

= 172nd Infantry Brigade ( United States ) =

The 172nd Infantry Brigade was an infantry brigade of the United States Army headquartered at Grafenwöhr , Germany . An active duty separate brigade , it was part of V Corps and was one of five active @-@ duty , separate , combat brigades in the U.S. Army before its most recent inactivation on 31 May 2013 .

First activated in 1917 , the brigade was deployed to France during World War I and used to reinforce front @-@ line units . The brigade 's actions in France during that time are not completely clear . It would later be converted to a reconnaissance unit that was deployed during World War II and saw several months of combat in the European Theater . The brigade has multiple tours of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2005 until 2006 and from 2008 until 2010 and in Operation Enduring Freedom from 2011 until 2012 . Its infamous 16 @-@ month deployment was one of the longest deployments for a unit serving in the OIF campaign . Most recently the brigade served a 12 @-@ month tour in Afghanistan from 2011 until 2012 .

The unit has been activated and inactivated numerous times , and has also seen several redesignations . The 172nd was one of the first brigade combat teams before it was deactivated in 2006 . Reactivated in 2008 from another reflagged unit , it immediately prepared for another tour of duty in Iraq . Following a series of budget cuts and force structure reductions , the unit formally inactivated on 31 May 2013 in Grafenwöhr , Germany .

= = Organization = =

The brigade was a separate unit and did not report to a higher division @-@ level headquarters , but instead reported directly to the V Corps of United States Army Europe . It consisted of six battalions and four companies . These components included two infantry battalions , one armor battalion , one field artillery battalion , a combat engineer battalion and a support services battalion . It also contained a headquarters company , a Signal company , a military intelligence company , and an armored cavalry company for reconnaissance .

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the unit was located at Grafenwöhr , Germany . The Unit also contained the 1st Battalion , 2d Infantry , the 2nd Battalion , 28th Infantry , the 1st Battalion , 77th Field Artillery , the 9th Engineer Battalion , the 3rd Battalion , 66th Armor , and the 172nd Forward Support Battalion . In addition , the brigade contained three independent companies ; 504th Military Intelligence Company , and Echo Troop , 5th Cavalry Regiment , the 57th Signal Company . All of these subordinate units were last located in Grafenwöhr .

= = History = =

= = = World War I = = =

The 172nd Infantry Brigade ( Separate ) , officially titled the " 172d Infantry Brigade " , was first constituted on 5 August 1917 in the National Army as the 172nd Infantry Brigade . It was organized on the 25th of that month at Camp Grant , in Rockford , Illinois and assigned to the 86th Infantry Division . The brigade was assigned to the 86th Division and deployed to Europe for duty during World War I. It arrived in Bordeaux , France , in September 1918 The combat record of the unit during its World War I service is not clear , but it is known that the 86th Division was depleted when much of its force was used to reinforce other units already on the front lines . Thus , the brigade received a World War I campaign streamer without an inscription , as it was not known to have fought in any engagements . After a cease fire was signed in 1918 , the Brigade returned to the United States . It was demobilized in January 1919 at Camp Grant , and the camp itself was abandoned in 1921 .

On 24 June 1921 the unit was reconstituted in the Organized Reserves as Headquarters and Headquarters Company , 172nd Infantry Brigade , and again assigned to the 86th Division . It was

organized in January 1922 at Springfield , Illinois and went through several redesignations , including Headquarters and Headquarters Company , 172nd Brigade , on 23 March 1925 and Headquarters and Headquarters Company , 172nd Infantry Brigade on 24 August 1936 .

= = = World War II = = =

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company , 172nd Infantry Brigade , was converted and redesignated the 3rd Platoon , 86th Reconnaissance Troop , and assigned to the 86th Infantry Division on 31 March 1942 , while the Headquarters and Headquarters Company , 171st Infantry Brigade , became the remainder of the 86th Reconnaissance Troop . On 15 December 1942 the troop was mobilized and reorganized at Camp Howze , in Gainesville , Texas , as the 86th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop , only to be reorganized and redesignated again on 5 August 1943 as the 86th Reconnaissance Troop , Mechanized . For the majority of the US involvement in World War II it remained stateside , participating in the Third Army # 5 Louisiana Maneuvers in 1943 , among other exercises , until finally staging at Camp Myles Standish , at Boston , Massachusetts on 5 February 1945 and shipping out from Boston on 19 February 1945 .

