



Our History

The 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment was initially formed on 20 June 1917 as Company A, 41st Infantry at Fort Snelling, Minnesota from soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment. On 9 July 1918, the Regiment was assigned to the 10th Division at Camp Funston, Kansas, Commanded by General Leonard Wood. Here the 41st prepared for deployment to Europe to fight in World War I. In October 1918, the regiment sent an advance party to France to prepare for the deployment, however, the War ended in November so the regiment did not deploy. As part of the general demobilization following the war, the regiment was deactivated on 22 September 1921 at Camp Meade, Maryland.

On 15 July 1940 the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry was activated as Company A, 41st Infantry (Armored) at Fort Benning, Georgia. The 41st Infantry Regiment constituted the organic infantry of the newly formed 2nd Armored Division. The association between the 41st Infantry and the 2nd Armored Division lasted throughout WWII and continued through Desert Storm. Throughout WWII the regiment was, in essence, a mechanized infantry regiment. The main combat vehicle was the half-track mounting .30 and .50 caliber machine guns. Combined arms maneuver was central to all operations. The 41st Armored Infantry always worked closely with tanks. Its companies and battalions were habitually cross-attached within the Division to form regimental-sized combined arms task forces that, in turn, were organized into brigade-sized units, called Combined Commands, for specific missions.

From 1940 to 1942, the Regiment trained hard in preparation for combat as part of 2nd Armored Division. During most of this period, the Division was commanded by MG George S. Patton. Both the Division and the Regiment distinguished themselves in a series of large-scale, force-on-force maneuvers in Tennessee, Louisiana, and Carolina. Battle drills, marksmanship, and tough physical training were the hallmarks of the 41st Infantry. On 1 January 1942 the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry was redesignated as Company A, 41st Armored Infantry. Also in 1942, Colonel Sidney R. Hinds, rose from Regimental S3 to Regimental Commander. He led the Regiment through most of WWII. It was he who adopted the motto "We stand up straight, we shoot straight, we drive straight, and attempt to live straight." The word 'Stalwart' implies that we have the strength and stamina to withstand punishment in combat, without loss of heart, and that we have the ability to deal a knockout blow to any enemy on any kind of job.

In October 1942, the Regiment set sail from Newport News, Virginia as a part of MG Patton's North African Invasion Force (Operation Torch). Participating in America's first amphibious landing of the war, the Regiment hit the beaches of Morocco, near Casablanca, in November 1942. In concert with the rest of 2nd Armored Division,

the 41st Infantry quickly overpowered the sizable Vichy French Forces (who were loose allies with Nazi Germany) before they could organize an effective resistance. The key was rapid movement and massing of forces to such an extent that the Vichy French became convinced that they were completely outmatched. Here, the 41st Infantry had taken part in perhaps the most difficult of all military operations, an amphibious landing on hostile soil, and had proven itself in combat.

Following a period of occupation duty in North Africa, the 41st Infantry participated as a part of 2nd Armored Division in the invasion of Sicily (9 July 1943). Under command of LTG George S. Patton and his Seventh Army, US forces bypassed the enemy strong points and seized the whole western end of the island with lightning speed. The 41st Infantry was in the forefront of the advance, playing an instrumental role in the capture of Palermo.

Following this successful campaign, the 41st Infantry arrived at Tidworth Barracks, England in November 1943 to prepare for the D-Day Invasion. Although the barracks were a welcome change for the unit after nearly a year of combat, the Regimental Commander knew what was ahead and immediately instituted a demanding training program.

The cold, wet English weather did not make training pleasant, but both the soldiers and their leaders knew that rugged, demanding training saved lives in combat. Training began at the individual and squad level. Soldiers received instruction on rifle marksmanship, knowing that shooting straight and rapidly would be essential in future battles. COL Hinds also emphasized first aid in his training plan. He had learned from the tough fighting in North Africa and Sicily that soldiers must have the ability to assist one another in an effort to maintain the infantry's most important weapon, the rifleman.

At nearby Imber Range, the 41st Infantry perfected its ability to fight as a member of a combined arms team. Working together with the 66th Armored Regiment, they learned how to fight mounted for longer periods before dismounting their half-tracks. In Sicily, the infantry had frequently dismounted when they first met resistance. In England, they learned the value of keeping up with the momentum of the attack by staying with the tanks.

In mid-April all leaves and passes were cancelled. Final preparation for combat began. Ammunition, weapons, and individual equipment were inspected several times. The 41st Infantry conducted practice landing operations. Numerous terrain board exercises and map problems trained the leaders for the difficult missions that lay ahead for the first week of June 1944. The 41st Infantry would cross Omaha Beach in Normandy as a part of the greatest armada in history, Operation Overload. Following the initial D-Day beach landings, the 2nd Armored Division was brought ashore on 9 June 1944 to provide the punch for a breakout from the beachhead. The Regiment's first major combat action came on 28-29 July, when several enemy columns simultaneously attacked. The enemy was repelled with heavy losses in savage hand-to-hand combat, grenade, and bayonet fighting. One enemy column of 94 vehicles was completely destroyed. In this engagement, as in many others, the outcome rested on the brave deeds of a few good men who rose to the occasion. Foremost among these was Sergeant Hulon B. Whittington, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions. Sergeant Whittington, completely disregarding intense enemy action, mounted a tank and by shouting through the turret, directed it to fire point blank at the leading Mark V German tank. The destruction of this vehicle blocked all movement of the remaining enemy column consisting of over 100 vehicles of a Panzer unit. It was also during this period that the 41st Infantry won its first Presidential Unit Citation, not only for blunting the strong German

counterattacks, but for spearheading the opposing enemy forces. The continuity of the defense was destroyed. This critical breakthrough set the stage for the rapid advance across France.

