 enlisted men and four officers, was assigned the task of constructing an Amphibious Repair Base at Alexishafen, New Guinea. Alexishafen is sometimes referred to under its other name of Madang. This base was to be about one-half the size of the one built at Stringer Bay.

The Company C Detachment departed from Milne Bay on 8 June 1944 and four days later arrived at Alexishafen. The men went in on virgin territory but encountered no difficult conditions. The base was built on a coral beach ten feet above the water level. The drainage problem was simple and construction difficulties negligible with the exception of securing water. An eight-inch pipeline about two miles long had to be laid through the jungle to provide water for ships and the base.

The job included the construction of over two miles of roads, fleet and base recreation facilities, warehouses, jetties, administration buildings, and utility systems; and the assembly of two pontoon drydocks.

The work was completed and the last echelon of the Company C Detachment departed from Alexishafen on 6 October 1944 and the next day joined the main body of the 91st Battalion at Finschhafen, New Guinea.

On 27 December 1944, two officers and 80 enlisted men of the battalion returned to Alexishafen from Finschhafen with orders to roll up the amphibious base. This operation was completed on 28 January 1945 and in February the detachment rejoined the 91st Battalion at Manicani Island in the Philippines.

## AUSTRALIA

On 14 June 1944, a detachment from Company B of the 91st Battalion, made up of 177 enlisted men and four officers, was sent from Milne Bay to Palm Island off the mainland of Australia. Arriving four days later, the detachment began the dismantling of the U.S. Naval Air Base that consisted of buildings and other facilities. The detachment dismantled and crated over five thousand tons of material and equipment and loaded it on a ship. Work was completed on 31 August 1944, and the men proceeded to Brisbane, Australia.

The Company B Detachment arrived at its destination two days later and was rewarded with ten days leave for rest and recuperation. The men then spent several months doing construction at Camp Seabee on the outskirts of Brisbane. During one interlude, the detachment participated, in conjunction with detachments from other Seabee battalions, in the remodeling and conversion of the USS Wright into a flagship for the Service Force of the Seventh U.S. Fleet.

On Christmas Day 1944, the detachment departed from Brisbane for temporary duty at Milne Bay while awaiting further transportation. After a few more stopovers in New Guinea, the detachment in February 1945 finally joined the main body of the 91st Battalion at Manicani Island in the Philippines.

## FINSCHHAFEN, NEW GUINEA

On 9 July 1944, the main body of the 91st Construction Battalion, minus the two detachments assigned to Alexishafen and Palm Island, left Milne Bay for Finschhafen, New Guinea. It arrived at its destination two days later and reported to the Naval Station for duty. The battalion occupied the old camp site of the 60th Construction Battalion and was assigned to three major construction projects: the Naval Advanced Base Staging Area, the PT-boat Base, and the Naval Supply Depot.

Many alterations were made at the camp, such as building a new mess hall and galley and also flush-type heads.

The construction of the ~~PT~~-boat Base began immediately and included warehouses, shops, frame barracks for 900 men, quarters for 80 bachelor officers, an officers mess, administrative offices, and recreation facilities. Electrical distribution lines and water mains were installed, and almost a mile of coral surfaced road was built. Construction difficulties were negligible except that the work was being done during the rainy season. Material, especially lumber, was practically unavailable, so the battalion set up and operated a sawmill. This project was completed on 15 September 1944.

The Naval Advanced Base Staging Area required facilities for 2,500 men. The battalion built barracks, mess halls, galleys, and about one-half mile of coral surfaced road. Water and electrical systems were installed. This project was about three-quarters completed by 1 November when orders came to curtail further work.

At the Naval Supply Depot the battalion built 20,000 square feet of frame warehouses, a timber and coral fill wharf, and storage platforms.

In addition to the major projects at Finschhafen, the battalion assembled fourteen strings of 2 by 30 pontoons for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and built a small-boat timber dock for the Australian Army.

