



# US Navy Civil Engineer Corps Collegiate Corner



March 2023

Greetings Future CEC Officers!

Spring is upon us! Hopefully you are well prepared for midterms and are able to enjoy some warmer weather as you head into the second half of the semester. Keep up the hard work and continue preparing yourself mentally and physically for OCS. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. We look forward to you joining the ranks!

In this newsletter prepared during Women’s History Month, we open the archives and share a story of trailblazing women who shaped the Civil Engineer Corps and Seabees. We also bid farewell to a fellow accessions officer, explain the process of moving in the military (PCSing), celebrate the birthday of the Civil Engineer Corps and the Seabees, and congratulate the newly selected officer candidates from the most recent Officer Candidate School selection board.

- CEC Accessions Team

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## **History of Women in the Seabees and the Civil Engineer Corps**

World War II, particularly the island hopping nature of combat in the Pacific requiring constant construction of bases, demonstrated to America the need for combat ready construction workers, which gave rise to the organization of the Seabees. World War II also created a need for women to fill in the ranks of various military branches, including the newly created Seabees, the Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) and Navy as a whole. While the first officially designated woman Seabee didn’t join the ranks until 1972, the steps towards admitting women into the Seabees began in World War II.

Ens. Kathleen F. Lux, paved the way by being the first female Civil Engineer Officer. She entered the Naval Reserve on November 28, 1942 and received her commission after training at U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen’s School in Northampton, Massachusetts. Lux served as an assistant in the office of Commodore C.P. Conrad, director of the Construction Department.

After World War II ended, women’s involvement in all branches of the military declined, and it wouldn’t be until the end of another major war before that they were once again encouraged to take a more active role in the military. As the Vietnam Conflict drew to a close, women began to enter the armed services as more opportunities were made available. This increase in female service members affected not only the CEC, but it also paved the way for women to join the



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Seabees. 1972 had the distinction of not only seeing a female officer rejoin the CEC, the first since World War II, but also seeing the first female Seabee being selected for duty. Ensign Jeri Rigoulot became reported to Officer Candidate School at Newport, R.I. in October 1972 and was commissioned as an ensign in the CEC Naval Reserve in February 1973. During that same summer, Constructionman Camella Jones became the first female Seabee by cross-rating as an Equipment Operator.

In the following years, women continued to take active roles in Navy and Seabee operations. In 1984, Chief Builder Carol Diane Keehner is believed to have been the first female Seabee to make Chief.

The 1990s saw great strides in the advancement women in the Seabees. In August 1990, female Seabees were assigned to Construction Battalion Units (CBU) 411 and 415 and their mission sent them to Saudi Arabia to erect and maintain a fleet hospital. In fact, both CBU's had female CEC officers in charge during their deployment that marked the first time female CEC officers led troops in a combat zone. In 1992, Keehner was the first female Seabee to make Master Chief and there were at least ten women in the ACB 1 (Amphibious Construction Battalion) designated as Seabees deployed to Somalia in December 1992.

Though women have long been ready and willing to take on the "Can Do" spirit of the Seabees, one of the major obstacles in their way was the very thing that made the Seabees special, the fact that they are not only construction workers but also designated as combat units. Though women were already serving in ACBs they were still barred by law from serving in Mobile Construction Battalions (MCBs). As war realities have changed, the idea of what was considered a combat zone has also been evolving. During the Persian Gulf War of 1991, women were limited to non-combat support roles such as communications, transportation, medicine, administration, and military police work, but often found themselves in harm's way. As the Gulf War has shown us, in the modern era almost any type of military unit, even ones miles behind what used to be called the front lines, can find themselves subject to attack. Although no American women were killed in the Gulf War, some were injured by enemy attacks and several assigned to transportation units were taken prisoner by the Iraqis.

