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By JH HAWA, DAA 3112

HISTORY OF THE 827TH TANK DESTROYER
BATTALION

ISBT - 827-0.1

Prepared by Captain E.L. Jahn

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HISTORY OF THE 827TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

The 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion was constituted on the 15th of March, 1942, pursuant to letter, Army Ground Forces and was activated on April 20, 1942 at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, pursuant to General Orders No. 17, Headquarters, Camp Forrest, Tennessee, dated April 20, 1942.

The initial cadre for activation consisted of 10 Officers of the 4th Cavalry Brigade, Fort Riley, Kansas and 77 Enlisted men (colored). Five Officers were furnished by the Fourth Cavalry, Fort Meade, South Dakota.

Initial assignments were as follows:

Commanding Officer.....Captain Francis McKane Oliver
 Executive.....Captain Burlle R. Farr
 Adjutant.....2nd Lt. Russell H. Rothweiler
 Operations Officer.....1st Lt. Robert V. Ely
 Supply Officer.....1st Lt. William B. Perry
 Asst. Supply Officer.....2nd Lt. Robert M. Parker
 Personnel Officer.....2nd Lt. Edward L. Jahn
 C.O. Headquarters Co.....1st Lt. Joe N. Love
 C.O. Recon. Company.....1st Lt. James E. Bing
 C.O. Company "A".....1st Lt. George R. Hill
 C.O. Company "B".....1st Lt. Leif E. Olsen, Jr.
 C.O. Company "C".....2nd Lt. George J. Cook
 Battalion SurgeonCaptain John B. Elders
 Bn. Communications O.....1st Lt. Willis V. Johnson
 Pioneer O, Recon. Co.....2nd Lt. Leo V. Steible
 Executive O, Company "B".2nd Lt. Richard J. Lilley

First Sergeants and other Key Non-coms were as follows:

Battalion Sergeant Major..Staff Sgt. Arthur S. Williams
 Battalion Supply Sergeant..Staff Sgt. Quincy Powell
 1st Sgt., Hq. Company.....Staff Sgt. Jesse Gant
 1st Sgt., Recon. Company..Staff Sgt. Green Blassingill
 1st Sgt., Company "A".....Staff Sgt. Joe Oliver
 1st Sgt., Company "B".....Staff Sgt. Alonzo Shearer
 1st Sgt., Company "C".....Staff Sgt. Monroe Lee
 Battalion Motor Sergeant..Staff Sgt. Archie Jones

The Battalion was attached to Second Army, and in turn attached to the 33rd Infantry Division for administration and training.

On April 26, 1942, the Battalion was attached to the Provisional Tank Destroyer Group, commanded by Lt. Colonel Hunt, which consisted of the 633rd, 773, and 810th Tank Destroyer Battalions.

May 13, 1942 marked the arrival of Lieutenant Colonel Frederick H. L. Ryder, Cavalry, from Fort Leonard Wood, Rolla, Missouri, where he had been Post Commander, to assume command of the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The month of April had affected some minor changes in the Battalion organization. The Battalion was designated as a "Heavy, self-propelled Tank Destroyer Battalion". Second Lieutenant Jahn became Battalion Adjutant in place of Second Lieutenant Rothweiler who became Battalion Motor Officer.

On May 24, 1942, nine Officers graduates of the Infantry School Officer Candidate School were assigned to and joined the Battalion, as follows:

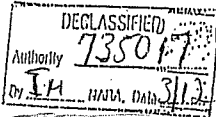
2nd Lt. Aubrey S. Hollingsworth
 2nd Lt. Jacques O. Partain, Jr.
 2nd Lt. Talmadge L. Burnette
 2nd Lt. Benjamin S. Hunter
 2nd Lt. Joseph J. Mack
 2nd Lt. Karl D. Hagerstrand
 2nd Lt. William H. Gronning
 2nd Lt. Willis N. Tucker
 2nd Lt. Thomas E. Wise

The new Officers were assigned to the various companies.

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History of the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion (C .)

