

NO TASK TOO GREAT

FOR 38 YEARS



A HISTORY OF THE
97TH ENGINEER BATTALION
(CONSTRUCTION)

From 1 October 1933 thru 22 October 1971

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
HISTORY OF THE
97TH ENGINEER BATTALION
(CONSTRUCTION)

The 97th Engineer Battalion (Construction) originally appeared on the rolls of the Regular Army on 1 October 1933 as the 56th Engineer Battalion (Separate). Over four years later, on 1 January 1938 the unit was redesignated as the 97th Engineer Battalion (Separate), and it has retained this numerical designation ever since.

The battalion was first activated for full military service at Camp Blanding, Florida, on 1 June 1941 as the nation was preparing for the war, which was soon to include the United States. Two re-designations occurred within 13 months: on 22 February 1942 the unit was reorganized as the 97th Engineer Regiment (General Service) and on 1 Aug 1942 the official designation became the 97th Engineer General Service Regiment.

At this time the Regiment had been in Alaska a few months and was beginning to construct the Alaskan portion of the world famous Alcan Highway. From this tough but successful mission, the unit redeployed to New Guinea for the duration of WWII. For these operations in the American Pacific Theater during the war the Regiment earned the Meritorious Unit Streamer.

After the war the unit was reorganized as the 97th Engineer General Service Battalion in the Philippine Islands where, on 15 March 1948, the unit was deactivated.

With the outbreak of a new war in Korea just two years later, the newly designated 97th Engineer Construction Battalion was activated at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri on 1 October 1950. Within a year the battalion was notified for overseas shipment and on 23 November 1951 arrived in Europe.

While serving in France the battalion had HQs at Toul and Verdun, under first the European Command, Army Engineers and the Advance Section of the Communication Zone (ADSEC), United States Army Europe (USAREUR). Activities of the 97th primarily supported the mission of the Theater Army Support Command (TASCOM) in forming a chain of supply posts linking the seaport towns of France with the main element of troops stationed in Germany.

After 14 years of continuous operations in France, the greatest duration for the 97th in any single location, official notification was received on 1 March 1966 to relocate under United States Army Europe (USAREUR) to Pirmasens, Germany, the present location. While thoroughly engaged in construction projects necessitated by French Location (FRELOC), the main body of the 97th Engineer Battalion (Construction) arrived in Germany in March 1967. Later that year, on 20 December 1967 the order to redeploy to Fort Riley, Kansas was received. When the main body of the 97th Engineer Battalion (Construction) departs in July 1968, it will have completed nearly 17 years of service in the European Theater. After summarizing the pre-European activities of the 97th, the exciting story of these years in France and Germany will be related in the chapters to follow.

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