

805th TD Batt

Outfit Chased Nazis Down Long Road From Africa To Po Valley

If you don't believe it, just drive down Headquarters Boulevard in the cantonment area of north camp and someone will whistle that delightful two-noted wolf call, but not at a passing female in a jeep—but at the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion now stationed there. What those men have done, to get to be the swell-heads they are, is nothing short of a miracle.

Lt. Donald Taylor who should be a member of the California Chamber of Commerce as well as publicity man for the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, said, "Why I'm going back to California and start a drive-in so that I can be the chief car hop. I learned to hop tank destroyers all over Africa and Italy—I certainly should be a success hopping cars. I've about decided to give up the advertising business."

Lt. Col. H. W. Fowler, battalion commander, also from California, has 151 points and is still undecided about leaving the army. "I like my outfit," he said rather calmly.

The entire outfit is loaded down with Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, high point men, awards of all kinds, but they don't talk about it much. The only serious talk you can get out of them is about the Elbow Rooms . . . mess halls to people outside the 805th. The Elbow rooms have juke boxes, curtains, table clothes, and fancy foods. The chefs like to cook—one was a mechanic and the others were salesmen (and not of food products either). Colonel Fowler said, "When we found the mechanic who could cook, our spirits lifted—now we have birthday cakes for the men with birthdays and we hope there's one a day."

Plenty of Birthdays

And they do. Every man in the outfit is remembered on his birthday and if there isn't at least one birthday a day, the Colonel has one. "We entertained in a like manner overseas—the cakes, however, wouldn't win any prizes nor would the recipes be included in the latest cook books."

The outfit brags about its five battle stars. It has a right to brag. One is for Tunisia and four are for the campaigns in Italy. "We were

among the first to get a taste of the German panzer might, in fact, we were the second TD outfit to be committed to battle," said one of the men. "We were still there when the last shots were fired and the Nazi army came clattering down."