The remainder of the month was spent by the Battalion in range firing at Camp Forrest. Personnel fired the model 1917 "Eddystone" Rifle, caliber .30 and approximately 36% qualified as marksman or better. The course was in the nature of familiarization-with-weapon firing.

Captain Oliver became Battalion Executive and Captain Farr became Battalion Intelligence Officer.

The month of June, 1942 was spent in the construction of a Battalion Obstacle course just East of the Battalion Housing Area, and in 37mm Sub-caliber firing. Personnel were required to complete the running of the obstacle course daily except Sunday, contributing to the physical fitness of the command as a whole.

The month of July, 1942 was spent in minor tactics, road marches, and routine garrison duties. The Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 33rd Division and was attached to the 14th Field Artillery Brigade for administration. Several promotions of Officers had taken place in June,.... Captain Oliver was promoted to Major,...Lieutenants Perry, Love, Hill, and Ely were promoted to Captain,...Lieutenants Cook, Steible, Rothweiler, and Jahn were promoted to First Lieutenants. Key Non-commissioned Officers were promoted to grades corresponding to their duties.

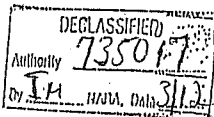
In August, 1942, the Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 14th Field Artillery Brigade and was attached to the 11th Detachment, Headquarters Army Special Troops, Second Army, which had its Headquarters at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. On August 14, 1942, Colonel Ryder was relieved from assignment to the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and departed for his new station at Fort Riley, Kansas. Captain Farr assumed command of the Battalion during the temporary absence of Major Oliver, who was attending the Command and General Staff School. On August 22, 1942, the Battalion received Orders to move to temporary station at Camp Hood, Texas, home of the Tank Destroyer Command, for training. The latter days of the month were spent in preparing the Battalion for the train movement. The Battalion proceeded to its new station on September 2, 1942 and arrived at Camp Hood, Texas on September 4, 1942. It consisted of 653 enlisted men and 25 Officers.

On arrival at Camp Hood, Texas, the Battalion was assigned to the Advanced Unit Training Center, Tank Destroyer Center, for twelve weeks of tactical and administrative training. It was housed in the Cantonment Area proper. The month of September was taken up with garrison duties and minor unit tactics. On September 25, 1942, Major John W. Darrah, Jr. arrived from Fort Riley, Kansas to assume command of the Battalion vice Major Oliver who had been relieved from assignment and assigned to the Cavalry School.

In October, 1942, the Battalion was relieved from assignment to the Second Army and was assigned permanently to the Tank Destroyer Center. First Lieutenants Ambinder (Medical Corps), and First Lieutenants Harold Sabin, and Louis Kanefsky (Latter two Officers Dental Corps) were assigned to and joined the Battalion. First Lieutenant Johnson was relieved from assignment to the Battalion and was assigned to the 9th Tank Destroyer Group. The Battalion entered upon its range firing season and completed the course creditably. It established a high record for similar units in the firing of the .30 caliber machine gun, and received a commendation from Brigadier General Richard Tindall, commanding the Advanced Unit Training Center, for its record on the range which was unquestionably good. In October, also, the Battalion spent three days on the Tank Hunting Course Number 2, and made an excellent showing there, receiving a commendation therefore from General Tindall. During the month of October, the Battalion received several increments of filler enlisted replacements which, continued through November, was to place the Battalion enlisted strength at a high of 1010, 144 enlisted men above authorized strength.

In November, the Battalion performed the usual garrison duties, received most of its motor vehicles (except combat vehicles), and continued specialized tactical training under the AUTC.

In December, 1942, the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion was notified that it would become one of the several "School Troop Battalions" of the Tank Destroyer Center Training Brigade upon completion of its three months training under the AUTC.



HISTORY OF THE
827TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

The 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion was constituted on the 15th of March, 1942 in compliance with letter, War Department, The Adjutant General's Office, AG 320.2 (2-27-42) MR- M-C, Subject: "Constitution and Activation of Certain Tank Destroyer Battalions" dated March 15, 1942, and inclosure thereto and General Orders No. 23, Headquarters Second Army dated April 13, 1942.

