

ORGANIZATION HISTORY

632ND TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

On July 2, 1941, the Provisional antitank Battalion, 32nd Infantry Division, was activated without enlisted personnel at Camp Livingston, Louisiana, per authority of General Order Number 32, Headquarters, 32nd Infantry Division, Major ROY W. BAILEY, 120th Field Artillery Regiment, was attached as Battalion Commander with three other officers as his staff. The general order provided for a Headquarters Battery and four letter batteries as firing units.

On July 11, 1941, officers and enlisted personnel were assigned on Special Duty to the batteries per Special Order Number 192, Headquarters 32nd Infantry Division. Headquarters Battery was formed with four officers and seventy nine enlisted men who were mostly from "G" and "H" Batteries of the 121st Field Artillery Regiment. Battery "A" was formed with three officers and ninety three enlisted men all but one of whom were of Battery "G", 121st Field Artillery Regiment. Battery "B" was formed with three officers and ninety three enlisted men representing the remainder of Battery "H", 121st Field Artillery Regiment. Battery "C" was formed with three officers and ninety seven enlisted men from the Antitank and Anti-aircraft Platoons of the 1st Battalion of the 120th, 121st and 126th Field Artillery Regiments. Battery "D" was formed with three officers and ninety seven enlisted men from the Anti-tank and Anti-aircraft Platoons of the 2nd Battalion, 120th, 121st and 126th Field Artillery Regiments. Company "D" of the 107th Engineers was attached to act as a Pioneer Company. Further officers were obtained from the 32nd Infantry Division at the request of the Battalion Commander until the total was twenty seven, exclusive of the Engineer Company.

On July 28, 1941, the Provisional Reconnaissance Troop, Antitank Battalion, 32d Infantry Division was created with five officers and one hundred and five enlisted men by Special Order Number 209, Headquarters, 32nd Infantry Division, Camp Livingston, Louisiana, dated July 29. This unit was created specifically for the August Louisiana Maneuvers to act as a Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop for the Division. The unit was attached to the Antitank Battalion for tactical employment.

On August 2, 1941, Headquarters Battery received an additional thirty three enlisted men and each of the letter units received an additional ten enlisted men per authority of Special Order Number 214, Paragraph 6, Headquarters, 32nd Infantry Division, Camp Livingston, Louisiana, dated August 2.

From August 10th to September 28th, 1941, the new Battalion functioned as a unit in tactical maneuvers with the 32nd Infantry Division in the Louisiana Maneuver Area during which time the Division was commended for its vigorous antitank defense by General E. L. DALEY, the V Army Corps Commander. At the close of maneuvers on September 28th, Company "D" of the 107th Engineers was returned to the control of the 107th Engineer Regiment.

During the entire period from the initiation of the Battalion except for the increase on August 2, 1941, the Battalion strength remained quite stable with gains balancing losses. Upon the return of the organization to Camp Livingston, however, the Division began discharging enlisted men under existing policies. The Battalion lost approximately sixty one during the month of October and ninety-two during the month of November and thirty-one to the 15th of December, through this cause. The large scale discharging came to a sudden halt, however, upon the declaration of War by this country on December 7th. At this date the strength of the organization was twenty seven officers and four hundred and eighty two enlisted men. Eight days

later on December 15, 1941, the Provisional Antitank Battalion, 32nd Infantry Division, was finally made a permanent organization. The name given it was the 632nd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Under the authority of General Order Number 51, Headquarters, 32nd Infantry Division, Camp Livingston, Louisiana, the source units from which the provisional organization had been constructed were inactivated and a Tank Destroyer Battalion, Light, Truck drawn, less Pioneer Company and Medical Detachment with Major ROY W. BAILEY commanding was created. Special Order Number 349, Paragraph 15, Headquarters 32nd Infantry Division, dated December 15th, transferred nine officers and eighty three enlisted men to Headquarters Company exclusive of the Battalion Commander, four officers and one hundred and ten enlisted men to Company "A"; five officers and one hundred and eleven enlisted men to Company "B" and five officers and one hundred and nine enlisted men to Company "C". General Order Number 51, however, did provide for a Medical Detachment of nine enlisted men from the Medical Detachments of the Field Artillery Units of the 32nd Infantry Division, being less than half the strength of the Medical Detachment allowed on T/O 18-15.

TOWED 37 MM GUN

At the time of activation the Battalion had no Tables of Organization which were authorized as a basis for enlisted grades and ratings. Finally, War Department Letter AG 221 (12-24-41) EA-A Subject: Allotment of Grades and Authorized Strengths, Tank Destroyer Units, dated December 29, 1941, as well as the long awaited Tables of Organization arrived and a promotion Board consisting of the unit Commanders and the Battalion Executive Officer was convened and the much hoped for promotions of the enlisted men were finally announced in the form of Special Order Number 1, Paragraph 7 through 12, Headquarters, 632d Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Livingston, Louisiana, dated January 1, 1942.

During all this time the Provisional Reconnaissance Troop was still training as a part of the organization and finally on January 13th, the last of the Provisional Antitank Battalion was inactivated by Special Order Number 13, Paragraphs 2, 3, 11, 12, 13 and 15, Headquarters 32nd Infantry Division, Camp Livingston, Louisiana, dated January 13, 1942.

