

122nd Engineer Battalion

Historical Narrative



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122nd Engineer Battalion

Historical Narrative

Introduction

As part of a mitigation plan for modifications to the Edgefield Armory in Edgefield, South Carolina, the South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG) contacted the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) to develop historical materials related to the 122nd Engineer Battalion, whose headquarters are located at Edgefield. In March 2018, SCIAA contracted with historian Josi Ward of Ward Brandt Consulting to write a narrative history of the 122nd Engineer Battalion and develop an exhibit for display in the Edgefield Armory. Ward completed the work in December 2018.

Methodology

Ward conducted the research regarding the history of the 122nd Engineer Battalion in the following stages:

1. Consulted textual and photographic archives at the Edgefield Armory and Adjutant General Military Base;
2. Conducted seven oral history interviews;
3. Prepared narrative history and submitted to SCARNG for review;
4. Designed a three-panel historical exhibit for display in the Edgefield Armory.

Stage 1: Ward began work on the project by reviewing the textual and photographic archives housed at the Edgefield Armory in Edgefield. Ward used these documents to develop a timeline of key periods in the battalion history, and to identify gaps in the historical record that oral history interviews may help to fill. Following the archival research, Ward also consulted annual reports published by the Office of the Adjutant General that are now housed at the South Carolina State Library in Columbia, as well as battalion archives housed at the Adjutant General Military Base also in Columbia, and identified key secondary sources regarding the history of the Army National Guard.

Stage 2: Ward identified former and current personnel from the 122nd whose experience with the battalion represented diverse aspects of its history. Ward next scheduled interviews with seven individuals. Ward conducted six oral histories interviews with Wayne Caughman, Frank Chapman, James Gunter, Elliott Powell, Todd Shealy, and Steven Smith. A seventh oral history interview with Stephen (Brad) Owens was conducted by Rachel Morgan, Cultural Resource Manager for SCARNG, based upon questions developed by Ward. Bryan Hall, Conservation Manager for SCARNG, recorded all but the Owens interview with audio and video. Ward developed transcripts of each interview for submission to the SCARNG archives.

Stage 3: Ward used the archival documents and oral history interviews to draft a narrative history of the 122nd Engineer Battalion, and to place it in within the larger context of National Guard history since the early Cold War. A draft of the narrative was submitted to SCARNG for review and modifications in early November, 2018. After receiving feedback on the historical narrative from Rachel Morgan and SC SHPO, Ward submitted the final report along with oral history transcripts to SCARNG on December 15, 2018.

Stage 4: Ward designed a three-panel historical exhibit for display in the Edgefield Armory which included condensed text from the narrative history and exemplary photographs selected from the Edgefield archive and the private collections of various former battalion members. Digital files of the display were submitted to SCARNG along with the narrative history and transcripts on December 15, 2018.

122nd Engineer Battalion

Historical Narrative

The history of South Carolina's 122nd Engineer Battalion is one of hard work, of physical achievements, and of deep pride in the battalion's culture and legacy. Federally recognized in 1947, but with roots much deeper than that, the battalion has been a steady and consistent presence in its members' lives even as it adjusted to significant cultural and political changes happening around it. The battalion's state mission has long been to provide community service and support National Guard projects, while its federal mission calls for combined engineering support to a Corps Area of Operation.¹ In serving this dual mission, the citizen soldiers who have served in the battalion over the years have made lasting changes to their local communities; provided relief to their wider region during times of disaster; traveled the world on humanitarian deployments; and served abroad in two different wars. Their work is hard. The results of the work are tangible. Less tangible, but no less impressive, is the enduring pride in the battalion carried by its current and former members.

Federal Recognition and Early Years: 1946-1958

The 122nd Engineer Combat Battalion was first allotted to the South Carolina National Guard on July 5, 1946, during the massive reorganization that followed the end of World War II. During these early years of the Cold War, the United States military was fundamentally rethinking its previous approach to national security, which relied on mass, citizen-soldier armies.² The threat of nuclear war demanded an increased specialization of ground troops to prepare for previously unimagined threats, and called for further reliance on reserve forces. The National Guard was declared in 1945 to be "an integral part and a first line Reserve component" of the military.³

In South Carolina, as in other states, this postwar reorganization resulted in significant expansions and changes to the hierarchy that would allow the National Guard to align with these new defensive priorities. The National Guard Bureau disbanded the 30th Division, and activated the 51st Division in January of 1947 to replace it.⁴ The 51st Division became the parent organization for the majority of South Carolina's

¹ Gwen R. Rhodes, *South Carolina Army National Guard* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1988), 121.

² Michael D. Doubler, *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636-2000* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), 219.

³ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 224.

⁴ "51st Infantry National Guard is Activated," *State* (SC), January 28, 1947.

National Guard units, and included units in Florida as well.⁵ The new units within the 51st umbrella included Company C of the 122nd, then located at Edgefield, which received its federal recognition in March of 1947.⁶ A reorganization in July of 1948 reorganized the 122nd into its long-lasting formation as a Headquarters Company with line units attached. Company C of Edgefield became Headquarters Support Company (HSC), and line units added over the following months included: Company A and Medical Detachment at Barnwell; Company B at Ridgeland; and Company C at Warrentonville. In February of 1949, the addition of Company D in Camden rounded out the battalion.⁷ (See Appendix B for a listing of all armory locations throughout the battalion’s history.) In 1955, armory buildings designed by Heyward S. Singley were constructed for both the Edgefield and the Barnwell units.⁸

Although numerous reorganizations over the following years would subtly change the structure of the 122nd, its basic structure as a headquarters unit attached to organic line units would remain constant for the next 60 years. Some of these minor reorganizations in the early years included the creation of a separate detachment of the Headquarters Company at McCormick, an Assault Platoon and Bridge Platoon, from 1949 to 1953.⁹ In February of 1953, the entire battalion was redesignated from 122nd Engineer Combat Battalion to 122nd Engineer Battalion (Combat).¹⁰ The battalion has also maintained its attachment to the 122nd Engineer Company (now the 124th Engineer Company) for the entirety of its existence. The Saluda unit is a separate company with its own specialization—initially light equipment, then combat support equipment, now horizontal construction—and more heavy-duty equipment, but being attached to the 122nd has meant that many leaders have passed between the Saluda and the line

⁵ South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1948), 43-44, 74; “Citizen Defenders of State and Nation,” *State* (SC), December 24, 1950.

⁶ 1947 was a huge year for South Carolina National Guard; 94 of its 116 units authorized by the War Department received federal recognition that year. South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1947), 27.

⁷ “Headquarters 122nd Engineer (Combat) Battalion, Report of Activities 1 July 1948 through 30 June 1949,” in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1949), 33.

⁸ Casey Lee, “Architectural Survey for the Edgefield Readiness Center,” (report prepared for South Carolina Army National Guard, Columbia, South Carolina, July 2016), 9; “Barnwell Complex,” accessed October 2018, <https://www.scguard.com/armories/barnwell-complex/>.

⁹ Department of the Army, “Federal Recognition report,” April 15, 1949, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Installation Historical Files, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1949), 33; South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1953), 26.

¹⁰ “General Orders Number 3,” January 23, 1953, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1953), 108-9.

units, and that there is a shared culture between the 122nd Engineer Battalion and the 122nd Engineer Company.¹¹

Lineage and Honors

The National Guard Bureau issued the first Official Statement of Lineage and Battle Honors for the 122nd Engineer Battalion (Combat) on March 19, 1956. Covering the recent history, the statement detailed the allotment of the battalion to the South Carolina National Guard on July 5, 1946; the organization and federal recognition of the Headquarters Company at Edgefield supported by additional units on March 13, 1947; and the redesignation as the 122nd Engineer Battalion (Combat) on February 1, 1953.¹²

An annex to the Official Statement of Lineage and Battle Honors details the history of the battalion prior to its organization as the 122nd Engineer Battalion. The origins outlined in this document are cited in other histories of the 122nd, yet should be understood most precisely as the deep history of the Camden unit—the battalion’s first Company D.¹³ The Camden lineage of the battalion begins with organization as the Camden Rifle Company—the 2nd regiment of the South Carolina Militia—in October of 1812. This Camden unit was one of the Volunteer Militia units that were authorized after the War of 1812 and became increasingly common during the antebellum period.¹⁴ The unit was mustered into Confederate States Army service in May of 1861 as Company E, 2nd Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers (also known as 2nd Palmetto Regiment); was redesignated Company M, 118th Infantry, an element of the 30th Division, or “Old Hickory,” during World War I; and was again inducted into federal service during World War II in September of 1940.¹⁵ The Official Statement specifies that although the battalion itself was not entitled to any campaign streamers, Company D in Camden was entitled to Campaign Silver Bands for the Indian Wars, Mexican War, Civil War, World War I, and World War II.

Although the history pertaining to the Camden unit ceased to be part of the battalion’s lineage and honors once the Camden unit was separated from the battalion in 1959, the Camden lineage was still included in the most recent history published of the battalion in 1988: Gwen Rhodes’s *South Carolina Army National*

¹¹ Chapman discusses the specialization and equipment of the Saluda unit extensively in his interview. Frank Chapman, interview with Josi Ward, October 9, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

¹² “General Orders Number 12,” March 19, 1956, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1956), 70-72.

¹³ The most recent history of the battalion is: Rhodes, *South Carolina*.

¹⁴ Michael Stauffer, *South Carolina’s Antebellum Militia* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1991), 15.

¹⁵ James Steele et al, “A Brief History of the South Carolina Army National Guard, From 1663 to Desert Storm,” (report prepared for South Carolina Army National Guard, Columbia, South Carolina, October 2013), 171.

Guard.¹⁶ This misattribution of the Camden company lineage to the battalion as a whole likely explains why, in 1997, Major Richard D. Leonard inquired of the National Guard Bureau historian: “I am requesting clarification as to the lineage of this battalion. . . . How [can] this battalion be traced to the Camden Rifle Company of 1812? Knowing that this battalion was not formed until 1946, how can this lineage be true?”¹⁷ The archives contain no record of whether Leonard received a response to his earnest inquiry from the National Guard Bureau. The answer to his question, however, is that the historical lineage outlined in the original Official Statement of Lineage and Battle Honors released for the battalion was based upon research into the line units as they stood when it was published on March 19, 1956. This lineage no longer pertained to the battalion once it no longer had an active presence in Camden.¹⁸

The National Guard Bureau has since released several subsequent Official Statements of Lineage and Honors, updated with minor changes. An updated Statement on May 1, 1970, announced that the Headquarters Company at Edgefield was entitled to campaign streamers for World War II in Tunisia, Sicily, Naples, Rome, North Apennines, and the Po Valley, and also entitled to the French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star.¹⁹ The most recent lineage and honors statement for the 122nd included a Campaign Participation Credit for the War on Terrorism and noted the additional decoration of the Valorous Unit Award for the battalion’s service in the Al Anbar province of Iraq in 2003.²⁰

Battalion Coat of Arms

Shortly after the 122nd Engineer Battalion received its Official Statement of Lineage and Battle Honors, the National Guard Bureau approved the battalion coat of arms and distributive insignia on August 28,

¹⁶ The archivist in the National Guard Bureau Historical Services offices confirmed the connection between a battalion’s lineage and the physical location of its current units. Derek R. Nestell, email message to author, November 16, 2018; the relocation of Company D from Camden to Saluda took place under the pentomic reorganization of April 1959: “Army National Guard Reorganization,” April 1, 1959, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1959), 12-13.

