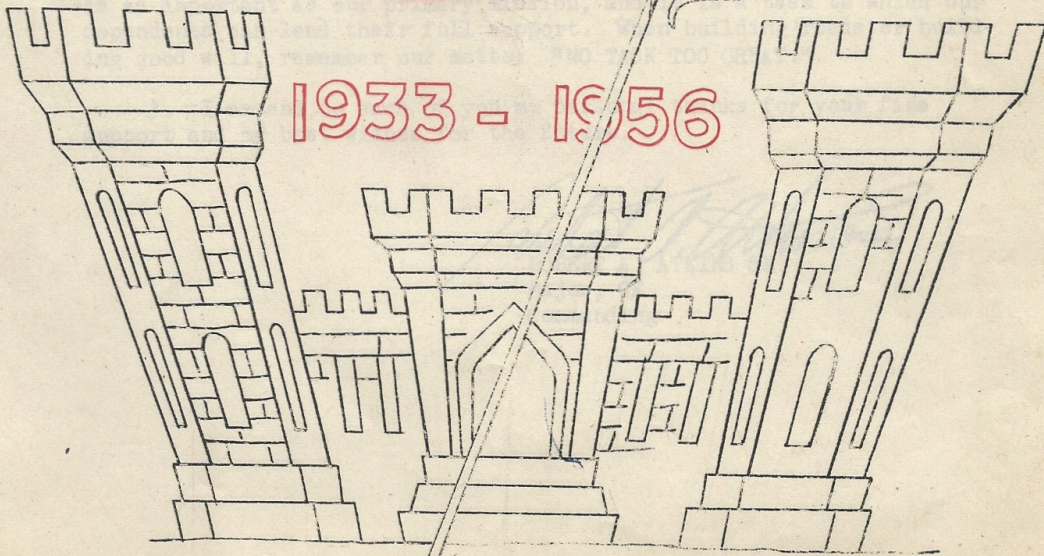
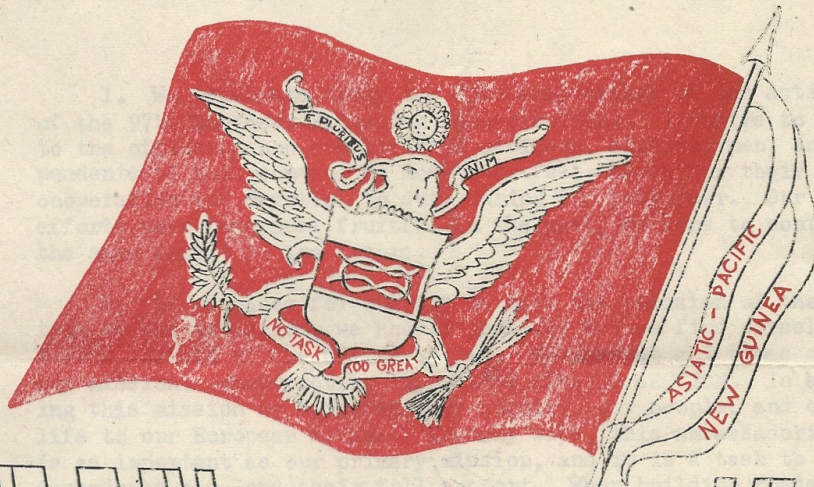


97TH  
ENGINEER BATTALION (CONS.)

23RD ANNIVERSARY



1933 - 1956

ALASKA - NEW GUINEA - PHILIPPINES - FUDORF

[Editor: This event was in October 1956. LTC Chester D. Brewer took command in 20 November 1956]

**HEADQUARTERS**  
**97TH ENGINEER BATTALION (CONSTRUCTION)**  
**APO 122** **US ARMY**

SUBJECT: Anniversary Greeting<sup>1</sup>

TO: All Personnel

1. We celebrate today the 23rd Anniversary of the activation of the 97th Engineer Battalion (Construction). I desire to express to the officers, non-commissioned officers, enlisted men, and dependents of this command my most heartfelt thanks for their splendid cooperation and devotion to duty during the past year. Our joint efforts have been most fruitful in the past, we hope to continue in the same spirit in the future.

2. As we pause for one day to mark the occasion of the activation of the battalion, we should consider why we find ourselves in Europe instead of the United States. We must at all times consider our mission: construction support to ADVANCE SECTION. In accomplishing this mission we represent our country, our people, and our way of life to our European allies. In many ways, this ambassadorial mission is as important as our primary mission, and it is a task to which our dependents can lend their full support. When building roads or building good will, remember our motto: "NO TASK TOO GREAT."

3. I extend to each of you my personal thanks for your fine support and my best wishes for the future.

s/Robert A. Atkins Sr.  
ROBERT A. ATKINS SR.  
Major, CE  
Commanding

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<sup>1</sup> Transcribed and prepared by MAJ (Ret.) Larry L. Castleman for the history files, 97th EBC, from original documents provided by Steve Kocsis, Hqs Company, 97<sup>th</sup> EBC, Verdun, 1956-58.

## HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

The birthday of this proud organization was 1 October 1933. On this day the 97th was officially “born” as the 56th Engineer Battalion (Separate) on the inactive list of the Regular Army. It was redesigned as the 97th Engineer Battalion (Separate) on 1 January 1938, and was initially activated for full military service at Camp Blanding, Florida on 1 June 1941. On 22 February 1942, the battalion was redesigned the 97th Engineer Regiment (General Service) and was again redesigned as the 97th Engineer General Service Regiment on 1 August 1942.

