



Fact File

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U.S. Army, Europe & Seventh Army Fact File

HISTORY – 2nd STRYKER CAVALRY REGIMENT



The 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment has the distinction of being the “Longest Active Serving Cavalry Regiment in the United States Army.” The 2d Regiment of Dragoons was constituted on 23 May 1836 to fight in the Florida Seminole Indian Campaigns. The Dragoon – a mounted infantryman – was deemed the most capable to defeat the agile and elusive Seminole. From these campaigns the Regiment earned their first Battle Streamer. Afterwards in 1842, the Regiment was relocated to Fort Jessup, Louisiana and Fort Towson, Indian Territory, to guard the western frontier of our expanding nation.

In 1846, the War with Mexico began over control of Texas. At the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, General Taylor ordered Captain Charles May to attack a Mexican defensive position, reinforced with a battery of artillery. Captain May led his squadron of D & E companies against the strongly held Mexican position and with speed and shock effect penetrated the Mexican lines allowing for the defeat of the Mexican defenses. Captain May’s order of the day would become the Regiment’s motto “Remember your Regiment and follow your Officers!” During this war the Regiment earned 14 additional Battle Streamers for their actions in combat.

After the Mexican War the Regiment returned to the Texas frontier, as our country grew westward, establishing a protective chain of forts for the settlers in order to secure the new territory. From 1852-54 two streamers were added to the Regiment’s Colors for campaigns in New Mexico against hostile Natives. In the mid-1850s the 2d Dragoons were stationed in Kansas. The next call to duty in defense of the Nation was in 1858 and sent the Dragoons across the Rockies in the middle of the winter to Utah to deal with the Mormon Uprising. The Regiment’s arrival in Utah ended the uprising and after the issue was settled, the Regiment was again stationed throughout the Western Frontier until 1861.

On February 9th, 1861 the South seceded from the Union and the nation was thrust into the Civil War. The ten companies of the 2d U.S. Dragoons began their long trek across the western frontier to join the Federal forces under the Army of the Potomac. The first unit to arrive in Washington D.C. was K Company, who joined the Union Forces in time to serve at the First Battle of Bull Run. Later in August 1861, all the Federal Mounted Units were re-designated and became U.S. Cavalry. The 2d U.S. Dragoons was re-organized and redesignated as the 2d U.S. Cavalry on 3 Aug 1861. The former Dragoons added two additional companies (L&M) to their Cavalry organization. The 2d U.S. Cavalry would honorably serve in almost every major battle and campaign that the Federal Army of the Potomac was involved in. Names like Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, The Wilderness, Shenandoah and Petersburg were several of the (14) Battle Streamers that the Regiment added to their Colors. Three 2d U.S. Cavalry Troopers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for actions in combat.

During the years following the Civil War, the Regiment returned to the western frontier to settle disputes and explore uncharted lands, as the Nation’s territories became states. Conflicts developed between settlers and the native tribes as the Nation’s expansion pushed west. Again the Regiment was scattered across the frontier where they were called upon to keep the peace, explore the vast unknown lands of new territory, establish forts and develop road systems and telegraph lines. During the last half of the century, (11) additional Battle Streamers from the Indian Wars would be added to the Regimental Colors and (15) Troopers would be recognized for their valor by receiving the Medal of Honor.

In 1898, units of the Regiment were again called to action in the Spanish-American War where they served with distinction. Major Rafferty’s Squadron deployed to the conflict in Cuba, as the only horse



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mounted U.S. Cavalry unit to serve in the war. The conflict may have ended quickly in Cuba, but soon thereafter the entire Regiment was re-stationed on the island as part of the American occupation forces. This service continued until 1903.

From 1903–06 and 1910-12 the Regiment was called twice overseas to the Philippine Islands where they were actively engaged in operations against the Moros Natives and their insurrection against the established Philippine government.

Upon returning to the United States, the Regiment's next assignment was Fort Bliss, Texas. From 1912 – late 1913 the 2d Cavalry served along the Mexican Border during the early years of the Punitive Expeditions. The Regiment worked directly under the command of General John Pershing conducting extensive reconnaissance patrols in the rugged desert and mountainous terrain.

In 1917, as America geared up to fight in the "War to End All Wars" the Regiment, based at Forts Ethan Allan, VT and Fort Myers, VA trained and formed additional Cavalry units for military action in the War. Based on its reputation and history, General Pershing called on the Regiment to serve in the AEF and in 1917 the Regiment deployed to Europe as the only American horse mounted Cavalry unit to fight in World War I. The Regiment served throughout the American sector conducting cavalry operations and were used as an exploitation force in several combat operations, thus working as Dragoons, dismounting to hold key terrain. Through these actions the Regiment proved that if properly used, horse mounted units still had value on the modern battlefield.

After serving in the Army of Occupation of Germany until mid-1919, the Regiment returned to the United States and was stationed at Fort Riley, KS. In 1927, the Regiment became the cornerstone in the formation of the 2d Cavalry Division. Throughout this period of transformation, military doctrine and tactics changed as new weapons and equipment were introduced. The Second Cavalry was deeply involved in the transformation during the mid 1920s and 1930s, especially Company A of the Regiment which helped develop mechanized tactics while testing and evaluating some of the first American Armored Cars. As the Regiment celebrated its 100th year of service to the Nation in 1936, the time had come for the rest of the Regiment to turn in their horses for M-2 Combat Cars and M-3 Scout Cars. As the 1930's came to a close, world events continued to escalate towards new conflicts.