¹⁷ Richard D. Leonard, “Memo to HQ, 122nd Engineer Battalion,” February 11, 1997, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Lineage and Unit Honors, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁸ The chief of Military History clearly establishes the Official Statements of Lineage and Battle Honors as the ultimate authority in these matters: “The basic documents around which any complete unit history must be fabricated are the Official Statement of Lineage and Battle Honors or the Statement of Service and Honors prepared by the office of the Chief of Military History, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D. C. These documents are the result of extensive research and are the official statements of the unit’s origin, age, and general history.” Office of the Chief of Military History, “Unit Histories” August 7, 1957, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Battalion Crest/Insignia Correspondence, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁹ “Lineage and Honors, 122d Engineer Battalion,” May 1, 1970, attached to “Unit History, Headquarters,” Hanging Folder: 122 BN Histories, Folder: CO/A/1226th History, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

²⁰ Department of the Army, “Lineage and Honors: 122d Engineer Battalion,” as of December 20, 2011, accessed October 2018, <https://history.army.mil/html/forestruc/lineages/branches/eng/0122enbn.htm>.

1956.²¹ Edna B. Hungerpiller of Edgefield designed an original sketch of the crest, which incorporated a red castle in the upper right side of the crest, symbolizing engineers, and a bayonet on the lower left, to hearken the battalion's secondary mission to fight as infantry.²² The final design maintained the color and arrangement of the Hungerpiller sketch, but simplified its imagery significantly. A scarlet shield, denoting engineers, is overlaid by a blue strip with a crescent moon, which hearkens the state flag of South Carolina.²³ This crest was ultimately approved and used for the manufacture of the distinctive insignia.²⁴

The motto selected in May of 1956 was the Latin, "Ad Caput Venire." Headquarters chose the motto from several options submitted by the Quartermaster General, which included: Ich Dien (I serve); and Labore et Honore (With Labor and Honor).²⁵ Although the motto was originally translated as "To Bring To a Successful End by an Effort," an attentive Colonel in the battalion later corrected the translation to, "To Bring to an End [Successfully]."²⁶

The Constant Duties of the 122nd

Although many of the aspects of service in the 122nd Engineer Battalion are dictated by national politics and international conflicts, some duties are constant: trainings and drills, community projects, and active duty deployments during natural disasters. These are the duties that most directly affect the battalion's home communities, and that are most instrumental in developing a relationship of trust and respect between the guard and the public that it serves.

²¹ "General Orders Number 34," August 28, 1956, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1957), 58.

²² Edna B. Hungerpiller, Sketch of 122nd Engr Bn Crest, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Sketch of Original Unit Crest Design, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; "History of the 122d Engineer Battalion," December 1, 1954, Hanging Folder: 122 BN Histories, Folder: 122 Battalion Histories, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

²³ "122nd Engr Bn (Cbt) History," November 9, 1986, Hanging Folder: 122 BN Histories, Folder: 122 Battalion Histories, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

²⁴ John G. Goodlett, Jr., Chief, Heraldic Services Division, to Chief, National Guard Bureau, August 16, 1956, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Battalion Crest/Insignia Correspondence, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

²⁵ Captain George R. Wise to Unit Commanders 122nd, June 1, 1956, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Sketch of Original Unit Crest Design, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

²⁶ COL Joseph Jelinek to CO 122nd, March 1, 1971, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: Battalion Crest/Insignia Correspondence, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

Annual Trainings and Community Projects

For most of its history, the 122nd Engineer Battalion has trained engineers as generalists, that is, all members were trained in a wide range of skill-sets.²⁷ More often than not, the entire battalion would attend annual training as a unit, and line units would be trained in identical skills. A sample list of training focuses during annual training may have included: roadwork, culverts, explosives and demolitions, mine warfare, field fortifications, new equipment training, bridge classification, or water reconnaissance. The physical projects corresponding to those skills may have included: the construction of aluminum foot bridges, field fortifications or a Quonset hut; pouring, demolishing, or removing concrete slabs; or the widening, grading, and surfacing roads.²⁸ The result was ideally the development of a “Swiss Army knife on wheels,” in Brigadier General Brad Owens’ words: a corps of engineers who carried with them a diversity of skill-sets acquired through their military training as well as in their civilian lives.²⁹ Recalling one annual training in which the Saluda unit was called to remodel WWII barracks at the Leesburg WET site, former commander of the Saluda unit, Colonel (retired) Wayne Caughman, remembered: “I had a guy . . . that installed tile; I had an electrician from Lexington; I had Billy Derrick [whose] dad ran a plumbing and construction company . . . we utilized those folks and their skills to be the local supervisor on the electrician, the electrical, the drywall . . . so we had all the skill-sets in this unit.”³⁰ Other guardsmen interviewed for this history also confirmed the importance and utility of civilian skill-sets in training projects.³¹

Because of the tangible nature of engineering work, the training exercises for the 122nd have frequently been real-life projects that make a lasting impact on the local community. These projects not only benefited their home communities, but also brought a passion and sense of purpose to training exercises that could otherwise become routine. After a particularly successful annual training in 1970, the commander of Company B took note of this dynamic: “Men have more interest and enthusiasm in projects that are permanent improvements rather than projects that are disposed of after being completed.”³² Command Sergeant Major (retired) James Gunter had similar recollections:

²⁷ Since the reorganization to modular force units in 2008, training has become more specialized. See “Modular Force Reorganization: 2008-present” section below for further details.

²⁸ Sample lists pulled from After Action Reports filed in Hanging Folder: Annual Training AARs, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

²⁹ Stephen (Brad) Owens, interview with Rachel Morgan, October 17, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

³⁰ Wayne E. Caughman, interview with Josi Ward, October 4, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

³¹ See, for example, Owens, interview.

³² “AAR AT-70” June 14, 1970, Hanging Folder: Annual Training AARs, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

Probably the biggest memory I have and some of the most enjoyable times was doing a lot of community projects. . . . You really have a sense that you're doing something worthwhile that somebody can use. You're helping to better somebody's life. Rather than just go somewhere in the woods and set up and do something for two weeks and then at the end of two weeks just load up your equipment, come back home, and nobody can ever tell you've been there really, other than maybe a few holes in the ground.³³

Because of the strong and positive response to the community projects, trainings have long been designed to train men for large-scale projects through smaller-scale exercises. In Colonel (retired) Wayne Caughman's words: "The ball fields and community projects were proxies for building roads and airfields."³⁴ Projects were always done for public facilities, never private, and typically were the result of specific requests made by municipal officials to the Community Support Coordinator at the Office of Adjutant General.³⁵

The Office of the Adjutant General (TAG) began tracking the value of these "community support projects" in its annual reports in fiscal year 1986-1987, and the diversity of projects, as well as their estimated value, are impressive. Projects included the rebuilding of a 100-year old concrete bridge in Aiken; the construction of a timber trestle bridge in Graniteville; grading a mile-long stretch of road in Camden; building a firing range for SC Criminal Justice Academy; and the construction of an experimental pond at Waddell Mariculture Center.³⁶ During the years that TAG tracked these projects, engineering units in the state worked on dozens of universities and public schools, churches, hospitals, community centers, airports, sports fields, and public parks.³⁷ The estimated value of the community projects constructed by guard engineers during annual and weekend training in fiscal year 1990-1 was \$1.5 million; 1991-2, \$1.2 million; 1992-3, \$1.3 million.³⁸ Over the years, members of the 122nd have left

³³ James Gunter, interview with Josi Ward, October 4, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

³⁴ Caughman, interview.

³⁵ The Community Support Coordinator first began submitting reports to TAG in fiscal year 1986-1987, which may suggest that was the first year such a position existed. South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1989-1990* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1990), 26; Chapman, interview.

³⁶ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 68; South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1987-1988* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1988), 24-25.

³⁷ See, for example: South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1987-1988* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1988), 24-25; South Carolina, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1988-1989* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1989), 24-26; South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1989-1990* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1990), 26.

³⁸ South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1990-1991* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1991), 30; South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1991-1992* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1992), 29-30; South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1992-1993* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1993), 30-31.

a lasting and permanent mark on the public landscape of their local communities, a contribution that is virtually un-documented and unnoticed, except by those who directly took part in the projects.³⁹

State Active Duty

Disaster relief is perhaps the single most important service that the National Guard provides to the country, and is certainly the most well-known of its contributions. The need for this service is as urgent as it is constant. (During the time that this history was being written in September of 2018, members of the battalion deployed to Horry County to deliver wire-mesh barrier and sandbags for flood management following the devastation of Hurricane Florence.) State Active Duty deployments are typically no longer than two weeks, a time frame dictated more by the civilian duties of members of the guard than by the extent of damage following any particular storm. As Chief Todd Shealy explained, “The reason behind [the two-week time frame] is inherently that our employers are okay with soldiers being gone two weeks because they’re used to that for annual trainings and that type of thing, but any time you get past two weeks employers start getting antsy. And they need their employees back. So we try to go in and do what we can.”⁴⁰

Due to the constant nature of these deployments, the number of emergency responses that the 122nd engineers have participated in is too vast to enumerate here; what follows is a summary of some of the most significant disaster responses over the years. One of the earliest State Active Duty deployments on record for the 122nd was an unprecedented 24-inch snowfall in February of 1973 that left an estimated 16,000 people stranded in motels, armories, churches, and private homes. Members of the 122nd were called to provide emergency transport.⁴¹ In March of 1984, a tornado hit six counties in South Carolina and guardsmen from the 122nd Engineer Company out of Saluda provided heavy equipment such as forklifts to assist with debris clearance.⁴²

Perhaps the most vividly remembered storm to hit South Carolina was Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The Adjutant General characterized Hugo as “the most destructive and widespread natural disaster in the known history of South Carolina and the nation,” and reported that 6,300 South Carolina National Guard personnel assisted civil authorities during the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo during September and October

³⁹ Although it is outside of the scope of this report, it would be fascinating to map the projects of the 122nd in order to make visible the extent of their contribution to the state’s built landscape over the years.