During the wartime period, the 97th Engineer Regiment reported to Ft. Lewis, Washington, where it was organized and staged for a further move to Valdes, Alaska. At this station the Regiment constructed a road from Slana, Alaska, to Fairbanks, Alaska. This entailed round-the-clock operation during the summer with practically 24 hours of daylight and the overcoming of many obstacles. All types of bridges were necessary and thousands of tons of cut-and-fill, plus the additional problem of filling apparently bottomless bags of Alaskan tundra confronted them.

Next followed an assignment to a world-famous project – the Alcan Highway. The Regiment was assigned the northern end of the project, approximately five hundred miles of road, from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Whitehorse, Canada. Much of this territory had never been visited by man, much less surveyed or even explored. This project was finished, ahead of schedule, late in 1943. The Regiment returned to the States in the spring of 1943 via Valdes.

Upon return to the States, the Regiment spent about four months in training and then embarked through San Francisco for service in the Southwest Pacific, specifically at Finchaven, New Guinea, where the headquarters remained until the close of World War II. During this campaign, the 97th earned the Meritorious Unit Streamer for the American-Pacific Theatre.

After the war, the 97th moved to the Philippine Islands where it was reorganized on 30 June 1946 and engaged in the usual post-war activities. On 15 March 1948, the Battalion was inactivated while still in the Philippines.

On 11 September 1950, the Battalion was redesigned as the 97th Engineer Construction Battalion and was reactivate at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, on 1 October 1950. During the period October 1950 – November 1951 the Battalion underwent the normal basic training with the ever-attendant lack of equipment, training aids, and adequate training sites. However, all these obstacles were overcome by the outstanding initiative, leadership and drive of the unit officers and NCOs and the willingness of the trainees to achieve their goal.

Early in November 1951, the Battalion was alerted, and embarked through New Orleans for Bremerhaven, Germany. Upon arrival in France, the Battalion was assigned to duty with ADSEC, COM E, with headquarters in Toul. During the period November 1951 to date, the Battalion has been redesigned several times and at present is identified as the 97th Engineer Battalion (Construction). During this period, there have been several unit moves, with

Headquarters and Co “C” at Verdun, France, Co “B” at Toul, France, and Co “A” at Vassincourt, France.

**BATTALION HEADQUARTERS STAFF**

MAJOR ROBERT A. ATKINS SR. – BATTALION COMMANDER

MAJOR CHESLEY J. NOEL - BATTALION EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CAPT. MARTIN D. TURSI

CAPT. FRANK E. RIEGEL

CAPT. JAMES B. SHERMAN

LT. WILLIAM H. HUNT JR.

LT. CLIFTON T. ZABKA

LT. LLOYD A. LEFFERS

CWO JAY M. JONES

MSGT LEROY D. WERTZ

**HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE  
COMPANY**

**COMPANY A**

LT. DAVID S. HANKE – CO

CAPT. FRANK M. O’QUINN - CO

LT. JAMES E. PAULUS

LT. MICHAEL E. GODSIL

CWO CHARLES J. DEAN

LT. JAMES J. WELLS

SFC HARVEY P. SMITH JR.

LT. WILLIAM D. ADAMS

LT. DANIEL N. KLINCK

MSGT NORMAN MIXON

**COMPANY B**

**COMPANY C**

LT. BRYAN K. FIELDS – CO

LT. WETSEL M. BLANKENSHIP - CO

LT. JOHN C. MITCHELL

LT. RAYBURN L. WILLIAMSON

LT. WILLIAM G. TUCKER

LT. LELAND W. TATUM

CWO HAROLD D. HICKS

LT. FRANK TISLER

MSGT WILLIAM I. GOOLSBY JR.

CWO JOHN L. TRIMMER

MSGT ROBERT R. SIEGEL

## ANNIVERSARY DAY PROGRAM

0900 Hours – Assembly

0930 Hours – Parade and Review

1030 Hours – Military Competition

1040 Hours – Rigging

1055 Hours – Field Stripping Weapons

a. Carbine, .30 Caliber

b. Rifle, .30 Caliber

c. Placing .30 Caliber Machine Gun Into Action

1125 Hours – Tent Pitching

1145 Hours – Drill Competition (Platoon)

1230 Hours – Picnic Lunch

1330 Hours – Competitive Athletics

a. Football, Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Co VS Co B

1400 Hours - b. 1 Mile Run

1415 Hours - c. Football, Company C VS Company A

1445 Hours - d. 50-Yard Dash

e. 100-Yard Dash

f. 220-Yard Dash

g. 440-Yard Relay

h. 220-Yard Relay With Wheelbarrows

1530 Hours - i. Soft Ball Game, Officers VS NCOs

1630 Hours – Recall

### EES Snack Truck

0930 Hours – 1200 Hours

1300 Hours – 1600 Hours

Coffee – Cake

Soft Drinks – Beer



# LUNCHEON MENU

GRILLED HAM STEAK

LIMA BEANS

POTATOE SALAD

FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD

FRENCH DRESSING

LAYER CAKE

COFFEE

TEA

BREAD

BUTTER

