

# The History Of Glider Infantry Regiment

(From The 327th Glider Riders)

The 327th Infantry Regiment of the 164th Infantry Brigade was organized in the Regular Army as part of the 82nd Infantry Division on 17 September 1917 at Fort Gordon, Georgia. After training rapidly, the Division embarked to northern France, arriving in early spring, 1918. The 327th Infantry moved on line at the end of 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 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 German's third and final defensive line on the Western Front).

With the termination of the "war to end all wars," the Regiment was demobilized at Camp Upton, New York on 25 May 1919.

It was reconstituted 24 June 1921 in the Organized Reserves as the 327th Infantry and assigned to the 82d Division. The 327th was organized in December 1921 with Headquarters at Greenville, South Carolina. The unit was ordered into active military service 25 March 1942 and reorganized at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. On August 16, 1942 the 82nd Infantry division was split and the 101st and 82nd airborne units were formed. The 101st was activated on this day at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. However, this was not the first time the 101st existed. In 1921, it was an organized reserve and in 1923, the Eagle patch was approved. This eagle design was in honor of a Wisconsin eagle, Old Abe.

Beginning December 8, 1942, each glider unit was sent to Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base in Maxton, North Carolina, where they trained for two months apiece. There were many other training exercises that the Division took part in. These included the Southern big Pines area, the Camden Maneuver on March 23-28, 1943, and the Tennessee maneuvers to name a few. The airborne and glider units received similar physical training and were the best-trained troops in the Army.

On September 15, 1943, the 327th GIR unloaded from the SS Samaria 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 emblem.

The 327th participated in two Command Post exercises during December 1943. The first was on December 10-11, and the second was December 28-29. These exercises included

parachute jumps, glider landings, and supply drops. In the early parts of 1944 they troops began preparing for D-day with three different exercises. The first, exercise Beaver, was held on March 27-31, 1944.

Exercise Tiger was the second held on April 23-30, 1944. The 327th participated as a seaborne echelon. Confusion set in early and the 327th ended up bivouacked in sixteen different camps spread over a 40-mile area. Exercise Eagle was held May 9-12, 1944 and was the dress rehearsal for the invasion of Normandy.

During these exercises the units involved were given different unit identifications. This was to prevent Germans listening to intercepted radio transmissions from knowing which units were actually participating. The 327th became known as the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

On D-day the 3rd Bn of the 327th landed just after noon and bivouacked near the beach. By the evening of D +1 the 1st and 2nd Battalions were assembled near Ste. Marie-du-Mont. 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. There they held the riverbank from below the locks to the mouth of the Douve River.

The 327th began its way toward Carentan on June 9, 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. 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 took up a position near a footbridge that connected the canal and the Douve River. On June 11th the 327th crossed the bridge at 1000 hours and advanced through the wooded area, where they became pinned under heavy fire.

At dawn on June 12th the 3rd Bn of the 327th renewed the attack at 0500 hours from the Basin-a- 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 in the day, while trying to take the high ground just south of Montmartin-en Graignes, a hamlet five miles southeast of Carentan, the 327th less 3rd Bn encountered German resistance. The resistance was heavy and consisted of small arms, mortars, and 88's. They hooked up with the 29th Infantry Division and set up defensive positions on the high ground just as dark 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.

On July 13, 1944, the 101st Divisions LST pulled into South Hampton, England. During the summer of 1944 several missions were developed, but were canceled. The first was

Operation Transfigure. The 327th was to assemble at the village of Chatonville, France after making a glider landing on August 19th. However, on August 17th General Patton's armor reached the area.

The second mission was called Limet I. The gliders were to land and troops assemble southeast of Tourani, Belgium. They were to patrol east and south and be prepared to support the division if needed. The mission was called off when the British Second Guards Armor Division Took Tourani. It was not long before the 327th would see action. This time it would be in Holland, for Operation Market Garden.

On September 18, 1944, twenty-three gliders with the 327th left Ramsbury, fifty-eight left Alder Maston, and eighty with the 2nd Bn left Membury. On the 19th eighteen gliders left Welford, and forty-one with the 1st Bn left Chilboton. One glider with the 327th left Greenham Common on D+6 and on D+8 about 500 officers and enlisted men were brought into Holland.

On D-day the gliders were designated to land at landing zone W (LZW). On the first day fifty-three of the seventy gliders landed without an accident. Three crashed on the LZ and nine in other locations, two in friendly and seven in enemy territory. Two dropped in England and one went down in the channel. In all two hundred and fifty-two men, thirty-two jeeps, and thirteen trailers came in.

