

A HISTORY
OF THE
3RD BATTALION
327TH INFANTRY REGIMENT



327th Infantry Regiment



327th Infantry coat of arms

Active:

1917-1945

1948-1953

1954-Present

Branch:

Army

Type:

Infantry

Part of:

101st Airborne Division

Garrison/HQ:

Fort Campbell, Kentucky



Distinctive unit insignia

Nickname:

"Bastogne Bulldogs"

Motto:

"Honor and Country"

Engagements:

World War I

World War II

*Battle of Normandy

*Battle of the Bulge

Vietnam War

War in Southwest Asia

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The 327th Infantry Regiment fought during World War I as part of the 82nd Division.

During World War II, the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment ("Bastogne Bulldogs") was a gliderborne regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. It has also been deployed to: The Dominican Republic , 1965; Vietnam 7/29/65 – 3/10/72; Grenada, 1983; Panama, 1989; and most recently to Iraq and Afghanistan.

History

WWI:

The 327th Infantry Regiment was organized in the Regular Army as part of the 82nd Infantry Division on 17 September 1917 at Fort Gordon, Georgia.



Camp Gordon circa WWI

After training rapidly, the Division embarked for northern France, arriving in early spring, 1918. The 327th Infantry moved online at the end of the summer, making it one of the first American units to see combat at St. Mihiel. This was the first operation in World War I conducted entirely by American forces. The Regiment then occupied defensive positions on the Lorraine Front in eastern France. The final Allied offensive, in November, found the 327th Infantry engaging in the great Meuse-Argonne offensive before any other unit in the Division. The 327th Infantry Regiment took a prominent part in the operation, leading to the flank attack north of Sommerance. The 327th was the first unit of the American Expeditionary Force to reach and pierce the formidable Kriemhilde Stellung (the Germans' third and final defensive line on the Western Front).

With the termination of the "War to end all Wars," the Regiment was demobilized on 25 May 1919, and then reconstituted in the organized reserves in December 1921. It remained in this status until the outbreak of World War II.

WWII:

With the reactivation of the 82nd Infantry Division in March 1942, the 327th regimental colors were again unfurled. The 327th was originally organized as an infantry regiment in the summer of 1942 as part of the 82nd Infantry Division at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. As the airborne concept was pushed into further development because of the

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coming of war, the 82nd was chosen to become the first of four airborne divisions to be created during World War Two. During the final days of the unit's basic training, the men were told by their commander, Major General Omar N. Bradley, that the Division was to be split to form a second Division, the 101st. Furthermore, he informed the men that the two divisions were to be Airborne, and the 327th was to be trained as Glider Infantry. The men were not sure about flying in gliders. Most of them had never even flown in a plane. Some men went AWOL, to return after a few days, but all knew that war was approaching and that they had to fight for their country. On 15 August 1942, the 327th Infantry became a Glider Infantry Regiment and was reassigned to the newly formed 101st Airborne Division. The Glider Regiments had previously consisted of two battalions each. Upon reorganization, they consisted of three battalions each. The 401st Glider Infantry Regiment (a sister Regiment) was deactivated and transferred its First Battalion to the 327th (later the battalion would be consolidated and redesignated as the 3rd Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry).



In the fall of 1942, the two regiments headed to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to begin training with the CG-4a Glider. Along the way, the glider men were introduced to the paratroopers of the 502nd PIR. Many fights would break out between these two groups, as the paratroopers thought they were the best and that the glider troopers did not have the "Right Stuff" to be Airborne Soldiers. Nevertheless, in North Carolina, the men received glider training at Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base. The first flights caused ill effects on some of the men, who used their helmets, since air sickness bags were not available at the time. As training with the gliders progressed, it became apparent that landing men by gliders was to be more dangerous than landing by parachute. Some of the landings resulted in serious injuries, mostly broken arms, and legs. On landing, gliders would slide out of control and crash into trees or fences. Some, upon landing, would slide in, and the nose of the glider would dig in and cause it to tilt up vertically on its nose section, causing the contents of the glider to break free of its lashings and come crashing forward, injuring Glider men and Glider Pilots alike.

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SS Samaria, circa 1928 it was converted into a troopship in 1939.

On September 5, 1943, the whole of the 101st Airborne Division departed New York and set sail for England. On September 15, 1943, the 327th GIR unloaded from the RMS Samaria (formerly the SS Samaria of the Cunard White Star Line) at Liverpool, England. They were then moved to Camp Ranikhet near Reading, where they continued to train and learn about the British Horsa gliders. During the winter, code names and emblems were given to each unit. The 327th received the code name "Keepsake" and the "Club", or trefoil, emblem.