⁴⁰ Todd Shealy, interview with Josi Ward, October 9, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

⁴¹ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 60, 129, 134.

⁴² Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 67-68.

1989.⁴³ The hurricane hit during Colonel (retired) Frank Chapman's final year as battalion commander, and he remembered it vividly:

We spent 22 days down in Charleston, cleaning up. We worked an 18-hour shift. Imagine this, now. You've got a whole bunch of people working an 18-hour shift for 22 days straight. You know how many complaints we got? None. . . . You know, what's the most important thing that any individual does in any job? It's not the money. It's the appreciation that you're doing something worthwhile. That's what most folks were doing. They were doing something that was worthwhile and they were being appreciated. So they were high, they were sky high.⁴⁴

Charleston residents Kathie and Paul Wilbur were so moved by the help they received that they sent a hand-written letter of thanks to the commanding officer of Company A: "The effects of Hugo was [sic] so discouraging. What a welcome sight to see the men of your unit show up in our neighborhood to clean up the trees, limbs, and debris lining our streets. . . . You should be proud of your members, they did an outstanding job."⁴⁵ Similar pride was taken in later deployments for Hurricane Bonnie in 1998 and Hurricane Floyd in 1999.⁴⁶ The 122nd engineers also planned a relief mission to Georgetown following a fire in September of 2013 that destroyed part of the waterfront business district. The engineers activated in November to assist in removal of debris (brick, metal, wood, appliances) that had fallen into the water.⁴⁷

The 122nd Engineer Battalion has also responded to emergencies outside of the state, thanks to an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) partnership that creates a reciprocal relationship between states with the understanding that home state will reimburse the expenses of out-of-state units.⁴⁸ The battalion deployed to Wake County and Harnett County, North Carolina, following Hurricane Fran in September of 1996. Their mission was to provide engineer support to recover the public school system from storm damage and return children to school promptly. Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Blair noted that the deployment across state lines "was symbolic of a new and growing cooperation between the governors of the southeastern states to use the National Guard in regional contingencies."⁴⁹ The entire

⁴³ South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1989-1990* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1990), 8.

⁴⁴ Chapman, interview.

⁴⁵ Kathie and Paul Wilbur to Commanding Officer, Company A, undated [1989], Envelope: 1990s, 122nd Engineer Battalion Photographic Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

⁴⁶ "Operation Order: 98-9 Activation for Hurricane Bonnie," August 25, 1998, Hanging Folder: State Active Duty, Folder: SAD/Hurricane Bonnie, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; and "Permanent Orders 92-16 thru 92-22, 13 Sept 1999," Hanging Folder: State Active Duty, Folder: State Duty Orders, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

⁴⁷ "OPORD 14-003 (Operation Georgetown Relief)," November 4, 2013, and CPT Land to SGT Spencer, "FW: Georgetown Recon," October 22, 2013, Hanging Folder: State Active Duty, Folder: Georgetown Relief November 2013, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

⁴⁸ Shealy, interview.

⁴⁹ Robert C. Blair, Jr. LTC Commanding, "Memorandum: Hurricane Fran," 21 August 1996, Hanging Folder: State Active Duty, Folder: Hurricane Fran, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

battalion and “just about every piece of equipment,” also deployed to West Virginia following a flood in July of 2001 to clear mud and debris around Bluefield and Welch where families who had lived along the riverbanks had lost virtually everything.⁵⁰ More recently, the Edgefield unit deployed to Puerto Rico in September of 2017 following Hurricane Maria. During its extended deployment, the unit cleared 24 miles of roadways in order to allow emergency vehicles to pass and infrastructure repair to begin.⁵¹

Facing New Threats at Home and Abroad: 1959-1970

During the 1950s and 1960s, under Adjutants General Dozier and Pinckney, the South Carolina National Guard kept pace with national priorities by training the guardsmen with specialty skills, and further, by improving basic training. This was in keeping with directives after the Korean War to strengthen the reserve components of the American military and to further prepare for the long-term threats of the Cold War. Legislation passed in the early 1950s, including the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952, required basic training of guardsmen to take place on active army installations. For the first time, individual guardsmen entered active duty for extended training periods.⁵² In the early 1960s, South Carolina joined ten other states in a pilot program that combined four drill periods into a single weekend—eight hours of training on both Saturday and Sunday—in an attempt to create time for more thorough training and increase participation in field exercises. Although the National Guard Bureau did not mandate weekend drill until 1966, all South Carolina guardsmen were “weekend warriors” by 1965.⁵³

The Pentomic Division

The implementation of the “pentomic” divisional structure in April of 1959 furthered this focus on strategies that would allow guard units to better respond to nuclear threats. The “pentomic” divisional structure replaced the earlier “triangular” structure, which had been the army’s model in World War I and Korea. Now, instead of a three-tiered structure, divisions would be broken into five tiers: “companies consisted of five platoons, five companies made up a ‘battle group,’ and each division had five battle groups.”⁵⁴ A pentomic battle group was thus smaller than a traditional infantry regiment, although larger than a single battalion. Because its incremental pieces were smaller, the division could more readily respond to threats from any direction, and exploit gaps in enemy’s lines.

⁵⁰ Owens, interview; “State Active Duty Personnel Report, 16-31 July 01,” undated, Hanging Folder: State Active Duty, Folder: West Virginia Flood SAD, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

⁵¹ “Puerto Rican Civilians Grateful for Rock Hill,” *Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), October 9, 2017; “SC National Guard Troops Heading to Puerto Rico,” *State* (SC), September 28, 2017.

⁵² Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 239.

⁵³ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 239; Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 55; Steele et al, “Brief History,” 203-4.

⁵⁴ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 244.

The reorganization under the pentomic division in 1959 was the first major reorganization that the 122nd Engineer Battalion had seen since its federal recognition in 1947. The pentomic reorganization resulted in significant changes across the South Carolina National Guard, but Adjutant General Pinckney hastened to report: “All personnel were retained and all existing armories utilized. No communities lost units or personnel. Organization areas were made more compact to provide better training and administration.”⁵⁵ For the 122nd, the 1959 reorganization removed the battalion’s medical detachment, added an additional line unit, and shifted the armory locations to: Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) at Edgefield; Company A at Johnston; Company B at McCormick; Company C at Warrentonville; and Companies D and E at Saluda. During this period more armories were built for the battalion units. Armory buildings designed by Heyward S. Singley were completed at McCormick and Saluda in 1960; and an armory was constructed at Johnston in 1962.⁵⁶

The same year as the reorganization, the 122nd hosted the first “surprise” mobilization alert of any guard unit in the State. Operation Gizmo, which began on October 10, 1959, was a field training exercise in which the entire battalion mobilized against a theoretical nuclear attack. Upon departing the Edgefield Armory, they ran through the set-up of an entire camp along the Savannah River for a four-day mobilization. Describing the purpose of the exercise, Warrant Officer 5 (retired) Elliott Powell focused on the basics: “What it tried to teach you is to break your responsibilities down, because if you go to any deployment, if you stay awake for five days, you’re no good. So they tried to set up where you will learn to delegate your responsibilities down, so you get your sleep, and everybody gets the right amount of sleep, or the opportunity of it.”⁵⁷ The exercise also allowed the surrounding Edgefield community to see what a disciplined and well-trained mobilization looked like. When the unit loaded up and departed the Edgefield Armory, residents of Edgefield reportedly waved goodbye and cheered.⁵⁸ Praising the exercise, John H. Gibson wrote in *Army* magazine, “This is the action and swift reaction that can win battles in an era when speed dominates the battlefield and nuclear weapons set the pace. In their concept of training, officers and men of the 122nd Engineer Battalion have substituted surprise for routine, action for words.”⁵⁹

⁵⁵ South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1959), 6.

⁵⁶ “McCormick Complex,” accessed October 2018, <https://www.scgard.com/armories/mccormick-complex/>; “Saluda Complex,” accessed October 2018, <https://www.scgard.com/armories/saluda-complex/>; “Johnston Complex,” accessed October 2018, <https://www.scgard.com/armories/johnston/>.

⁵⁷ Elliott Powell, interview with Josi Ward, October 5, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

⁵⁸ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 54.

⁵⁹ John H. Gibson, *Army* (April 1960), excerpted in “Company A—Unit History,” December 8, 1986, Hanging Folder: 122 BN Histories, Folder: Co. A/1226th History, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

Selected Reserve Force

Although the 1960s brought chaos at home—much of which the 122nd would be called into active duty to contain—the decade was also the beginning of the longest and most stable era in the battalion’s history. As a result of the Berlin Crisis in October of 1961, in which large portions of the National Guard were mobilized including two battalions from South Carolina, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara instituted a wave of reforms that again strove to increase flexibility and efficiency of response to mobilization. Undoing the pentomic division and returning to a more traditional triangular division, McNamara’s new “Reorganization Objectives Army Division” (ROAD) resulted in significant changes for the 122nd. Most significantly, the reorganization in South Carolina eliminated the 51st Division, which had been the largest parent division in the state.⁶⁰ The 122nd was relieved from assignment to the 51st Division on April 1, 1963.⁶¹

Following its detachment from the 51st Division, the 122nd Engineer Battalion underwent a series of incremental reorganizations before it settled into what would become its longest-standing structure. In 1963, Companies D and E, both located at Saluda, were combined and reassigned as Company E, 51st Quartermaster Battalion.⁶² The following year the Saluda company was redesignated as 122nd Engineering Company (Light Equipment), which was a separate unit attached to the 122nd Engineer Battalion.⁶³ That same year, Company B of the 122nd relocated from McCormick to Barnwell.⁶⁴ In 1965 a final major reorganization took place which moved units within and among armories and created a new Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) detachment at Johnston—the Communications, Equipment, and Medical (CEM) section of the battalion. The resulting structure of the 122nd was: HHC-Detachment at Edgefield; Communications, Equipment, and Medical (CEM) section HHC at Johnston; Company A at McCormick; Company B at Barnwell; Company C at Warrentonville; and the 122nd Engineering Company (LE) at Saluda.⁶⁵ The addition of a fourth line unit in 1967, Company D at Batesburg, was the final

⁶⁰ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 250-255.

⁶¹ Department of the Army, “Lineage and Honors: 122d Engineer Battalion,” as of December 20, 2011, accessed October 2018, <https://history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/eng/0122enbn.htm>.

⁶² “General Orders Number 82,” July 10, 1963, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1963), 133-4.

⁶³ “General Orders Number 43,” April 22, 1964, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1964), 165.