A unit hereinafter to be known as the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion, is activated at this station, effective this date, organized under Tables of Organization 18-25; strength Thirty-five Officers and Eight hundred seven Enlisted men; with enlisted cadre to be derived by assignment from the Second Cavalry Division; is upon activation attached to Second Army and is attached to the Thirty-third Infantry Division, this station, for administration, duty, and Courts-Martial jurisdiction. As contained in Section V, Special Orders Number 17, Headquarters Camp Forrest, Tennessee, dated April 20, 1942.

The initial Cadre for activation consisted of 10 Officers and 77 Enlisted men (colored). Five Officers were furnished by the 4th Cavalry, Fort Meade, South Dakota which were as follows:

Staff:

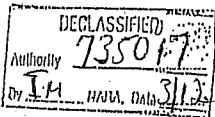
- Commanding Officer.....Captain Francis McKane Oliver
- Executive Officer.....Captain Burle R. Farr
- Intelligence Officer.....
- Operations Officer.....1st Lieut. Robert V. Ely
- Supply Officer.....1st Lieut. William B. Perry
- Asst. Supply Officer.....2nd Lieut. Robert M. Parker
- Adjutant.....2nd Lieut. Russell H. Rothweiler
- Personnel Officer.....2nd Lieut. Edward L. Jahn
- CO, Headquarters Company.....1st Lieut. Joe N. Love
- CO, Reconnaissance Company.....1st Lieut. James E. Bing
- CO, Company "A".....1st Lieut. George R. Hill
- CO, Company "B".....1st Lieut. Leif E. Olsen, Jr.
- CO, Company "C".....2nd Lieut. George J. Cook
- Battalion Surgeon.....Captain John B. Elders
- Executive Officer, Company "B".....2nd Lieut. Richard J. Lilley
- Pioneer Officer, Recon. Company.....2nd Lieut. Leo V. Steible
- Battalion Communications Officer.....1st Lieut. Willis V. Johnson

Enlisted Staff:

- Battalion Sergeant Major.....Arthur G. Williams, Staff Sergeant
- Personnel Sergeant Major.....Adolph Holmes, Sergeant
- Battalion Supply Sergeant.....Quincy Powell, Staff Sergeant
- Battalion Motor Sergeant.....Archie Jones, Technical Sergeant
- First Sergeant Headquarters Company.....Jesse Gant, Staff Sergeant
- First Sergeant Reconnaissance Company...Green Blassingill, Staff Sergeant
- First Sergeant Company "A".....Joe Oliver, Staff Sergeant
- First Sergeant Company "B".....Alonzo Shearer, Staff Sergeant
- First Sergeant Company "C".....Monroe Lee, Staff Sergeant

Other Enlisted Personnel on initial order:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sgt. Dennison Graine | Sgt. Samuel G. Smith | Sgt. Andrew Favors |
| Pfc. Joseph Adams | Sgt. John D. Carson | Sgt. James L. Taylor |
| Sgt. Claude Johnson | Sgt. Guthrie McKinney | Cpl. William L. Duncan |
| Sgt. Davis McGee | Sgt. Benoaal R. Nicles | Cpl. Edward Goodlow |
| Sgt. Clarence Collins | S/Sgt. Robert G. Johnson | Sgt. Herbert Hodge |
| S/Sgt. William Anderson | Pvt. Thaddeus W. Carper | Sgt. Jalester Linton |
| Pvt. Livingston Vaughn | Pvt. John D. Armstrong | Sgt. Nathaniel Barber |
| Sgt. Philip Hardin | Pfc. William E. Campbell | Sgt. J. D. Lloyd |
| Pfc. Harvest Webb | Pfc. Malcolm E. Higgins | Sgt. Joseph L. Keeby |
| Pvt. Flennaral Martin | Pvt. Frank N. Owens | Cpl. James S. Harris |
| Pvt. Frank Early | Pvt. William O. Jones | Cpl. Edgar Penn |
| Cpl. Willie D. Miller | Pfc. James N. Smith | Pvt. James P. Jones |
| Pvt. Gaylord M. Thomas | Pvt. William J. Proctor | Cpl. Junior Beane |
| Cpl. Frederick S. Lavizzo | Pvt. George E. Berry | Pvt. Alvin Peters |
| Pfc. Glover L. Samuels | Pvt. Nathaniel S. Brown | Pvt. Roland L. Woodfork |
| Pfc. Ernest H. Clayborn | Pvt. Richard V. Hicks | Pfc. Milfred W. Blanks |
| Pvt. Paul Barbee | Pvt. Ocie Hopkins | Pvt. Alonzo Patton |
| Pvt. Odon Lewis | Pfc. Bobie Dixon | Pvt. Harry H. Brown |
| Pvt. Paul Smith | Pfc. John W. Brown | Pfc. William S. Hawkins |