Helmet of Staff Sergeant Aloyse Schaefer, G Company, 2nd Battalion. / 327th Glider Regiment

Normandy

In June 1944, the decision to drop both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions simultaneously into Normandy reduced the number of available aircraft to tow the

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gliders for a glider assault. The 327th Glider Infantry Regiment was ordered to land across Utah Beach with the 4th Infantry Division on D-Day.



327th Lands on Utah Beach D+1

Although some elements did reach shore on 6 June 1941, the 3rd Battalion of the 327th landed just after noon and bivouacked near the beach. Rough seas, beach traffic, and the fact that the paratroopers of the 101st had already achieved many objectives, the rest of the 327th landing was delayed until D+1, where the 1st and 2nd Battalions assembled near St. Marie-du-Mont, suffering a few casualties going ashore due to enemy fire and strafing by enemy aircraft.

On D+2, the 3rd Bn saw action near St. Come-du-Mont. At 2000 hours, units of the 327th marched up to the bombed-out wooden bridges south of the La Barquette Locks to relieve the 506th, and were possibly the first unit of the Utah Beachhead to link up with the Omaha Beachhead around the four-villages area of le Fourchette, le Mesnil, le Rocher, and Cotz. There, they held the riverbank from below the locks to the mouth of the Douve River; the 327th was camped right next to German paratroopers, separated by thick hedgerows. German-speaking 327th soldiers engaged in taunting the enemy. The 327th took several casualties from enemy mortars, but the mission was accomplished. The 327th was then directed South between the bulk of the 101st and the 75th Infantry Division of the Omaha Beachhead.

With the First and Second Battalions guarding Utah Beachhead's left flank northeast of Carentan, the 327th began its way toward Carentan on June 9th, 1944. At 0145 hours, C Company, 1st Bn crossed the Douve River. By 0700 hours, they occupied the village of Brevands and began their two-day fight up the south bank toward Carentan. The 327th suffered heavy casualties while advancing on Carentan, via what is now the city Marina, from a northeast direction, and other casualties approaching Carentan from the east. G Company led the attack on the west bank of the Marina Canal. A Company of the attached 401st was on the east bank of the canal. Concealed German machine guns and mortars inflicted the most casualties. At 2200 hours on June 10th, the 327th attacked the hedge grove area just short of the Canal de Vire-et-Taute, and the 2nd Bn assumed a position near a footbridge that connected the canal and the Douve River. On

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June 11th, the 327th crossed the bridge at 1000 hours and advanced through the wooded area, where they became pinned down under heavy fire.

At 0500 hours on June 12th, the 3rd Bn of the 327th renewed the attack from the Basina-Flot to the northeast. They received sniper fire and fire from the west end of town, which turned out to be covering fire. By 0700 hours, they were in the town. Later that day, while trying to take the high ground just south of Montmartin-en-Graignes, a hamlet five miles southeast of Carentan, the 327th, less the 3rd Bn, encountered German resistance. The resistance was heavy and consisted of small arms, mortars, and 88s. They hooked up with the 29th Infantry Division and set up defensive positions on the high ground just as darkness settled in.

On June 13th, the 327th was moved back to the rail line, where they held until June 14th. By June 15th, they were on their way to Carentan. On June 16th, they were put into line between the 501st and 502nd. On June 17th, the 327th saw limited objective attacks to help push the outpost line forward. This was the last real fighting they had in the Normandy Campaign.



Members of the 327th in Carentan

Chaplain Gordon Cosby earned a Silver Star for bravery in the face of the enemy for assisting wounded glider men in front of heavily armed German soldiers. The 327th played a pivotal role with the 501st and 506th of the 101st in taking Carentan.

The unit was commanded by Col. George S. Wear through 10 June, and then its command was picked up by Col. Joseph H. Harper. Although not official, the men of the 327th understood that Wear was replaced due to friendly fire artillery casualties while crossing the Douve River. Officially, enemy mortars were blamed.

Operation Market Garden

The next combat operation the Regiment would participate in would be Operation "Market Garden," the airborne invasion of Holland. The regiment played a pivotal part in the Market Garden battle near Best, in the Netherlands, encircling a large German force which had been pressured from the west by the tank support 502nd of the 101st.

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In the Market Garden operations, some companies in the 327th suffered 2/3 casualty rates before arriving at Opheusden. The 2nd Battalion, especially Company G, suffered heavy casualties from a brutal shelling in the churchyard at Veghel. The large artillery shells were launched from the Erp vicinity. Dutch collaborators aided German scouts and were executed by the Dutch underground after the shelling.