⁶⁴ “General Orders Number 45,” April 28, 1964, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1964), 167.

⁶⁵ “General Orders Number 137,” November 1, 1965, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1966), 126-127; Warrant Officer 5 (retired) Elliott Powell suggested in his interview that the reorganization of Johnston as a Headquarters detachment was a simple question of numbers: HHC had only 38 people and needed more to maintain its federal recognition, so the units were combined, see: Powell, interview.

reorganization of the period.⁶⁶ Following this series of reorganizations, the 122nd settled into its longest, most stable era.

The 122nd was also designated as a selected reserve force (SRF) in 1965, becoming one of 17 National Guard units in South Carolina to receive that assignment. In the annual report that year, Adjutant General Pinckney explained, “The continuing military build-up in Viet Nam [sic], with the resultant decrease of the active army’s strategic reserve, was cause for constant concern because of the ‘on again, off again’ possibilities of a guard call-up. Then in October came the announcement to organize a selected reserve force from within the reserve components.”⁶⁷ The SRF units were authorized 100% strength and 100% equipment, which led to the reorganization of units and reallocation of equipment to prioritize the SRF units. While lower priority units were sometimes left with “less than actually required to conduct meaningful training,” those that were designated SRF, including the 122nd, were receiving the best that the South Carolina National Guard could provide. The designation required additional work from guardsmen, as trainings for SRF units were doubled to twice a month—the second drill was typically focused on civil disturbance training—and units took two tactical training tests each year.⁶⁸ In 1968 all of the 122nd units, with the exception of newly added Company D of Batesburg, were upgraded to Advanced Unit training. In 1969, once the Batesburg unit had achieved 70% Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) qualification for engineers (the unit had been a signal unit prior to its attachment to the 122nd), it too was upgraded to Advanced Unit training.⁶⁹

Civil Disturbances

As tensions surrounding the Vietnam War increased and the civil rights movement gained momentum, the National Guard was called to make use of its long-standing (and increasingly focused) civil disturbance training. Between 1970 and 1973, the National Guard was called more than 200 times. In South Carolina, the 122nd was called to four separate protests that escalated to dangerous levels.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ “General Order Number 195,” December 19, 1967, in *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1968), 122.

⁶⁷ South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1966), 8.

⁶⁸ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 45; Steven Smith, interview with Josi Ward, October 9, 2018, transcript, SCARNG Archives and Environmental Server, McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC.

⁶⁹ Correspondence between 122nd COs and TAG, August 5, 1968 - May 29, 1969, Hanging Folder: Battalion History/Crest/Lineages, Folder: 122 BN Correspondence, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

⁷⁰ Ruth Renee Ballard, “‘Calling Out the Guard’: Perspectives on the South Carolina National Guard During Three Civil Disturbances 1968-1970” (master’s thesis, University of South Carolina, 2004), 1-3.

The first, and arguably most grisly of these events was the protest commonly referred to as the “Orangeburg Massacre,” which began rather benignly but escalated quickly. The protest started peacefully when a group of civil rights advocates from South Carolina State College, who had been calling for the resignation of their college president, arranged a sit-in at a segregated bowling alley on February 5, 1968. Following arrests of many of the participants on the first night, 350 protesters arrived the second night, and tensions with local police began to mount. Governor Robert McNair feared a riot would ensue and called 250 members of the South Carolina National Guard into active duty on the third night, February 7. Those mobilized included the entire 122nd Engineer Battalion. The arrival of guardsmen added fuel to the protestors fire, and the ensuing conflict resulted in local patrolmen firing into the crowd of African American students. Stationed at the perimeter, the guardsmen did not intervene. Twenty-seven students were wounded that day and three died.⁷¹ The event was an embarrassment for the guard, and pointed to unresolved questions about the guard’s role in the presence of local law enforcement. The tragedy did eventually result in the state legislature passing a law called the Zeigler Amendment, which authorized active duty guardsmen to make arrests, thus empowering them to take a more active role when necessary.⁷²

The battalion was again called to active duty from April 28 to 30, 1969, when a riot broke out at Voorhees College, a historically black college in Denmark, South Carolina. The conflict began when the administration denied a series of demands made by students, such as the demand to include black studies as part of the college curriculum.⁷³ When students responded in protest, the administration temporarily closed the college. Around 200 students stayed on campus, looted the dining hall, and broke into a dormitory; guardsmen were called to assist local law enforcement in clearing the Administration-Library Building and Sciences Building.⁷⁴ Members of the 122nd arrived to Voorhees College on April 28 to perform reconnaissance and clear buildings of unauthorized personnel. Roughly 60 members of the battalion stayed on patrol duty until April 30, by which point the faculty had agreed to meet most all of the student demands.⁷⁵

⁷¹ “Orangeburg Clash Top SC News Story,” *State* (SC), December 25, 1968.

⁷² Steele et al, “Brief History,” 200-201; Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 57, 122.

⁷³ “Faculty Agrees to Most Demands,” *State* (SC), April 30, 1969.

⁷⁴ “Voorhees Rebels Vacate Buildings,” *State* (SC), April 30, 1969; “Thud of Boots, Clacking Rifle Bolts Break Silence,” *State* (SC), April 30, 1969.

⁷⁵ “AAR—State Duty 28-30 April 1969,” May 19, 1969, and “AAR—State Duty” May 12, 1969, Hanging Folder: Civil Disturbance AARs, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; “Faculty Agrees to Most Demands,” *State* (SC), April 30, 1969.

Only a month after Voorhees College, in May of 1969, the Saluda unit received call to Charleston where a strike of non-professional, African American workers at two public hospitals resulted in more than a dozen marches, a city under curfew, and three months of negotiations.⁷⁶ In the annual report that year, the Adjutant General wrote, “Since the first of July last year we have had elements of our guard ordered to state duty for civil disturbances in ten instances, at six locations, involving 5,989 officers and men. The most sensitive of these duties and of the longest duration was in Charleston. Here we had troops almost continuously from the 29th of March through the 3rd of July, totaling eight battalions, with 5,000 troops.”⁷⁷ Culminating in a Mother’s Day march attended by more than 10,000 protestors, the strike negotiations continued until late June, during which time guardsmen provided security for public utilities, the police station and the South Carolina Medical College, and enforced curfew throughout the city.⁷⁸

The final major civil disturbance that that resulted in active duty for the 122nd occurred on the campus of the University of South Carolina in Columbia when two different anti-war protests occurred in less than a week. The entire battalion was mobilized from May 11 to 18, 1970, and made up part of the 1,000 guardsmen assigned to USC that week.⁷⁹ During the first demonstration, guardsmen arrested and removed 41 students who were occupying the Russell House. Following a second demonstration in which students took over and vandalized the University’s Administration Building, members of the 122nd secured roadblocks at all entrances and exits to the university, and guarded water supply installations.⁸⁰ Recalling the mobilization, former member of the Headquarters Company Bill Connolly described the chaos: “We had to guard the water tanks because someone tried to poison Columbia’s water supply. . . . It was an awful scene on campus. . . . We patrolled the entire campus and it was not uncommon for us to be pelted with cherry bombs shot by slingshot.”⁸¹ This dangerous mobilization was also one of the last civil disturbances of this era that the battalion was called to patrol.

⁷⁶ “Charleston Caught in Storm Tide,” *State* (SC), May 1, 1969; South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1969), 96.

⁷⁷ South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1969), 9.

⁷⁸ Ballard, “Calling Out the Guard,” 18-21.

⁷⁹ “Company A—Unit History,” December 8, 1986, Hanging Folder: 122 BN Histories, Folder: Co. A/1226th History, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; “Costs at USC Total \$100,000,” *State* (SC), May 15, 1970.

⁸⁰ “AAR: Civil Disturbance at USC” May 21, 1970, and “Final AAR-RCS ARNG B-98,” May 22, 1970, Hanging Folder: Civil Disturbance AARs, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; “Campus Relatively Quiet,” *State* (SC), May 14, 1970.

⁸¹ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 58-59, 125.

Total Force Policy: 1970-2000

The years that followed the Vietnam War were a “a period of decline and resurgence” for the National Guard and the American military more broadly.⁸² The cultural aftershocks of the war, and the criticism that the military faced, led to public demands for reduced defense spending nationwide, for force reduction, and for the end of the draft. What resulted came to be called the Total Force Policy. Following personnel cuts in active army units, Total Force Policy called for the reserve branches of the military to bear a more direct responsibility for national defense than they had previously. Without the draft, reserves became the primary means to reinforce army units in any emergency. This new policy required that closer, more functional ties be built between the regular army and the National Guard. It demanded increased focus on mobilization readiness training. It required a necessary upgrade of the technology that the guard used to match unit equipment inventories with equipment shortages throughout the guard. And it resulted in the development of roundout brigades—reserve units that were permanently assigned to active duty divisions for training, and which would be ready to “roundout” their numbers immediately in the event of an emergency.⁸³

Roundout Brigade Program

The driving idea behind the roundout brigade was two-fold. As envisioned by General Creighton W. Abrams, army chief of staff at the time, the program promised to increase the number of active army divisions, and also to repair the army’s ties to the American public. The public criticism of the Vietnam War and its aftermath, “convinced Abrams that the army should never again go to war without the full support of the American people.”⁸⁴ It was clear to Abrams that the most direct link between the active military and the American public was the National Guard. From that premise, the National Guard Roundout Brigade was conceived. Three South Carolina battalions were chosen to participate in the program in July 1975, including the 122nd Engineer Battalion, which became affiliated with the 27th Airborne Engineer Battalion of Fort Bragg.⁸⁵

As the roundout program was beginning, South Carolina’s National Guard was taking steps to increase its technological readiness in ways that would allow it to most fully support its high-priority combat battalions. In October of 1974, the state implemented the Division Logistics System (DLOGS) as method for tracking supplies. This early use of computer technology (IBM and UNIVAC equipment) automated the tracking of supplies and equipment. A former officer of the 122nd Headquarters Company recalled,

⁸² Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 271.

⁸³ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 277-9.

⁸⁴ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 280.

⁸⁵ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 61-62.