On December 7th 1941, America was thrust into World War II, and the 2d U.S. Cavalry Regiment was deeply involved in training Troopers in mechanized operations at Fort Riley. Adjustments were made within all of the existing Cavalry Regiments to help create new Armored units that were needed to fight in Europe. After the restructuring, in January 1943, the Regiment was re-designated as the 2d Cavalry Group (Mechanized) under Colonel Charles Reed. Extensive training was conducted and new equipment issued to the Regiment. The Regiment's final exercises before wartime deployment were the Tennessee Maneuvers. Second Cavalry Group deployed to England and then on to Normandy on 19 July 1944, where they began their service as the "eyes and ears" of General Patton's Third Army and would screen Patton's advance throughout the remainder of World War II. From their daring reconnaissance missions conducted into German territory throughout the war, the German High Command labeled the Regiment "The Ghosts of Patton's Army," because they seemingly materialized at different points behind German lines. The Regiment is also noted for its rescue of the Lipizzaner Stallions from Soviet occupied territory and the surrender of the 11th Panzer Division as the war came to a close.

The Regiment would remain in Germany for the next 47 years, first as the 2d U.S. Constabulary Regiment and from 1948 until 1992 as the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment. This began the Regiment's mission of reconnaissance and security along the East German and Czechoslovakian borders during the Cold War. Throughout this period the Dragoons fielded newer weapons, tanks and equipment while serving on the forward edge of freedom's frontier.



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When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the 2d ACR was a fully trained, combined arms combat unit, equipped with M1A1 Abrams Tanks and M-2 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicles. In November the 2d ACR deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Storm where they would spearhead VII Corps' attack. On the 26th of February 1991, the Regiment was heavily involved in blocking the Iraqi counterattack into Kuwait by seven of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard Divisions. At a desolate spot deep in the eastern Iraqi desert the 2d ACR engaged the Tawakalna Division. This engagement became known as the "Battle of 73 Easting," the outcome of which destroyed the Iraqi armored force and earned the Regiment the Army's Valorous Unit Award. The actions against the Iraqi Divisions have become instructional examples of modern high intensity armored warfare. After Desert Storm, the Regiment returned to Germany where they received orders to return to the United States after 49 years of continuous overseas service.

In July 1992, the Regiment was re-designated as 2d ACR (Light) and began training at their temporary home, Fort Lewis, WA. The Regiment's newest mount became the Scout HMMWV. After one year of training, the Regiment was relocated to Fort Polk, LA to become the Corps Cavalry, the "eyes and ears" of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

At Fort Polk, 4th Squadron (Regimental Aviation Squadron) was added to the Regiment's organization. The addition of 4/2 (Air Cav), with their OH-58D Kiowa Warrior scout helicopters and UH-60 helicopters, completed the Regiment's re-organization into a Light Cavalry Regiment. From Fort Polk, units from the Regiment were called overseas to the Republic of Haiti as United Nations peacekeepers. "Operation Up-hold Democracy" lasted from June 1995 until March 1996. Later in 1997, the 2d ACR was again deployed overseas to Bosnia as part of NATO's SFOR in support of "Operation Joint Guard" in this war torn region.

In 2002, the Regiment deployed B and L Troops to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as part of The Global War On Terrorism. In support of the War on Terror, the 2d Cavalry Dragoons were called to service in Iraq. With only 96 hours notice, the Regiment deployed Second Squadron and O Troop (Air Cavalry) to Southwest Asia to protect the V Corps lines of communication during major combat operations against the Iraqi Army. By May 2003 the entire Regiment was deployed and distinguished itself in the Baghdad AO to include Sadr City and 9 Nissan. Upon the Sadr Uprising of April 2004 the Regiment was extended in combat and fought classic urban battles in Sadr City, Diwaniya, Al Kut, Kufa, and An Najaf. For its 15 month combat tour and heroic actions against the Mahdi Army, the Regiment earned the highest unit award given in the U.S. Army: the Presidential Unit Citation.

In July 2004, the Regiment re-deployed and returned to Fort Polk, LA to prepare for its next mission. In March 2005, the 2d Cavalry Regiment bid farewell to Fort Polk and were re-assigned to Fort Lewis, WA. At Fort Lewis, the Regiment began its restructuring and re-organization into a Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) as part of the Army's Transformation – returning to its original mission as Dragoons – mounted infantry.

On 1 June 2006 the Regiment began another chapter in its great history as 1st Brigade (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), 25th Infantry Division (Light), SBCT 2 was reflagged to the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment and moved to Vilseck, Germany as part of the United States Army Europe Transformation to a lighter, more agile force and to carry on the long tradition of the Dragoons. The return to Germany by the Dragoons marked the first time a unit deployed to Germany permanently in over 30 years.

From the Swamps of Florida to the Deserts of Iraq, the 2d Dragoons have lived up to their Motto "Toujours Pret" (Always Ready) when our Nation calls.