

A Storied Heritage of the ‘Fighting 44th’ ESB-E

‘Getting the Message Through’

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44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion-Enhanced

The storied history of 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion-Enhanced spans from World War II to present day, marked by key campaigns and the evolution of tactical signal support operations. Constituted on Feb. 3, 1944, as a heavy construction battalion, it saw service in the European theater of operations.

The battalion earned campaign credit for the Rhineland, Central, and Asiatic-Pacific theater campaigns before transitioning to the Pacific to support the final stages of the Pacific campaign and subsequently inactivated in 1946. The battalion was re-activated on Aug. 1, 1966, and designated as 44th Signal Battalion in support of operations in Southeast Asia. The 44th earned credit for 11 different Vietnam War campaigns. Following Vietnam, the battalion Inactivated again in 1972 and returned to service on March 16, 1981, in Germany, and again saw service overseas earning campaign credit for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In 1995, the battalion deployed throughout the Balkan region to support Operation Joint Endeavor.

The “Fighting 44th” deployed to U.S. Central Command five different time between 2003-2012 to support operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Aside from the overseas operations, the battalion’s rich history of enduring service in Germany traces a path through the cities of Mannheim, Schweinfurt, Grafenwoer, and now Baumholder. The battalion's outstanding service continues today as the battalion serves as the lone theater committed tactical signal battalion supporting both U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command.

On Dec. 16, 2021, the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion officially redesignated as 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion-Enhanced (ESB-E). This signified the transition to a more agile tactical signal battalion. The battalion completed ESB-E conversion in late February 2022 and immediately deployed forces in response to the Ukrainian Crisis.

In last nine months of 2022, the 44th executed more than 50 signal support missions throughout 11 different countries across the NATO alliance. The surge in operations created the opportunity for the 44th ESB-E to change the way the battalion fights, adapting to the reality of sustained signal support operations in addition

to normal exercise and training support.

“2022 was a catalyst for questioning our definition of what it means to be ‘expeditionary,’” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Alvarez, network operations NCO, Bravo Company, 44th ESB-E. “We were forced to revamp existing procedures to keep up with the dynamic and ever-evolving environment of a high operations tempo across the theater. Our leaders and Soldiers did an exceptional job increasing the short-order deployability of our unit’s signal assets.”

The demands of the new operational environment placed a premium on the 44th’s ability to provide trained, certified, and ready signal support teams while still providing predictability to Soldiers and families. The 44th ESB-E adapted an operations and readiness training cycle which emphasized a progression of training utilizing the Signal Assessment Tables (SAT).

The battalion established a progression of training structure which places elements of each company in a focused mission cycle, training cycle, and reset cycle. Leveraging the SAT, the 44th ESB-E conducts a two-week Signal Range Density (SRD) exercise to certify units against short notice prepare to deploy mission requirements using a variety of mission scenarios.

The frequency and density of teams within each cycle is flexible based upon the projected operational demands of the battalion. Currently, the battalion conducts three SRD exercises a year, averaging 18 signal teams each iteration. This new training structure paid dividends, enabling the 44th to react to rapid-response mission requirements throughout 2022 and 2023, while maintaining readiness and predictability for the battalion.

The rich history and lineage of the 44th ESB-E spans generations of signalers, maintainers, and sustainers successfully evolving to deliver the network. The battalion has prevailed through the vast theaters of operations of World War II, thick jungles of Vietnam, and the mountainous, desolate Middle East. Amidst supporting a challenged NATO Alliance, operating in an unknown African environment, and responding to crisis in the USCENTCOM area of operation, the Fighting 44th continues to prepare for the next test.

No matter where or when called, history has proven the Soldiers of the Fighting 44th will always “Get the Message Through.”