“going to the new system was a lifesaver for the full-timers.”⁸⁶ The computer system enabled immediate redistribution of weapons and supplies wherever and whenever needed, which allowed the guard to have nearly all of the high-priority combat battalions ready for early deployment, and with all essential equipment, within a year.⁸⁷

The 122nd Engineer Battalion was chosen to become a roundout brigade in the early years of the program, and the affiliation shaped the next decades of the battalion’s training and service. Following President Ronald Reagan’s election in 1981, defense spending to fight Soviet threats in the Middle East, Africa, and Central America increased substantially. This additional funding expanded the roundout program and led to a prioritization of overseas deployments for training (ODTs), which served the larger anti-communist mission while also meeting the training priorities of the roundout program.⁸⁸ Regarding the surge of ODTs in the 1980s and 1990s, Brigadier General Brad Owens recalled: “The idea back in those days was that if we went into these underdeveloped, third-world countries and we provided infrastructure support, primarily in the roads and in schools and that sort of thing, that we could show the American goodwill, that we could provide that humanitarian support and we would become a partner of choice.”⁸⁹ The 122nd engineers participated extensively in Central American missions that served as both training exercises and humanitarian support missions focused on road building and infrastructure repair.

Overseas Deployments for Training

The era of ODTs for the 122nd Engineer Battalion began in 1985 and continued throughout the 1990s. Early on, the missions related to a National Guard road building program, *Fuertes Caminos* or Blazing Trails, which began in 1985 and included the construction of a 17-mile section of road on the western coast of the Azuero Peninsula in Panama.⁹⁰ Over the next decade, 122nd units expanded the road building operations and also worked on the construction of school buildings, medical clinics, infrastructural improvements, and bridges.

The ODTs were an important part of American policy to contain communist threats abroad by developing a strong American presence in countries facing communist expansion and authoritarian regimes. But the ODTs also increased in frequency because their utility back home was equally important. Colonel

⁸⁶ Rhodes, *South Carolina*, 61.

⁸⁷ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 278-9.

⁸⁸ The army established a National Training Center at Fort Irwin in 1983, and in 1985 the ARNG training schedule required every roundout unit to train at Fort Irwin every three years, which the 122nd did at least once, circa 2000. Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 286-295; Gunter, interview.

⁸⁹ Owens, interview.

⁹⁰ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 295-6.

(retired) Frank Chapman took over as battalion commander of the 122nd in May of 1985, at a time when strength was down. One of his charges as commander was recruitment: “We ultimately ended up with something we called Operation 1,200, and that’s where our goal was to get 1,200 people in the 122nd Engineer Battalion. And we did. And then we kept our turnover rate—attrition rate—down below 5% most of the time, which was pretty awesome.” What drew new recruits and retained existing enlisted was simple, in Chapman’s mind: members of the 122nd were having fun. “The goal was to always be combat ready, be proficient in our mission, and do exciting things that caused people to want to be a part.” One conversation stayed with him from this era, in which a fellow guardsman, sitting beside him in a Jeep in Panama, said to him, “Colonel, I’m gonna stay one more year, just to see what we’re gonna do next year.”⁹¹ They were exciting times for the soldiers of the 122nd.

Preparation for the ODTs started with specialized mobilization training back home. In July of 1987, the entire battalion participated in MODRE training exercises that prepared them for their upcoming ODT mission by “examining alert notification procedures, home station mobilization processing, [and] completion of ODT requirements for overseas training.”⁹² In the following years, battalion units cycled through REMOBE training as well, an exercise designed to “examine and correct deficiencies noted in preparatory planning, alert notification procedures, mobilization procedures at home station, and mobilization movement and load plans.”⁹³ These additional mobilization readiness training sessions would continue for at least the next decade, although most years only select units of the battalion would participate, based on their upcoming ODTs.⁹⁴

In addition to the specialized mobilization training, former battalion members also recall this era being a time when the battalion professionalized and began to take its duties on with increased discipline and seriousness. Colonel (retired) Steven Smith attributed the change to Colonel (retired) Frank Chapman, whose leadership as company commander of Saluda from 1974-1977 and battalion commander from 1985-1989 introduced major changes in expectations for the soldiers: “Frank had been active duty, he had been to Vietnam, he had commanded a company at Fort Jackson . . . he made people soldier that had never soldiered before. I used to tell people that before Frank came along, we’d go to summer camp in the

⁹¹ Chapman, interview.

⁹² South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1987-1988* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1988), 129.

⁹³ In 1990, HHC and CSE both participated in REMOBE exercises. South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1989-1990* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1990), 60-61.

⁹⁴ For example, in October 1991 Company D received preparation for overseas replacement (POR) training in advance of an ODT in Honduras, while CSE received MODRE training in January of 1992. South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1991-1992* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1992), 66.

summer. After Frank came along we went to annual training.”⁹⁵ Other interviewees, including Chief Todd Shealy, concurred with this assessment of Chapman as a commander whose leadership shaped the battalion’s work ethic and culture for years to come.⁹⁶

The Saluda unit, 122nd Engineer Company (CSE), was the first to be sent on ODT when they trained in Panama and Ecuador as part of Blazing Trails in 1986 and 1987.⁹⁷ Chief Todd Shealy was platoon leader of the CSE unit at the time, and described the work: “We ran a rock quarry and hauled rock to build roads . . . it was starting up the road project where we were connecting all the Central American countries. Over the years we continued that infrastructure-building program all the way through Central America.”⁹⁸ The following year, in 1988, the entire battalion save for the Saluda unit returned to Central America for a Blazing Trails mission, this time working in Honduras and Ecuador.⁹⁹ The Adjutant General’s annual report that year boasted that 610 personnel of the 122nd Engineer Battalion cycled through Blazing Trails training that year.¹⁰⁰ In order to complete such long-term projects, separate units would be sent for 21-day cycles, but a handful of officers from the Headquarters Company would remain abroad for the duration of the training cycle, anywhere from 3 to 6 months.¹⁰¹

Later Central American ODTs expanded out from the original Blazing Trails mission, although a focus on road building remained central to many missions, given the 122nd engineers’ skill-sets and equipment. The Headquarters Company and Company D participated in an ODT in Honduras in 1992, which Brigadier General Brad Owens described in detail:

We were basically raising the road from the riverbed that frequently flooded about halfway up the mountain ridge. It was very dangerous, but it was it was a wonderful project for us. . . . We moved 118 pieces of culvert pipe—concrete culvert pipe—sling-loaded by a Blackhawk over a 21-day period. We went into that road project two weeks behind schedule and we came out after 21 days two weeks ahead of schedule.¹⁰²

In 1994, the 122nd sent units to Panama from May to October to build a high school in Pedasi; add a classroom wing to a school building in Sabana Grande; and provide major upgrades to a school building

⁹⁵ Smith, interview.

⁹⁶ Shealy, interview.

⁹⁷ The dates of the 1986 ODT were February 15 to May 31, 1986, see: South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1985-1986* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1986), 95; The dates of the 1987 ODT were listed as classified, see: South Carolina, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1987), 119.

⁹⁸ Shealy, interview.

⁹⁹ Gunter, interview.

¹⁰⁰ South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1987-1988* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1988), 120.

¹⁰¹ Powell, interview; Chapman, interview.

¹⁰² South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1991-1992* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1992), 57-8; Owens, interview.

in Llano de Piedra.¹⁰³ The next year, the battalion built a CMU-block high school with latrine and playground in Double Head Cabbage, Belize. Units rotated in and out of the project over four rotations of 15 days apiece from February to April, 1995.¹⁰⁴ In 1997, the battalion returned to Panama to construct and repair selected schools in the vicinity of La Chorrera. Detachment 1 HHC and Companies A, B, and C each deployed for 16 days between January and April.¹⁰⁵ That same year the battalion returned to Panama to construct El Coco School and a road approaching it, and to do extensive repairs and upgrades at the Las Ollas Arriba School and Medical Clinic.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the 122nd participated in the Beyond Horizon Mission (which earned a visit from President Clinton) in Honduras, in which Company A was deployed to Ganadero in February of 1999 to work on the Estero Del Indio Clinic, El Porvenir School, Bridge to La Campa, and Quebrada de Yoro Clinic.¹⁰⁷ Recalling those years, Colonel (retired) Frank Chapman recalled realizing when talking to army soldiers that the reservists were busier than the active duty soldiers: “They didn’t like it too much. But we did a lot of stuff.”¹⁰⁸

Although the Central American ODTs dominated the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, and stand out most vividly in the memories of former guardsmen who participated in them, the 122nd also traveled to other parts of the globe during this time. Between 1986 and 1989, the battalion travelled to Anchorage, Alaska, four different times in order to renovate scout armories in various remote villages in the state.¹⁰⁹ And in 1995, members of the 122nd travelled to Albania, where they repaired a dilapidated hospital that had been built under the communist regime in the 1950s.¹¹⁰ Some ODTs have even continued into the 21st century, as was the case in March and April of 2011 when 56 soldiers from Edgefield’s Forward Support

¹⁰³ “Team Longstreet: Cosecha Amistad 94-Panama, May-Oct 1994,” Hanging Folder: Overseas Training Missions, Folder: Panama ‘94 ODT, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁰⁴ “USARSO OPOD 95-03, ODT 95 BH-1/2 (U)” November 7, 1994; “122nd Engineer Battalion – AAR – Second Rotation,” undated; and “Double Head Cabbage High School” field drawings, December 13, 1994, Hanging Folder: Belize-Honduras ODT/AT Missions, Folder: 1st Rotation Co A (- Det) 4-19 Feb 95, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁰⁵ “Oplan 97-01 (Team 122),” October 20, 1996, and “After Action Report Initial Leader Recon, Team 122 (122 Engineer Battalion) – Panama” August 16, 1996, Hanging Folder: Overseas Training Missions, Folder: Panama ODT Mission 1997, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC. See also: Press release, “LaChorre,” undated, Hanging Folder: Press Releases/Newspaper Clippings, Folder: Press Release, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁰⁶ “Fact Sheet: Overseas Deployment for Training, 1997 Panama,” July 9, 1996, Hanging Folder: Overseas Training Missions, Folder: Panama ODT Mission 1997, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁰⁷ “Annual Training OPOD 9-1,” February 18, 1999, and “President Clinton Visits Honduras,” *Beyond the Horizon Mission Plus*, March 11, 1999, Hanging Folder: Overseas Training Missions, Folder: Honduras 1999, 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁰⁸ Chapman, interview.

¹⁰⁹ South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Report 1988-1989* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1989), 128; Chapman, interview.

¹¹⁰ Gunter, interview.

