

HISTORY OF SPECIAL WEAPONS 1957 - 1990

Special Weapons, a division of the Ordnance Department at Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) McAlester, started in 1957. The first Special Weapons Director, Mr. Baldwin, started the unit in 1957 where in was located in the Administration Building (Headquarters') basement. The next Civilian Director was Dick Halpern, who took over in 1960. The first two engineers hired were Bob Farris and Charlie Nichols. In 1961 Tony Lasaro was Civilian Director and hired Jack Petricek. Palmer Anthony came in 1959, and in 1960 the Detachment split into Engineering (Palmer Anthony) and Documentation (Martin Mummert). In 1958 CDR Prade, Ordnance Officer, asked for a military Special Weapons Officer and assigned CDR Fred Chase for these duties. The division grew steadily, and Documentation, including the newly organized Unsatisfactory Reports (UR) Branch moved to Building 7 (Calibration Lab), occupying the south end of the building. All manufacturing, parts and cables were made in the present Building 9 (Machine Shop) under Quinton Ussery. In early 1961 Building 53SH109, now Building 567, (a large 804 x 108 ft building built to store mothballed machine tools, powder presses and production line major items after the Korean War, but never used) was obtained and partially renovated. It was used for the working of training and war reserve components for early nuclear weapons. The building finally got some office spaces. Anthony and LT Lewis had the offices now occupied by 473. There were utilities there in the M-Bay, E-Bay and present lunch room along with the men's restroom. The remainder of the building was unheated in the winter. The further north space (present lunch room) was the Electrical Bay. No further construction was north of that space.

You entered the building through a wooden door in the north panel of the door in the present machine shop tool crib. You had to step through the door like a hatch on shipboard, bumped heads and bruised shins resulted.

A strict security system was maintained. The present guard shack (smoke shack) was not there, but there was, however, a small (dog house) guard shack at the gate (approximately 20 feet south of the present gate). This was an electrically operated sliding gate, kept closed unless a delivery truck or Navy truck had to pass in or out. A company of Marines performed all the guard and security duties. Armed Marines made an inspection march around the building every hour. A security officer (civilian) did oversee all pass and tag operations at the front gate and maintained all the badging system. At 53SH109, a Marine was on duty 24 hours a day. Changing of the guard occurred at 8:00 a.m. The SGT of the guard and Navy OD would inspect all weapons prior to change. Our working hours were 0730 to 1600 hours. We later changed to 0715 to 1545 to stagger the traffic on C-Tree through the administration area. The Marine guard at the gate maintained an exchange badge system. Workers got here before 0715 stood in line to exchange badges (rain or shine). The building was usually open by 0700, but not everyone knew the lock combination. If the designated building opener slept in or was sick, you waited outside in the weather until the Weapons Officer or Palmer Anthony arrived to open the building.

Time clocks were used and workers punched in or out. The people started lining up from the permitted five minutes before quitting time to sometimes ten or more minutes before. This occurred until Palmer would give us a lecture about lining up early. After we built offices and work space north of the present lunch room, we had time clocks on the north wall of the lunch room and on the south wall of the hallway across from the administration supervisor's office. With two time clocks, people lined up at various times and each group north or south argued the other one was lining up too soon and another lecture by Palmer ensued. Engineers punched out until 1964 then were exempt, however, they did use the time card racks to store their cards on Friday. The lunch room (present E-Bay) was added in 1961 and half was lunch room and south half was for the engineers.

In 1963, Special Weapons split from the Ordnance Department and was made a separate department. Palmer Anthony was made Civilian Director and Quinton Ussery who ran the overall manufacturing and repair division got PO'd and quit, leaving for NASA in Houston. With all the shakeup, in late 1963/1964, the office spaces north of the present lunch room were built. Palmer and LT Lewis shared the middle office (present CDR's secretary's office). Door Number 6 was installed as a new entrance through the vestibule with electric door latches operated by switches in the front office. Documentation and the UR Branch moved from Building 7 to 53SH109, occupying the large room that had just been built. No construction was made past the north wall of this room at that time. The library was where the budget office was before the 1989 renovations. The supply section was in the south end of the building between Door 11 and the end of the building. The NAD Supply Department handled all the orders for parts and materials from Building 8. Ralph Everett, Isabel Staples and Houston (Whitey) Roberts handled all the requisitions and 1348's. Carl Capers was the warehouseman in this building, but clocked in and out of Building 8. The Maintenance and Repair Branch of Special Weapons had a Planning and Estimating Branch and the shops had a shop planner and parts runner (Huck Davidson). The last of the shop planners and division planning and estimation group then was our own Ed Clark, Jr. In 1962 Engineering Division was put under Gus Bagby, who also was over part of the Calibration Laboratory, Building 7. There were seven people in Engineering at that time (Bagby, Farris, O.W. Roberts, Rienking, Argo, Petricek and Maddox). We moved into our new spaces (presently Documentation) June 4, 1967. We had a work area, test gear area, and the present NAVAIR Branch and two additional work rooms (present Documentation secretary's area). A NAPSAC room was constructed and Documentation built a supervisor's office next to the NAPSAC room (present 472 offices). Engineering spaces had a drafting room and a conference room. NAD McAlester redesignated Building 53SH109 to the present Building 567 in 1973. The NAD ceased to exist in October 1977 when the Army took over. The Commander's Office was added prior to 1980 in the Joe Butler reign.

