**The 82nd Signal Battalion - A Brief History**

The 82nd Signal Battalion has a proud and distinguished history, which includes service in World War I, World War II, the Dominican Republic (Operation Power Pack), Vietnam, Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury), Panama (Operation Just Cause), Saudi Arabia (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm), and numerous disaster relief missions.

**World War I**

The 82nd Signal Battalion's history began in 1917 at Camp Gordon, Georgia, as the 307th Field Signal Battalion. The battalion's initial strength was 471 enlisted men, organized into outpost, wire, and radio companies, along with supply and headquarters detachments. After an intense training period, the battalion set sail on the English ship "Virginian" on May 18th, bound for Liverpool, England, and then Laltaviw, France. For the first time in its history, the 82nd Signal Battalion was headed into harm's way to provide communications.

Once in France, the battalion moved to Toul, where it relieved the 101st Field Signal Battalion. This is where the Signaleers received their baptism by fire, constantly harassed by German artillery with gas and high-explosive shelling.

On August 10th, the 307th was ordered to the northern sector of Nancy, relieving the 1st Field Signal Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Division. German air raids were frequent. During one such attack, a large aerial bomb exploded 200 feet from the telephone wires, which were on standard poles. The concussion knocked out all trucks forward of the Division for a few minutes.

The Division later withdrew to an area north of Nancy. On September 22nd, the Division was ordered to the Argonne Forest. The battalion was held in reserve for a few days, preparing for the American Army's second great attack—a key turning point in the war. Signaleers often worked 36 to 40 hours without rest, laying and maintaining lines under relentless high-explosive and gas shelling. The Outpost Company's signalmen advanced with the infantry, establishing instant communications as soon as an objective was reached. During this period, uncommon valor was common.

On October 31, 1918, the Division was relieved from the front lines just eleven days before the armistice. The 307th Field Signal Battalion was reviewed by General John J. Pershing before departing for America on May 6, 1919. The unit was demobilized at Camp Harrison, Virginia, on May 22, 1919. On June 24, 1921, the 307th Field Signal Battalion was reconstituted as the **82nd Signal Company** and allotted to the organized reserves of the 82nd Infantry Division.

**World War II**

Less than four months after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into World War II, the 82nd Signal Company was ordered to active duty. On August 15, 1942, the unit was reorganized and redesignated as the 82nd Airborne Signal Company. The airborne tab was added to the "All American" patch.

The Signal Company’s first taste of combat came on the night of July 9, 1943, when a signal detail supporting the 505th Parachute Combat Team (commanded by Colonel James Gavin) jumped behind enemy lines at Gela to spearhead the invasion of Sicily. The campaign was a tiring game of "leapfrog" as the company established and maintained eight different command posts. Upon completion of the Sicilian Campaign, the unit prepared for operations on the Italian mainland.

The company supported the 504th and 505th Parachute Combat Teams already in Salerno. Following the capture of Naples, the Signal Company moved to Ireland for rest and recuperation. By the spring of 1944, the company, reinforced with fresh replacements, began a strenuous training period for the upcoming invasion of France. The Signal Company was once again returning to the soil of France in the name of freedom.

On that fateful day of June 6, 1944, soldiers of the Signal Company filled three C-47s and seven gliders. In the 33 days of hard fighting that followed the initial assault, the company suffered significant casualties: nine enlisted men were killed, one officer and seven enlisted men were missing in action, and 26 were wounded or injured. The lack of replacements and the high loss of equipment from glider crashes seriously impeded the company’s operational efficiency. In spite of these circumstances, the company maintained communications. Once again, uncommon valor was the norm. The company was awarded a Silver Star, six Bronze Stars, and 16 Purple Hearts. The unit also received the Presidential Unit Citation, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, and the French Fourragere.

The company was sent back to England to prepare for the upcoming invasion of Holland, where it was brought to full strength and reequipped. On September 17, 1944, the Signal Company made its third combat jump into the Netherlands.

The "All American" Signalmen returned to France to rest and refit but were quickly on the move again. On December 17, 1944, the company was alerted to move to Werbomont, Belgium. There, it established wire and radio communications to all Division units.

