



Camp Sutton, Monroe, NC: 1942-1945

The official dedication date was March 7, 1942.

Camp Sutton went through several overlapping stages beginning its life as a “hardening camp” for soldiers going overseas to the war. The 73rd Field Artillery Brigade has the distinction of being the first major unit. New concept units such as Tank Destroyers, specifically the 1st Tank Destroyer Group with the 801st and 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalions, made their home at Camp Sutton for a time. The 301st and the 302nd Ordnance Regiments (constituted through the assistance of the National Automobile Dealers Association) arrived shortly after Camp Sutton raised its flag.

The Camp functioned as support for and as a staging area for the 1942 Carolina Maneuvers. The 1942 Carolina Maneuvers are not remembered as well as the 1941 Carolina Maneuvers. Both encompassed most of the same area in North and South Carolina. Part of the land that was to become Camp Sutton was a headquarters area in the 1941 Maneuvers. Local positive support for the 1941 Maneuvers was instrumental in the military accepting the Monroe area as a place to locate the new army camp that was to be named Camp Sutton.

The need for engineers for the war effort resulted in the activation of two new Engineer Unit Training Centers. One of which was located at Camp Sutton. Established engineer units such as the ones previously constructing projects like the Alaskan Canadian Highway and the Canadian Oil Pipeline as well as new units starting from the ground up converged on Camp Sutton. Approximately 3500 Italians, former prisoners of war, were also trained in engineering to be returned to Europe to assist construction and repair of the damages caused by war.

Quartermaster Truck Regiments such as the 472nd were established and trained at Camp Sutton before deploying to the China-Burma-India Theatre. Additional Quartermaster Units such as Salvage & Repair Companies, Graves Registration Companies, Bakery Units and Replacement Depots, many subordinate to the 2nd Army, were established and trained at Camp Sutton.

The final stage is usually considered the P. O. W. Camp for the German enlisted prisoners which began in March 1944. Used as contracted labor in the local area, many here had their first direct contact with their former enemy. Life long friendships occurred from this contact.

Though the camp’s closing (official date January 1, 1945) did change the economics of the town itself, the improvements left behind such as roads, bridges, sewer lines and the beginnings of a modern hospital were a tremendous boon to Monroe.

Some Sources used: Ben Taylor’s “Camp Sutton: Gone But Not Forgotten”; Loose newspaper clippings in the Locked Files; “The Heritage of Union County: Volume II”; “The CarryAll” (1944 camp newsletter)

-J. C. 2007; Edited by pmp March 2007, Revised May 2008