The 86th Reconnaissance Troop arrived in France on 1 March 1945 , acclimated and trained , and then moved to Köln , Germany , and participated in the relief of the 8th Infantry Division in defensive positions near Weiden which is now part of Lindenthal on 28 ? 29 March 1945 . During its few months of combat duty in Europe , the troop participated in amphibious assaults across was Danube , Bigge , Altmühl , Isar , Inn , Mittel @-@ Isar and Salzach rivers in Germany and Austria . It was assigned to First , Third , Seventh , and Fifteenth US Armies . The unit was at Salzburg on 7 May 1945 ( V @-@ E Day ) . It was then sent back stateside to prepare for operation in the Pacific . Arriving back in New York City on 17 June 1945 , the unit proceeded to Fort Gruber in Braggs , Oklahoma before staging at Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg , California on 14 August 1945 . The unit shipped out from San Francisco on 21 August 1945 and arrived in the Philippines on 7 September 1945 , five days after the Japanese surrender .

= = = The Cold War = = =

On 10 October 1945 the 86th Reconnaissance Troop ( Mechanized ) was again redesignated the 86th Mechanized Reconnaissance Troop before finally being inactivated on 30 December 1946 while still stationed in the Philippines . However the 86th Mechanized Reconnaissance Troop was reactivated again on 9 July 1952 as part of the Army Reserve . It continued serving within the Army Reserve for some years . Activation of the brigade with its new structure took place on 1 July 1963 at Fort Richardson , Alaska . The Army set up an experimental Airborne Company " Company F ( FoxTrot ) Airborne in 1962 in Fort Richardson . The Company Commander was Capt Lawrence . Under the new structure , the unit was renamed Company C Airborne . The Airborne Company was used to see how best to use Airborne Troops in Arctic conditions throughout the vast area of Alaska .

The new structure included one Light Infantry Battalion ; one Mechanized Infantry Battalion ; and one Tank Company . Its shoulder sleeve insignia was authorized for use on 28 August 1963 and its distinctive unit insignia was authorized on 8 June 1966 . The Brigade was reorganized from Mechanized Infantry to Light Infantry on 30 June 1969 , with a reduction to two mechanized infantry battalions . In 1974 the 172nd Infantry Brigade was reorganized again to include three light infantry battalions ,

US Army Alaska was known as USARAL through the 60s and 70s , whereas after the activation of the 6th Infantry Division it was known as USARAK . The two Arctic brigades , the 171st ( 4 @-@ 9th Infantry , 1 @-@ 47th Infantry [ which was subsequently deactivated ] , and other components at Fort Wainwright ) and the 172d ( 4 @-@ 23d Infantry , 1 @-@ 60th Infantry , 1 @-@ 37th Artillery , 561st Combat Engineer Company , and other components at Fort Richardson ) were consolidated in 1973 with the drawdown after Viet Nam . There was an administrative split between the " LIB " ( Light Infantry Brigade ) and the " Brigade Alaska " , with the 1 @-@ 43d Air Defense , 222d Aviation

, 56th MP Company , 23d Construction Engineer Company , Northern Warfare Training Center- then at Fort Greely , ' being assigned .

It was again reorganized in 1978 to a structure that included one infantry battalion , one mechanized infantry battalion , and one tank battalion The brigade was again inactivated on 15 April 1986 at Fort Richardson , Alaska , being reflagged as part of the newly reformed 6th Infantry Division .

= = = Transformation = = =

In the late 1990s , Army leaders including General Eric Shinseki began shifting the Army force toward brigade centered operations . All separate brigades had been deactivated in the 1990s as part of the US Army 's drawdown following the end of the Cold War . These inactivations , along with subsequent reorganization of US Army divisions , saw several divisional brigades stationed in bases that were far from the division 's headquarters and support units . These brigades had difficulty operating without support from higher headquarters .