The Signal Company then began a series of movements with the Division as they drove deep into the heart of Nazi Germany. At Ludwigslust, Germany, the company maintained and repaired over 200 miles of commercial open wire, operating and installing the telephone system at Division Headquarters. At Sessone, France, they modified the wire network and Division Command Post installation to meet the changing requirements of Division Headquarters and its units.

The company remained in Berlin until its return to the United States aboard the **"**Queen Mary" on January 3, 1946. On January 12, more than one million enthusiastic spectators gave the 82nd Airborne Division troopers a gala reception as they led a tremendous Victory Parade up New York’s Fifth Avenue.

**References:**

* Mullins, Christopher Eric. *The History of the 82nd Signal Battalion: World War I and World War II*. Independently Published, 2020. [Link: https://www.amazon.com/History-82nd-Signal-Battalion-World/dp/1795286687/](https://www.google.com/search?q=https://www.amazon.com/History-82nd-Signal-Battalion-World/dp/1795286687/ref%3Dsr_1_2%3Fcrid%3D3O5NT8J905BII%26dib%3DeyJ2IjoiMSJ9.U0hsneAPevvk4Bnzh0WFDT7iN0xwBiiDFrkS3uE5jwuBY6uk690SwcWltzbMorVWCH7lMDIfion028KIH7lMDIfion028KIHsfWSYrsi-SC_QEsCOBqBdtHIaJx1r4u8Oq10wyNYzU0xwFwi8rq7bL1jcv-y26uWgZMrrSNm-SEQMI1mH9tro6um5KfGGvVEx_jAlWoQEtgncON56RqdmT6p3FdyWqtRdOaRXfe1McTnSAS8PU_UVjLt9w.6aqFBE49B2WtYzR5DXPCyVSeBp6aEosdGkeGrnK14g0%26dib_tag%3Dse%26keywords%3Dchristopher%2Beric%2Bmullins%2Bbooks%26qid%3D1754336588%26sprefix%3Dchristoper%2Beric%2Bmullins%2Bbooks%252Caps%252C96%26sr%3D8-2)
* Mullins, Christopher Eric. *The History of the 82nd Signal Battalion- Berlin Occupation Duty*. Independently Published, 2023. [Link: https://www.amazon.com/History-Signal-Battalion-Berlin-Occupation/dp/B0CFC7PC6D/](https://www.amazon.com/History-Signal-Battalion-Berlin-Occupation/dp/B0CFC7PC6D/ref%3Dsr_1_6?crid=3O5NT8J905BII&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.U0hsneAPevvk4Bnzh0WFDT7iN0xwBiiDFrkS3uE5jwuBY6uk690SwcWltzbMorVWCH7lMDIfion028KIHsfWSYrsi-SC_QEsCOBqBdtHIaJx1r4u8Oq10wyNYzU0xwFwi8rq7bL1jcv-y26uWgZMrrSNm-SEQMI1mH9tro6um5KfGGvVEx_jAlWoQEtgncON56RqdmT6p3FdyWqtRdOaRXfe1McTnSAS8PU_UVjLt9w.6aqFBE49B2WtYzR5DXPCyVSeBp6aEosdGkeGrnK14g0&dib_tag=se&keywords=christopher+eric+mullins+books&qid=1754336588&sprefix=christoper+eric+mullins+books%2Caps%2C96&sr=8-6)

On January 19, 1946, following a much-needed furlough, the company reassembled at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In March 1948, the company was demobilized and allotted to the Organized Reserve Corps. Nine months later, it was reactivated and allotted to the Regular Army of the 82nd Airborne Division.

**Post-WWII and the Modern Era**

On September 1, 1957, the 82nd Airborne Signal Company was reorganized into the 82nd Signal Battalion (Airborne Division), composed of Company A (Command Operations Company), Company B (Forward Operations), and a Headquarters Detachment. The Battalion Commander was LTC Fred D. Hemmrich, who assumed command in June 1957.