On 7 December 1944, the base received orders to halt all construction. The 91st Construction Battalion was alerted for a forward movement and it departed from Finschhafen for the Philippines. The detachment earmarked for the roll up of the Amphibious Base at Alexishafen remained at Finschhafen awaiting further orders.

The expected orders arrived on 24 December and the roll up detachment departed on that day and arrived at Alexishafen on Christmas Day, 1944.

## PHILIPPINES

After a two-day layover at Hollandia, New Guinea, the 91st Construction Battalion arrived at Leyte in the Philippine Islands on 26 December 1944. Two days later it departed from Leyte and arrived at Manicani Island on the following day. For the battalion, this was the beginning of a one-year tour of duty in the Philippines.

While stationed at Manicani Island, the battalion constructed a Ship Repair Base and attendant facilities. During the year small detachments occasionally went to the adjoining islands of Leyte and Samar to perform special tasks.

The Ship Repair Base project consisted of building quarters, warehouses, docks, a hospital, and recreation facilities for 8,000 men. The men of the battalion also built ten miles of roads, timber wharves, and causeways; installed fuel and water lines and electric and power lines; and logged timber and operated a sawmill.

All construction work at Manicani Island was halted at the beginning of September 1945 because Japan surrendered and hostilities ceased. During the following months, the battalion sort of disintegrated as officers and enlisted men departed for discharge in the United States or else were transferred to other Seabee battalions to await their turn for the long awaited voyage home.

On 31 December 1945 United States Naval Construction Battalion 91 was officially disestablished at Manicani Island in the Philippines. Thus ended 33 glorious and fruitful months of service and achievement for the 91st Seabees.

United States Naval Construction Battalion 91

Chronology

- 22 Apr 43 U.S. Naval Construction Battalion 91 was officially established at the U.S. Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Enlisted personnel and officers were detached from the training center and were attached and assigned to the battalion. The battalion then boarded a train at Camp Peary and departed for Davisville, Rhode Island.
- 23 Apr 43 The battalion arrived at the Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island.
- 23 Apr 43 to 15 Jun 43 While stationed at Camp Endicott, the personnel underwent advanced technical and military training.
- 15 Jun 43 The battalion boarded trains at Davisville, Rhode Island and departed for Camp Parks in California.
- 15 Jun 43 to 22 Jun 43 In transit to California the battalion suffered through an austere and extremely hurried journey because of inadequate and antiquated railway cars.
- 22 Jun 43 The battalion arrived at the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Replacement and Recuperation Center, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.
- 22 Jun 43 to 12 Jul 43 At Camp Parks the personnel underwent further advanced military and technical training.

12 Jul 43        The battalion entrained at Camp Parks and departed for Port Hueneme, California.

13 Jul 43        The battalion arrived at the Advance Base Depot Receiving Barracks, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California.

13 Jul 43 to     While stationed at Camp Rousseau, both the battalion  
21 Sep 43        and its personnel were outfitted for overseas duty. The men also continued with their advanced military training and worked on several base construction projects.

10 Aug 43        Four officers and ten enlisted men of the battalion departed from Port Hueneme aboard the SS Nathaniel Currier. This advance party was escorting most of the battalion equipment and supplies to Ladava on Milne Bay, New Guinea.

20 Sep 43        The advance party arrived at Ladava, Milne Bay, New Guinea.

20 Sep 43 to     The men of the advance party, in cooperation with a  
21 Oct 43        detachment from Naval Construction Battalion 84, built a galley and mess hall and erected tents and heads for about 250 enlisted men and 30 officers.

21 Sep 43        The main body of Naval Construction Battalion 91, consisting of over a thousand enlisted men and officers, boarded the USAT Sea Witch and departed from the Advance Base Depot, Port Hueneme, California. The destination was Ladava, Milne Bay, New Guinea.

