

History of the Engineer Castle



The medieval castle is inseparably connected with fortifications and architecture. In heraldry, the castle and the tower are often used on coats of arms . In this country the term "castle" has been applied to the strongest of our early fortifications such as Castle Pickney in Charleston, South Carolina, and Castle Williams and Clinton in New York Harbor.

The Corps of Engineers castle is a highly stylized form without decoration or embellishment. The Army officially adopted the castle to appear on the Corps of Engineers Epaulets and belt plate, in 1840. Soon afterwards the cadets at West Point, all of whom were part of the Corps of Engineers until the Military Academy left the charge of the Chief of Engineers and came under the charge of the Army at Large in 1866, also wore the castle on their cap beginning in 1841. Subsequently the castle appeared on the shoulder knot; on the saddle cloth, as a collar device, and on the buttons. although its design has changed many times since its inception, the castle has remained the distinctive symbol of the Corps of Engineers.

Technician Third Grade

Harold F. Sabath

In January of 1943 three Engineers from the 1138th Engineer Combat Group were detailed to assist the 81st Infantry Division with amphibious training at San Luis Obispo, California. Missouri native Harold Sabath was one of these Engineers. As storm clouds rose on the horizon and the waves grew, Harold Sabath's sense of duty would be tested.



Ten man inflatable boats like the ones used by the 81st Infantry Division at San Luis Obispo, California.

The rough seas threw the small inflatable 10 man boats around. As T/3 Sabath successfully navigated his boat to shore, he noticed another boat capsize in the surf zone. The powerful currents prevented the infantrymen from swimming to shore and slowly dragged them toward a coral reef. As a few men rushed for a distant lifeboat, others watched in horror as the turbulent seas carried the survivors toward the razor sharp rocks.

Before World War II Sabath had been a Red Cross lifeguard. He felt that as a certified lifeguard he possessed the skill to save the men, and knew it was his obligation to attempt a rescue. He tied a rope around his waist and dove into the rough surf. Swimming under water, he reached the ten men at the capsized rubber boat. He ordered all to kick their legs. With the effort of the now motivated

Army Values

Loyalty

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers. Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal Soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow Soldiers. By wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share, you show your loyalty to your unit.

Duty

Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks and responsibilities — all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

Respect

Treat people as they should be treated. In the Soldier’s Code, we pledge to “treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same.” Respect is what allows us to appreciate the best in other people. Respect is trusting that all people have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the Army value of respect, which results from knowing you have put forth your best effort. The Army is one team and each of us has something to contribute.

Private Vinton Dove



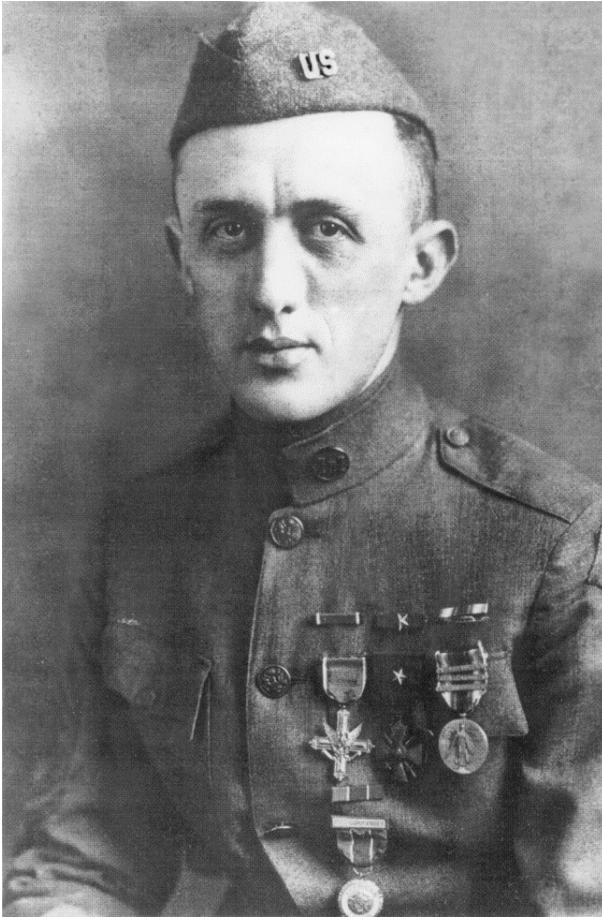
Private Dove at Fort Belvoir, 1943.