On April 27, 1965, the Assault Command Post and the Second Forward Area Signal Platoon were alerted to deploy with the 3rd Brigade to the Dominican Republic. Second Lieutenant Arthur Kelly was to lead the Signal Battalion’s parachute assault element on a combat jump. However, the San Isidro Airbase was secured by indigenous forces, which changed the mission to an airland operation. Under the direction of the Battalion Commander, LTC Donald Martz, a Division Command Communications System was quickly established. As the airhead expanded, the majority of the Signal Battalion deployed to provide communications for the operation.

A particularly critical mission was a communications link required between the Division at San Isidro Airbase and the Marine Forces near the American Embassy in Santo Domingo. Bravo Company Commander, Captain Leo Childs, ordered 2LT Arthur Kelly and four soldiers to establish a VHF link. They completed the mission under sustained sniper fire. The battalion also established a VHF link between Corps Headquarters and the U.S. Naval Destroyer Squadron. A VHF terminal mounted in a hut was airlifted to the deck of a destroyer escort and operated continuously, maintaining communications even while the ship was cruising along the coast. On November 6, 1965, the main elements of the battalion redeployed to the United States, leaving one platoon from B Company behind to support the 1st Brigade in its peacekeeping operations.

Elements of the 82nd Signal Battalion arrived in Vietnam on February 22, 1968, as part of the 3rd Brigade Task Force stationed at Phu Bai. After 22 months of combat, the signal soldiers redeployed back to the United States on December 11, 1969.

On October 24, 1983, 22 soldiers from the Signal Battalion were alerted for what initially seemed like another Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise. The alert was not an exercise; President Reagan had directed the rescue of American students on the island of Grenada. Operation Urgent Fury was underway. Sergeant Luketina, a radio operator with the Assault CP Platoon of Alpha Company, was assigned to the 2nd Brigade. On Thursday, October 27th, Sergeant Luketina was seriously wounded at 2nd Brigade Headquarters. He valiantly fought for his life for eight months but succumbed to his wounds on June 30, 1984, one day before his 24th birthday. In his honor, a plaque was erected at the entrance of the Battalion Headquarters.

**Just Cause and Desert Storm**

On December 20, 1989, at 0155 hours, over 2,176 paratroopers jumped into Panama to protect American lives, neutralize the Panama Defense Force, and restore democracy. Among these jumpers were soldiers from the Signal Battalion carrying vital single-channel tactical satellites. The Division Assault CP Platoon from A Company was also involved, providing communications support for the Commanding General and his staff.

On August 7, 1990, in the largest American deployment since the Vietnam War, the Signal Battalion deployed to Saudi Arabia under the command of LTC William H. Bell for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The battalion helped draw President Bush’s “line in the sand” to stop Saddam Hussein’s military from further aggression. On the left flank of the Division was the French 6th Light Armored Division, and on the right was the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division. The battalion provided communications for the Division as they drove deep into Iraq during the 100-hour ground war.

To ensure the Commanding General, MG Johnson, could communicate with the lead Brigade, the battalion employed three FM RETRANS vehicles from Alpha Company, which "leapfrogged" in front of the division. Additionally, the battalion supported the division’s advance with two vehicles configured with FM to TACSAT capability. A TSC-93 with a supporting TTC-41 switch also accompanied the CG to allow secure telephone communications to XVIII Airborne Corps and the Coalition Forces. To ensure communications with the French forces on the left flank, the Division attached a LNO team supported with Single Channel TACSAT, a MRC-127, and a SB 3614 from Bravo Company to the French 6th Light Armored Division.

Following the capitulation of Iraqi forces, the battalion redeployed to Fort Bragg on March 7, 1991.

**Reorganization and Humanitarian Missions**

In November 1991, the battalion began its most significant reorganization since World War II. Over the next two months, the battalion fielded the Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE) and the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS). The battalion’s 500+ soldiers converted to new MOSs as all Tri-Tac equipment was turned in. The battalion devised an extensive plan to ensure the Division fielded the new equipment while still maintaining the ability to deploy paratroopers in 18 hours with reliable communications. During this time, the battalion added a fourth company to its MTOE, activating Charlie Company.