These changes in warfare lead to the 1994 National Defense Authorization Act, which finally allowed women to be legally assigned to surface combat ships and mobile construction battalions. The Bureau of Naval Personnel began drawing up plans to integrate female Seabees and CEC officers into mobile construction battalions. The first woman ordered to an MCB was Chief Builder Cheryl Hundley, who reported to MCB 5 on April 5, 1994. Later that month, Lt. j.g. Michaela Bradley became the first female CEC officer assigned to a MCB when she reported



*Constructionman Camella J. Jones learns how to operate a large crane from a Chief Petty Officer. She was the first woman of the Navy to qualify as a Heavy Equipment Operator and to be assigned to a U.S. Navy Construction Battalion, November 1972. Photograph by PH3 Paul Mansfield, USN. NHHC Photograph Collection, NH 106746.*



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aboard MCB 133. By June 1994, more than 100 enlisted women and 14 women officers were assigned to mobile construction battalions, and by October all eight MCB's had women on board. This change was significant because it opened up more than 4,000 seagoing positions to women, which could only have a positive effect on their military careers. Before this change in assignment policy, most female Seabees were confined to shore positions, such as public works departments and construction battalion units.

In 1996 the Seabee's had another first, this time underwater. Petty Officer Margret Cooper became the first woman Underwater Construction Team (UCT) Seabee. As the CEC and Seabees integrated women into their workforce, they continued to prove that no matter their gender, Seabees and CECs have the spirit and determination to fulfill every role, no matter what locations or challenges they faced.

Not only did women prove they could do the same jobs and meet combat ready requirements, they also proved that they could lead and command forces and battalions.

The commanding career of current Rear Adm. Katherine Gregory began when she became the first female CEC to lead battalion on June 11, 1999 when she reported to NMCB 133 as their Commanding Officer. She then served as commander to the 30th Naval Construction Regiment, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific, and Chief of Staff for the First Naval Construction Division, and the Pacific Fleet Civil Engineer. On October 26, 2012, having achieved the rank of rear admiral, she assumed duties as commander of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers. A contemporary of Gregory is Rear Adm. Paula Campbell Brown who was the first female commander of a Seabee regiment in combat when she took the helm of 30th Naval Construction Regiment (Forward) in Iraq. She command this post from September 2005 to March 2006, proving not only could Seabee women fight in combat, but that they could lead as well. Brown also served as Commanding Officer of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 18 and Commander of the First Naval Construction Regiment (1st NCR). During Operation Iraqi Freedom, she mobilized as the Commander, 30th NCR (rear) for seven months in Pearl Harbor with the Pacific Seabees. She made history again as the first female Deputy Commander of the First Naval Construction Division in 2010.

Seabee women have proven that they can do anything their male counterparts can do, including going back to basics. In 2012, almost by accident, the first all-female construction team took on a construction job from start to finish, a first in the Seabees' 70-year history. They were able to complete it in record time in the barren rocky mountains of Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold and the focus of recent combat efforts.



*First Female Seabee Team*





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As we move forward, women will continue to show their strength and capability. With a strong history and the “Can Do” attitude, the women of the Seabees and CEC will continue to break barriers with honor, purpose, and integrity.

By: Ingi House, United States Navy Seabee Museum March 16, 2015  
<https://seabeesmuseum.wordpress.com/2015/03/16/archivists-attic-history-of-women-in-the-seabees-and-the-civil-engineer-corps/>

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## ACCESSIONS OFFICER FOCUS

Before we go into our traditional “Career Focus” section, we would like to take this time to honor LT Viaronic “V.” Snow-Hill, our CEC South Accessions Officer. LT Snow-Hill will be transferring out of his accessions role in late March 2023 for a spectacular new assignment in Norfolk, Virginia as the Aide to the Commander of NAVFAC ATLANTIC – one of few highly selective positions in the CEC also referred to as Admiral’s Aide or Flag Aide.



From candidate interviews, class presentations, career fairs, and engagement with professional organizations, LT Snow-Hill has been a champion in ensuring the future success of the Civil Engineer Corps. His pioneering spirit and extra attention committed toward expanding our outreach efforts toward fellow architects seeking to serve the country will leave a lasting legacy in the accessions team. He is a model example of a Civil Engineer Corps Officer, your dedication and work ethic will be truly missed.

In standard Navy tradition, we wish V. *“FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS.”*

In his place, we will soon welcome aboard LT Marcella Cupello as the new South Accessions Officer. LT Cupello is currently scheduled to check onboard NAVFAC Southeast in Jacksonville, Florida in April 2023. We look forward to introducing her via next month’s Collegiate Corner!

