

SEABEE CENTER NEWS

Naval Construction Battalion Center
4902 Marvin Shields Blvd
Gulfport, MS 39501-5001

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Rob Mims, Public Affairs Officer
Phone: 228-871-2699
E-Mail: robert.c.mims@navy.mil

Press Release

NCBC Gulfport changes hands

GULFPORT, Miss. – Capt. Paul Odenthal, Civil Engineer Corps, relieved Capt. Rick Burgess, Civil Engineer Corps, as commanding officer, Naval Construction Battalion Center during a ceremony on board Seabee Center June 27.

Just before Odenthal spoke the words, “I relieve you, sir” and Burgess replied “I stand relieved,” the NCBC flag was passed from Command Master Chief Mark Thomas to Burgess. He then passed the flag to Odenthal, who passed it back to Thomas. This act is steeped deep in tradition and is always accomplished in the same manner to symbolize passing the responsibility of command.

As Odenthal uttered those famous words he took command of NCBC and becomes the first to do so since April 1966 without taking command of the former 20th Seabee Readiness Group, which was realigned and renamed in February. Burgess handed over command of 20SRG to Capt. Darius Banaji before the group was renamed Naval Construction Group 2. Although names and faces have changed, the mission of the Seabee base remains the same. It is here “To maintain and operate facilities and provide services and material in support of Naval Construction Force Operations, to include Amphibious units, the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Enhanced), and other fleet and assigned organizational units deployed from or home ported at NCBC Gulfport.”

Although the new skipper will only wear one hat, there are many upcoming challenges including the looming civilian furlough, budget restraints and ongoing mission realignment. Add in normally busy day-to-day operations and the skipper’s position is a hectic, full time job.

Some of those operations include taking care of thousands of transients who flow through the base. NCBC provides food, lodging and other amenities to more than 10,000 Army, Navy and Air Force students who train at the Naval Construction Training Center, another 2,400 Navy students who go through the Expeditionary Combat Skills Site, thousands more who train at the NCG2’s Contingency Construction Crew Training courses and on average more than 5,500 individual augmentees and Reservist process through the Navy Military Personnel Support and Naval Operations Support Command annually.

Burgess assumed command of NCBC July 11, 2011. He will move to the Pentagon where he will be work for the Chief of Naval Operations.

Rear Adm. John C. “Jack” Scorby, Commander, Navy Region Southeast and guest speaker for the change of command said, “Until you sit in the seat, it’s impossible to describe the literally

hundreds of completely diverse issues Skipper Burgess has had to deal with over the past two years. But, suffice it to say, he has handled each and every issue brilliantly.”

Odenthal, who most recently held the position of Executive Officer at Naval Facilities Engineering Command NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic in Norfolk, Va., is the 29th officer to assume the duties as commanding officer of NCBC.

“If you read Capt. Odenthal’s bio,” said Scorby, it is clear that he has been given some of the toughest assignments and performed brilliantly in all of them. So I know that he is more than ready to continue NCBC Gulfport’s record of excellence.