

HISTORICAL *and* PICTORIAL REVIEW

609TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

UNITED STATES ARMY



FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA

1942

609th TANK DESTROYER  
\* \* BATTALION \* \*

FORT BRAGG

HEADQUARTERS  
SIX HUNDRED AND NINTH TANK  
DESTROYER BATTALION

FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA



May 20, 1942.

*To All Members of the Six Hundred and Ninth Tank Destroyer Battalion.  
Greetings:*

We are not only a new Battalion, but we are a part of a new Branch of the Service so to speak.

As the people of our nation have recently ceased to think and speak in terms of Defense and rather now have become imbued with the spirit of the Offensive, so we have evolved from the defensive antitank elements to the offensive Tank Destroyer Battalion.

We are progressing rapidly in this pioneer field of training for the purpose of seeking out and destroying the blitz in its lair, and at the same time not minimizing in any way the consideration of stopping the enemy mechanized units once they are launched in the assault.

During the brief history of the 609th, it has come to be known as a smooth operating, efficient and dependable Battalion; this in no small part due to the superb leadership of the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Russell T. Finn.

As your Battalion Commander in the temporary absence of Colonel Finn, may I prophesy a great future for the Battalion and admonish you to "Carry On."

As another pioneer once said, "Hue to the line and let the chips fall where they may."

*Major, 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
Commanding*



**GORDON V. HOLCOMB**

*Major*

Commanding

Born August 21, 1904, near Hot Springs, Arkansas. Attended Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Graduated in 1929. Commissioned Second Lieutenant through Citizens Military Training Camp, on December 14, 1925. Served as Flying Cadet in the United States Army. Underwent flight training at March Field, Riverside, California, in 1929. Received Master of Science Degree from Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1931. Served with detective bureau, Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D. C., in 1931-35. Was aide to General Pelham D. Glassford, 1931-32 during his tenure as chief of the police force. Throughout services as commissioned officer in Reserve Corps, attended O. R. C. Summer Camps at Fort Sill and Fort Hoyle, Maryland. Was com-

missioned First Lieutenant Field Artillery (Reserve) on December 19, 1929; Captain, on August 24, 1934, and Major on March 20, 1941. Participated in the Second Army maneuvers in June, 1941, with the 105th Field Artillery of the 27th Division. Entered service on January 12, 1942, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. At completion of officers training course was executive of the 29th Training Battalion, Field Artillery Replacement Training Center, Fort Sill. Reported to duty at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on April 7, 1942. Assigned to 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion as executive. Assumed command of the 609th in the absence of Lieutenant Colonel R. T. Finn, who was detailed to temporary duty at the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.



THOMAS S. LEITCH  
Captain  
S-3



WILLIAM D. RICHARDSON  
Captain  
S-4



# BATTALION STAFF

## *609th Tank Destroyer Battalion*



ROBERT U. WINTERS  
First Lieutenant  
S-1



SIMPSON B. DAUGHERTY  
Major  
Chaplain

# History

## 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion

On December 15, 1941, eight days after the battle cry of an enraged America became "Remember Pearl Harbor," the 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion, a new unit in one of the newer branches of the service, was activated.

The Battalion was activated at its present post, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and on December 17, 1941, Major R. T. Finn assumed command of the Battalion which was, when activated, a part of the Ninth Division.

In the earlier days of the expansion of the new army of the United States there were few separate tank destroyer outfits. Instead, each of the Field Artillery Battalions had an Antitank Platoon in its Headquarters Battery. At Fort Bragg on July 15, 1941, the Headquarters Battery Antitank Platoons of the 26th F. A., 60th F. A., 84th F. A., 34th F. A., and Battery D of the 34th F. A. combined to form the Provisional Antitank Battalion attached to the Ninth Division. This Battalion had three firing companies and a Headquarters Detachment.

The newly formed Battalion had no headquarters building or motor pool or drill field until in August when they moved to buildings between 7th and 8th streets behind the Ninth Division Artillery Headquarters. In February 400 men were sent

from the Replacement Center to bring the new organization up to Battalion strength. Major R. T. Finn, commanding officer from the Battery D of the 34th F. A. was placed in command of the new unit.

The training period was extensive for all of the men in the new battalion at Fort Bragg during the spring and summer months and on September 22, 1941, the Provisional Antitank Battalion left Fort Bragg on maneuvers with the First Army. They were away from Fort Bragg until December 1, 1941. While on these maneuvers, the Battalion had base camps at Rock Hill, South Carolina, and near Laurenburg, North Carolina.

After the return from maneuvers and on December 15, 1941, the 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated with its personnel coming from the Provisional Antitank Battalion. Major Finn remained in command, being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on December 12, 1941. On April 25, 1942, he was detailed to special duty to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The Battalion, now under the command of Major G. V. Holcomb, continues its training and work day by day and is continually proving the importance of its work in the mechanized and expanding army of these United States.

## *Insignia*



### BLAZONRY

Inasmuch as personnel of the 609th Battalion came from Field Artillery organizations, the Field Artillery color of red is used as the color of the shield. The hand holding a burning torch is of gold. The inscription on the scroll "Siempre Listo" is Spanish for "Always Ready."