327th Glider Infantry, driving from Eindhoven to Nijmegen, cheered on by Dutch citizens, Sep 18, 1944.

At Opheusden, the 327th withstood repeated assaults by the enemy and heavy artillery barrages. At 1700 hours on October 9th, 1st Bn 327th was shelled with two thousand artillery shells landing on their position. In *Rendezvous with Destiny*, Rapport and Arthur cite British officers who indicated that the barrage suffered by the 327th was as intense as anything they had seen and rivaled what the British pummeled the Germans with at El Alamein in North Africa.

The fighting along the west and northwest perimeter in the Ophuesden (the Island) area was as intense as any fighting in the area. E Company engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy near the railroad track switch house south of Opheusden. The enemy repeatedly hurled their units unsuccessfully at the glider men and suffered high casualties.

The Regiment, along with allied units, endured 73 days of continuous combat. By mid-November, after the fighting had settled down, the 327th had occupied the front lines for 48 days until ordered to withdraw from Holland. The Regiment started to head back toward Mourmelon-le-Gros, France, to rest and recuperate. This stay did not last long.

Bastogne

At Bastogne, Belgium, the 327th held half of the perimeter (including the 401st, which was acting as the Regiment's 3rd Battalion and later officially became a part of the 327th). Numerous intense fights erupted along the 327th sector, including two brutal fights at Marvie and more to the west in the 401st section. The Germans attacking were of the Volksgrenadiers and the elite tank-based Panzer Lehr. At Marvie, the 327th was outnumbered by 15 to 1. Facing only two US companies, the German commander took his whole division further west after engaging G Company with E Company in reserve

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and several tanks from the 10th Armored Division. At Marvie, the Germans lost six tanks and several half-tracks. One tank broke into Marvie but was destroyed trying to make a run towards Bastogne. Several days later, on the night of 23 December, the enemy attacked in force with tanks. The road through Marvie was blocked when G Company mistook a US tank destroyer for a German tank and destroyed it on the village bridge. The Germans overran Hill 500 just to the west of Marvie and broke through the gap between F and G Company. The enemy then put rear pressure on the F Company Command Post. A platoon-sized paratrooper element came to support F Company. The German forces managed to place tanks behind US lines between Marvie and Bastogne. The glider men of Company G and Company F were pushed back from 500 to 1000 yards during the intense fighting but did not break. Unable to make quick progress, the Germans pressed the attack until morning but withdrew when the German Command Center was destroyed by US artillery. Again, the 327th was badly outnumbered by the enemy. After the breakthrough by General Patton's tanks, the 327th proceeded to the north sector of the Bastogne theater of operations. There, the 2nd Battalion engaged in clearing Champs after a German armored element broke through paratrooper lines. Company A and Company C suffered intense casualties and were merged into one company called ACE. Later, the 327th made an open field maneuver against armored enemy troops east of Foy, which helped secure that village. The fierceness and speed of the open field attack surprised the Germans and the paratrooper regiments on the flanks of the attack. German forces attacked the flank and surrounded ACE Company in Bois Jacques. After that, the enemy was primarily in withdrawal mode back to Germany.

Although encircled and outnumbered, American forces withstood all attempts by the Germans to take positions, including Germans dressed in American uniforms. The 327th Regiment held on for nine days, until relieved by the 4th Armored Division. Despite suffering heavy casualties, the Regiment took 750 prisoners, knocked out 144 Nazi tanks and 105 other enemy vehicles. For its actions as a unit in the defense of Bastogne, the 327th Regimental motto is "Bastogne Bulldog."

The 327th is often slighted by fans of the 101st Airborne Division, as riding in a glider is not deemed as perilous as parachuting in battle. Several companies of the 327th suffered casualty rates as high or higher than many paratrooper regiments. Some companies, such as A, C, G, and the 401st took casualties as severely as the most engaged paratrooper regiments. On D+2, glider flights into Market Garden suffered a 30% loss of gliders.

Germany

After the Battle of the Bulge, the 327th Infantry fought in the Rhineland near Hagenau, France, in Alsace and Berchtesgaden Campaigns. Following the end of World War II, the 327th Infantry Regiment was again deactivated on 30 November 1945 in France. The regiment was redesignated as the 516th Airborne Infantry Regiment on 18 June 1948 and was active from 6 July 1948 to 1 April 1949 and from 25 August 1950 to 1 December 1953 at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky.