History of the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Cont.)

Other Enlisted Personnel on initial order:

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pvt. George R. Chafin | Pfc. Woodrow W. Walker | Pvt. Gilbert Swan |
| Private Eddie L. Bascomb | Pfc. Jimmie Rooker | Pfc. Virgil D. Washington |
| Pvt. Thomas Fuller | Pvt. Kelly Christian | Cpl. Harold Grimette |

The Battalion upon its activation was attached to the Second Army, for administration and training.

On April 26, 1942, the Battalion was attached to the Provisional Tank Destroyer Group, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hunt, which consisted of the 633rd, 773rd, and 810th Tank Destroyer Battalions.

The Battalion continued its course of training and on May 13, 1942 marked the arrival of Lieutenant Colonel Frederick H. L. Ryder, Cavalry, from Fort Leonard Wood, Rolla, Missouri, where he had been Post Commander, to assume command of the Eight twenty seventh Tank Destroyer Battalion. The month of April had affected some minor changes in the Battalion organization. The Battalion was designated as a "Heavy, self-propelled Tank Destroyer Battalion". Second Lieutenant Jahn became Battalion adjutant in place of Second Lieutenant Rothweiler who became Battalion Motor Officer.

On May 24, 1942, nine officers graduates of the Infantry School Officer Candidate School were assigned to and joined the Battalion, as follows:

Second Lieutenant Aubrey S. Hollingsworth
 Second Lieutenant Jacques O. Partain, Jr.
 Second Lieutenant Talmadge L. Burnette
 Second Lieutenant Benjamin S. Hunter
 Second Lieutenant Joseph J. Mack
 Second Lieutenant Karl D. Hagerstrand
 Second Lieutenant William H. Gronning
 Second Lieutenant Willis N. Tucker
 Second Lieutenant Thomas E. Wise
 The new Officers were assigned to the various companies in the Battalion.

On May 25, 1942 the Battalion was attached to the Thirty-third Division for duty, administration, and Courts-Martial Jurisdiction.

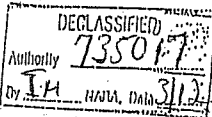
The remainder of the month was spent by the Battalion in range firing at Camp Forrest. Personnel fired the Model 1917 "Eddystone" Rifle, caliber .30 with approximately Thirty-six percent qualifying as marksman or better. The course was in the nature of familiarization-with-weapon firing.

Captain Oliver became Battalion Executive and Captain Farr became Battalion Intelligence Officer.

During the first part of June a supplement of men arrived from Camp Croft, South Carolina, later other men arrived from Camp Wolters, Texas. The Battalion then proceeded in the course of training and administration. Part of the month was spent in the construction of a Battalion Obstacle course just East of the Battalion Housing Area, and in the 37mm sub-caliber firing. Personnel were required to complete the running of the course daily except Sunday, contributing to the physical fitness of the command as a whole.

The month of July, 1942 was spent in the instruction and demonstrations in minor tactics, road marches, and other routine garrison duties. The Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 33rd Division and was attached to the 14th Field Artillery Brigade for administration. Several promotions of Officers and Enlisted men were accomplished, some of them in June. Captain Oliver was promoted to Major, ...Lieutenants Perry, Love, Hill, and Ely were promoted to Captain, ...Lieutenants Cook, Steible, Rothweiler, and Jahn were promoted to First Lieutenants. The enlisted men promotions were limited to the grades corresponding to their duties.