Private Vinton Dove entered the Army at Fort Myer, VA, in September 1943. Following bull dozer operator training, he was assigned to the 37th Engineer Battalion. On D-Day, Private Dove and his assistant operator, Private Shoemaker, were in a Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) heading for Omaha Beach. The LCM contained two jeeps in front of Dove and Shoemaker's bulldozer, and several squads of Infantry. As the LCM's ramp dropped, machinegun fire raked the LCM, killing the two jeep operators and most of the Infantry. Dove threw the dozer into gear and pushed the two jeeps ahead of it into the surf. Sixteen bulldozers were slated to land on Omaha Beach early on D-Day. Only six made it ashore, and three of those were destroyed by German mortars and artillery.

Sitting atop the dozer, Dove and Shoemaker were chest deep in seawater. After pulling several disabled vehicles out of the surf and removing many obstacles with the dozer, the two Engineers headed

for the beach. Rifle and machinegun fire was so intense that Dove operated the dozer lying nearly horizontal, while clearing mines and obstacles from the beach. Later that morning, an Infantryman requested Dove's assistance in taking out a German machinegun

Sergeant Paul Smithhisler



In late October 1918 Allied units had repeatedly tried to cross the Escaut River in Belgium. Accurate German machine guns and artillery fire had blunted several assaults. After several units had failed the mission was assigned to the 37th Infantry Division. The 112th Engineer Regiment put out a call for volunteers to conduct a reconnaissance of the German positions on the far bank of the river.

Sergeant Paul Smithhisler, a draftsman in Headquarters Company, volunteered. Under the cover of darkness, just before

Sergeant Paul Smithhisler wearing his Distinguished Service Cross, French Croix de Guerre, World War One Victory Medal, and a Veteran's award.

midnight on November first Sergeant Smithhisler eased down the steep muddy bank and into the icy cold water. Private Burke, another volunteer, remained behind to assist the Sergeant up the river bank and provide cover if necessary, upon his return. Sergeant Smithhisler

Specialist Fourth Class

Eugene Buckley

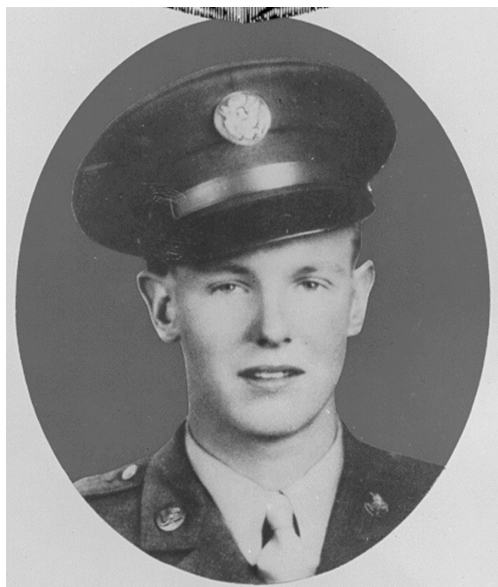
Just after dusk on April 16th 1968, the 1st Engineer Battalion was tasked to cut a landing zone for a Vietnamese Army (ARVN) unit. The ARVN unit had taken heavily casualties and was still engaged and surrounded by the enemy. Several dozen severe casualties required immediate evacuation. Specialist Buckley, who was a Combat Engineer, and another soldier volunteered for the rescue mission. At 2:00 a.m., both soldiers were lowered from a helicopter, with a chainsaw and several axes, into the jungle near Tan Uyan, Vietnam.

The ARVN perimeter was under constant enemy rifle and machinegun fire. Even though the noise from his chainsaw drew more enemy fire, Specialist Buckley continued clearing the much needed landing zone.

He continued to enlarge the clearing and directed other soldiers to assist with the axes. After hours of intense labor, the landing zone was large enough to allow helicopters to land. Fifty casualties were evacuated before concentrated enemy fire prohibited further use of the landing zone. Buckley was forced to remain with the ARVN unit that fought its way out over the next few days. Buckley's actions saved many lives and for these actions he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. The citation reads, *"For gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: On this date (17 April 1968), Specialist Buckley*