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As was the case with many combat divisions of World War II fame, the colors of the 101st Airborne Division and its subordinate elements were active only as training units and were not organized as parachute or glider units.

On 27 April 1954, the 516th was relieved from assignment to the 101st Airborne Division and activated at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on 15 May 1954, again as a training unit. On 1 July 1956, it was reorganized and redesignated as the 327th Airborne Infantry Regiment, an element of the 101st.



Paratroopers from the 327th escorted Black students into Little Rock Central High during the 1957 integration crisis

On 25 April 1957, the colors of Company A, 327th AIR were reorganized and redesignated as HHC, 1st Airborne Battle Group, 327th Infantry, and remained assigned to the 101st Airborne Division (organic elements concurrently constituted and activated). This was the only active element of the 327th Infantry during the Pentomic era. When the Army abandoned battle groups for brigades and battalions, the unit was reorganized and redesignated on 3 February 1963 as the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, an element of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

On 21 January 1964, the lineage of the former Company B, 327th AIR was redesignated as HHC, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, assigned to the 101st Airborne Division (organic elements concurrently constituted) and activated on 3 February 1963, also as an element of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

As elements of the 1st Brigade, the two battalions of 327th Infantry deployed to Vietnam in 1965, where they were joined by the rest of the division in late 1967. The 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry was the last unit of the 101st Airborne to leave Vietnam, departing in April 1972, making it the longest serving unit in combat during the Vietnam War. While still at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, the remaining elements of the 101st were severely stripped of personnel to support the war effort. When ordered to deploy, it was necessary to fill empty manning slots with non-Airborne-qualified soldiers, effectively making these units of the division Airborne in name only. In mid-1968, the Army created a second Airmobile division (the other being the 1st Cavalry Division) by reorganizing

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the 101st and its subordinate elements, to include the battalions of the 327th Infantry. The division has remained a helicopter-landed unit to the present day.

During the early 1980's the Army adopted a battalion rotation program that paired combat battalions based in the continental United States with those stationed overseas. As part of this program, the lineage of the former Company C, 327th AIR was redesignated on 21 January 1983 as HHC, 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry, and assigned to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). This was accomplished by reflagging the existing 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry. In Alaska, the existing infantry battalions of the 172nd Infantry Brigade were reflagged as the 4th, 5th, and 6th Battalions, 327th Infantry, with the 3 'C' Companies back on Airborne status, thus reactivating the lineages of the former Companies D, E, and F, 327th AIR. The rotational program was later abandoned, and the Alaska-based battalions were reflagged again, leaving only the Fort Campbell-based battalions with 327th designations.

Operation Desert Storm

In 1990, the 1st BCT was deployed to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield. The 1st BCT established defensive positions north of Tap Line Road, approximately 60 miles (97 km) south of the Iraq border. On 17 January, the 327th Infantry Regiment conducted a ground movement to Camp Eagle II in preparation for deployment into Iraq. Over the course of the next week, the regiment regrouped and, by C-130 and ground convey, repositioned to RaFa in northern Saudi Arabia and further into TAA Campbell, where it remained for approximately 30 days. With the commencement of ground operations, under the command of Colonel Tom Hill, the 327th conducted the deepest and largest air assault operation in history, establishing FOB Cobra approximately 85 miles (137 km) inside Iraq. Subordinate elements were the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Battalion commanded by LTC Hancock, 2nd Battalion, 327th commanded by LTC Gary Thomas, 3rd Battalion, 327th commanded by LTC (P) Gary J. Bridges, and 1st Battalion, 502nd commanded by LTC Jim Donald. 2nd Battalion 320 FA artillery was commanded by LTC Lynn Hartsell. The 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment conducted a second air assault operation to seize FOB White under the command of 2nd Brigade 101st Airborne Division to further seal the defeat of Iraqi forces. Not a single 101st Airborne Division soldier was lost.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

In early 2003, the entire 101st Airborne Division deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where the 1st Brigade Combat Team, made up of the 327th Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Ben Hodges and its support elements, prepared for battle at Camp Pennsylvania. The majority of the 327th Infantry Regiment later shifted to Camp Udairi, Kuwait, and from there, conducted a massive air assault into southern Iraq while other soldiers crossed the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border in a massive maneuver known as a GAC, or Ground Assault Convoy. Once in Iraq, the 327th encountered heavy to light resistance from both fleeing Iraqi soldiers as well as

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the Fedayeen Saddam and other less organized fighters. The 327th fought through An Najaf, Al Kufa, Karbala, Baghdad, and then headed north to conduct Stability and Security Operations in Qayyarah West and Mosul, or Al Mawsil. They returned to the U.S. in early 2004 and were redeployed to Iraq again in the fall of 2005.