21 Oct 43        The battalion arrived at Ladava, Milne Bay, New Guinea.

21 Oct 43 to 9 Jul 44 At the Ladava naval base the battalion established its headquarters and became a part of the Third Naval Construction Brigade. Detachments of men constructed camps, bases, facilities, hospitals, utility systems, and other kinds of work throughout the Milne Bay area. Besides Ladava, they operated at such places as Gamadodo, Gohora Bay, Stringer Bay, Hilimoi, Gilli Gilli, Dowa Dowa, and Modewa.

8 Jun 44 Company C of the battalion, consisting of 251 enlisted men and four officers, departed from Milne Bay.

12 Jun 44 Company C Detachment arrived at Alexishafen (Madang), New Guinea and reported to the Naval Base for duty.

13 Jun 44 to 7 Oct 44 Company C Detachment constructed an amphibious repair base at Alexishafen.

14 Jun 44 Company B of the battalion, consisting of 177 enlisted men and four officers, departed for work at Palm Island, Australia.

18 Jun 44 Company B Detachment arrived at Palm Island, Australia and began dismantling the facilities of the U. S. Naval Base.

9 Jul 44 The main body of the battalion, now consisting of 586 enlisted men and 15 officers, departed from Milne Bay.

11 Jul 44 The main body of the battalion arrived at Finschhafen, New Guinea and reported to the naval station for duty.



11 Jul 44 to 12 Dec 44 The battalion was stationed at Finschhafen. It did construction work on a Naval Advanced Base Staging Area, a PT-boat Base, a Naval Supply Depot, and assembled 14 strings of 2 by 30 pontoons for the U.S. Army Engineers. Most of this work was completed by 15 October 1944.

26 Aug 44 About 145 men of the Company C Detachment at Alexishafen departed to rejoin the battalion at Finschhafen. Four officers and 105 enlisted men remained to complete the work.

27 Aug 44 The 145-men echelon of the Company C Detachment rejoined the main body of the battalion at Finschhafen.

31 Aug 44 Company B Detachment had completed the dismantling of the naval facilities at Palm Island, Australia and departed for duty elsewhere.

2 Sep 44 Company B Detachment arrived for duty at Brisbane, Australia.

2 Sep 44 to 25 Dec 44 Company B Detachment did considerable construction work at Camp Seabee. It also participated, along with detachments from other Seabee battalions, in the conversion of the USS Wright into a flagship for the Service Force of the Seventh U.S. Fleet.

7 Oct 44 The remainder of Company C Detachment, four officers and 101 enlisted men, departed from Alexishafen, New Guinea.

8 Oct 44 The remainder of Company C Detachment arrived at Finschhafen, New Guinea and rejoined the main body of the battalion.

12 Dec 44 The main body of U. S. Naval Construction Battalion 91, consisting of 20 officers and 751 enlisted men, departed from Finschhafen for the Philippine Islands. Left behind were two officers and 80 enlisted men who, when transportation was available, were to report for duty at Alexishafen, New Guinea.

24 Dec 44 The battalion detachment left at Finschhafen departed for Alexishafen, New Guinea. It arrived at its destination the next day and proceeded to roll up the base previously built by the Company C Detachment of the battalion.

25 Dec 44 Company B Detachment of the battalion departed from Brisbane, Australia for temporary duty at Milne Bay while awaiting further transportation.

26 Dec 44 The main body of the battalion, after a two-day layover at Hollandia, New Guinea, arrived at Leyte in the Philippine Islands.

28 Dec 44 The battalion departed from Leyte.

29 Dec 44 The battalion arrived at Manicani Island in the Philippines.

29 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 45 While stationed at Manicani Island, the battalion constructed a Ship Repair Base and attendant facilities.

29 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 45 By the middle of February 1945, the battalion complement was completed at Manicani with the return of the two detachments previously left behind in New Guinea.

Work ceased at the beginning of September, 1945 because Japan surrendered and hostilities ceased. During the following months, the battalion sort of disintegrated as officers and enlisted men departed to the United States for discharge or were transferred to other Seabee battalions.