It was Shinseki 's idea to reactivate a few separate brigades and assign them their own support and sustainment units , which would allow them to function independently of division @-@ level headquarters . These formations were termed " Brigade Combat Teams " . Such units could be stationed in bases far from major commands , not requiring division @-@ level unit support , an advantage in places like Alaska and Europe , where stationing entire divisions was unnecessary or impractical . The first of the separate brigades was to be the 172nd Infantry Brigade . On 17 April 1998 , the U.S. Army reactivated the " 172nd Infantry Brigade ( Separate ) " and reflagged the 1st Brigade , 6th Infantry Division as that unit was headquartered at Fort Wainwright , Alaska . Two years later , the 173rd Airborne Brigade was reactivated on 12 June 2000 at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza , Italy > . The 172nd was given an airborne infantry battalion , one of only three existing outside of the 82nd Airborne Division ( the other two battalions were part of the 2nd Infantry Division based in Korea ) . The 172nd Infantry was designed as a " pacific theater contingency brigade " . Located in Alaska , the 172nd would be able to deploy to any contingencies in Alaska , Europe ( over the north pole ) or the Pacific .

In July 2001 the US Army announced that the 172nd Infantry Brigade was to become one of the Army 's new Interim Brigade Combat Teams , later to be known as Stryker Brigade Combat Teams ( SBCTs ) . Changes to the brigade included the addition of some 300 Stryker vehicles , and several Unmanned Aerial Vehicles . The transformation was intended to increase the brigade 's mobility in operations as well as reduce its logistical footprint . The project entailed around \$ 1 @. @ 2 billion in construction costs for training facilities , motor pools , and other buildings . This transformation was completed when the unit was formally redesignated on 16 October 2003 . After the transformation was complete , the 172nd became the third Stryker brigade in the US Army , with a force of 3 @, @ 500 soldiers . In 2005 , the new Brigade Commander changed the motto of the infantry brigade from " Snow Hawks " to " Arctic Wolves " . In early 2005 , the brigade was alerted that it would be deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom for the first time . To prepare , it participated in several large exercises at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk , Louisiana . The 220th Military Police Brigade , a reserve unit , provided additional soldiers to assist the brigade in the exercises during their final preparations for deployment .

= = = Operation Iraqi Freedom = = =

In August 2005 , the 172nd Infantry Brigade deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom . The unit deployed to Mosul , Iraq . 4 @-@ 14 CAV and a Stryker infantry company ( A / 4 @-@ 23 IN and later , B / 2 @-@ 1 IN ) were attached to 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force , and stationed at COP Rawah ; away from the rest of the BDE . Duties of the unit during deployment included numerous patrol operations , searches for weapons caches , and counterinsurgency operations . Its tour was to have ended on 27 July 2006 , but the U.S. Army unexpectedly extended the deployment until the end of November 2006 . During the extension , the unit was sent to Baghdad to quell

growing sectarian violence concerns . The infamous extension of the deployment had happened after some of the units of the Brigade were already touched down at their home base of Fort Wainwright , AK , forcing them to fly back to staging areas in Iraq . The extension occurred after the unit 's regular 12 @-@ month tour was complete , making the deployment last for a total of 16 months . As a result of the unit 's action in Iraq , the brigade was awarded the Valorous Unit Award . During this action , 26 soldiers of the brigade were killed in action , and another 350 were wounded . Ten additional soldiers in units attached to the brigade were killed .

= = = Inactivation 2006 = = =

Having returned from its extended tour in Baghdad , Iraq , the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team was officially deactivated and the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team , 25th Infantry Division was activated in its place on 14 December 2006 .

The brigade 's six battalions and four separate companies were likewise reflagged as part of the change . The reflagged units were :

1st Battalion , 17th Infantry Regiment to 1st Battalion , 5th Infantry Regiment .  
2nd Battalion , 1st Infantry Regiment to 1st Battalion , 24th Infantry Regiment .  
4th Battalion , 23rd Infantry Regiment to 3rd Battalion , 21st Infantry Regiment .  
4th Squadron , 14th Cavalry Regiment to 5th Squadron , 1st Cavalry Regiment .  
4th Battalion , 11th Field Artillery Regiment to 2nd Battalion , 8th Field Artillery Regiment .  
172nd Brigade Support Battalion to 25th Brigade Support Battalion .  
A Company , 52nd Infantry Regiment to D Company , 52nd Infantry Regiment .  
572nd Military Intelligence Company to 184th Military Intelligence Company .  
562nd Engineer Company to 73rd Engineer Company .  
21st Signal Company to 176th Signal Company .

