

692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion

I. History:

The 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion constituted March 15, 1942, in the Army of the United States. It was activated April 10, 1942 from Camp Gordon, Georgia. It was deactivated February 8, 1946, from Camp Swift, Texas. It was disbanded January 14, 1952. Its campaign participation during World War II was in Rhineland, Northwest Europe (Holland), Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe. The 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion code name was Chico.

The 692nd left the New York Port on September 12th, 1944 on the British ship, Scythia. It initially landed in England on September 23rd but continued on to Cherbourg, France, arriving on September 25th. It was one of the first vessels to enter the war-torn port in World War II. The unit then moved to Valognes staging area, and then joined the 104th Infantry Division in Wustwezel, Belgium. The 692nd was attached to the First Canadian Army for operations, and it supported the First Canadian Army in the attack of the port of Antwerp to the Maas River in October 1944. The Battalion minus Company "C" was moved from Holland to the assembly area in Aachen, Germany on November 6th. "C" Company arrived in the assembly area two to three days later with the Battalion moved into position to support the 104th Infantry Division in its attack. Its orders were to engage the enemy and destroy its fortifications. It engaged in heavy attacks and counterattacks in Eschweiler, Weschweiler, Lenden and areas near the Roer River. The Battalion took over defensive positions of the other units which were withdrawing to meet the counterattack of the German break-through in the Ardennes. It captured and used enemy artillery and ammunition, utilized strategic positioning to support other battalions' fire power. There were many men who got a crash course in artillery fire at this time. Also at this time, late February 1945, the 692nd was reorganized from a 3 in. towed battalion to a 90 mm self-propelled tank destroyer unit, all the while repelling the enemy's thrust in the Bulge, thus receiving admiration of the First Army and the 104th Division. The 1st platoon, Co. "B", 692nd is awarded the Presidential Unit Citation from the Army and was given a streamer embroidered Roer River bridgehead. The unit was cited for exceptionally outstanding performance of duty and action against the enemy February, 1945, in the vicinity of Birkesdorf and Arnoldsweiler, Germany.

On February 23, 1945, the Battalion forced a pre-dawn crossing of a violent flood-swollen Roer River and overran a well-established and heavily mined enemy position. Devastating counter-fire failed to halt the attack on Birkesdorf and the high ground to the north. With these objectives at hand, the First Battalion 415th Infantry and the 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion Co. "B" committed to a night assault across unfamiliar ground to capture Arnoldsweiler. Advancing without hesitation, they met deadly artillery fire but secured a portion of the town by dawn. The enemy then launched six furious counterattacks which were heavily supported by artillery. Self-propelled gun and mortars were used in the counterattacks. The battalions stopped all counterattacks inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. After 2-1/2 days of heavy, steady, furious fighting, it secured Arnoldsweiler. The conspicuous gallantry indomitable fighting spirit and outstanding

performances of duty exhibited by the First Battalion 415th Infantry Regiment and attached unit 692 Tank Destroyer Battalion permitted the Roer River Bridgehead to be firmly established.

When the Ardennes (Bulge) battle was contained, the Battalion fought its way to Cologne-Rhine River. Here the Battalion helped to save the Regamen Bridge by assaulting the opposite side of the Rhine River with heavy accurate artillery fire while troops rushed to engage the enemy. This action saved lives by not having a forced river crossing of the Rhine. In this time frame, it was assigned to the First Canadian Army, 1st Army, 9th Army, and 3rd Army. With objections from the 104th Infantry Division and the First Army, the 692nd Tank Destroyer was sent to Alsace. Orders from the 7th Army, 42nd Infantry Division were to “Destroy the enemy, his fortifications” in the Saar Basin in southwest Germany. The only unit to be called upon to break the Siegfried line more than once, the 692nd participated in offensive action which effected the penetration of heavy German defenses after numerous attacks and counterattacks to Alsace, Munchen, and Dachau. At the termination of the war, the unit was at Salzberg, Austria, on the Chiem Sea. The 692nd assumed occupational duties in Torwang, Germany, Austria and Bavaria, which is approximately 300 square miles, capturing many Gestapo agents, SS personnel, and much of Herman Goering’s loot on the Chiem Sea Island. The unit liberated the concentration camp at Dachau and one of their captured Gestapo agents was the first spy to be executed by the 7th Army.

The 692nd returned to the United States from Grand Duclair, France, Port of LeHavre on the Liberty Ship, the William Tell; landed in Boston Harbor on August 25th 1944. All the men went their separate ways from Camp Miles Standish, Massachusetts.

II. Attachments:

1st Canadian Army

British: 21st Army Group

65th Royal Artillery

American - 1st, 3rd, 7th, and 9th Armies, II, III, IV, IVV, XV, XVI, XIX, XXI, and XXII Corps., 12th, 14th, 29th Armored Divisions, 42nd, 63rd and 104th Infantry Divisions.

III Statistics:

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| A) | Days of steady combat | 195 |
| B) | Ammunition Used: | |
| | 90-mm. APC | 430 |
| | 90-mm. HE | 2,445 |
| | 3” APC | 1,260 |
| | 3” HE | 26,152 |
| | 3” naval star shells | 86 |
| | 37 mm. APC | 4 |

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| | 37 mm. CAN | 1 |
| | 37 mm. HE | 25 |
| | 50-caliber | 23,255 |
| | 30-caliber | 22,555 |
| C) | Weapons destroyed were: | |
| | 20-mm | 5 |
| | 75-mm | 5 |
| | 88-mm | 9 |
| | 150-mm | 1 |
| | Anti-aircraft weapons | 8 |
| | Unidentified | 12 |
| | Machine guns | 66 |
| | Heavy mortar | 1 |
| | Fighter aircraft downed | 1 |
| D) | Vehicles destroyed consisted of: | |
| | Armored car | 1 |
| | Half-tracks | 7 |
| | 88-mm. tanks | 14 |
| | Trucks | 5 |
| | Other wheeled vehicles | 16 |
| E) | Fortifications destroyed consisted of | |
| | Pill boxes | 55 |
| | Defended observation posts | 72 |
| | Mined road blocks | 10 |
| | Water tower | 1 |
| | Prisoners of war | 2500 |
| | Assaulted the Siegfried Line | Twice |

IV. Decorations:

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| Silver stars | 21 |
| Bronze stars | 265 |
| Purple hearts | 131 |
| Soldiers medals | 2 |
| Combat medical badges | 10 |
| Certificates of merit | 96 |
| All personnel: | |
| ETO ribbons with 3 battle stars | |
| 1 Central Europe (Siegfried line- Rhine River- Remagen Bridge) | |
| 2 Ardennes (Bulge) | |
| 3 Rhineland (Siegfried line- Dachau) | |
| Army of occupation World War II | |
| Victory ribbon World War II | |

V. Loses - Chico left behind the following men:

1st Lt. Ben L. Nicolosi
2nd Lt. Louis F. Nicharot
2nd Lt. Gregory F. Daalman
Sgt. James W. Pearce
Sgt. Arthur D. Van Tuyl
T-4 Henry E. Smith
Cpl. Robert J. Erdman
Cpl. William D. Richards
Cpl. Dominique A. Radice
T-5 James C. Delorenzo
F-5 Albert T. Haschke
PFC, Eugene L. Albert
PFC, Charles E. Allred
PFC, Oneil Chambre
PFC, John Pstrek
Pvt. Frederick H. Doering
Pvt. Daniel B. Foster
Pvt. Henry J. Krakowiak
Pvt. Pietro A. Quattracione