

UNIT HISTORY
of
692D TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

1942

The 692d Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated at Camp Gordon, Georgia 10 April 1942 in compliance with General Order number 17, Headquarters Camp Gordon, Georgia dated 6 April 1942 under T/O 18-15. The Battalion began basic training as soon as fillers were received, being designated as a replacement Battalion per authority contained in letter 320.2/363 SUBJECT "Replacement Pools" dated 2 October 1942, Headquarters AGF, Army War College, Washington, D.C.

1943

Replacement training was begun in January and in February, training as a combat unit was started. On 29 March, the Battalion moved from Camp Gordon, Georgia to Camp Bowie, Texas where basic training was begun. On 14 May, the Battalion moved from Camp Bowie to North Camp Hood, Texas, then to Camp Hood, Texas on 24 June 1943, where training was continued. From Camp Hood, Texas the unit entrained to Camp Phillips, Kansas on the 8 November. Tennessee maneuvers were begun after the subsequent move from Camp Phillips, Kansas to Carthage Junction, Tennessee on 1 December.

1944

Maneuver training was completed on 12 January and a move to Camp Campbell, Kentucky was made on 16 January, and thence to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey on 25 August. On 10 September the Battalion moved to the New York Port of Embarkation and boarded the transport HMS "Scythia" on 12 September. It arrived at Cherbourg, France on the 23 September and moved to Valognes staging area. The Battalion joined the 104th Infantry Division 28 October and was in Aachen, Germany area during November, reaching the Ruhr River in December. Defensive positions were taken up during the German break-through in the Ardennes.

1945

During January and February, the Battalion remained with the 104th Infantry Division and drove to the approaches of Cologne on 5 March. On the 21 March the Battalion joined the 42nd Infantry Division with the mission to breach the Siegfried Line. During April, the Battalion participated in the offensive which affected the penetration of Nuremberg and Munchen.

Incl 1

Revised by

Jan. 1945

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(Continued)

1945

At the termination of the war, the unit assumed occupational duties in Torwang, Germany and in Austria, in June. At the end of the war the Battalion had 193 days of combat duty, had received 525 awards and decorations, 106 enemy weapons and 43 enemy vehicles had been destroyed, 137 enemy strong points neutralized and 2492 prisoners had been taken. The Battalion arrived at Le Havre, France 7 July for re-deployment to the Pacific and sailed 14 August landing at Boston 26 August. In October, the Battalion assembled at Camp Swift, Texas, was reorganized during November and December under T/O 13-25 and training for an administrative cadre was begun.

1946

Administrative training was continued during January and February until orders for inactivation were received as of 8 February.

Richard T. Knowles
RICHARD T KNOWLES
Major FA (TD)
Commanding



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1943

During the week of 30 August to 5 September, the battalion underwent the Battle Conditioning Course, at Camp Hood, Texas. During this period the entire battalion bivouaced in the field, and all personnel were instructed and participated in woods fighting, infiltration with overhead fire, close combat, combat in cities, and other phases of Battle Conditioning. On 23 October, it completed advanced Unit Training and was relieved of attachment to the 17th Tank Destroyer Group and attached to the 20th Tank Destroyer Group. Upon completion of Unit Training, the battalion entered the third period of training.

The battalion departed Camp Hood, Texas, by rail on 6 November and arrived at Camp Phillips, Kansas, on 8 November 1943.

This permanent change of station was made under authority contained in letter, AGF, 370.5/52 (TD Units) (R) (6 November 1943) GNGCT, subject: "Transfer of 692d Tank Destroyer Battalion". Upon arrival at Camp Phillips, the battalion was relieved of assignment to the Tank Destroyer Center, and assigned to XI Corps, Second Army and further attached to 14th Tank Destroyer Group.

On 29 November the battalion departed from Camp Phillips, Kansas, by rail and arrived at Carthage Junction, Tennessee, on 1 December 1943. This temporary change of station to the Tennessee Maneuver Area was made under authority contained in letter, Headquarters, Second Army, file AG 370.5/16 (GNMBF), dated 22 September 1943, subject: "Instructing Domestic Troop Movement".

During the month of December the battalion participated in the Second Army Tennessee Maneuvers. Operating under the 14th Tank Destroyer Group, service in the "Tennessee Maneuvers" closely approximated actual warfare. All conditions of weather were encountered including rain, mud, sleet, snow and near-zero cold. Weapons and vehicles were properly cared for. All missions were vigorously and efficiently performed in spite of these adverse conditions. Accidents and the sick list was remarkably low, and there were few absences or derelictions for any cause. Commendable action on the part of this battalion at Cedar Bluff, Tennessee, on the night of 14-15 December permitted 2 river crossings to be made by the Red Force, of which this unit was a part. This unit's rear guard action in holding the enemy Blue Infantry enabled the river crossings to be made successfully. Much of the knowledge and experience gained in these maneuvers proved invaluable a year later during a bitter German winter.

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1944

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In January of 1944 Lt. Col. Harvey Shelton, who had commanded the 692d Tank Destroyer Battalion for over fourteen months, was transferred and Major John S. Hafer, Infantry, assumed command. In June Lt. Col. Samuel S. Morse joined the battalion and assumed command.