The Parachute Bay came about in early 1965. A partitioned wall and doors were constructed: Two lines were built up. Jack Lawler was supervisor under the M&R Branch (Duffy Cothran). A Chemical Lab was built (present library), Ellis Pardee ran the Chem Lab until he transferred to the Army in 1977 to Building 15. Engineering kept the Chem Lab for a couple of years until the space was made a library in 1978/1979. The SW Department got a paint spray booth about 1972 and a walk-in grit blaster about 1973/1974. The Machine Shop dock area got a roof and a welding shop was built in 1976. The compressor

room was built in 1968 when the Machine Shop was added. The incinerator was added in 1976, which brings new construction into modern times. More recent construction was the Conference Room and TOMAHAWK Training Bay in 1985, second Training Bay in 1990, remodeling of Documentation, Air Engineering Branch, UR Offices, Budget which occurred in 1980/90. NAVSEA Engineering Branch had new offices constructed in 1990, after sharing the E-Bay for a year.

Since May 1957 we have had eleven base Commanders and ten Special Weapons Officers, as follows:

NAD Base Commanders

CAPT Murphy 1955/57
 CAPT Robbins 1957/60
 CAPT Judson 1960/62
 CAPT Galvani 1962/65
 CAPT Hanson 1965/1970
 CAPT Chambliss 1970/74
 CAPT Smith 1974/1977
 CDR R. "B." Segal 1977

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AAP Base Commanders

COL Parker 1977/80
 COL Kimura 1980/1983
 COL Baird 1983/85
 COL Busby 1985/87
 COL Boddie 1987/89
 COL Shelton 1989/

Special Weapons Civilian Directors:

T. Baldwin 1958/60
 Dick Halpern 1960
 Tony Lasaro 1961
 Trevor Reece 1962
 Palmer Anthony 1967/81
 Fred Hitchcock 1982/85
 Jim Thompson 1985/

Documentation Supervisors:

Martin Mummert 1959/82
 Wayne Taylor 1982/88
 Phil Jacobs 1988/

UR Supervisors:

Jim Sanders 1959/89
 Elmer Phipps 1990/

Special Weapons Officers

CDR Fred Chase 1958/60
 LT Grisby 1961/62
 LT Bill Lewis 1962/65
 LT CDR Henry Mitchell 1965/68
 LT CDR Fred Friddle 1968/70
 CDR Herman Kinsel 1970/72
 CDR Don Waymire 1972/76

LT CDR Tom Anderson 1976/77
 CDR Charlie Murdock 1977/78
 CDR Joe Butler 1978/80
 LT CDR Frank Thomas 1980/83
 CDR Russell Rhine 1983/

Engineering Supervisors:

Palmer Anthony 1960
 Gus Bagby 1962/80
 Air - Bob Farris
 Sea - L. R. Maddox
 Fred Hitchcock 1981/82
 Jim Thompson 1983/85
 Air - Ken Argo
 Sea - Roger Skaggs
 Air - Roger Skaggs 1990/
 Sea - Sherry Mitchell 1990/

Maintenance & Repair Supervisors:

Quinton Ussery 1958/63
 Duffy Cothran 1963/72
 Herman Ragland 1973/74
 L. R. Maddox 1975/80
 Bill Creason 1980/88
 Wayne Taylor 1988/

L. R. Maddox, Elder Statesman, Special Weapons Historian, Engineer and Nemesis at Large retired 30 November 1990, served 1963/90, now only three who were here in 1963 still remain: Elmer Phipps, John Nelson, Don Hudson, these are now the old-timers. .

I pass the Historian responsibilities to Elmer Phipps.

L. R. Maddox
HISTORIAN
20 Dec 90

In 25 years of operation . . .

NAD commanded by 14 officers

AAA

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Most people regard Captain E. L. Woodside as the Depot's first Commanding Officer, and, since most World War II workers knew him well, they had reason to believe he was the Depot's first Commanding Officer.

Actually, Captain H. E. Fischer commanded the Depot from the day of commissioning, 20 May 1943, until 19 July 1943. Until the arrival of Captain Woodside on 6 November 1943, Commander John L. Lewis was acting Commanding Officer from July to November of 1943.

Captain Woodside took over command of the Depot with only one loading line in operation. Under the pressure of wartime needs, facilities were rushed into operation and, in some instances, production was underway in buildings still under construction.

Under the leadership of Captain Woodside, the Depot reached its peak of production as well as employment with 8500 civilians and 1500 military personnel.

Prior to Captain Woodside's departure from the Depot he asked that "The McAnad News" publish a message of appreciation from him to all of his associates here for the loyalty and devotion to duty which was displayed during such trying times. The "McAnad News" was established during his administration.

Captain Woodside was relieved of this command on September 11, 1946.

COL SHELDON 87/87
 Col Boddie 87-87
 Col Busby (8057)
 COL BAIRD 83/85
 Col Kimura 80/83
 Col. PARKER 77/80

ARMY ↑ 1977

NAVY
 SEGAL '77
 CASE Navy COL
 Smith 74-77
 Chambliss 74/76

Former Commanding Officers, pictured counter-clockwise, are:



Captain E. L. Woodside
6 November 1943 to 11 September 1946



Captain J. F. Goodwin
11 September 1946 to 15 May 1948



Captain V. R. Roane
12 July 1948 to 6 October 1949



Captain T. W. Rimer
6 October 1949 to 10 June 1952



Captain B. L. Lubelsky
10 June 1952 to 22 March 1955



Captain John W. Murphy
27 July 1955 to 26 August 1957



Captain O. C. Robbins
26 August 1957 to 12 September 1960



Captain C. S. Judson, Jr.
12 September 1960 to 30 June 1962



Captain A. H. Galvani
1 July 1962 to 20 August 1965



Captain R. M. Hanson
20 August 1965 - 1970