



Construction Electrician 2nd Class David Martinez, right and Construction Electrician 1st Class Eddie Valdez use a Fluke Clamp Meter to test the voltage of a generator in order to ensure the correct power needs are supplied to a Marine Corps berthing facility in Al Asad, Iraq. Martinez and Valdez are both members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Twenty-Two and are deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

ucts." She took the request to her manager, Senior Service Provider, Marty Kidd. With help from Judi Smith, a specialty associate, Kidd obtained several refurbished 87V multi-meters and sent them to Mason.

Battalion 24 put the tools to use. While in Iraq the NMCB 24 built forward operating bases in three locations. They also completed building a location for the newly-formed Iraqi Security Forces.

"Anytime our Seabees receive support from back home," Commanding Officer Tim Simpson wrote to Fluke, "they receive a huge morale boost and much needed encouragement to carry out their daily missions."

Lone Star Battalion arrives in Iraq

After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Louisiana and Mississippi gulf, the battalion was called home in late September to assist in rebuilding. They were replaced by the NMCB-22, (Lone Star Battalion) from Fort Worth, Texas, which took over the responsibilities NMCB-24 left behind. The Lone Star Battalion brought with them their own long history of engineering and construction including building

for the Atlanta Olympic Games, rebuilding after flooding in North Carolina and considerable work in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm.

Fortunately, the tools remained at Al Asad to continue testing.

"Our primary task is construction in forward operating areas," says NMCB-22 Commander Gilbert Jordan. "This encompasses a wide range of jobs."

But the work they do is not much like that of their civilian counterparts in the United States. "The pace is frantic, requiring long hours and seven days per week scheduling," Jordan says. "Many of the basic components we build are designed and engineered, but the field implementation usually requires onsite design to adapt the site and basic design for construction, utilities, and force protection." That work needs to be done in a hurry and with limited resources in a harsh environment.

Many of the battalion reservists, Jordan says, have told him that the most striking difference in Wartime Seabee construction from their civilian work is the existing infrastructure and metric and international standards for nearly all types of construction materials. That is one area in which the Fluke meters can be

of help. "They have been especially helpful for safety in places requiring both international voltage (230/400) and US standard voltages (120/208 and 277/480)," Jordan says.

The battalion faces other hardships as well. "The lead time for materials can be very long, which requires adaptability to be able to complete projects with the material on hand."

Working conditions are difficult with extreme heat and dust, Jordan says, "and are very harsh on nearly all of our tools and equipment." The climate can take a toll not only on the tools and equipment but on the men as well. Additional strain comes from the fast pace of the work. "Work schedules are long," Jordan says, "and require adaptability to meet operational requirements, mission changes and force protection requirements."



Construction Electrician 2nd Class Grant Wallace uses a Fluke multimeter with an amp clamp to check for proper voltage to an outlet in a Southwest Asia Hut or SWA Hut, a stand-alone wooden multi-purpose structure. The SWA Hut in the photo will be used as a berthing facility for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Twenty-Two (NMCB 22) members and is located on the NMCB-22 compound in Al Asad Iraq. Wallace is a member of NMCB 22 and deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.