31 Dec 45 United States Naval Construction Battalion 91 was officially disestablished at Manicani Island, Philippines.

## 91<sup>ST</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

### Chronology

- 22 Apr 1943 U.S. Naval Construction Battalion 91 was officially established at the U.S. Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Enlisted personnel and officers were detached from the training personnel and officers were detached from the training center and were attached and assigned to the battalion. The battalion then boarded a train at Camp Peary and departed for Davisville, Rhode Island.
- 23 Apr 1943 The battalion arrived at the Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island.
- 23 Apr-15 Jun 1943 While stationed at Camp Endicott, the personnel underwent advanced technical and military training.
- 15 Jun 1943 The battalion boarded trains at Davisville, Rhode Island and departed for Camp Parks in California.
- 15 Jun-22 Jun 1943 In transit to California the battalion suffered through an austere and extremely harried journey because of inadequate and antiquated railway cars.
- 22 Jun 1943 The battalion arrived at the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Replacement and Recuperation Center, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.
- 22 Jun-12 Jul 1943 At Camp Parks the personnel underwent further advanced military and technical training.
- 12 Jul 1943 The battalion entrained at Camp Parks and departed for Port Hueneme, California.
- 13 Jul 1943 The battalion arrived at the Advance Base Depot Receiving Barracks, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California.
- 13 Jul-21 Sep 1943 While stationed at Camp Rousseau, both the battalion and its personnel were outfitted for overseas duty. The men also continued with their advanced military training and worked on several base construction projects.
- 10 Aug 1943 Four officers and ten enlisted men of the battalion departed from Port Hueneme aboard the SS Nathaniel Currier. This advance party was escorting most of the battalion equipment and supplies to Ladava on Milne Bay, New Guinea.
- 20 Sep 1943 The advance party arrived at Ladava, Milne Bay, New Guinea.
- 20 Sep-21 Oct 1943 The men of the advance party, in cooperation with a detachment from Naval Construction Battalion 84, built a galley and mess hall and erected tents and heads for about 250 enlisted men and 30 officers.

21 Sep 1943	The main body of Naval Construction Battalion 91, consisting of over a thousand enlisted men and officers, boarded the USAT <u>Sea Witch</u> and departed from the Advance Base Depot, Port Hueneme, California. The destination was Ladava, Milne Bay, New Guinea.
21 Oct 1943	The battalion arrived at Ladava, Milne Bay, New Guinea.
21 Oct 1943 – 09 Jul 1944	At the Ladava naval base the battalion established its headquarters and became a part of the Third Naval Construction Brigade. Detachments of men constructed camps, bases, facilities, hospitals, utility systems, and other kinds of work throughout the Milne Bay area. Besides Ladava, they operated at such places as Gamadodo, Gohora Bay, Stringer Bay, Hilimoi, Gilli Gilli, Dowa Dowa, and Modewa.
08 Jun 1944	Company C of the battalion, consisting of 251 enlisted men and four officers, departed from Milne Bay.
12 Jun 1944	Company C Detachment arrived at Alexishafen (Madang), New Guinea and reported to the Naval Base for duty.
13 Jun-07 Oct 1944	Company C Detachment constructed an amphibious repair base at Alexishafen.
14 Jun 1944	Company B of the battalion, consisting of 177 enlisted men and four officers, departed for work at Palm Island, Australia.
18 Jun 1944	Company B Detachment arrived at Palm Island, Australia and began dismantling the facilities of the U.S. Naval Base.
09 Jul 1944	The main body of the battalion, now consisting of 586 enlisted men and 15 officers, departed from Milne Bay.
11 Jul 1944	The main body of the battalion arrived at Finschhafen, New Guinea and reported to Naval station for duty.
11 Jul-12 Dec 1944	The battalion was stationed at Finschhafen. It did construction work on a Naval Advanced Base Staging Area, a PT-boat Base, a Naval Supply Depot, and assembled 14 strings of 2 by 30 pontoons for the U.S. Army Engineers. Most of this work was completed by 15 October 1944.
26 Aug 1944	About 145 men of the Company C Detachment at Alexishafen departed to rejoin the battalion at Finschhafen. Four officers and 105 enlisted men remained to complete the work.
27 Aug 1944	The 145-men echelon of the Company C Detachment rejoined the main body of the battalion of Finschhafen.
31 Aug 1944	Company B Detachment had completed the dismantling of the naval facilities at Palm Island, Australia and departed for duty elsewhere.
02 Sep 1944	Company B Detachment arrived for duty at Brisbane Australia.
02 Sep-25 Dec 1944	Company B Detachment did considerable construction work at Camp Seabee. It also participated, along with detachments from other Seabee battalions, in the conversion of the USS <u>Wright</u> into a flagship for the Service Force of the Seventh U.S. Fleet.

