



More about the 40th Signal Construction Battalion in World War Two

The 40th Signal battalion was constituted on 31 July 1942 as the 40th Signal Construction Battalion and activated on 21 September 1942 at Camp Campbell, Kentucky.

The post is located between Hopkinsville, Kentucky., and Clarksville, Tennessee. The site was selected on July 16, 1941, with construction beginning Feb. 4, 1942. Within a year, the reservation designated as Camp Campbell was developed to accommodate one armored division and various support troops or a total of 23,000 men.

Early in the summer of 1942, the post's initial cadre, one officer and 19 enlisted men, arrived from Fort Knox, Kentucky. From that time until the end of World War II, Camp Campbell was the training ground for the 12th, 14th and 20th Armored divisions, Headquarters IV Armored Corps and the 26th Infantry Division.

The battalion departed for England aboard the Queen Mary on 12 January 1944. It arrived in France 30 days after the initial D-Day landings and immediately set out on its mission on cable construction across Northern France to support the breakout. From France, the battalion supported missions in Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland, before entering Germany on 8 December 1944, where it stayed until the end of the war.

The 40th Signal Construction Battalion served as a communications unit within the 12th Army group, the largest and most powerful American formation ever to take to the field. 900,000 men served in this formation, constituting the bulk of American allied forces that would serve in European Theatre of Operations. They moved forward as part of the “big push” of Allied forces towards the heart of Third Reich, from Normandy, through France, on to Belgium and Holland, and eventually, Germany.

Key points that could be worth mentioning:

- The Battalion consisted of 19 Caucasian Officers and 423 Enlisted African American Men
- 4 of them received the Bronze Star
- 93% of the battalion that returned home back to the US were with the unit since the creation of Battalion in 1942, suggesting that twelve were either injured, AWOL (absent without leave), changed to different units, or killed in action – I have noted that at least five were injured, two killed in action, and two went AWOL.
- The 40th were the first unit to put communications wire on German soil in December 1944 in Aachen.
- The 40th were the first unit to put communications cables over the Rhine in April 1945

The battalion left Marseilles for Boston on 31 August 1945 and was reassigned to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, where it was inactivated on 25 January 1946.

The 40th Battalion Post World War Two



The battalion remained inactive until 31 August 1950, when it was redesignated as the 40th Signal Construction Battalion and again activated on 19 September 1950 at Camp Gordon, Georgia.

The battalion departed for Germany 17 January 1952. While in Germany, it was reorganized and redesignated as the 40th Signal Battalion on 1 October 1953. The battalion remained in Germany for another two year until it redeployed to New York and later to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, on 17 April 1956.

The 40th Signal Battalion was then reassigned to Fort Gordon, Georgia, arriving on 5 December 1958. It soon develops a close association with XVIII Airborne Corps and participated in several exercises at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Eventually, the battalion was reassigned to Fort Bragg on 13 July 1964. While assigned to Fort Bragg, elements from the battalion supported the division's deployment to the Dominican Republic.

Soon after, the battalion was alerted for deployment to Vietnam, with the bulk of it leaving from Oakland, California, aboard the USNS GAFFEY, and arriving at Cam Ranh Bay on 16 September 1966.

The battalion was then assigned to the 1st Signal Brigade as part of the U.S. Army Strategic Communication Command (USASTRATCOM). During the war, the battalion participated in 14 campaigns and was awarded two Meritorious Unit Citations. It saw service in Vietnam until 28 June 1972, when it flew back to Travis Air Force Base, California, for eventual reassignment to Fort Lewis, Washington, as a colour guard detachment, then at Zero strength.

The unit was then reorganized and reassigned to its present home Fort Huachuca, Arizona, on 22 January 1973. Upon relocating, the unit was assigned to USASTRATCOM in the process of being reorganized as the newly created U.S. Army Communications Command that is currently the U.S. Army Information Systems Command.

The 40th Signal Battalion currently consists of four line companies: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta signal companies, and a Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

They have just recently returned from a 15-month tour in Operation Desert Shield.