In August 1992, the battalion deployed a Company Task Force with the 2nd Brigade to ravaged South Florida in support of Hurricane Andrew Relief Operations. For more than 30 days, Signal Battalion soldiers, along with other division troopers, provided food, shelter, and medical assistance.

On September 18, 1994, over 60 C-130s took off from Pope and Seymour Johnson Air Force Bases en route to Haiti. The "All American Division" was en route to conduct the largest parachute assault since Operation Market Garden. The battalion, under the command of LTC James Van Patten, crossloaded tactical satellite operators and assault command post platoon radio operators on board the aircraft, providing en route communications for the Task Force Commander. One hour and 50 minutes from the objective area, the invasion was aborted, and the aircraft returned to Pope AFB.

The mission was aborted based on communications received en route, proving that the 82nd Airborne Division had accomplished its mission without firing a shot. Today, the Signal Battalion stands ready at a moment’s notice to provide communications for the 82nd Airborne Division, anytime, anyplace, and anywhere in the world.

**Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)**

The 82nd Signal Battalion and its subordinate companies were also recognized for their distinguished service in the Global War on Terrorism. Their awards include:

* Company A: Valorous Unit Award (Army), streamer embroidered AFGHANISTAN 2003
* Company B: Presidential Unit Citation (Army), streamer embroidered IRAQ 2003, and Valorous Unit Award (Army), streamer embroidered BAGHDAD MAY 2003-FEB 2004
* Company C: Valorous Unit Award (Army), streamer embroidered IRAQ 2003-2004

In honor of the fallen, we remember these Signal Battalion soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice:

* Major Michael Donahue: Died in Afghanistan during OEF-2014.
* Sergeant Marshall Edgerton: Died in Iraq during OIF 2003.
* Major Edward Murphy: Died in Afghanistan during OEF-2005.
* SSG Tony B. Olaes: Died in OEF on September 20, 2004.
* Sergeant Adam Quinn: Died in Afghanistan during OEF 2007.
* SFC Matthew Sluss-Tiller: Died in Afghanistan during OEF 2010.

*Reference:* [*Airborne Signal Memorial Day*](https://www.airbornesignal.com/memorial-day)

Today, the Signal Battalion stands ready at a moment’s notice to provide communications for the 82nd Airborne Division, anytime, anyplace, and anywhere in the world.

**Inactivation**

The 82nd Signal Battalion was inactivated in 2006 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as part of a larger Army reorganization.

We stand true to our motto, **“The Commander’s Voice.”**

 A Summarized version with a teaser at the end for the webpage.

The 82nd Signal Battalion has a long and decorated history, beginning in 1917 as the 307th Field Signal Battalion. The unit saw its first combat during World War I in France, providing vital communications under heavy enemy fire in the Argonne Forest. The battalion was reconstituted in 1921 and later re-designated as the 82nd Airborne Signal Company at the start of World War II. During this conflict, they conducted combat jumps in Sicily, Normandy, and the Netherlands, maintaining communications despite suffering heavy casualties. Their distinguished service earned them several prestigious awards, including the Presidential Unit Citation.

Following WWII, the unit was reorganized into the 82nd Signal Battalion and continued to deploy in support of the 82nd Airborne Division. They participated in major operations in the Dominican Republic (Operation Power Pack), Vietnam, Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury), Panama (Operation Just Cause), and Saudi Arabia (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm). The battalion also underwent a significant modernization in the 1990s, fielding new equipment to maintain its readiness for rapid deployment.

In the final years of its active service, the battalion was heavily involved in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), with companies deploying to both Afghanistan and Iraq and earning numerous awards for their valor. The battalion was officially inactivated in 2006 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as part of a wider Army reorganization. The legacy of the 82nd Signal Battalion is honored by its members, both living and fallen, who served with distinction and dedication.

**Teaser:**

Dive into the proud history of the 82nd Signal Battalion, from the trenches of World War I to the battlefields of the Global War on Terrorism. Discover the legacy of "The Commander's Voice" and honor the paratroopers who ensured communications in every major conflict.