

HISTORY OF THE 637th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

- Oct., 1941 - 37th Division Provisional Tank Destroyer Battalion formed with National Guard and Selective Service personnel from Artillery and Engineer units as well as a few from Infantry, Military Police, etc. The Provisional Group participated in maneuvers with the 37th Division during August & September 1941 and stationed at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.
- Dec., 19, 1941 - The 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion was officially activated at Camp Shelby and developed from the 37th Division Provisional Tank Destroyer Battalion. Training had started using 75mm artillery guns as the basic weapon then with the new Tank Destroyer designation; a transition was made to 37mm Anti Tank guns.
- Feb., 1942 - 637th TD Battalion left Camp Shelby and were transported by train to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania where additional organization and training occupied the time of the troops.
- May 7, 1942 - Departed from Indiantown Gap, travelling by train to San Francisco, California. Troops were exercised on the hills of San Francisco until time to depart for an unknown destination.
- May 25, 1942 - The 637th boarded the ship Santa Clara and 18 days later landed at Auckland, New Zealand. The Santa Clara was in a convoy of five other ships and accompanied by the heavy cruiser San Francisco and two destroyers.
- June 19, 1942 - The TD Battalion was transported from Auckland to Suva, Fiji Islands aboard the ship President Coolidge accompanied by the New Zealand cruiser Leander.
- June 22, 1942 - Battalion arrives in Suva and transported by trucks to a temporary camp at Thuvu. A more permanent camp was established at Momi Bay. Pyramidal tents were the shelters provided for the troops while mess halls, kitchens, orderly rooms and supply, etc. were constructed mostly of native materials; wood pole frames and thatched roofs of grass. Walls, when needed were bamboo. As the camp was being established, the firing companies were setting up defense positions.
- Aug. 10, 1942 - Army Officer Candidate School opens at Natambua, Viti Levu. Men of the 637th TD Bn were selected to attend the school and after graduation were assigned to units of the 637th as second lieutenants.
- Nov. 11, 1942 - A second Army Officer Candidate School was conducted and some officers were assigned to the 637th. Training was continuous during the period of time the 637th was in Fiji. Ranges were built for qualifications in the use of weapons; an obstacle course and other training aids devised; A special jungle training was included with trips into the jungles, living with food from the land. While in Fiji, the 637th was reorganized with some shifting of personnel. The organization now consisted of Headquarters Co., A Co., B Co., C Co. and Reconnaissance Co.. Pioneer Co. dissolved into Recon. Co. with one platoon designated as the Pioneer Platoon.
- 1943
- 1944
- Aug. 19, 1944 - The 637th moved from Momi Bay to areas near Nandi. All units of the 637th embarked from Lautoka, Fiji, aboard a Navy ship which headed north to Espiritu Santo where the battalion disembarked and established a new camp. Extensive training was the order at Espiritu Santo. A special jungle school was held and then the new M-18 Tank Destroyers arrived along with a factory representative who instructed the dismantling and reassembly as well as the proper operation, servicing, etc.

Sept. 1944 The Battalion left Espiritu Santo by troop transport ship to Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. Troops and equipment were lightered ashore at Empress Augusta Bay where an encampment was established next to the 148th Infantry. The 637th was now attached to IV Corps. While in Bougainville some of the men were eligible for rotation; having spent over two years overseas, and others remained to greet and train new replacements arriving from the U.S.

Nov.-Dec. '44 The 637th was divided into small units assigned to different ships for the trip and assault scheduled for the landing in the Philippines. Ships were loaded at intervals and then proceeded to their assigned rendezvous points to meet with convoys of ships headed for the Philippines.

Jan. 9, 1945 Landings began on the shores of Lingayan Gulf and continued for several weeks as lightering was required to reach the beaches. After a short period of time, units were reassembled and started their drive toward Manila. Reconnaissance Co. sent out platoons to seek and find enemy positions along the way, engaging in light skirmishes.

Jan. 27, 1945 Engagement with enemy forces at Angeles and the first encounter with Japanese tanks in the area of Clark Field.

Feb. 4, 1945 The battalion participated in the approach march on Manila, fought the battle north of the Pasig River, took part in the attack on the Intramuros and was in the final battles south of the Pasig. For these actions the battalion was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation (General Orders No. 13, War Department, 1 February, 1946).

Mar. 1945 After the Manila campaign the battalion was part of XIV Corps in the Batangas campaign assisting both the 1st Cavalry Division and the 11th Airborne Division, in the battles at Mount Macolod and Mount Malepunyo. Company B of the 637th was attached to the 37th Division for the Baguio and Cagayan Valley campaigns and took part with the Division in all battles.