Command (FSC) company trained in El Salvador to work on four project sites: Chamoco Project, Aqua Aqrias (sic) Project, Tepititan Project, and Caminos Project.¹¹¹

In the midst of its steady rotation of ODTs in the 1990s, the 122nd also went through several minor reorganizations in September of 1993 that renamed the Barnwell unit Detachment 1 Company A (from Company B), renamed the Batesburg unit Company B (from Company D), and moved Company C from Warrentville to Graniteville.¹¹² Thus, the new locations of the 122nd following this shuffle were: Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC)-Detachment 1 at Edgefield; Detachment 1 HHC at Johnston; Company A-Detachment 1 at McCormick; Detachment 1 Company A at Barnwell; Company B at Batesburg; Company C at Graniteville; and 122 Engineer Company (CSE) at Saluda. This structure remained in place until 2008, with minor changes. A detachment to Company B was briefly organized in Eastover from 2002-2004.¹¹³ In August of 2004, when the Eastover detachment was removed from the battalion, the Johnston detachment also consolidated with the Headquarters Company at Edgefield.¹¹⁴

Wartime Deployments: 2003-2014

Desert Storm was the National Guard's first opportunity to test the effectiveness of the Total Force Policy. Nearly 400 National Guard units were ordered to active duty—the most since the Korean War—and the Gulf War was remembered as a “resounding success” for the guard. Public support for the war was widespread, an opinion that was attributed partially to the extensive use of reserve troops. However, none of the roundout brigades—long anticipated to be the guard's strongest additions to army forces—were deployed. Nor were any units of the 122nd mobilized. After Desert Storm, the roundout program was terminated.¹¹⁵

The remainder of the 1990s brought significant budget cuts and reductions that meant the National Guard finished the decade a much smaller force than it had begun.¹¹⁶ One powerful way that these cuts are

¹¹¹ “Historical Record of the 122nd Engineer Battalion for Training Year 2011,” January 12, 2012, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹¹² “NGB-ARF-II Organizational Authority Number 228-93,” September 15, 1993, Binder: NGB Organizational Authority Approvals, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹¹³ “NGB-ARF-T Organizational Authority Number 131-02, Reorganization of South Carolina ARNG Units,” July 30, 2002, Folder: 122 EN BN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹¹⁴ “NGB-ARF-T Organizational Authority Number 160-04, Reorganization of 122nd Engineer Battalion,” August 12, 2004, Folder: 122 EN BN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹¹⁵ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 329-330, 388.

¹¹⁶ Doubler, *I Am the Guard*, 367.

visible to a researcher interested in National Guard history is in the evisceration of the *Annual Reports* of the Adjutant General of South Carolina. For decades these reports had been fine-grained, thorough documents that included lengthy letters from the Adjutant General; logs of the force strengths of all South Carolina National Guard units; documentation of all significant reorganizations and redesignations; and training logs and locations. In fiscal year 1994-5, the reports were restructured to *Annual Accountability Reports* and became unpaginated, unbound printouts that contained no specific information about individual units, no general orders, no training schedules. As if to apologize for the noteworthy lack of information in the reports, the *Annual Accountability Report* for fiscal year 1996-7 included this disclaimer: “During these times of dwindling funding resources and mandated personnel downsizing, the Office of the Adjutant General faces challenges to maintain readiness and accomplish the state and federal missions. Fiscal responsibility, getting the job done, and taking advantage of every possible opportunity to increase agency efficiency are the major program goals and the principal focus of our efforts.”¹¹⁷

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The first wartime deployment of the 122nd Engineer Battalion began on March 3, 2003. The 122nd was part of the first wave of American forces to arrive in Iraq; the 122nd was the first South Carolina National Guard unit sent.¹¹⁸ At that point it was the largest single-day deployment the state guard had seen since World War II (a record that has since been surpassed by the 218th deployment to Afghanistan in 2007).¹¹⁹ Assigned to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment for the duration of the deployment, 530 soldiers from the 122nd were joined by 30 volunteer soldiers from the 178th Engineer Battalion.¹²⁰ The soldiers initially deployed to Fort Stewart, where they received additional training before departing to the Middle East. Brigadier General Brad Owens, the battalion commander during the deployment, recalled, “We spent about 20 days down there doing individual weapons qualifications, running everybody through the gas chamber, running specified missions, physical training, and that sort of thing, getting their equipment up to speed.”¹²¹ Their orders called for a year deployment with a possible additional year, and indeed members of the 122nd began returning to South Carolina exactly one year later in March of 2004 with the remaining to follow over the next three months.¹²²

¹¹⁷ South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Accountability Report 1996-1997* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 1997), no pagination.

¹¹⁸ Owens, interview.

¹¹⁹ “SC Guard Sends 500 Troops to Gulf,” *State* (SC), March 4, 2003; “SC has played big role in Afghanistan,” *State* (SC), February 9, 2017; Owens, interview.

¹²⁰ “SC Guard Unit Adapts to New Role,” *State* (SC), August 31, 2003.

¹²¹ Owens, interview.

¹²² “Graniteville Armory to Welcome its Troops,” *Augusta Chronicle* (GA), March 2, 2004.

While in Iraq, the 122nd was located at several bases west and south of Baghdad, although the majority were at Al Asad Airbase, which Owens described as one of the safer bases in Iraq. Units also rotated into Rifles Base, where the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment headquarters were located, and eventually into Al Qa'im, on the Syrian border. By the end of the year, the battalion had grown beyond the original 530 soldiers from South Carolina to include more than 800 engineers. And they “covered an area about the size of Texas,” which encompassed territory west of Baghdad in Fallujah and Ramadi, the western desert to Jordan and Syria, and the southern desert down to Saudi Arabia.¹²³

The battalion’s duties ranged from humanitarian projects to combat projects to the engineering projects that they were known for. “We are the most diverse engineer battalion in the army—minefields to ball fields,” Brigadier General Brad Owens said at the time.¹²⁴ Looking back, Owens elaborated: “It was very asymmetric. In one town you were fearing for your life and in another town we were building soccer goals for the kids.” A vital part of the battalion’s work while deployed was to build trust with locals in the region, which was helped enormously by their mission to focus on infrastructural and humanitarian projects. Owens recalls an early observation upon arriving to Iraq:

The good thing was that the majority of the Iraqi people were not overly anxious about us being there as being occupiers . . . When I rolled into Ramadi on the first day and I saw the 54th engineer trucks . . . I noticed that they were well-received by the populace. The Iraqis could differentiate the 54th engineer trucks from all the other combat trucks because it had the engineer symbol, which is a bridge symbol. And so I had all my guys put engineer bridge symbols on the side of our trucks so that they would at least know that we were good guys.¹²⁵

Because the Iraqi people were already primed to trust engineer forces in particular, the battalion was able to slot themselves into an established relationship of cooperation rather than suspicion.

The infrastructure and engineering work that the battalion undertook while in Iraq included physical improvements and assistance in planning. Much of the physical work involved improving the power grid and critical water infrastructure in the Al Anbar province that had been neglected over the years of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship. Once stable power was secured, engineers began work on getting neglected factories (copper, glass, fertilizer) back into production, which promised to have longer-term benefits to restoring the country’s economy. Improvements to schools, from the local level up to universities, also began as water and power infrastructure were established. To lay the groundwork for long-term planning, Owens helped to start the Al Anbar Engineer Council in the hopes of taking the

¹²³ Owens, interview; “SC Guard Building Ties to Iraqis,” *State (SC)*, August 31, 2003.

¹²⁴ “SC Guard Building Ties to Iraqis,” *State (SC)*, August 31, 2003.

¹²⁵ Owens, interview.

politics out of engineering work, a goal he recognized may have been impossible.¹²⁶ Specific sites that the battalion worked on included the Barwana Water Plant (a top priority water mission because areas of the village had not received water in more than a year); bridges in Barwana and Haditha; schools in Haditha; and the grading and construction of a runway at the Al Asad Airbase. Such projects always also involved combat and security operations: route planning, convoy escorts during movement, removal of buildings used for terrorist activities, and constant cooperation with EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) on IED removal.¹²⁷ The battalion also planned and completed Operation Rifles Fury in November of 2003, in which they occupied and secured Al Qa'im.¹²⁸

At home, a small cadre of members of the 122nd kept basic operations of the battalion going—recruitment and basic skills training—but focused most of their energies on communicating with family members of the deployed. Given that the deployment was the first of its kind for the battalion, and recognizing that “when these people were going into the guard they had no idea they’d be called up . . . under these kind of conditions,” the battalion took seriously the responsibility of outreach and support.¹²⁹ Chief Todd Shealy served as Rear Detachment Commander at Edgefield during the deployment, and described a level of support that went far beyond the simple delivery of information: “We were there. When Mama had a water leak, they would call the armory for help or something, and we would help families get through life situations while their loved ones were deployed. . . . That’s a great thing about the National Guard and especially the 122nd, we’re all kind of family . . . and we want to make sure that we don’t suffer in silence.”¹³⁰

The battalion was awarded the Valorous Unit Award “for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy” for its service between April 25, 2003, and September 18, 2003.¹³¹ The award is the second highest presidential unit award, and the 122nd was the first SCARNG unit ever to receive the honor. Reflecting on the award, and his role in guiding the battalion’s deployment, Brigadier General Brad Owens returned to the men and women in the unit: “What makes [a deployment] a success? It’s not that [Valorous Unit Award] hanging on the wall. It’s getting as many of those great Americans back home

¹²⁶ Owens, interview.

¹²⁷ 1LT Brandon C. Candee, “Memo for Cdr, A Co, 122 EN Bn, FOB Webster, Iraq,” July 11, 2003, and CPT Ray C. Patterson, “Alpha Company Daily Engineer Tasking,” July 15, 2003, along with attached paperwork, Hanging Folder: Iraq 2003, Folder: Class III (POL), 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹²⁸ Owens, interview.

¹²⁹ Major General Stan Spears, quoted in: “SC Guard Sends 500 Troops to Gulf,” *State* (SC), March 4, 2003.

¹³⁰ Shealy, interview.

¹³¹ “Department of the Army Announcement: Valorous Unit Award,” February 7, 2012, Hanging Folder: Deployments, Folder: 122 En Bn OIF 2003-2004 (WPO8AA), 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

to their families. That’s what makes it a success.” He went on, “My battalion’s success in Iraq is attributed to [its] former commanders, because you don’t build an army overnight.”¹³²

Following the battalion’s successful deployment in 2003, the 122nd Engineer Company (CSE) out of Saluda was called to Iraq in 2005.¹³³ (This followed a near-deployment in 2003, in which the unit gathered at Fort Dix, but was not ultimately sent abroad.¹³⁴) The unit was attached to the 14th Engineer Battalion for this deployment and “neutralized countless improvised explosive devices,” during their year in Iraq. Following its return home, the Saluda unit received a Meritorious Unit Commendation from the Department of the Army for its service between November 8, 2005, and November 7, 2006.¹³⁵

Operation Enduring Freedom

Several units of the 122nd also deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (A careful reader will note that the unit names and numbers in this section are unfamiliar; this is due to a reorganization in 2008 that is discussed below. See “Modular Force Reorganization: 2008-present.”) The 1227 Engineer Detachment (concrete) was the first unit of the 122nd to deploy to Afghanistan. The unit was attached to the 19th Engineer Battalion, HHC, for the deployment, which lasted from August 14, 2009, to April 23, 2010. The detachment’s mission was to provide engineering support throughout regional command south, and assist in the completion of over more than 50 projects taken on by the larger unit. They mobilized and demobilized out of Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, and upon returning home the detachment received a Meritorious Unit Commendation in May of 2010.¹³⁶

In August of 2010, the 1221 Engineer Company (route clearance) deployed to Afghanistan, where they conducted route clearance operations in the Paktia and Ghazni provinces. They deployed out of Fort McCoy; their demobilization station was Camp Shelby in Mississippi.¹³⁷ 195 soldiers deployed, and the unit completed 587 missions, which included finding 125 IEDs. The deployment resulted in numerous decorations, including 22 Purple Hearts, 25 Bronze Stars, 135 ARCOMs, 18 AAMs, 154 Combat Action

¹³² Owens, interview.