Private Junior Van Noy



In the fall of 1943, Engineers from the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade supported Australian forces in a landing at Finschafen, New Guinea. The joint force quickly overcame enemy resistance and opened the nearby airfield. ***“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Finschafen, New Guinea, on 17 October 1943. When wounded late in September, Pvt. Van Noy***

declined evacuation and continued on duty. On 17 October 1943 he was gunner in charge of a machinegun post only 5 yards from the water's edge when the alarm was given that 3 enemy barges loaded with troops were approaching the beach in the early morning darkness. One landing barge was sunk by Allied fire, but the other 2 beached 10 yards from Pvt. Van Noy's emplacement. Despite his exposed position, he poured a withering hail of fire into the debarking enemy troops. His loader was wounded by a grenade and evacuated. Pvt. Van Noy, also grievously wounded, remained at his post, ignoring calls of nearby soldiers urging him to withdraw, and continued to fire with deadly accuracy. He expended every round and was found, covered with wounds dead beside his gun. In this action Pvt. Van Noy killed at least half of the 39 enemy taking part in the landing. His heroic tenacity at the price of his life not only saved the lives of many of his comrades, but enabled them to annihilate the attacking detachment.”

Captain Chris J. Brous



Brous serving as an enlisted man in Panama.

In the early morning hours of August 2, 1944, Captain Chris J. Brous was returning from inspecting his front line troops. As his jeep rounded a turn in the road, it was struck by tank and machine gun fire, killing the driver. Captain Brous and First Lieutenant McKinney were taken prisoner.

Both Engineer

officers were wounded. They were ordered to sit in a nearby field to await transport to a German hospital. Realizing that his field notes might contain information harmful to the Allied cause, Captain Brous tore them into tiny pieces and buried them.

In route to the German hospital, Lieutenant McKinney asked what he should do with his field notes. Captain Brous responded, "You know your orders, eat them!" At the hospital, the German surgeons removed 16 shell fragments from Captain Brous' left thigh and chest. He was then sent to a German hospital in Paris. On August 18th, Captain Brous and 80 other Allied prisoners were taken to a train station for transport to a Prisoner of War (POW) camp in Germany.



Photograph from Captain Brous' identification card.

Private Hubert Webb



Photo of Private Webb taken shortly after he graduated from Engineer training.

Late in the fall of 1944, a patrol of 23 infantrymen and 8 Engineers were sent on a mission across the Saar River to capture an enemy prisoner. The patrol was evenly split between two assault boats. Under the cover of darkness and a rainstorm, the patrol left friendly positions. The patrol managed to reach the far shore, where four Engineers, including Hubert A. Webb, remained with the boats while the rest of the force sought out a prisoner.

The patrol found

the enemy's defensive line too strong. Dawn was quickly approaching, so the infantry decided to call off the patrol and return to the boats. Shortly after beginning the return trip, an infantry soldier stepped on a mine. The resulting havoc erased all sense of order among the infantry and aroused the German defenders. Two more infantrymen stepped on mines as the patrol raced for the boats.

Two of the wounded were placed in Webb's boat and the group quickly set out for the safety of the far shore. A little over half-way

Specialist Fifth Class Richard Friend

In the early morning hours of Sunday, March 21, 1967, a supply convoy from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was going from the Gia Ray Rock Quarry to Saigon. Four Engineers from the 595th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) joined the convoy with the hope of locating some much needed repair parts. The convoy contained eight Armored Personnel Carriers (APC) and one tank from the 11th Cavalry Regiment, as well as the Engineers' Jeep and 2 ½ ton truck.

Specialist Five Richard Friend rode shotgun in the jeep, positioned 6th in the order of march, right behind the Engineers' 2 ½ ton truck. Just kilometers outside of Gia Ray, the convoy rolled through the village of Suoi Cat.

On the far side of the village, the convoy was ambushed by what later was determined to be a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) battalion-sized element. The extremely intense ambush was over a kilometer long, with enemy on both sides of the road, firing machine guns, rocket propelled grenades, and 57mm anti-tank guns. The lead tank hit a mine and threw a track, stopping most of the convoy within the kill zone of the ambush. The jeep driver, Specialist George Heppen, decided to race out of the kill zone, while Friend and another occupant returned fire. The jeep sped 500 yards, but while trying to pass the disabled tank, it was struck by a recoilless rifle round. The jeep veered off the road and struck a tree. Friend was thrown from the



passenger's seat and struck the same tree, breaking his nose.