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## CAREER FOCUS

As you will soon learn, being in the military requires you to move. Your tours as a Junior Officer will typically be 24 months if you are assigned to a deployable unit, such as an NMCB, and 24-36 months if you are assigned to shore duty, such as a NAVFAC Public Works Department. The Navy understands that moving often creates a burden – both financially and mentally, especially if you have a spouse, children, or pets that need to move with you.

When you move from one duty station to another, the Navy refers to that as a “PCS” or permanent change of station. How you get your stuff from point A to point B depends on where you are headed and what kind of move you want to do. For moves within the contiguous United States (known as CONUS), you have a few options. One option is a “DITY” (do-it-yourself) move, for which the military will reimburse you for your moving expenses. Another option is called a HHG (household goods) move where you would let the military hire a contracting company to pack, ship, and store or deliver your belongings. The last option is a combination of the two, called a “partial DITY” for which you are reimbursed for moving some of your own items while allowing the military-hired movers to do the rest.

If you move overseas (known as OCONUS), there are tighter restrictions on how much stuff you can take with you. The military will pay for you to put some of your belongings in storage while paying to ship the rest. They will also pay for you to ship one car overseas. Additionally, you will need passports and possibly visas for your entire family for your overseas move.

The website [www.move.mil](http://www.move.mil) will be a useful resource as you plan your move, as well as the Fleet and Family Support Center on base.

Moving also means you will need to find a place to live, whether you decide to live in military housing or find an apartment or home to rent or buy. If you would like to live in military housing (on or off base), you will need to contact the Navy Housing Service Center before you move as there may be a waiting list. The entirety of your Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) will be used to pay your rent if you opt for military housing, whereas if you choose to live off base, you will be paid your allowable BAH rate regardless of how much you pay in rent. Your BAH is based on geographic duty location, pay grade, and dependency status. Refer to <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm> for more information on BAH rates.

The Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN 1320-210) instruction authorizes your detaching command to give you up to 10 days of “permissive temporary additional duty” (TAD) to find a place to live, assuming you have PCS orders and are moving from a different region. Take all the time that you are authorized for house hunting TAD to find a place to live, sign a lease, set up your utilities, etc. so that you can be properly focused at work. The MILPERSMAN instruction is located at this website:

<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupersnpc/reference/milpersman/1000/1300Assignment/Documents/1320-210.pdf>



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As you report to your first duty station, you will be assigned a sponsor (typically another CEC Junior Officer already at the command) to help you as you transition into the area and your new job. Reach out to him or her for advice and guidance! If you have questions on who your sponsor is or you are not able to get in touch with him or her, refer to your orders or contact your Detailer for assistance.

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS AND SEABEES

NAVFAC Team,

As we settle into March, we find ourselves prepared to celebrate one of our favorite months at NAVFAC. Not only do we have the honor of recognizing Women’s History Month, we also get to pause to remember the history of our Navy's Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) and Fighting Seabees.

On Thursday, March 2nd, our Corps will celebrate its 156th anniversary, and on Sunday, March 5th, our Seabees celebrate their 81st birthday!

Since 1942, when Admiral Ben Moreell, the 21st Chief of Civil Engineers, and “Father of the Seabees,” created the first Construction Battalions, Seabees and CEC officers have answered the global call for assistance that only our Nation's foremost combat and engineering community can deliver.

From humble beginnings to the present day, active duty and reserve CEC officers and Seabees continue to bring unique skills and capabilities to bear in support of our Navy and Marine Corps team in this current environment of strategic competition. They are a naval expeditionary force multiplier, bringing combat operations support to every theater in which the Navy and Marine Corps operates, epitomizing the very essence of forward presence.

Please join me in toasting this magnificent heritage as these proud service members remain ever ready to build, to fight, and to operate forward at moment's notice.

To our “Can Do” Team of CEC officers and Seabees, I am honored and proud to serve alongside you -- I wish you a happy birthday!





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VR/Dean

Dean VanderLey, P.E.  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Commander, NAVFAC Systems Command  
Chief of Civil Engineers

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR THE CEC COLLEGIATE PROGRAM AND OCS!

Joshua Harris	Tyler Walker	Emmy Hendricks	Chamberlain Hinkley
Jonathan Baez	Duncan Belfour	Patrick Littlefield	John Burton-Austrom
Lisa Kirabo	Rashad Abdul-Majid		

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## ACCESSIONS TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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