In August, 1942 numerous changes occurred, the Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 14th Field Artillery Brigade and was attached to the 11th Detachment, Headquarters Army Special Troops, Second Army, which had its Headquarters at Camp Forrest, Tennessee.



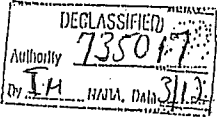
History of the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Cont.)

Several more promotions of Officers took place during November and December. Major Darrah was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Lieutenants Rothweiler, and Jahn to Captain, and Lieutenant Lilley, Parker, Hollingsworth, Partain, Burnette, Hunter, Wise, Mack, Hagerstrand, Gronning, and Tucker to First Lieutenants. Captain Farr, who was Executive Officer and was attending the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, was promoted to Major. Several Officers were sent to the Orientation and Basic Tactical Courses at the Tank Destroyer School, and approximately 20 new Second Lieutenants, graduates of the Tank Destroyer Officers Candidate Courses, joined the Battalion. Lieutenants Hunter, and Burnette returned from the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, and the Infantry School at Fort Benning, respectively, where both officers had been taking the communications courses.

In January, 1943, the Battalion was undergoing cadre and specialized training, performed the usual garrison duties, and was finishing its training under the AUTC. Several changes in assignment of Officers occurred. Lieutenants Hollingsworth, Lilley, became Company Commanders.

February, 1943 marked the formal assignment of the Battalion to the Training Brigade as a "School Battalion". The month was taken up in the preparation of the various organizations of the Battalion to assume their new duties as demonstration troops for the Tank Destroyer School. A Cadre of 83 enlisted men left to activate the 649th Tank Destroyer Battalion, at Camp Bowie, Texas on the 19th of February. The Battalion also furnished five Officers for this cadre. Captain Olsen, who had been with the Battalion since its activation, was transferred to the 649th TD Battalion, Major Farr was transferred to the 648th TD Battalion, Captains Ely, Perry, and Lieutenants Bing, Cook, Steible, Lilley, Gronning, Mack, Wise were transferred to the Tank Destroyer Replacement Training Center Pool. First Lieutenant Tucker was transferred to the Air Corps. The War Department approved the proposed coat of arms and motto for the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion on the 26th of February. The Battalion was notified to prepare to be re-organized as a Towed Gun Battalion (3" Gun Towed by M3 Half-track)

March, 1943 was taken up in the usual garrison duties and by this time the Battalion was full-swing into its part in the regular School Demonstrations.



Lt. Col. Hudson in accordance with TP's in AG

On 6 March 1943, orders were received to furnish a cadre of six (6) Officers and 90 Enlisted Men for the 649th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which this Battalion was to be the parent unit.

On 23 March 1943, the Battalion received its first increment of Colored Officers (a total of 23) who were assigned various duties as Platoon Leaders and a few to the Special Staff.

During the months of April and May 1943, the Battalion performed duties as School Troops for the Tank Destroyer School and were assigned to the Training Brigade, Tank Destroyer Center, Camp Hood, Texas.

The Battalion observed its First Anniversary on 20 April 1943, with a Field Day Program which Company "E" won first prize.

During June 1943, all companies, except Headquarters Company, occupied a bivouac under tactical conditions for week in the field. Unit training consisted mostly of night, blackout, marches and at least two (2) dismounted road marches of 15 miles per week.

On June 4, 1943, the Battalion was reorganized per Letter, Headquarters Army Ground Forces, 4 June 1943, Subject: "Reorganization of Tank Destroyer Battalion," reference 321/14 (TD Units) (R) GNGCT (6-4-43) as a towed battalion under T/O 18-35, 7 May 1943. This change caused the inactivation of Reconnaissance Company, however, raised the strength.