Mar. 1945 At the close of the Luzon campaigns the battalion was assembled at Muntinlupa, south of Manila, for re-equipment, replacements and renewed training. A Tank Destroyer cadre of approximately 550 replacements from Camp Hood, Texas provided replacements now in command of Col. Ward III, replacing Col. McNelly, who had served since 1942.

May The battalion was assigned to the Sixth Army and sailed for Japan in September as part of the occupation forces. The original members of this battalion had, in a large part, returned to the United States by the end of 1945.

# HISTORY OF THE 637th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

Commanding Officers- Lt.Col. Carlos Fish (Provisional) Nov. '41  
Lt.Col. Gilmore (135thFA) '42  
Lt.Col. Russell Ramsey (135thFA) July '42  
Lt.Col. Richard McNelly (135thFA) '42-'45

Executive Officers Maj. Col. Critchfield<sup>Ward 111</sup> (134thFA) 1945  
Maj. Floyd Dunning (37th MP)  
Maj. Delbert Schultz (145th Inf)  
Maj. Stokes  
Maj. Allison D. Holmes (135thFA)

S-1 (Administration) Capt. Frank Dickson ( )

S-2 (Intelligence) Capt. Vilas Lautzenheiser (136thFA)  
Capt. Stokes  
Capt. Doolittle (136thFA)

S-3 ( Training ) Capt. Morris Zimmerman ( )  
Capt. Rufus Bynum ( )

S-4 ( Supply ) Capt. Isom Gillory ( )  
Capt. Rosenberger ( )  
Capt. Lyle Milligan ( )  
Lt. John Maxwell ( )  
Lt. Edwin Cottier ( )  
Capt. Vilas Lautzenheiser (136thFA)

Headquarters Company Lt. Don Renner (134thFA)  
Capt. Edwards (Div. HQ)  
Capt. Clyde Wilburn (145th Inf)  
Lt. Harold Arnett ( ) OCS  
Lt. Doolittle ( )  
Capt. Lyle Milligan ( )  
Lt. John Maxwell ( )  
Lt. John Montgomery ( ) OCS  
Capt. Rosenberg, MD  
Capt. Losoff DDS  
Capt. Fink MD(112th Med)  
Capt. Bond MD  
Capt. Diedrich Haines MD  
1st Sgt. Clancy Wells  
1st Sgt. Harold Brisker  
Sgt. Major Robt. Ammiller  
W.O. Harold Mott  
Clerk - White  
ED Goodman  
Henry Lalla

NOTE: Names given in order of their assignment

637th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

"A" Company

Capt. Lerner ( )  
Capt. Chet Brown ( )  
Capt. Isom Gillory ( )  
  
Lt. Norm Fuller ( ) OCS  
Lt. Gerald Cooke ( ) OCS  
Lt. Edwin Cottier ( )  
Lt. John Maxwell ( )

"B" Company

1st Sarg. Ray Rosing  
Capt. Wilber Ireland (38thDiv)  
Capt. Clark Singleterry (136thFA)  
Capt. Chet Brown ( )  
Capt. Ken Dawson ( )  
Capt. Bob Green ( ) OCS  
  
Lt. Ken Dawson ( )  
Lt. Bob Ellis ( )  
Lt. Paul Goetz ( )  
Lt. Ulrich ( )

"C" Company

1st Sarg. Nick Zatezalo  
Capt. Raye (38th Div)  
Lt Clark Singleterry (temp)  
Capt. Allison (A.D.) Holmes (135thFA)  
  
Lt. Daryl Horlander ( )  
Lt. Dale Sanders ( )  
Lt. Bob Strasmyer (136thFA) OCS  
Lt. Steve Polachek (136thFA) OCS  
Lt. Tom McNally ( ) OCS  
Lt. Bob Porrier (136thFA) OCS  
  
1st Sarg. Bob Green  
1st Sarg. Crawford

1. PIONEER Company

Capt. Bill Lytle (112th Engrs)  
Lt. Schubert (112th Engrs)  
Lt. Baxter (112th Engrs)  
Lt. Ned Thatcher ( ) OCS  
Lt. John Maxwell ( )  
1st Sarg.

2. Reconnaissance Company

Capt. Lyle Milligan ( )  
Lt. Bob Forsythe ( )  
Lt. Bob Strasmyer (136thFA) OCS  
Lt. John Montgomery ( ) OCS  
Lt. Gerald Cooke ( ) OCS  
Lt. Clancy Wells ( ) OCS  
Lt. Paul Snacker ( )  
Lt. Mumford ( )  
Lt.  
1st Sarg. Bob Guenther

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