On D+1, which was made up of eighty percent of gliders, four hundred and twenty-eight of the four hundred and fifty gliders landed at LZW. They brought in two thousand five hundred and seventy-nine men, one and forty-six jeeps, two bulldozers, one hundred and nine trailers, and much more.

The D+2 landings did not go as well as the previous days. There was heavy fog and bad weather. Only two hundred and nine of the three hundred and eighty-five gliders landed at LZW. Sixteen crashed in enemy territory and thirty-one in friendly areas. One thousand three hundred and forty-one men (three hundred fifty-four from 1st 327th), seventy-nine jeeps, and forty guns were brought in. Many more were lost in the crashes.

On D+2 the 1st Bn 327th set up a perimeter after they beat back the Germans at Zon. C Company, while covering a four hundred-mile front south of the canal, was attacked by Germans on D+3. During D+4-5, the 327th was in Zon at landing zone area.

Sept 22, 1944 found the 327th moving toward Vechel. The 1st Bn repulsed an attack by the Germans at the bridge. D+6 found seventy-seven of eighty-four gliders landing at LZW. One was with the 327th. The 327th continued to hold the bridge at Erp on D+7 and they defended the town from D+8-10. Two men of C Company, 1st Bn 327th died in Hein Ophensden at 1700 hours when two thousand artillery shells landed on their position on October 9th.

By mid-November units started to head back toward Mourmelon. This stay did not last long. On December 16, 1944, the Germans went on an offensive. They pushed through the allied and sixty-five miles into the territory. On December 17th at 2030 hours the

101st received orders to move north towards Werbomont. At first they did not know where they were going, but soon it was made clear. They were heading to Bastogne.

On December 19th the 327th sent out a patrol to crossroads X. At 1630 hours the 1st Bn was attached to the 501st and were put on the right flank near Neffe Wardon Mont. By December 20th, the 2nd Bn was ordered to Marvie, and the 3rd Bn remained in Flomizoulle. The Germans had Bastogne and the allies surrounded. The 39th regiment reached the high ground 1km north of Remofosse thanks to the 327th.

On December 21st the 1st Bn 327th, relieved from the 501st, was sent southwest of Bastogne near the woods and ordered to set up a roadblock along the main highway and patrol Vileroox and Chenogne. Company B held up the 2nd Panzer at the road block southeast of tenneville. On December 23rd, a platoon of Company G of the 327th became surrounded on hill 500 south of Marvie at 1840 hours. By 1900 hours they were overwhelmed by the 901st Panzergrenadier and never heard from again.

The 3rd Bn 327th encountered eighteen German tanks on their front during the battle of Champs on December 25th. Not one tank was able to get away from the howitzers of the 463rd PFA.

Much needed supplies were brought in on the 26th by eleven gliders and thirty-five of fifty gliders on the 27th. At 1745 hours on December 28th the 3rd Bn 327th, near Lutremage, south of Bastogne was attacked. Company F 327th along with the 1st and 2nd Bn attacked Senonchamps and the high ground two miles west of Bastogne.

On January 3rd, the 327th was part of task force Higgins. The 1st Bn moved to relieve the 1st Bn 501st. The 2nd Bn assembled in reserves in the woods southeast of Rolle, and Company E was used to plug a hole near Monaville. The next day, January 4th, near Champs the 1st Bn 327th received the brunt of a German attack. This attack consisted of artillery, eleven tanks, self-propelled guns, and the 104th Panzergrenadier. The 327th was over run, Company C was pinned down by the tanks while trying to support Company A. Company C lost thirty men and Company A lost forty-one men during this battle.

An eight man squad from Company C 1st Bn 327th went on a spying mission to Rovette on January 8th 1945. By January 9th, the 2nd Bn was assembled near Bos de Niblamont southeast of Rolle. The 1st Bn was in the woods one thousand yards east of the 2nd and the 3rd Bn took over the 502nd position. They did not see any action this day. On January 12th the 327th passed through the 501st position and cleared the area north of Bois Jacques near Noville.

Ace Company, combined Company A and C of 327th unit, clear some Nebelwerfer positions in the open ground near Foy-Margeret Road. By 1600 hours on January 13th they reached the woods between Bois Jacques and Bourcy, where they were cutoff. Seventy-seven men of the 101st division were lost on this day. While trying to get back to the main force, Company C patrolled and captured Troung on the 14th. By January 15th the 327th held the high ground East of Bastogne.