The Regiment won its second Presidential Unit Citation by repelling another strong enemy counterattack on 20 July 1944, consisting of approximately 600 men and 10 tanks. One hundred thirty-nine enemy troops were killed during this battle that sealed off the Germans on the Cherbourg Peninsula and continued the advance of the 2nd Armored Division.

Following the breakout from the Normandy hedgerow country, the 41st Infantry spearheaded the advance of XIX Corps, First Army, across France and Belgium in August and September 1944. Finally, the 41st reached the German Border.

Here the Germans planned to offer a more determined resistance. Along its border, the Germans had constructed the "Westwall" popularly known as the "Siegfried line." This was a network of mutually supporting pillboxes, trench systems, obstacles, gun emplacements and dug in tanks arranged in a depth of about 20km. Its purpose was to slow the Allied advance, wear down the attacking forces, and make the enemy vulnerable to counterattack by highly mobile mechanized forces. 2nd Armored Division was ordered to push through the line between the Wurm and Roer Rivers. Elements of the 41st Infantry led the way for virtually every one of the 2nd Armored Division's task forces during this campaign. The attack began on 1 October 1944.

2nd Armored Division attacked on a very narrow front of 5km. German resistance was strong, as they were fighting on their own soil. 2nd Armored Division made steady but slow progress. The Germans counterattacked continuously. Near the village of Puffendorf, the Germans launched the largest tank counterattack to date on the western front. It was stopped in its tracks, but losses were high. From 17 to 28 November, the 41st Infantry breached a 15' wide, 10 mile long antitank ditch and led the way for the final, dramatic 10 day attack to the Roer River. Infantry Maneuver and close combat were decisive factors during this attack. For its sacrifice, bravery and contribution in this stage of the campaign, the 41st Infantry received its third Presidential Unit Citation.

In December 1944, the German Army launched a powerful counterattack in the Ardennes through Belgium and created a "bulge" in the American lines. 2nd Armored Division moved rapidly to reach the area of the furthest German advance. Here, near Celles, Belgium the 41st Infantry led the attack as 2nd Armored Division broke the nose of the entire German offensive. No German forces advanced westward. 2nd Armored Division then shifted to the east and attacked with the 41st leading the way. The 41st Infantry entered Houffalize, Belgium on 16 January 1945 and linked up with the elements of Patton's Third Army. For its gallant efforts in this attack to "break the spine of the bulge," the 41st was awarded its fourth Presidential Unit Citation.

Soon thereafter, the war ended. On 4 July 1945, the 41st Infantry moved to occupy the American zone in Berlin. On 27 January 1946, the 41st sailed for the US from Calais, France.

The next years would serve as a transition period for the 41st as they were reorganized. The 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry was reorganized on 25 March 1946 and became Company A, 41st Armored Infantry Battalion, still an element of 2nd Armored Division. From 10 July 1951 to 19 December 1957, the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry was still an element of 2nd Armored Division, stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany. On 1 July 1957, Company A, 41st Armored Infantry Battalion

became Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Rifle Battalion, 41st Infantry. The battalion was then transferred to Fort Hood, Texas. Finally on 1 July 1963 the unit was reorganized as the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry.

On 22 March 1983, the battalion was issued its first M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles. After a long summer of training, the battalion conducted an ARTEP in December 1983. This served as the "Graduate Exercise" of the most lethal and formidable mechanized infantry battalion the world has ever known. In November 1984 the battalion received movement orders to rotate to the 2nd Armored Division (Forward) in early summer 1986 as the Army's first COHORT rotational battalion. Upon arriving at Garlstedt, Germany the 1st Battalion 41st Infantry proved its combat readiness by leading the way in numerous field exercises.

After a long period of peace, violence again came upon the 41st when Saddam Hussein invaded the tiny nation of Kuwait. The 41st Infantry was called upon to deploy to Southwest Asia to prepare for the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi hands. On 15 February 1991, Task Force 1-41 IN began firing on the enemy. TF 1-41 was the first coalition force to breach the Saudi Arabian border and conduct ground combat operations in Iraq. For six hours the task force engaged a brigade sized element. A tenacious and determined enemy occupied extremely well prepared and heavily fortified bunkers. Task force elements dismounted and engaged the Iraqis in numerous short range fire fights while methodically clearing the extensive bunker complex. By morning, the Task Force had systematically reduced the entrenched enemy position in zone. During the entire campaign, TF 1-41 traveled over 200km in 72 hours and destroyed 65 armored vehicles and 10 artillery pieces, while capturing 300 prisoners. For these heroic actions, TF 1-41 was awarded the Valorous Unit Award.

After Desert Storm, another period of transition was in store for the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry. On 15 June 1992 the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry was inactivated on 16 December 1992 at Fort Polk, Louisiana and then inactivated 15 December 1995 at Fort Hood, Texas and relieved from assignment to the 2nd Armored Division. Finally, it was assigned 16 February 1996 to the 1st Armored Division and activated at Fort Riley, Kansas as the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry on 29 March 1996 with Battery C, 1-4 ADA attached (garrison operations only). Today the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry soldiers stand ready.

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