

HISTORY OF THE 50th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

The 50th Engineer Combat Battalion was originally the 1st Battalion of the 50th Engineer Combat Regiment. The regiment was activated at Camp White, Oregon on September 4, 1942. The original cadre of seven (7) officers and one hundred and six (106) enlisted men was furnished by the 39th Engineers. Fillers were practically all draftees chiefly from the Middle West, a few from Texas and a few from California.

The regiment remained at Camp White, undergoing basic training, until about 10 January 1943 when the 1st Battalion was sent to Southern California while the 2nd Battalion went to Fort Ord, California. The regiment was brought together again in March 1943, and attached to the Seventh Infantry Division. A program of intensive amphibious training was begun, and preparations made for an overseas movement.

On April 24, 1943 the Seventh Infantry Division and attached troops sailed for the Attu Operation. The 1st Battalion was attached to the 17th Infantry to perform shore party work. Companies "A" and "C" landed with the Infantry at Massacre Bay, Attu, on "D" Day, May 11, 1943. Company "B" landed at the same time on Red Beach by Holtz Bay. The 2nd Battalion landed on D plus 1 day and aided in shore party work. Following the shore party phase 1st Battalion troops were engaged in the forward movement of supplies to the Infantry. This work consisted chiefly of handpacking ammunition and rations to otherwise inaccessible positions.

The regiment was caught in the break-through about 0500 29 May 1943 and was responsible for breaking to the "Banzai" attack and preventing it from carrying through to the beachhead. Approximately three hundred and fifty (350) enemy were killed by members of the regiment, and the unit was highly complimented for the work. Losses were about twenty men killed and about thirty five wounded.

Following the combat phase the regiment was engaged in construction work until July 10, 1943 when the 1st Battalion embarked for Adak and preparation for the Kiska operation. Regimental Headquarters and the 2nd Battalion remained on Attu. The landing on Kiska took place on August 15, 1943. The Battalion engaged in shore party work and road maintenance and construction until it sailed for Oahu, Hawaii on September 25, 1943.

On November 29, 1943 the 1st Battalion was reorganized and redesignated 50th Engineer Combat Battalion. While at Oahu work was done on the preparation and building of camp-sites. The Battalion was again attached to the Seventh Division about December 10, 1943 and training in amphibious landings, jungle tactics and Infantry tactics was carried on.

On January 21, 1944 the Battalion attached to the 17th Infantry, sailed for Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, to participate in the Mandated Islands Campaign. Following the shore party phase, the organization performed construction work until June 24, 1944 when embarkation was begun for a return to the Island of Oahu. No battle casualties were suffered.

After a very brief rehabilitation period, the Battalion was assigned to the 1140th Engineer Combat Group, and attached to the Seventh Infantry Division for shore party work. Following a practice training cruise to the Island of Maui, Hawaii, the XXIV Corps, consisting of the 7th and 96th Divisions, sailed for the Phillipine operation. The landing was made on "A" Day October 20.

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1944 at Dulag, Leyte, Phillipine Islands and work immediatly started on unloading ships. The Battalion suffered heavy casualties during enemy bombing on the night of October 25, 1944. Some trucks and heavy equipment were lost. Since being relieved of shore party operations the battalion has been engaged in bridge and road construction and maintenance.

OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION ARE AS FOLLOWS

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer	Major William E, Wilhelm
Executive Officer	Major George S. Baumgartnor
Adjutant	1st Lt. Harold R, Fitch
Operations Officer	Capt. John F. Harris
Ass't Operations Officer	1st Lt. William E, Rasmussen
Supply Officer	Capt. Russel B. Lamb
Ass't Supply Officer	WOJG James J. McCov
Bn Motor Officer	1st Lt. Aloysius M. Sorg
Personnel Officer	WOJG Robert R. Jones
Ass't Div. Engr.	Capt. Fred G. Schurman

HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE COMPANY

Commanding Officer	Capt. Allen Rose
1st Sgt.	Dan E. Edgington

COMPANY "A"

Commanding Office	1st Lt. Winston F. Bott
Company Officers	1st Lt. Ernest B. Baker
	1st Lt. Vernon Skidmore
	2nd Lt. Ed Adams Jr.
	2nd Lt. Ben D. Flick
1st Sgt.	Clyde V. Garver

COMPANY "B"

Commanding Officer	Capt. Harry J. Bunchman
Company Officers	1st Lt. James N. Carter
	1st Lt. Howard L. Tirgrath
1st Sgt.	Charles M. Hadley

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COMPANY "C"

Commanding Officer
Company Officers

Capt. Paul E. Neff
1st Lt. Francis M. Beattie
2nd Lt. Peter V. Davies
2nd Lt. Duncan C. Weatherall
George T. Riley

1st Sgt.