On January 16th the 327th helped the 502nd capture the town of Bourcy. The 2nd and 3rd Bn with 1st in reserves attacked the high ground north of Bourcy and the town of Hardigsy. By the 17th the 327th was in the Sibrot area. The 3rd Bn held a sector of Bastogne-Houffalize Highway five hundred yards south of Foy. That night the 101st boarded one hundred and twelve ten-ton trucks, and ninety-eight two and one-half ton trucks. They drove one hundred and sixty miles in thirty-six hours straight through bad weather. They finally arrived south of Alsace, France near Drulingen. During January the 327th received four hundred and eighty-seven non-glider replacements. All together the 327th and 501st lost fourteen men this month.

On January 26th and 27th the 327th held a four mile front on the south bank of the Moder River a half mile up stream from Haguenau and one quarter mile west of Nuebourg. Across the river was the dense evergreen Forest de Haguenau. It was approximately fifteen miles wide and five miles deep in spots. There was an open area about a quarter mile deep between the river and forest.

G Company of the 327th killed four of an eight-man party the Germans had sent over. In return the Germans sent 120mm shells into the 1st Bn position at Schwerhaguen. On January 31st, E Company of the 327th plus A and B company of the 501st participated in Operation Oscar. The three company recon party was to cross the Moder River and go to the rail lines, then into the forest. There they were to capture prisoners and do whatever damage they could. Between 0245 and 0345 hours the attack was made against the 47th Volksgrenadier Division. One officer and fifteen enlisted men were captured. Approximately fifty Germans were killed.

On February 3rd the 1st 327th was brought up to replace the 327th men on the line. On February 6th a three man BAR team was killed when an 88 round landed in their foxhole. On the 8th the 327th 1st Bn extended their sector by five hundred yards. On the 12th C Company sent 21 men across the river to capture more prisoners. Meanwhile, the 3rd Bn and Company A 1st Bn were put onto the line.

On February 14th the largest enemy patrol came across the Moder River into the 327th s sector. The attack was repulsed. On the 17th the 3rd Bn relieved the 2nd Bn and another attack was repulsed on the 18th. On February 24-25th the 327th was relieved and sent back. On the 27th they took an eighteen-hour trip from Reding to Mourmelon.

In February the 327th suffered sixty-eight casualties, twelve of them KIA. E Company was hit the hardest, losing fifteen of seventeen men on the February 1st raid. Company G had thirteen casualties and five KIA. Four of the five took place on February 6th.

The 327th started March in Mourmelon. On the March 1, 1945 the 1st Bn 401st GIR officially became part of the 3rd Bn 327th GIR. On Thursday, March 15th the 101st received the Distinguished Unit Citation, the first time a whole division ever received this. During the time here training continued and four hundred men of the 327th were sent to get their glider certification. The time here did not last long.

The 101st was sent into the Ruhr area. The 327th was near the Buttgen area north of Neider Cassel down to Erft. The 1st Bn was to the south, 2nd Bn to the north, and the 3rd Bn was in Nuess. On March 5th nightly patrols began. On April 5-6th Company A of the 327th crossed the river by boat at 2300 hours. They were to reconnoiter the hostile shore and locate enemy defenses. When they returned to the riverbank they found their boats sunk. They had to cross the Nuess-Dusseldorf Bridge to get back.

On April 8-9th A Company crossed the Nuess River downstream. There was a lot of fighting on the outskirts of Hamm. Just across from Nuess they took sixteen prisoners. In Nuess the 327th was in charge of administering a DP camp. On April 17th the 327th was relieved and they traveled toward Germany and Austria. By April 25th they were close to Merchingen. By May they were closing in from Merchingen to Schongau, twenty miles south of Landsberg. By late May they were near Berchtesgarden. By mid-July the 327th was near Hofgastein and by August 1, 1945 they were in Sens.

Originally the 101st Division was slated to be shipped to New York on December 5, 1945 for a parade and then return to Fort Bragg. However, these plans were changed. On November 30, 1945, the 101st was deactivated. The brave men were sent home without the parade they deserved. 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, 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, 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 Combat Arms Regimental System. Withdrawn 21 January 1983 from the Combat Arms Regimental System and reorganized under the United States Army Regimental System.