07 Oct 1944	The remainder of Company C Detachment, four officers and 101 enlisted men, departed from Alexishafen, New Guinea.
08 Oct 1944	The remainder of Company C Detachment arrived at Finschhafen, New Guinea and rejoined the main body of the battalion.
12 Dec 1944	The main body of U.S. Naval Construction Battalion 91, consisting of 20 officers and 751 enlisted men, departed from Finschhafen for the Philippine Islands. Left behind were two officers and 80 enlisted men who, when transportation was available, were to report for duty at Alexishafen, New Guinea.
24 Dec 1944	The battalion detachment left at Finschhafen departed for Alexishafen, New Guinea. It arrived at its destination the next day and proceeded to roll up the base previously built by the Company C Detachment of the battalion.
25 Dec 1944	Company B Detachment of the battalion departed from Brisbane, Australia for temporary duty at Milne Bay while awaiting further transportation.
26 Dec 1944	The main body of the battalion, after a two-day layover at Hollandia, New Guinea, arrived at Leyte in the Philippine Islands.
28 Dec 1944	The battalion departed from Leyte.
29 Dec 1944	The battalion arrived at Manicani Island in the Philippines.
29 Dec 1944 – 31 Dec 1945	While stationed at Manicani Island, the battalion constructed a Ship Repair Base and attendant facilities. By the middle of February 1945, the battalion complement was completed at Manicani with the return of the two detachments previously left behind in New Guinea. Work ceased at the beginning of September, 1945 because Japan surrendered and hostilities ceased. During the following months, the battalion sort of disintegrated as officers and enlisted men departed to the United States for discharge or were transferred to other Seabee battalions.
31 Dec 1945	United States Naval Construction Battalion 91 was officially disestablished at Manicani Island, Philippines.

## 91<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

### Officers in Charge

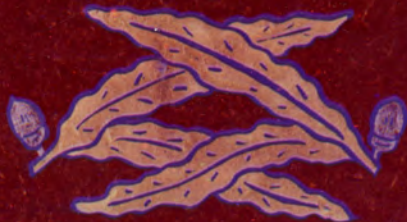
Commander Lewis F. Hewett, CEC, USNR	22 Apr 1943 – 29 Sep 1945
Lieutenant Clayton R. Fralick, CEC, USNR	29 Sep 1945 – 16 Nov 1945
Lieutenant Junior Grade John M. Gibson, CEC, USNR	16 Nov 1945 – 31 Dec 1945

### Executive Officers

Lieutenant Commander Harold L. Haworth, CEC, USNR	22 Apr 1943 – 09 Sep 1943
Lieutenant Commander Burth A. Johnson, CEC, USNR	09 Sep 1943 – 21 Sep 1945
Lieutenant William E. Wood, CEC, USNR	21 Sep 1945 – 04 Nov 1945
Lieutenant Junior Grade Rollin D. Morgan, CEC, USNR	04 Nov 1945 – 31 Dec 1945



U.S.N



91st



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