

39th Engineers reactivate legacy

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (AA) Public Affairs

Story by [Sgt. David Cox](#)

Date: 04.22.2015

Posted: 04.22.2015 12:00

News ID: 160819

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. - Soldiers with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division held an activation ceremony for 39th Brigade Engineer Battalion April 16 at Freedom Fighters Physical Fitness Center Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

The 39th BEB, first activated April 25, 1942, at Camp Bowie, Texas, received various unit citations during the Vietnam War. It has been reactivated because the restructuring of BCTs laid out in the Department of the Army's BCT 2020 initiative.



In addition to the activation, 2nd BCT "Strike" bid farewell to the last remaining brigade special troops battalion active in 101st Airborne Division – the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion. They also conducted a relinquish of command ceremony and assumption of command ceremony for the respective commanders.

"It is clearly a busy day in the history of Strike," said Col. Peter N. Benchhoff, the commander of 2nd BCT. "Each part of this ceremony is indignant of the consistency of our service and the consistency of change in our Army. Commanders may change and unit designation may change to meet new threats and requirements, but other more significant attributes of our service will remain the same."

In attendance of the ceremony was Maj. Gen. Gary J. Volesky, the commander of 101st Airborne Division and Fort Campbell, Brig. Gen. Anthony C. Funkhouser, the Army Engineer School commandant at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and members of the 39th Engineer Battalion alumni.

"It was about showing the [39th Engineer Battalion] alumni that attended the ceremony how their history continues and the legacy that the colors of the battalion represents," said Lt. Col. Christopher Payant, the commander of the 39th BEB. "It's a little bit different configuration than they were used to, but they did not mind because they were happy to see the unit's legacy continue"

Payant, a native of Dumfries, Virginia, said that the assumption of command ceremony was not about him, but it was about the 39th BEB becoming a part of 2nd BCT and the 101st Airborne Division.

While the 39th can look forward to its next rendezvous with destiny, leadership with 2nd BCT reflected on the 2nd BCT's legacy and contributions to the 101st history.

"It's a bittersweet day," said Lt. Col. Robert C. Connell, the outgoing commander of the 2nd BCT. "It marks the inactivation of the last of the Air Assault BCT's."

Connell, a native of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, said that he was proud of the accomplishments of the 2nd BCT during its deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2014.

"Regardless whether our colors are cased, we shall not forget our history, our predecessors, the sacrifices of our

fallen comrades and those taken from us too soon,” Connell said. “Over the years, much has been asked and the battalion has always responded. I am honored to have commanded them over the past 21 months.”