¹³³ “Saluda Sends Off Guard Unit,” *State (SC)*, September 1, 2005.

¹³⁴ “122 En BN GWOT Deployments Master Log,” undated, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; Owens, interview.

¹³⁵ “Department of the Army Announcement: Meritorious Unit Commendation,” December 31, 2008, Hanging Folder: Deployments, Folder: 122 CSE OIF 2005-2006 (WP8HAA), 122nd Engineer Battalion Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹³⁶ Department of the Army, “Permanent Orders 124-06,” May 4, 2010, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹³⁷ “122 En BN GWOT Deployments Master Log,” undated, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

Badges, and 2 Combat Medic Badges.¹³⁸ In addition, the unit received a Meritorious Unit Commendation in November of 2011 as well as the Valorous Unit Award.¹³⁹ Two soldiers from the unit were killed in action, and in 2015 a memorial was erected at the Graniteville Armory to honor the local soldiers killed in the line of duty.¹⁴⁰

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) and Forward Support Command (FSC) units of the 122nd were the next to depart for Afghanistan. They deployed as Task Force Workhouse in March of 2013 with a mission to provide engineer support including training and mentoring the Afghan National Army engineer force; troop construction and deconstruction projects; and theater route clearance.¹⁴¹ The units were mobilized to Fort Bliss, Texas, on March 3, 2013, and replaced their counterparts in the 178th Engineer Battalion upon their arrival in Afghanistan.¹⁴² HHC commanded two construction companies and two route clearance companies; FSC moved personnel, equipment and supplies across the entire area of operations. The task force completed over 90 missions during its year abroad. More than 700 soldiers who were part of the task force earned numerous awards, including 109 Combat Action Badges, 1 Combat Medic Badge, 142 Certificates of Achievement, 192 Army Achievement Medals, 206 Army Commendation Medals, 68 Bronze Starts, 640 NATO Medals, and 7 Purple Heart Medals.¹⁴³ A celebration was held at the Edgefield Armory upon their return home in March 2014.¹⁴⁴

The final deployment of a 122nd unit to Afghanistan began in October of 2013 when the 124th Engineer Company (horizontal construction company, formerly 122nd Engineer Company CSE) deployed to Kandahar Forward Operating Base (FOB). Their mobilization and demobilization station was Camp Shelby in Mississippi. The unit was attached to the 489th Engineer Battalion for the deployment, during which they provided heavy equipment deconstruction and retrograde support throughout the southern

¹³⁸ “Historical Record of the 122nd Engineer Battalion for Training Year 2011,” January 12, 2012, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹³⁹ Department of the Army, “Permanent Orders 327-18,” November 23, 2011, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Accountability Report 2011-2012* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 2012), 8.

¹⁴⁰ “Two Local Guard Members Killed in Afghan Blast,” *State* (SC), October 4, 2010; “National Guard Dedicates Fallen Soldier Memorial,” *Augusta Chronicle* (GA), December 5, 2015; “Fundraiser Set for Graniteville Soldier Memorial,” *Aiken Standard* (SC), June 10, 2015.

¹⁴¹ “Citizen Soldiers Deploy Again,” *Edgefield Advertiser* (SC), February 28, 2013; “Guard Unit Deploying to Afghanistan,” *State* (SC), February 23, 2013; “Fundraiser to Benefit Local Army National Guard,” *Edgefield Advertiser* (SC), June 20, 2013.

¹⁴² “Historical Records of the 122nd Engineer Battalion 01Jun2012-30Jun2013,” June 30, 2013, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁴³ “Historical Record of the 122nd Engineer Battalion 01July2013-30June2014,” July 23, 2014, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁴⁴ “122nd Battalion Given Freedom Salute,” *Edgefield Advertiser* (SC), March 14, 2014.

region of Afghanistan. The deployment resulted in the deconstruction of ten major Forward Operating Bases.¹⁴⁵

Modular Force Reorganization: 2008-present

The most significant reorganization that the 122nd Engineer Battalion had seen since the late 1960s took place in September of 2008. The reorganization shifted the battalion from a corps wheel structure—in which virtually identical units are attached to a headquarters unit like so many spokes on a wheel—to a modular force structure. The modular force structure is different from the corps wheel in several key ways: independent units are smaller than the previous units; they are highly specialized; and they can be deployed independently from the larger battalion. Each of the newly established units are AA units, meaning that they are standalone units with their own lineage, honors, and nomenclature.¹⁴⁶ During this reorganization the battalion was also redesignated from 122nd Engineer Battalion (Combat) to 122nd Engineer Battalion.¹⁴⁷ This restructuring took place in the midst of major reorganizations across the South Carolina National Guard, in which 800 soldiers were added, along with new units, between 2007 and 2010.¹⁴⁸

For members of the 122nd, the transition was intense. Chief Todd Shealy, who served as the battalion commander at the time, outlined the complexities of the reorganization: “We had to transition from the long history of being a battalion with lettered companies to that modular force . . . [with] specialized skill-sets. . . . We had to make decisions on who would best fit those particular skill-sets, and then we also had to adjust manning back and forth.” In summary: “We had to get the people, we had to get them schooled, set in the right places, then get the right equipment, and get the right training to get them where they needed to be in that force. It was challenging.”¹⁴⁹ Given that the reorganization was the most fundamental and extensive that the battalion had faced in its half-century history, Shealy’s assessment of the challenges is noteworthy for its pragmatic understatement.

¹⁴⁵ “122 En BN GWOT Deployments Master Log,” undated, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; “Historical Record of the 122nd Engineer Battalion 01July2013-30June2014,” July 23, 2014, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC; “Historical Record of the 122nd Engineer Battalion 01July2014-30June2015,” August 4, 2014, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁴⁶ Shealy, interview.

¹⁴⁷ The battalion designation change was dated April 16, 2008. Master Sergeant Tim Turner, email message to author, November 14, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ “Guard Readies to Make Changes,” *State* (SC), December 9, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Shealy, interview.

Initially, the newly established units of the 122nd were as follows: HHC (Headquarters and Headquarters Company) and FSC (Forward Support Command) were located in Edgefield; 1221 Engineer Company-Detachment 1 (route clearance) in Graniteville; 1227 Engineer Detachment (concrete) and Detachment 1-1221 in Batesburg; 124th Engineer Company (horizontal construction company, formerly 122nd Engineer Company CSE) and 1225 Engineer Detachment (survey and design) in Saluda; 1226 Engineer Detachment (asphalt team) and Detachment 1-124th in McCormick; 1223 Engineer Company (vertical construction company) in Summerville; 741st Quartermaster Company-Detachment 1 in Barnwell; and Detachment 1 741st Quartermaster Company in Allendale.¹⁵⁰

Over the following years, many small adjustments were made: units were consolidated, added, and assigned to different armories. The 741st units must have been reassigned immediately, as they appear in no further battalion documentation. In 2009, Detachment 1 124th Engineer Company in McCormick consolidated with the primary company in Saluda.¹⁵¹ Around 2010, a reorganization transferred the 1223 to the 178th Engineer Battalion.¹⁵² Several changes in 2011 reorganized the Batesburg units: Detachment 1 1221 Engineering Company in Batesburg consolidated with the main company in Graniteville, while the 1226 Engineer Detachment and the 1225 Engineer Detachment each relocated to Batesburg.¹⁵³ That same year also saw the activation of a third unit in Batesburg, the 1220 Engineer Platoon; it received federal recognition in November of 2012.¹⁵⁴ The battalion also received a multi-role bridge company in 2011: 125th Engineer Company (MRBC) in Abbeville and Detachment 1 125th in McCormick. Each of the two 125th units received federal recognition in January of 2012.¹⁵⁵ In 2016, the designation of the 1226

¹⁵⁰ “NGB-ARF-T Organizational Authority Number 80-08, Reorganization of South Carolina ARNG Units,” April 16, 2008, Folder: 122 EN BN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC. Many but not all of the original reorganization orders are also on file in the Edgefield digital archives, including: “Permanent Order 219-011 [1225],” August 7, 2007; “Permanent Order 247-002 [124],” September 4, 2007; “Permanent Order 248-002 [1223],” September 5, 2007; “Permanent order 254-004 [1226],” September 11, 2007; “Permanent Order 254-005 [1227],” September 11, 2007, 122nd Engineer Battalion Digital Archives, Edgefield Armory, Edgefield, SC.

¹⁵¹ “NGB-ARF-S Organizational Authority Number 263-09, Consolidation of 124th Engineer Company,” April 12, 2010, Folder: 124 EN CO, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹⁵² Sergeant Major Joshua Land, email message to author, October 29, 2018.

¹⁵³ “Change of Station for 1226th Engineer Detachment,” March 1, 2011, Folder: 1226 EN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC; “ARNG-FMS Organizational Authority Number 465-11,” November 3, 2011, Folder: 1221 EN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC; “ARNG-FMS Organizational Authority Number 160-11,” April 29, 2011, Folder: 1225 EN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹⁵⁴ “ARNG-FMS Organizational Authority Number 414-11, Organization of 1220th,” October 6, 2011, Folder: 1220 EN PLT, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹⁵⁵ “Permanent Orders 175-005,” June 24, 2011, and “ARNG-FMF Organizational Authority Number 124-12,” April 26, 2012, Folder: 125 EN CO MRBC, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant

changed from asphalt team to utilities detachment.¹⁵⁶ And in 2017, the 1225 Engineer Detachment at Batesburg consolidated with HHC in Edgefield.¹⁵⁷

Following all of these adjustments, as of December, 2018, the location of the 122nd Engineer Battalion are as follows: Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) and Forward Support Command (FSC) in Edgefield; 1220 Engineer Platoon (area clearance), 1226 Engineer Detachment (utilities), and 1227 Engineer Detachment (concrete) in Batesburg; 1221 Engineer Company (route clearance) in Graniteville; 125th Engineer Company (MRBC)-Detachment 1 in Abbeville; Detachment 1 125th Engineer Company in McCormick; and 124th Engineer Company (horizontal construction company) in Saluda.