As Friend shook off the mental haze caused by his collision with the tree, he found himself in the middle of an extremely violent and well-prepared ambush, with no helmet, and no weapon. His only solace came from the

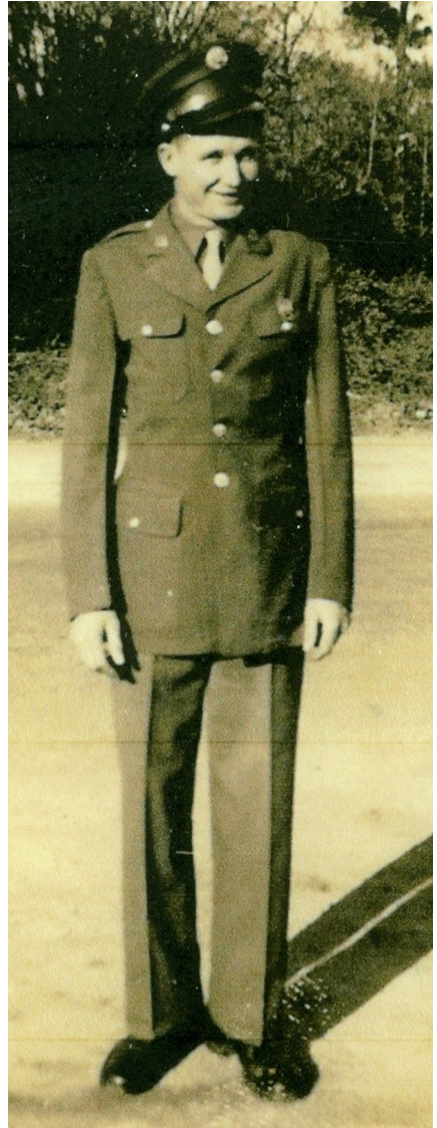
The Jeep SPC/5 Friend was riding in during the ambush of 21 May 1967.

Private James D. McRacken

In October of 1943, James Dougald McRacken left his pregnant wife in his hometown of Red Spring, North Carolina, to answer his nation's call. Following training, McRacken had a short furlough to meet his newborn daughter. On his return, he was assigned to the newly formed Company A, 315th Engineer Battalion, 90th Infantry Division.

On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), the 315th Engineers landed on Utah Beach with the rest of the 90th Division. On August 5th the 315th Engineers were just 130 miles southwest of Paris, on a hill overlooking the small French town of Mayenne. A citizen of Mayenne warned the Engineers that the Germans had rigged Mayenne's only bridge with explosives. If the ancient stone bridge was destroyed, it would drastically slow the Allied advance and leave the people of Mayenne without this essential fixture of infrastructure.

As the Engineers fought their way into town, heavy volumes of German small arms, machine gun, and artillery fire slowed the advance. Knowing the Germans would detonate the explosives at any



Private McRacken.

Private First Class Philip George



A D7E open cab bulldozer like the one operated by Private First Class Philip Alan George.

In early August 1967, Bravo Company, 39th Engineer Battalion, was tasked with opening a five mile stretch of Robertson Road connecting QL1 to the Chu Lai ferry. The "road," which was a Viet Cong stronghold, had been closed since 1954

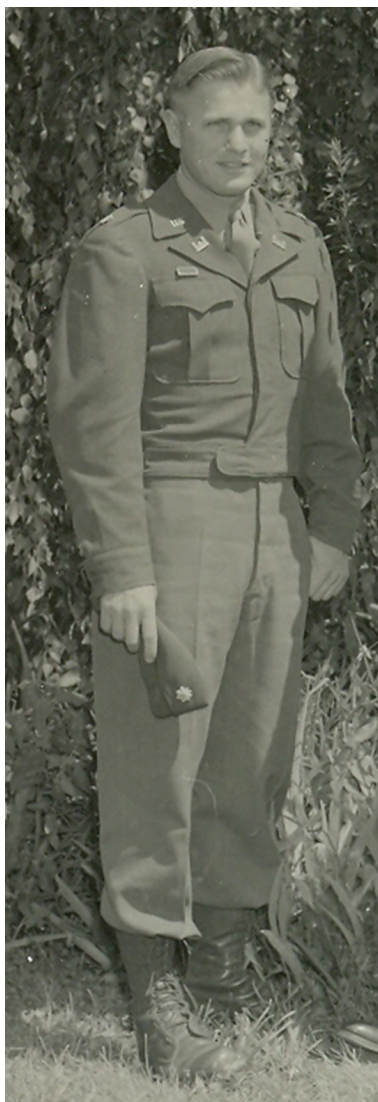
and resembled an overgrown path.

On 11 August, the First Platoon opened half the road before being ambushed. The ensuing battle took the lives of two Engineers and wounded three more. The next day Captain Wenners sent his entire company to open the road. With the road almost complete, the Engineers came under heavy sniper fire and scrambled for cover. When the drivers attempted to move their vehicles, snipers resumed the deadly fire. It became apparent that if the road was not completed and the convoy moved, the enemy would surely mount an all-out attack after dark. Private First Class Philip Alan George volunteered to open the road with his bulldozer. As sniper rounds ricocheted off his bulldozer, George remained at the controls of his machine and finished the road.

