

THE 540th ENGINEER COMBAT REGIMENT (C)
A Brief History

Activated in September, 1942, the Regiment was bivouaced at Camp Bradford, Virginia, from September 27 to October 15, 1942, and in training with Naval boat crews from the Little Creek Amphibious Base.

Thereafter, the Regiment participated in five major amphibious assault landings - North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio, Italy, and southern France. It also was called upon to participate in other assault landings - two end runs along the north coast of Sicily, one end run along the west coast of Italy, and the crossing of the Rhine into Germany.

In February of 1945, the Regiment was reorganized as the 540th Engineer Combat Group with the First Battalion redesignated as the 2832nd Engineer Combat Battalion and the Second Battalion redesignated as the 2833rd Engineer Combat Battalion. After the war in Europe ended, the Regiment was deactivated in November of 1945.

After the beach and port areas were secured following an assault shore landing, the Regiment, as a combat engineer unit, provided support to front line and rear units in building roads and bridges, clearing and laying mine fields, constructing and repairing railroads, clearing tunnels, using demolitions to clear port and road obstructions, repairing or constructing facilities for hospital and prisoner of war use, dumps and storage sites for supplies and ammunition, and many other engineering projects. The men were subjected to many enemy air and artillery attacks, and in some critical instances such as the Battle of the Bulge, functioned as infantry.

Actually, the Regiment had one of the longest continuous records of service of any unit in World War II. This period extended from the time the Regiment landed on November 8, 1942 in North Africa, until its deactivation in 1945. Of its number, 78 were killed in action or died of wounds, and 232 were wounded. 310 men were decorated with Purple Hearts, and there were over 200 other individual decorations. These included 2 Distinguished Service Crosses, 35 Silver Stars, 16 Legions of Merit, and 57 Bronze Stars.

The Regiment received the Unit Meritorious Service Award for operation of the Port of Anzio. On March 28, 1944, the Port of Anzio became the "4th largest port in the world" in terms of tonnage unloaded daily, a memorandum from Hq. Fifth Army disclosed. On that date, 7,828 tons of war material were unloaded by the Regiment.

Its World War II campaign participation credits are:

Algeria-French Morocco (with Arrowhead)	11-8-42 to 11-11-42
Sicily (with Arrowhead)	7-9-43 to 8-17-43
Naples-Fogia (with Arrowhead)	9-9-43 to 1-21-44
Anzio (with Arrowhead)	1-22-44 to 5-24-44
Rome-Arno	5-24-44 to 8-15-44
Southern France (with Arrowhead)	8-15-44 to 9-14-44
Rhineland	9-15-44 to 3-21-45
Ardennes-Alsace (Battle of the Bulge)	12-16-44 to 1-25-45
Central Europe	3-22-45 to 5-11-45

(Bottom line should read: Central Europe 3-22-45 to 5-11-45)