With the recent Army-wide reorganization adding one brigade to each division and eliminating one infantry or armor battalion from each brigade, 3-327th was inactivated and replaced by the 1st Squadron (RSTA), 32nd Cavalry Regiment. The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) also includes the 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment; the 426th Brigade Support Battalion; and the Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

During their second tour in Iraq, they were stationed in the Kirkuk province and under the command of COL David Gray and CSM Rory Malloy. The majority of the 1st Brigade Combat Team was positioned on FOB Warrior at the Kirkuk Regional Air Base, while 1st Battalion and other attachments were spread out amongst FOB McHenry outside of Hawijah, FOB Caldwell just south of Kirkuk, and FOB Bernstein southwest of Kirkuk.

For their third OIF deployment, the Bastogne Bulldogs were split up, with the 1st Battalion deployed near Baiji, Iraq, and the 2nd Battalion deployed in the vicinity of Samarra, Iraq. Both battalions served 15-month deployments beginning in September 2007 and ending in late November 2008.

Lineage

- Constitution on 5 August 1917 in the National Army as the 327th Infantry and assigned to the 82nd Division.
- Organized 17 September 1917 at Camp Gordon, Augusta, Georgia.
- Demobilized 26 May 1919 at Camp Upton, at Yaphank, New York.
- Reconstituted 24 June 1921 in the Organized Reserves as the 327th Infantry and assigned to the 82nd Division.
- Organized in December 1921 with Headquarters at Greenville, South Carolina.
- Ordered into active military service on 25 March 1942 and reorganized at Camp Claiborne, Forest Hill, Louisiana.
- Reorganized and redesignated 15 August 1942 as the 327th Glider Infantry; concurrently relieved from assignment to the 82nd Division and assigned to the 101st Airborne Division
- (3rd Battalion consolidated 6 April 1945 with the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry [see ANNEX], and consolidated unit designated as the 3rd Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry)
- Inactivated 30 November 1945 in France

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- (Organized Reserves redesignated 25 March 1948 as the Organized Reserve Corps)
- Redesignated 18 June 1948 as the 516th Airborne Infantry
- Withdrawn 25 June 1948 from the Organized Reserve Corps and allotted to the Regular Army
- (1st Battalion inactivated 1 April 1949 at Camp Breckinridge, at Morganfield, Kentucky)
- Regiment (less 1st Battalion) inactivated 22 April 1949 at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky
- Regiment activated 25 August 1950 at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky
- Inactivated 1 December 1953 at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky
- Relieved 27 April 1954 from assignment to the 101st Airborne Division
- Activated 15 May 1954 at Fort Jackson, Columbia, South Carolina.
- Reorganized and redesignated 1 July 1956 as the 327th Airborne Infantry and assigned to the 101st Airborne Division
- Relieved 25 April 1957 from assignment to the 101st Airborne Division; concurrently reorganized and redesignated as the 327th Infantry, a parent regiment under the U.S. Army Combat Arms Regimental System
- Withdrawn 21 January 1983 from the Combat Arms Regimental System and reorganized under the United States Army Regimental System

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401st Infantry

During the early part of World War II, after the formation of the division, the 101st had two two-battalion glider regiments, one of which was the 401st. When the TO&E for airborne divisions was changed to encompass a single three-battalion glider regiment, the 2nd Battalion of the 401st was transferred to the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 1st Battalion of the 401st Glider Infantry Regiment served as the third battalion of the 327th GIR. This battalion was sea-landed in the Normandy invasion, glider-landed during Operation Market Garden, and moved by truck to participate in the Battle of the Bulge.

- Constituted 23 July 1918 in the National Army as the 1st Battalion, 401st Infantry, an element of the 101st Division.
- Demobilized 30 November 1918
- Reconstituted 24 June 1921 in the Organized Reserves as the 1st Battalion, 401st Infantry, an element of the 101st Division.
- Organized in November 1921 with Headquarters at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Disbanded 15 August 1942; concurrently reconstituted in the Army of the United States as the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, an element of the 101st Airborne Division, and activated at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana
- Disbanded 1 March 1945 in France, and the personnel and equipment were designated and constituted as the 3rd Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry.
- Reconstituted 6 April 1945 in the Army of the United States as the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry; concurrently consolidated with the 3rd Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry, and consolidated unit designated as the 3rd Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry, an element of the 101st Airborne Division