

HISTORY OF THE 555 ENGINEER GROUP

The 555th Engineer Group, which is currently under the command of COL Fayette L. Worthington, was constituted February 1, 1943 in the Army of the United States as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1103d Engineer Combat Group. It was activated February 25, 1943 at Fort Devens Mass. Intensive training at Fort Devens was culminated in the West Virginia maneuver Area in October, November and December of that year.

In January 1944 the unit sailed for England after overseas processing at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Landing at Liverpool, the Group proceeded to Henley-on-Thames where it trained extensively in bridging, until the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. At that time the unit was assigned to the First Army and crossed the English Channel during the period June 20-22, 1944. The 1103d earned its first of 5 battle stars landing and maintaining supply routes at Omaha and Utah beaches. After the successful landing, the Group was intensively occupied in clearing mines, road building and maintenance. It was during the breakthrough at St. Lo, that the 1103d first came under small arms fire.

August of 1944 saw the unit's transfer to the Third Army under GEN George Patton, which was then in the south and central area of the eastward drive and moving fast. Such a movement afforded little need or time for deliberate front-line construction, so most of the Group's work was done in the rear areas. Later combat brought them to the protection of captured bridges on the Loire River. They also made a successful crossing on the Seine River at Montereau.

One of the most difficult operations of the unit was at the Moselle River at Arnville, near Metz, France where it was responsible for providing bridging for assault forces crossing the river under the direct observation and fire of the Germans. Engineers of the 1103d were called upon to blast breaches in the massive and many cubicled Metz forts to enable reduction of severe enemy resistance there.

A similar hazardous operation by the 1103d came on the Saar River near Echternach, and resulted in a successful crossing and holding of the bridgehead against very heavy opposition.

Late in February 1945, the 1103d was called upon to support the Ninth Army in the Ruhr cleanup in the northern sector, then to the Rhineland with the XVI Corps, with whom they remained throughout the rest of the war. The 1103d eventually won 5 battle stars for the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central European campaigns.

The 1103d was inactivated on May 8, 1946 in Germany, but a few months later was reactivated on January 20, 1947 at Russelsheim, Germany. On March 5, 1947 the unit was redesignated Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 555th Composite Service Group. On March 15, 1949 the unit was further redesignated Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 555 Engineer Combat Group. On August 9, 1950 the Group moved to Kaufbeuren, Germany and seven months later to Rhineland Aaseerne in Ettlingen near Karlsruhe. In October 1952 the unit moved to Phillips Barracks, Karlsruhe. Later in 1966 the unit again moved back to Rhineland and on January 17, 1967 moved to its present location of Smiley Barracks, Karlsruhe, Germany.

Principal units assigned to the 555th are the 78th Engineer Combat Battalion, 502d Engineer Float Bridge Company, 809th Engineer Panel Bridge Company, 8594 Labor Service Group, and 4080 Labor Service Company.

The 499th Engineer Battalion was assigned to the Group from January 1955 until it rotated under Gyroscopic in January 1957 and was replaced by the 78th Engineer Battalion. Former units of the 555th include the 108th Engineer Combat Battalion, 557th Engineer Light Equipment Company, 896st Civilian Labor Service Group, and the 55th Engineer Panel Bridge Company.

The Group also has the distinction of having its own aviation platoon which became a member of Group Headquarters in 1957. The platoon operates out of Karlsruhe Army Air Field and encompasses both rotary and fixed wing aircraft.

One item of particular interest is that the "Triple Nickle" has never returned to the Zone of the Interior since leaving in early 1944. The 555th is proud, not only of its hard won 5 battle stars and having served with 3 different armies in Europe, but for our long peace time record as an efficient and faithful outfit in the performance of our assigned duties in the maintenance of a ready, willing and able striking force. The mission of the 555 Engineer Group (Combat) is to command and supervise assigned or attached units. To plan and coordinate the operations of a Group which may consist of Engineer Combat, Construction or support Battalions and other assigned units engaged in engineer combat support activities.

555 has its own unit crest which contains 2 symbols which are the "Fluer-De-Lis" and the German Eagle, emblematic of the 2 countries upon whose soil this Group has fought. A Latin motto at the top of the crest "Volens Et Potens" means "Willing and Able". The background of the crest is red, of the Engineer Red and also in recognition of the Engineers who shed their blood while building the Group's outstanding combat record. The blue streak crossing the crest represents the many rivers that the 555th Engineer Group has bridged in the cause of democracy.

This year is the 25th Anniversary of the 555th Engineer Group and the unit proudly claims one of the longest continuous periods of assignment as a unit in Europe. It has spent all except ten months of that history entirely in the European Theater.