Meanwhile a Medical Officer had been assigned on December 31st and nine enlisted from the Medical Detachments of the Artillery Units of the 32nd Infantry Division on January 7th, to the Medical Detachment, as provided for in General Order Number 51. This total was supplemented by fourteen enlisted men of Company "I", 107th Medical Regiment on January 31, by special Order Number 30, which after the return of one enlisted man to his parent organization brought the total to the enlisted strength of twenty two men, two men short of full strength.

The following day General Order Number 3, Paragraph 4, which was the order reorganizing the 32nd Infantry Division into a Triangular Division, redesignated the Headquarters Battery of the 126th Field Artillery Regiment as the Pioneer Company, 632nd Tank Destroyer Battalion. This gave the new organization a full complement of units but still left the units considerably below authorized strengths, except for the Medical Detachment.

During this period the strength of the organization remained stable except for transfers to the Air Corps as cadets and mechanics, and training was speeded up slightly.

On February 24th, 1942, in conjunction with the 32nd Infantry Division, the Battalion began a truck and train movement covering approximately 1900 miles, and lasting until March 5th, at which time the entire Battalion had arrived at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, which was classed as a permanent change of station for the organization and a staging area for overseas. Not long after arrival at this Post, however, it was announced that all personnel would have their mail addressed to APO 32, c/o Postmaster, New York City, New York.

On March 18, 1942, the Battalion Commander received a very fine letter from the Commanding General of the 32nd Division commending the excellent condition of the area occupied by the battalion in Camp Livingston upon its evacuation.

On March 31, Major ROY W. BAILEY was relieved of command and transferred to the Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound by Par 27, Special Order No. 86, Headquarters First Corps Area, Boston, Massachusetts, dated March 31, and Major HERALD M. HOOTMAN, Inf, was attached unassigned to command, per Par 9, Special Order 93, Headquarters, 32d Infantry Division, dated April 3, 1942. Meanwhile recruits had been arriving at the rate of 156 on March 28, twenty four on March 31, and one-hundred and fifty nine on April 3.* This brought the battalion to nearly full strength and on Saturday April 11 the entire battalion moved by rail in two trains in conjunction with the 32d Division to Ft McDowell, California as a staging area for movement overseas, arriving on Thursday, April 16.

From Thursday April 16, to Sunday April 19, the battalion was busied drawing equipment and supplies. At last on Monday April 20, the entire battalion boarded the ATX Hugh L. Scott and the boat left dock in San Francisco at about 6:00 PM on April 22. After an uneventful voyage, the AT Hugh L. Scott docked at Port Adelaide, S. A. on Thursday and the battalion moved immediately by train to Camp Woodside, about thirty miles from Adelaide near the village of Woodside, S.A. On May 4 Major HERALD M. HOOTMAN was relieved of command of the battalion and transferred to the 127th Infantry Regiment effective April 9, per par 14, Special Order No. 104, Headquarters 32d Division, and Lt Col HUGH M. FANNING, Inf was assigned as Commanding Officer per Par 7, Special Order No. 104, Headquarters 32d Division, dated May 4.

On Sunday, May 17, the battalion moved by truck to Camp Sandy Creek which is also about thirty miles from Adelaide, near Gawler, S.A.

Training and garrison duties continued at Sandy Creek until July 14 when the battalion moved by rail to Camp Mangalore, Victoria for a period of training on the antitank ranges in that locality. During this period the antitank elements of the three infantry regiments of the 32d Division, the Reconnaissance Company and the field artillery battalions of the division. This phase of training continued until the twelfth of August, at which time the battalion moved northward to join the other elements of the division at Camp ~~in~~ Tambouring, Queensland on August 16, 1942.

From this time on the tempo of training was gradually intensified with emphasis on beach defense. On August 22, the battalion received its first officer replacements in the form of four second lieutenants, field artillery, recently arrived from the United States. This revelation was followed on September 11 by new T/O's doing away with the light and heavy Tank Destroyer Bns and combining the better features of both in a single organization. Par 1 GO 42, Hq 32d Div redesignated Pnr Co as Rcn Co.

On September 16, Camp Tambouring was redesignated Camp Cable in honor of the first casualty in the division from enemy fire by Sect II GO 12, Hq USASOS, SWPA, *Trfd fr FARTC, Ft Bragg, N.C., except 24 trfd fr 637th T.D. Bn, 37th Inf Div.

dated September 5.

A period of training in jungle warfare methods and beach defense was outlined at this time.

The Battalion finally obtained much needed officer replacements by commissioning two (2) NCO's on September 15; one (1) NCO on September 19; one (1) NCO and one (1) WOJG on September 23 and three (3) NCO's on October 18.

During this period and until December 21 the batgalion occupied itself with field training which embodied considerable emphasis on Infantry training and toward the latter part of the period short Tank Destroyer Tactic Problems. On the last mentioned date the Battalion made a short truck movement to an area in the near vicinity of Petrie, Queensland. The new site which was part of a 32d Division bivouac area was designated Camp Strathpine by the Division Commander. The next few weeks were spent mostly in trying to make livable the new camp site, road building activities being particularly difficult because of the extremely frequent rains and the nature of the subsoil of the area. It was at this site that the Battalion observed the passing of the calendar year of 1942.