When the Engineer convoy started moving, the third truck was hit by enemy fire and became disabled, blocking the road. It could not be moved and blocked the escape of all the vehicles behind it. The snipers began to concentrate their fire on the vehicles behind the disabled truck.

First Lieutenant Orville Munson

During the first week of January 1944, the 48th Engineer Battalion struggled to convert a severely damaged railroad into a highway, in support of operations to capture Mount Porchia, Italy. For several days, the Engineers worked on the highway during the day, then were placed into the line as infantry each night.



On the night of January 6th, the 48th Engineer Battalion was directed to capture Mount Porchia. First Lieutenant Orville Munson, Commander of Company A, led his company across several miles of “no-man’s-land” and through the battle to capture the hill. For his actions that night, 1st Lt. Munson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. His citation reads, *“1st Lt. Munson led his company in darkness through mined and shelled areas to the foot of Mt. Porchia, Italy. He acted as point of the column and was often far in advance and alone in enemy territory. He encountered two enemy machine gun nests from which he drew fire, but he extricated his company by leading his men in a circular path around the enemy positions. During this action, he killed one German at close range with his submachine gun. Later, he encountered an enemy patrol and was captured. With a gun at his back, he shouted a*

1st Lt. Orville “Bill” Munson in Germany shortly after V-E Day.

Sergeant Major Frederick W. Gerber



Sergeant Major Gerber in 1867.

A native of Dresden, Germany, Frederick Gerber arrived in the United States in the 1830s. He joined the 4th Infantry in 1839 but returned to civilian life in 1844. His decision to reenlist when the company of engineers was authorized in 1846 brought him into the Corps of Engineers for the remainder of his life.

In the war against Mexico, Gerber won numerous accolades. During the Battle for Mexico City, he saved the life of Lt. George B. McClellan, who later served as commander of Union forces during the Civil

War. When the city was surrendered to the United States, Gerber was given the honor of sounding the surrender call. During the Civil War, Gerber had the responsibility for molding volunteer recruits into engineer soldiers, training the much needed pontoniers, sappers, miners, and pioneers.

On November 8, 1871, Gerber became the first engineer to receive

SP4 Marvin Miller



Specialist 4 Marvin Miller, 1st Engineer Battalion in a tunnel near Chu Chi, Vietnam.

Specialist Fourth Class Marvin Miller had one of the most dangerous jobs in Vietnam—he was a “tunnel rat.” Tunnel rats entered the labyrinth of underground passages to clear enemy forces and set explosives to

collapse the tunnels.

In February of 1969, the 1st Infantry Division discovered many tunnel openings near Chu Chi, Vietnam. The 1st Engineer Battalion tunnel rats were called in to investigate. The tunnel rats discovered a huge underground complex. As explosive charges were being set to seal several entrances, the enemy attacked. Miller raced through hostile fire to the scene of the attack. He assisted in carrying the dead



Specialist 4 Marvin Miller, drops a smoke grenade into a tunnel.

Private First Class David Hutchinson

Just four days into a year-long tour in Afghanistan, Private First Class David R. Hutchinson manned a MK-19 Automatic Grenade Launcher in the turret gunners position of the third vehicle in a convoy. The convoy contained 17 soldiers in four vehicles from the 420th Engineer Brigade. As the vehicles passed through a steep mountain pass, 15-20 enemy attacked with Rifle Propelled Grenades (RPG), machine guns, and automatic rifle fire.



Private First Class David Hutchinson conducting pre-deployment training.

From their positions on the high ground the enemy was able to fire down into the Engineer's protective turrets. After striking the first and last vehicles with RPGs the enemy launched a ground assault against the convoy. Hutchinson quickly determined that an enemy machine gun position was the key to the enemy's assault. He directed his MK-19 fire on that position and destroyed it. Enemy fire now concentrated against Hutchinson. He responded with MK-19 fire against the exposed enemy troops. Hutchinson expended an entire can of ammunition, destroying positions and killing at least 5 enemy soldiers before an RPG struck the crew compartment of his vehicle. RPG shrapnel impacted his right leg and caused him to collapse into the cab of the vehicle.

The convoy was now able to exit the ambush. Laying severely wounded in the crew compartment, Hutchinson noticed his first ser-