The 555th Engineer Group is now under the major command of USAREUR and Seventh Army Troops which is commanded by BG Jack Wagstaff. Until 1967 the unit was under the Seventh Army Engineer Command. The Group was the only combat unit of the Corps of Engineers in the Karlsruhe area.

The "Triple Nickle" Engineers have had and currently participate in an active sports program. The competition is usually between member companies of the Group but there is some inter-command competition scheduled. Sports include football, bowling, basketball and baseball. Tournaments in table tennis and billiards are conducted on occasion.

Active participation in the community affairs of Paul Revere Village, the American military community adjacent to Sniley Barracks and good public relations with the Karlsruhe area German public, is yet another activity to

which the unit can point to with pride. German-American Friendship Week is celebrated annually. Also during the year reciprocal visits are quite common between local German dignitaries and establishments and the Group. Frequent aid and engineer support is given the civilian population. There is a community paper published at Group headquarters entitled the Paul Revere Patriot and many other activities which make the Group a focal point in the area. Another paper, "The Triple Nickle Times", is published by the Public Information Office at Sailey Barracks for all men on duty with the 555 Engineer Combat Group.





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Lineage and Honors

HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
555th ENGINEER GROUPConstituted 1 February 1943 in the Army of the United States as
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1103d Engineer Combat Group

Activated 25 February 1943 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts

Inactivated 8 May 1946 in Germany

Activated 20 January 1947 at Russelheim, Germany

Redesignated 5 March 1947 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment,
555th Composite Service GroupRedesignated 7 March 1949 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company,
555th Engineer Combat GroupRedesignated 1 April 1953 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company,
555th Engineer Group (Combat)

Inactivated 25 June 1969 in Germany

CAMPAIGN STREAMERS:

World War IINormandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

DECORATIONS

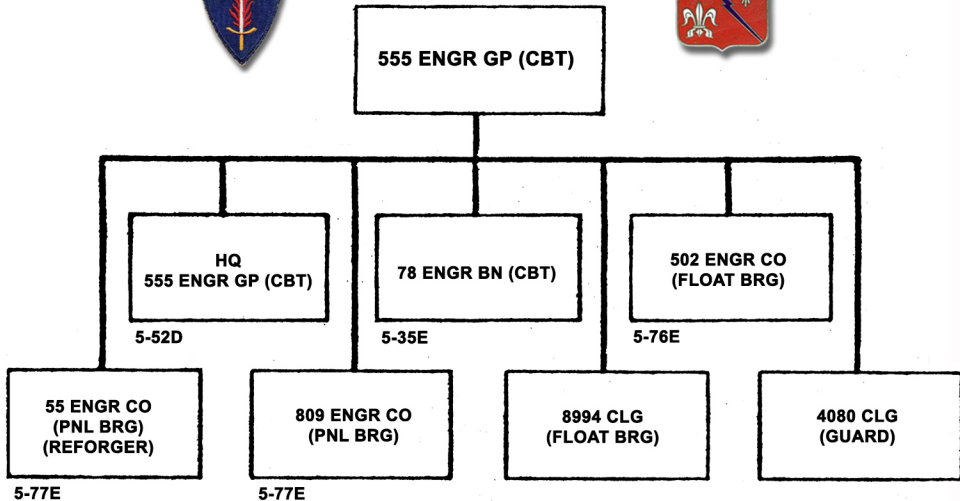
None

By Order of Wilbur M. Brucker, Secretary of the Army:

R. V. LEE,
Major General, United States Army.
The Adjutant General.



ORGANIZATION CHART (1968)





CAPABILITIES



1. Combat Engineering:

36 Engineer Squads

2. Tactical Bridging

a. Floating

Class 60

600'

M4T6

546'

b. Fixed

Bailey Bridge

2 ea 80' E/S

or

1 ea 130' D/D



MISSION

- ■ 1. PROVIDE ENGINEER SUPPORT TO 7th ARMY
 - A. BARRIER
 - B. MSR
 - C. TACTICAL BRIDGING
 - D. ADM
 - E. PSP's
- 2. NATO ADM SUPPORT
- 3. FIGHT AS INF WHEN REQUIRED
- 4. INSTALLATION GUARDS
- 5. SWING BRIDGES

SWING BRIDGE SITES



HEIDELBERG



Brühl

BRUHL



SPEYER



RHEINHAUSEN



Rheinhausen



Germersheim



GERMERSHEIM



FLOW

LEOPOLDSHAFEN



Leopoldshafen



KARLSRUHE