## *609th Tank-Destroyer Battalion*



## *In Action*



**C a n n o n e e r s   D r i l l   a t**  
**R e v i e w   f o r   S e c r e t a r y   S t i m s o n**





ANTITANK GUN INSPECTION

ANTITANK GUN INSPECTION

**I  
N  
S  
P  
E  
C  
T  
I  
O  
N**

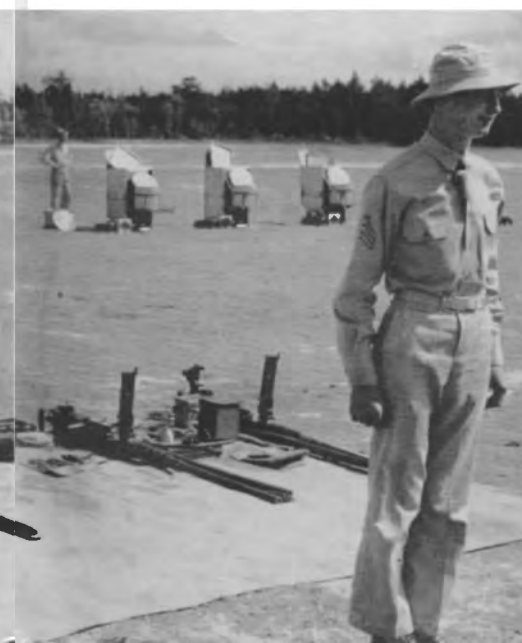
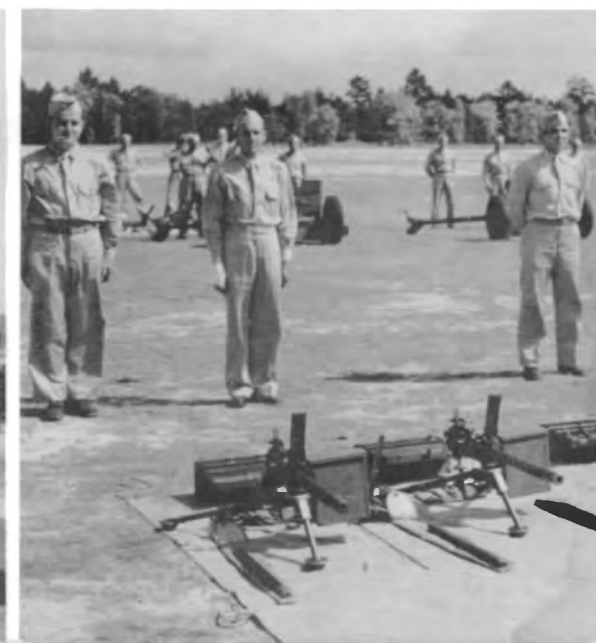
**OF  
THE**



**609TH  
TANK  
DESTROYER  
BATTALION**

.50 CAL. MACHINE GUNS

.50 CAL. MACHINE GUNS





Colonel Cramer making an inspection.



Above and Below: Sections of the motor pool.



Maintenance equipment inspection.



Above: Motor pool inspection.



Right: Inspection of motorcycles.



Left: Colonel Cramer inspects.

Right: Field kitchen ready for inspection.



Below: Tent and equipment inspection.



# I n s p e c t i o n



★  
Right, reading from top to  
bottom: Laying hasty anti-  
tank mines.



Rifle practice on the target range.



Assembling and explaining light machine guns.  
Sending communications from radio car.



# Preparing for the Enemy







**THE  
P  
I  
O  
N  
E  
E  
R  
S**



**S  
E  
T  
T  
H  
E  
I  
R**

Across top of both pages:  
Pioneers construct tank traps.

Left: Construction of tank trap with materials at hand.



Right: Pioneers display their equipment.

Extreme Left: Using a Barco hammer.

Below: Booby traps.

**T  
R  
A  
P  
S**





Head bandaging.



Applying wooden arm splint.



# The Medical Detachment



Getting a shot.



Illustrating the correct method of carrying a patient to the ambulance.

## In the Field and in Camp

### MAP READING AND INSTRUCTING

The ability to read maps under field conditions and doing it in a hurry, making quick and accurate decisions, faces each soldier in the Tank Destroyer Battalion. Lectures and demonstrations by experts acquaint the men with every detail of this duty. The pictures on this page show the men becoming fully prepared to carry on in this duty.



Getting a shot.



Ear examination.





1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

O  
F  
H  
U  
M  
A  
N  
T  
R  
E  
A  
T  
M  
E  
N  
T

- 1. Office of Battalion Headquarters.
- 2. Mess line.
- 3. Food breakdown.
- 4. Pool game in day room.
- 5. Repairing jeep.
- 6. Mess hall at chow time.
- 7. Trigger finger exercises.
- 8. Mail call.
- 9. Keeping the home fire burning.



Headquarters, 609th Tank Destroyer.



Headquarters Building.

# Buildings in the 609th T. D. Battalion

Area shot.



Above and below: Battalion area shots.





# *Personnel*

# 609TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

UNITED STATES ARMY



FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA

1942