

COMMISSIONING CEREMONY



UNITED STATES NAVAL MOBILE
CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

FIFTY-EIGHT

DAVISVILLE, RHODE ISLAND

HISTORY

The 58th Naval Construction Battalion was originally commissioned on 26 December 1942 at Camp Allen in Norfolk, Virginia under the command of Commander Andrew D. Lewis, CEC, USNR. After several months of military and technical training at Camp Peary, Virginia and advanced training at Camp Rouseau, Port Hueneine, California, the Battalion departed for Guadalcanal to await their first overseas construction assignment.

The Battalion's first taste of action came on 13 August 1943, when they arrived at Vella La Vella from Guadalcanal.

There they succeeded in establishing a fighter airfield, despite continuous harassment from Japanese bombers. For this action the Battalion was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation, which stated in part "for outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces during the invasion and establishment of a fighter air base at Vella La Vella, Northern Solomons, from 13 to 31 August 1943".

In September 1943, Lieutenant Commander L. I. Quayle, CEC, USNR, was Officer-in-Charge of the Battalion and completed the work at Vella La Vella. After completing the fighter strip, the Battalion went to Auckland, New Zealand for a well earned rest. Their stay was brief, for in April 1944, after having replenished their supplies at Banika in the Russell Islands, they were hard at work with the construction of a PT overhaul base, personnel camp and fuel farm at Los Negros in the Admiralty Islands. There, Lieutenant Commander Robert E. Turrentine, CEC, USNR, took command of the Battalion in October 1944.

From December 1944 to April 1945, the Battalion began preparing for the invasion of Okinawa. They even assembled a complete Japanese village for the 6th Marine Division to use on a training site for the invasion of Okinawa.

The Battalion's last major task began with the actual invasion of Okinawa. There they worked day and night to establish and maintain roads, bridges, water supply, communications and earth work for permanent installations.

Even though there were 261 enemy air raids during the period of April 1st to June 30th 1945, the Battalion succeeded in keeping Yontan airfield in continuous operation.

Soon after these operations, the Battalion was gradually phased out and in May of 1946, it was decommissioned after nearly four years of outstanding service.

HONORED GUESTS

Honorable and Mrs. John H. Chafee
Governor of the State of Rhode Island

Honorable and Mrs. Fernand J. St. Germain
House of Representatives

Rear Admiral T. F. Caldwell, USN
Deputy Chief of Staff, Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

Rear Admiral Erger, CEC, USN
Deputy Chief, Bureau of Yards and Docks

Rear Admiral and Mrs. M. H. Turtle, USN
Commander Fleet Air Quonset

Rear Admiral J. C. Bullard, USN
Commander Carrier Division Eighteen, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

Captain V. E. Schumacker, USN
Service Forces Commander, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

Captain and Mrs. J. H. Barker, Jr., CEC, USN
Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Construction Battalion Center
Davisville, R. I.

Captain and Mrs. S. R. Smith, CEC, USN
Commander Naval Construction Battalions, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

Lieutenant Commander R. E. Turrentine Jr., CEC, USNR (Retired)
Former Commanding Officer
U. S. Naval Construction Battalion Fifty-Eight

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UNITED STATES MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

FIFTY-EIGHT

15 MARCH 1966

1000 HOURS

Pre Commissioning Ceremonies	U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Fifty-Eight Drill Team
Invocation	Commander W. F. Hollis, CHC, USN COMCBLANT Staff Chaplain
Introduction of Honored Guests	Captain S. R. Smith, CEC, USN Commander, Naval Construction Battalions U. S. Atlantic Fleet
Remarks and Reading of Commissioning Orders	Rear Admiral T. F. Caldwell, USN Deputy Chief of Staff, Commander in Chief U. S. Atlantic Fleet
Presentation of National Ensign and Battalion Colors	Rear Admiral T. F. Caldwell, USN Deputy Chief of Staff, Commander in Chief U. S. Atlantic Fleet
Reading of Orders	Commander W. W. DeGroot III, CEC, USN
Remarks	Rear Admiral W. M. Enger, CEC, USN Deputy Chief, Bureau of Yards and Docks
Benediction	Commander W. F. Hollis, CHC, USN
Departure Honors	

COMMANDING OFFICER



COMMANDER WARD WALTON DeGroot III, CEC, USN

Commander DeGroot, was born in New York City on 17 October 1929. He attended Rutgers University prior to entering the United States Naval Academy, where he graduated in the class of 1951.

Commander DeGroot served aboard USS Tweedy DE-532 as a Line officer prior to transfer to the Civil Engineer Corps in 1953. He then attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he received his Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree in 1954. As a Civil Engineer Corps Officer, he has served as Planning Officer and Assistant ROICC, Public Works Office, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California; Shops Engineer, Public Works Department, U.S. Naval Academy; Staff Civil Engineer, Commander Naval Air Bases, Japan; Emergency Military Construction Programmer, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Op-44); Personal Aide and Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations/Logistics; and as OICC/ROICC, Sewells Point Area, Atlantic Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks. He is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, 36th Class.

Commander DeGroot is married to the former Claire K. Sindlinger of Holmdel, New Jersey. They have four children; Robin, 12; Dana, 10; Douglas, 8; and Gretchen, 5.

BATTALION OFFICERS

LAWSON, L. D.	LCDR	USN	Executive Officer
SWISTOCK, J. R.	LT	USN	Operations Officer
BONDERMAN, W. E.	L TJG	USNR	Asst. Operations Officer
TACK, C. A.	LT	USN	Plans & Training Officer
SCHOFIELD, D. A.	L TJG	USN	Asst. Plans & Training Officer
DUNN, M. G.	L TJG	USNR	Administration Officer
STEADMAN, W. G. III	LCDR	USN	Supply Officer
MARTIN, P. E.	ENS	USN	Dispersing Officer
GERMAN, A. T.	L TJG	USN	"A" Company Commander
ALLEMAND, L. J.	WO-1	USN	"A" Asst. Company Commander
GALLEN, J. J. Jr.	LT	USN	"B" Company Commander
RYAN, P. L.	ENS	USNR	"B" Asst. Company Commander
PORTER, M. D.	LT	USN	"C" Company Commander
LORD, L.	ENS	USNR	"C" Asst. Company Commander
MARTIN, W. D.	L TJG	USN	"D" Company Commander
PACIFICCO, G. D.	ENS	USNR	"D" Asst. Company Commander
DERR, R. A.	ENS	USNR	"H" Company Commander