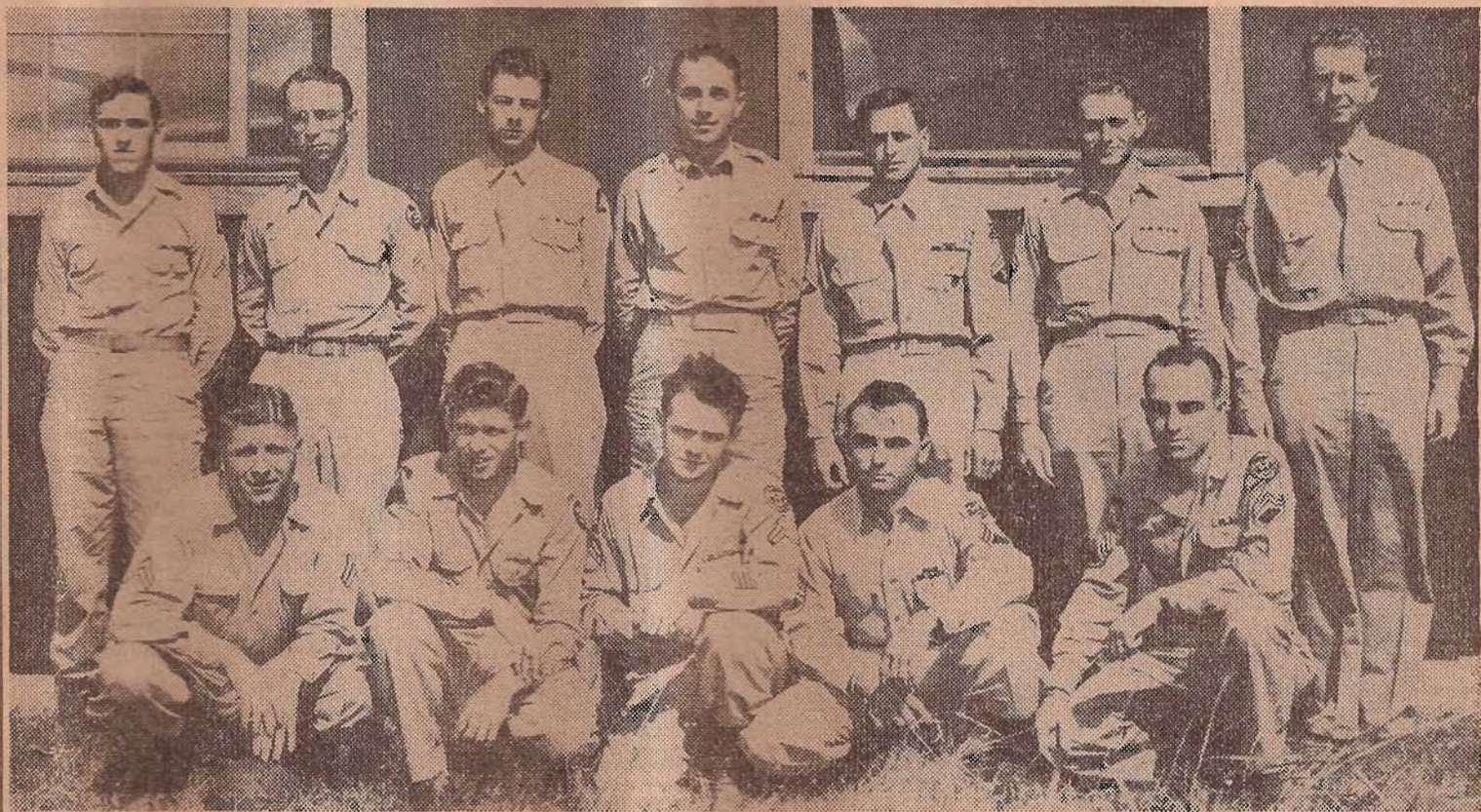
They didn't earn their stars the easy way. They were won out of 500 days of combat, and at one time, spending more than nine continuous months in the line. The first battle star is for Tunisia at Faid Pass and Kasserine Pass where they were new and inexperienced. "Besides that—we were slightly out numbered by the blasted Jerrys" asserted another man. "It was a tough baptism by fire."

The breaking of the Gothic line was where they became the first outfit in the theatre to be completely equipped with the new M-18 hellcat. Then came Bologna where they were snowbound and mudbound in the hills for six long months. After Bologna came the rat-race up the Po Valley where they helped the 88th Division capture 33,000. They've had three years experience and took part in five major campaigns. They fought with 75s on half track, M-10s, three inch towed guns and M-17s and played the role of artillery, anti-tank and assault guns.

Overseas 31 Months

Lt. Col. Fowler spent 31 months overseas as a tank commander, an amphibious commander and a TD commander. He served in the first armored division in Africa and was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French forces in Italy. He participated in action at Venafro, Cassino, the advances on Rome and Florence, Faid Pass and the Po Valley. He has five bronze stars and an arrowhead for amphibious operations. Major Baker D. Newton, the executive officer of the outfit, spent 36 months overseas. He earned five bronze stars in the major campaigns in Tunisia and Italy and was awarded the bronze star medal and Silver Star medal for gallantry in action. He was with the 805th in the push for Bologna (incidentally the 805th was the first Tank Destroyer outfit in Bologna) in the push for Bologna and the race to take Verona and smash the Nazi forces in the Po Valley.

alion Long On Battle Honors



HIGH POINT MEN—The 805 TD Bn brags about its high point men and gathered together the above group to prove a point! Left to right standings: Pfc William B. Oettle, T-5 Vincent C. Hammar, Pfc Grant D. DeVore, Lt. Col. Herbert B. Fowler, Battalion commander, who sports 152 points himself; T-5 Ralph L.

Brenner, T-5 Andrew J. Pruitt, and T-Sgt. James L. McEwen. Left to right front row: Cpl. Frank G. Smida, Pvt. Lyle E. McGunnigle, Cpl. John N. Francis, S-Sgt. James A. Connally, and S-Sgt. Gilbert Thibaudeau.