There was a large turnover in officer personnel again this year. The battalion received twenty-eight officers during the year and transferred forty-eight. The officer strength on 1 January 1944 was fifty-five and on 31 December 1944 it was thirty-five. The enlisted strength was 628 on 1 January 1944 and 723 on 31 December 1944. The changes in enlisted strength were caused by the increase in T/O strength when the battalion converted from a self-propelled to a towed battalion and the transfer of physically unqualified men in preparation for overseas movement. The monthly net increases and decreases in strength are shown in Table I below.

TABLE I

	net changes in officer strength	net changes in enlisted strength
January	decrease of 1	increase of 2
February	no net change	increase of 9
March	decrease of 2	increase of 123
April	decrease of 4	decrease of 6
May	no net change	increase of 3
June	increase of 1	increase of 25
July	decrease of 7	decrease of 4
August	decrease of 9	decrease of 48
September	no net change	no net change
October	no net change	decrease of 3
November	no net change	decrease of 2
December	increase of 2	decrease of 4

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The battalion completed its maneuver training on 12 January and immediately started an intensive program of maintenance of equipment. On 17 January the unit moved in its organic transportation from the Tennessee Maneuver Area to Camp Campbell, Kentucky. This move was made under authority contained in TWX, Headquarters Second Army, dated 3 January 1944 and TWX, Headquarters Second Army, dated 8 January 1944. Upon arrival at Camp Campbell the battalion was assigned to XX Corps but remained attached to 14th TD Group. In February the battalion was relieved of assignment to XX Corps and assigned to XXII Corps.

On 1 March the battalion was converted from a self-propelled to a towed tank destroyer battalion and despite the handicap of an acute lack of equipment started training in its new role. The changes in tactics necessitated by the use of a towed gun were studied and practiced by all ranks. As the new guns were received an intensive program of familiarization was started. Gunners were trained with the new weapon and later qualified with high scores. Tactical and Direct Firing Tests were taken in June and the battalion was declared qualified for overseas shipment. Preparation for overseas movement was rushed and at the same time the battalion took several weeks training in indirect firing. The indirect firing test was successfully completed early in August and the heavy equipment was sent to the New York Port of Embarkation to be prepared for overseas shipment.

The battalion departed Camp Campbell, Kentucky, by rail on 23 August and arrived Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 25 August. This permanent change of station was directed by paragraph 8, Special Orders #207, Headquarters 14th Detachment Special Troops, Second Army, dated 14 August 1944.

On 10 September the battalion moved by rail from Camp Kilmer to the New York Port and boarded the transport HMS Scythia. The Scythia left New York Harbor 12 September and after an uneventful crossing arrived Weymouth Harbor, England, 22 September. On 23 September the Scythia left Weymouth Harbor and arrived Cherbourg Harbor, France. Two days later the personnel disembarked and traveled by truck to the Valognes Staging Area, two miles southeast of Valognes, France. An administrative bivouac was set up and the next month was spent in receiving the equipment and preparing it for combat.

During the time the battalion was in Normandy it was assigned to Ninth Army, attached to the III and later the XVI Corps, and attached to the 104th (Timberwolf) Division. On 25 October the battalion departed Valognes in its organic motor transportation to join the 104th Division in Belgium. This permanent change of station was made under authority contained in letter, Normandy Base

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Section, subject: "Movement Orders" dated 23 October 1944. The night of 25-26 October was spent near Rambouillet, France, the night of 26-27 October near Monldee, France, and the night of 27-28 in a tactical bivouac near Wustwezel, Belgium, within four thousand yards of the front lines. Upon joining the 104th Division the unit was attached, for operational control, to the First Canadian Army.

After making a six hundred mile, three day, motor march, the battalion spent one day, 28 October, in maintenance, reconnaissance, and other preparations for battle. The following day the reconnaissance platoons and gun companies moved up to positions in support of the attacking infantry. By its very presence the battalion kept the Germans from launching any armored counter attacks. By direct fire on enemy observation posts and strong points the battalion gave the infantry direct support and saved them many casualties. The indirect fire of the unit was highly praised by the field artillery units supported. During the ten days of combat in this locality the enemy was driven from the northern part of Belgium to the Maas River. The purpose of this campaign was to drive the Germans from the area south of the Maas River thereby relieving the threat of counterattack against the city of Antwerp and cutting the lines of supply and communication of the enemy units holding out around the Scheldt Estuary. This purpose was quickly achieved and the facilities of the great port of Antwerp were made available for the unloading of supplies for the Allied Armies.

On 6 November the battalion less C Company withdrew and moved to an assembly area near Aachen, Germany. The next day was spent on maintenance. On 8 November C Company withdrew from the combat in Holland and joined the battalion. On this day B Company moved to firing positions in Germany. The next day the remainder of the battalion moved to positions in support of the 104th Infantry Division.

During the next month the 104th Division attacked and drove the enemy from the towns of Stolberg, Eschweiler, Weisweiler, Durwisch, Hehlrath, Inden, Lammersdorf, Frenz, Lucherberg, Pier, Schophoven, and Merken. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, they were driven from an important salient, and our front lines were established on the Roer River. This drive was widely recognized as one of the finest assaults of the war. Throughout the action the 692d Tank Destroyer Battalion rendered valuable support to the artillery by its well placed and effective indirect fire. Outstanding service was rendered by the platoons in direct support of the infantry. The destruction of pillboxes, gun emplacements, enemy strong points, and observation posts greatly assisted the infantry in their advances.

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