= = = Reactivation in Germany = = =

As part of the Grow the Army Plan announced 19 December 2007 , the Army will activate and retain two Infantry Brigades in Germany until 2012 and 2013 . On 6 March 2008 , it was announced that the 172nd Infantry Brigade would be activated as the first of these brigades , with the other being the 170th Infantry Brigade . On 17 March , the 172nd Infantry Brigade was formally activated in Schweinfurt , Germany by reflagging the 1st Infantry Division 's 2nd ( Dagger ) Brigade , which relocated to Ft . Riley , KS . Colonel Jeffrey Sinclair was commanding the brigade at the time . The 172nd Infantry Brigade relocated to Grafenwöhr , Germany , The unit it was activated using the assets of the 2nd Brigade , 1st Infantry Division , which had recently completed its own tour of duty in Iraq . The 172nd Infantry Brigade was activated with the following unit redesignations :

Headquarters and Headquarters Company , 172nd Infantry Brigade ( formed from HHC , 2 @-@ 1 ID )

2nd Battalion , 28th Infantry ( reflagged from 1 ? 26 Infantry )  
1st Battalion , 2nd Infantry ( reflagged from 1 ? 18 Infantry )  
3rd Battalion , 66th Armor ( reflagged from 1 ? 77 Armor )  
Troop E , 5th Cavalry ( reflagged from Troop E , 4th Cavalry )  
1st Battalion , 77th Field Artillery ( reflagged from 1 ? 7 Field Artillery )  
172nd Support Battalion ( reflagged from 299th Forward Support Battalion )

57th Signal Company , 9th Engineer Battalion and 504th Military Intelligence Company remain attached to 172nd but were not reflagged .

When the brigade converts to a modular design , the Brigade Special Troops Battalion will be given organic , unnumbered signal , engineer and military intelligence companies along with a chemical and military police platoons .

After its activation , the brigade began moving its components from Schweinfurt to Grafenwöhr , Germany , as part of the Grow the Army plan . Simultaneously , the brigade converted to a modular structure to become a Brigade Combat Team upon completion . In May 2008 , the brigade was

alerted that it would be returning to Iraq in the fall of that year . The deployment was set to last 12 months , and was set to start after the unit 's 12 @-@ month out @-@ of @-@ action cycle ended on November 2008 . This would be the brigade 's third tour to Iraq , as it completed a tour of duty in Iraq shortly before being redesignated from the 2nd Brigade , 1st Infantry Division . The brigade began training for its deployment to the country as soon as it received orders for deployment . German military officers trained with the brigade during this preparation . The soldiers of the brigade were part of a 40 @,@ 000 @-@ soldier troop rotation into Iraq and Afghanistan , intended to maintain previous troop levels in both countries until late 2009 . In fall of 2008 , the brigade completed its transition to a brigade combat team , and was redesignated as the 172nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team .

In late October 2008 the brigade began moving equipment and vehicles by train from Germany in preparation for their tour in Iraq . 385 containers full of gear , as well as 75 M1A1 Abrams Tanks , M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles , and HMMWVs were sent by train on 28 October. the brigade picked up additional MRAP and uparmored HMMWVs in Kuwait . The brigade deployed into theater by December 2008 , replacing the 4th Brigade Combat Team , 3rd Infantry Division .

A proposal was made to relocate the unit to White Sands Missile Range , New Mexico in 2012 as the 7th Brigade Combat Team , 1st Armored Division , pending discussions to leave two heavy brigades in Europe .

= = = Afghanistan = = =

The 172 IBCT deployed to Afghanistan in the summer of 2011 . The brigade left behind its " heavy " vehicles , Bradley fighting vehicles and Abrams tanks , for MRAPs . Soldiers will spend some of their time during the deployment patrolling on foot , as their normal heavy tracked vehicles are incompatible with rugged terrain of Afghanistan . . During this deployment the Brigade was responsible for Paktika province along the Pakistani border . One of the more controversial aspects of the deployment was the formation of the first US / Afghan Joint firing base with Afghan National Army Artillery firing in support of U.S. forces in the Urgan district .

Following a number of budget cuts and force structure reductions , the brigade deactivated in Germany on 31 May 2013 .

= = Honors = =

= = = Unit decorations = = =

= = = Campaign streamers = = =