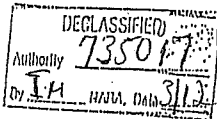
20 July 1943, the Battalion was reorganized per Letter Headquarters Army Ground Forces, 13 July 1943, Subject: "Reorganization of 662d and 827th Tank Destroyer Battalions," Reference 321/18 (TD Units)(R) 13 July 1943) GNGCT as a self-propelled Battalion under T.O 18-25, dated 27 January 1943. The Battalion was relieved from duty as School Troops per General Order No. 49, Headquarters Tank Destroyer Center, dated 20 July 1943 and assigned to Tank Destroyer Advanced Unit Training Center, on 20 July 1943, to undergo a six weeks refresher course.

29 July 1943, Lt. Col. George B. Hudson, Cavalry was assigned to be Commanding Officer and was relieved from assignment and transferred to the Cavalry Replacement Pool, Fort Riley, Kansas, on 9th August 1943. On 17 August 1943, Lt. Col. John W. Darrah, Cavalry, was relieved from assignment as Battalion Commander and transferred to Port of Embarkation, Miami, Florida and a POR.

On 25 August 1943, Lt. Col. Herschel D. Baker, F. A., was assigned to the Battalion as Commanding Officer. Lt. Col. Baker had just returned from overseas where he commanded the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, during the entire North African Campaign.

During July, August and September, 1943, the Battalion underwent extensive training in marksmanship in all weapons and tactical training from small units to the Battalion.

September 30, 1943, the Battalion was inspected by Major Frank H. Thompson, Inspector General, Tank Destroyer Center and rated generally Unsatisfactory.



On 2 October 1943, the Battalion departed Camp Hood, Texas, for a permanent change of station, enroute to the Desert Training Center, California, per Letter, Headquarters, Army Ground Forces, dated 18 September, 1943, reference 370.5/42 (TD) (R) 18 Sept 43) GNGCT. The movement was made in two serials - one commanded by Captain George R. Hill, C. O., Company "A", which carried Co. "A" and all destroyers; then the other carried the remainder of the Battalion. The first train left at 0900 hours and the second at 1400 hours. On 4 October, 1943 at 1415, the second train arrived in Goffs, California, and at 2355 the first train arrived. The Battalion was attached to the 93rd Infantry Division upon arrival.

During the month of October, 1943, the Battalion was undergoing small unit training and preparing for 93rd Division "D" exercises and Corps Maneuvers.

On November 2, 1943, at 1400 hours, the Battalion moved into the field for "D" exercises under the 12th Tank Destroyer Group. The entire maneuver was spent with the Battalion getting experience in performing its primary mission and on several occasions its secondary mission. The maneuvers were completed on the 12 December, 1943 which date we returned to Essex, California, and started issuing furloughs to meet POM requirements. December 31, 1943, the Battalion was alerted and preparing to meet POM requirements and having received twelve (12) new Officers from the Tank Destroyer Officers Replacement Pool.

January 1944, found the Battalion still alerted and training to meet POM requirements. During January quite a few Officers were transferred to other organizations and the Battalion received fourteen (14) Field Artillery Officers. The remainder of the month was spent in schools on indirect fire which were concluded by all Officers and Platoon Sergeants firing by all three methods indirect fire problems. On 11 January 1944, the Battalion received 97 replacements for men to be transferred out, all of whom were from Tank Destroyer Organizations and Tank Destroyer trained.

February, 1944, saw the alert called off and the Battalion received orders, per Letter, Headquarters, AGF, dated 15 February, 1944, reference 370.5/106 (TD Units) (R) (15 Feb 44) GNGCT, Subject: "Transfer of Certain Tank Destroyer Units," to make a permanent change of station to Fort Huachuca Arizona, and upon arrival thereat to be attached to XXIII Corps, Fourth Army. The Battalion moved by rail its M-10s and the entire battalion moved overland departing Essex, California, on 27 February 1944 at 0430 hours enroute to Fort Huachuca. The Battalion arrived in Fort Huachuca, at 1200 hours 29 February, 1944; distance marched was 592 miles and was an excellent march.