The primary justification for the reorganization was the efficiency of modularity—the ability to deploy a singular specialized unit rather than the entire battalion. This move to modular force was a change taking place in the engineering specialty of the army across the country at the time.¹⁵⁸ The basic building block of the modular force was the brigade combat team, and the idea was that the increased specialization of individual modules would allow for increasingly targeted, and smaller, deployments. Brigadier General Brad Owens tied this focus on smaller units to the fragmented and varied demands of the asymmetric fight:

In an asymmetric fight, it's pockets of this and pockets of that, and you need this over here and this over there, and you don't need a divisional hierarchy. So the more you move towards asymmetry, the more you can step down your basic building block being a smaller-size element like a brigade as opposed to a division.¹⁵⁹

When asked whether he believed the move toward a modular force was based upon lessons learned during the Iraq War, Owens looked back even further: “It was actually lessons learned from Desert Shield and Desert Storm. . . . We had thousands and thousands of people in Desert Shield and Desert Storm that were mobilized just to support the tip of the spear for a 100-hour war. . . . I believe that the Iraq war probably triggered the implementation of those lessons learned. They were planning on doing it but they just needed a trigger.”¹⁶⁰

General Military Base, Columbia, SC; South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General, *Annual Accountability Report 2011-2012* (Columbia, SC: State Budget and Control Board, 2012), 8.

¹⁵⁶ “ARNG-FMS Organizational Authority Number 99-15,” May 27, 2015, Folder: 1226 EN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹⁵⁷ “ARNG-FM Organizational Authority Number 320-17,” October 17, 2017, Folder: 1225 EN, South Carolina Office of the Adjutant General archives, Adjutant General Military Base, Columbia, SC.

¹⁵⁸ Shealy, interview.

¹⁵⁹ Owens, interview.

¹⁶⁰ Owens, interview.

There are some drawbacks to this targeted approach to deployments, because it entails a loss of flexibility that both Chief Todd Shealy and Brigadier General Brad Owens described as trademarks of the engineering specialty. In Owen’s words, “The majority of the army called the engineers a Swiss Army knife because . . . you had that flexibility. . . . When modularity came along, we lost that because we became so specialized.”¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the fragmentation of the line units broke the hearts of many service members whose primary allegiance had been to their unit. Former member of the Batesburg unit, Colonel (retired) Wayne Caughman, lamented the loss of a unit that in 1973 received the Eisenhower Trophy, given annually to commend the most outstanding unit in the state: “You won’t find many of the old-timers like me [who] can understand why they broke up the Batesburg unit. . . . Why not move another unit that wasn’t as cohesive, wasn’t as outstanding?”¹⁶²

Another regret frequently expressed by current and former battalion members is the way that the modular force reorganization fundamentally shifted the 122nd away from being a hometown guard. As specialists are recruited outside of the home region, and as new promotion programs require movement between armories, the nature of each unit’s relationship to its home armory has changed. Shealy summed up the advantages and disadvantages of these recent change succinctly: “Great for how the army works, great for progression, poor for keeping the hometown guard.”¹⁶³ Although it is unlikely that the South Carolina National Guard will return to a hometown force in the foreseeable future—Americans are an increasingly mobile population, for better and for worse—Brigadier General Brad Owens did suggest that a return to a corps wheel model may be on the horizon, given the changing nature of international conflicts and the long-term success of that structure for the American military.¹⁶⁴

A Culture of Leadership

Over the seven decades of its existence, the 122nd Engineer Battalion has earned a formidable reputation within the state and the nation. It has been repeatedly selected as one of the South Carolina National Guard’s elite units, whether as a Selected Reserve Force, as a Roundout Brigade unit, or as one of the first battalions the state sent to Iraq. The battalion has also developed a reputation as a producer of leaders, as evidenced in part by the fact that two of its battalion commanders—Major General Robert L. McCrady and Major General Robert E. Livingston—have gone on to become the Adjutant General of South Carolina.

¹⁶¹ Owens, interview.

¹⁶² Caughman, interview.

¹⁶³ Shealy, interview.

¹⁶⁴ Owens, interview.

When asked why the battalion has earned and sustained such a strong reputation, several former battalion commanders found different ways to articulate their pride in the 122nd Engineer Battalion. Colonel (retired) Frank Chapman put it this way: “One of the words that comes to mind is culture. [In the] 122nd, the expectation is that you’re successful in whatever you do, and whatever the mission is, you always accomplish your mission and you always do it well. That’s the expectation. It’s a culture that is established. And tradition is a part of culture. If you have a winning tradition and you have a culture that supports that winning tradition, then you’re going to be successful.”¹⁶⁵ Chief Todd Shealy hit on similar themes in his explanation: “An organization has a DNA. If you look at different organizations they have cultures. People change, but sometimes that organization kind of stays the same. Part of the DNA of the 122nd is it either tracks or builds strong leaders. It is attention to detail, it is the family atmosphere—taking care of each other—and it is the *esprit de corps* that’s built within that.”¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, these men spoke proudly of the strong relationship that the 122nd engineers have built with engineers across the state and nation.

Along with others in the engineering specialty within South Carolina, the 122nd is a proud member of the Palmetto Chapter of the Army Engineer Association, a nationwide organization that works to build up the engineer community at local and national levels. Many members of the battalion interviewed for this history pointed to Colonel (retired) Frank Chapman as “one of the most integral pieces to building the battalion and the engineers across the state.”¹⁶⁷ When he was commander of the 122nd from 1985 to 1989, Chapman initiated what came to be known as the “Castle Rally,” an annual meeting of the senior engineers statewide that was designed to be a formal and fun social event, and which continues to this day.¹⁶⁸ The annual rallies eventually resulted in the formal establishment of the Palmetto Chapter, which many members refer to as one of the strongest chapters in the nation.

The upcoming arrival of the 117th Engineer Brigade to South Carolina stands as testament to the strong reputation that the state’s engineers have earned within the Army Engineer Association, thanks in large part to the leadership and record of the 122nd Engineer Battalion. In Brigadier General Brad Owens’ words: “For South Carolina to get a brigade at a time when there is very little growth in force structure allocation . . . is a tribute to those that not only have deployed and fought the war fight, but also to those commanders that worked so hard on the Army Engineer Association in South Carolina and in keeping us

¹⁶⁵ Chapman, interview.

¹⁶⁶ Shealy, interview.

¹⁶⁷ Shealy, interview.

¹⁶⁸ Chapman, interview.

connected throughout the engineer regiment.”¹⁶⁹ The 122nd Engineer Battalion—its leaders and its soldiers—have played a significant role in building this national reputation through their long history of hard work at home and abroad, their willingness to deploy and their success upon deployment, and their culture of loyalty to one another and to the communities they serve.

¹⁶⁹ Owens, interview.

Abbreviations Used in Text and Notes

AT	Annual Training
FSC	Forward Support Command
HHC	Headquarters and Headquarters Company
MRBC	Multirole Bridge Company
ODT	Overseas Deployment for Training
SCARNG	South Carolina Army National Guard
SCIAA	South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology
SC SHPO	South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
SRF	Selected Reserve Force
TAG	The Adjutant General

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State (SC)

Appendix A: Battalion Commanders of the 122nd Engineer Battalion

Robert L. McCrady	March 1947
Joseph E. Brown, Jr.	March 1960
Frampton W. Durban	April 1963
Joseph E. Brown, Jr.	April 1964
Charles A. Leath	January 1968
Julian M. Marchant	September 1970
William A. Reel, Jr.	September 1972
Asthon A. Shuler, Jr.	April 1973
Richard A. Culbreath	December 1975
Russell Moyer	March 1977
J. Roy Berry	February 1979
Samuel A. Williams	June 1980
Pete G. Miley	July 1982
Frank H. Chapman	May 1985
Xanthan (Willard) Polk, Jr.	November 1989
John (Jack) W. Reece	May 1992
Robert (Rob) C. Blair	October 1994
Steven W. Vinson	June 1997
William (Bill) E. Fulmer	July 1999
Robert E. Livingston	July 2001
Stephen Brady (Brad) Owens	May 2002
Samuel Darwin	October 2004
Todd Shealy	October 2006
John Scott Coleman	November 2008
Victor Brown	October 2010
James (Jamie) Fowler	June 2014
Christopher (Chris) Hyman	July 2016
William (Bill) Matheny	October 2017-present

Appendix B: The 122nd Engineer Battalion and its Armories

1948 – 1959

Federal Recognition and Early Years

Edgefield	Headquarters Support Company (HSC)
Barnwell	Company A and Medical Detachment
Ridgeland	Company B
Warrenville	Company C
Camden	Company D [as of 1949]

1959 – 1965

“Pentomic Division” reorganization

Edgefield	Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC)
Johnston	Company A
McCormick	Company B [moved to Barnwell in 1964]
Warrenville	Company C
Saluda	Companies D and E [redesignated as 122nd Engineer Company (LE) in 1964]

1965 – 1993

The long, stable era

Edgefield	Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) - Detachment
Johnston	Communications, Equipment and Medical (CEM) Section HHC
McCormick	Company A
Barnwell	Company B
Warrenville	Company C
Batesburg	Company D [as of 1967]
Saluda	122nd Engineer Company (LE) [redesignated as 122nd Engineering Company (CSE) in 1977]

1993 – 2008

Minor Reorganizations

Edgefield	Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) - Detachment 1
Johnston	Detachment 1 HHC [consolidated with HHC in 2004]
McCormick	Company A - Detachment 1
Barnwell	Detachment 1 Company A
Batesburg	Company B
Graniteville	Company C
Saluda	122nd Engineer Company (CSE)

2008 – present

“Modular Force” reorganization

Reorganization in September of 2008 shifted the battalion from a corps wheel structure--in which virtually identical units are attached to a headquarters unit like so many spokes on a wheel--to a modular force structure. This move to modular force units, which are highly specialized and can be deployed independently from the larger battalion, took place throughout the engineering specialty of the army. The locations listed below are those current as of December 2018.

Edgefield	Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) & Forward Support Command (FSC)
Batesburg	1220 Engineer Platoon, 1226 Engineer Detachment & 1227 Engineer Detachment
Graniteville	1221 Engineer Company
Abbeville	125th Engineer Company (MRBC) - Detachment 1
McCormick	Detachment 1 125th Engineer Company
Saluda	124th Engineer Company