

802d Century Old; Fought In Four Wars

One hundred and four years ago, one of the units now included in the 802d Tank Destroyer Battalion, a portion of the III Armored Corps, was organized at Flushing, New York.

Pride in its distinguished ancestry and its completely modern present-day makeup is shared by all members of the 802d, who can trace the record of its predecessors back to 1839 and list participation in four wars.

In 1839, the Hamilton Rifles were formed at Flushing, and successively became a light Horse Artillery battery, participating as such in many Civil War engagements; the 17th Separate Company of the New York National Guard; Company "I", 51st Pioneer Infantry, which saw service in the St. Mihiel salient and the Meuse-Argonne Drive in France, and then as Company I, 14th Infantry, New York National Guard.

Designated as the 102d Anti-tank Battalion in 1940, the unit entered federal service on January 13, 1941. More than fifteen months ago, it became the 802d Tank Destroyer Battalion, formed the nucleus of the present 802d, and now constitutes the organization's Company C.

The Hempstead, N. Y., unit of the 802d also claims a record of participation in a previous war, for it was organized in November, 1915, as the Machine Gun Company, Tenth Infantry, New York National Guard, and many of its original members saw service in France with the 51st Pioneer Infantry and the 106th, 107th and 108th Infantry Regiments in the 27th Division.

Predecessors of units now included in the 802d fought in the Civil War, participating in battles from Bull Run to the siege of Petersburg; in the Spanish American War, when forty members of the ancestor of Company C volunteered for service as a unit; in the Mexican Border campaign, and in World War I.

In addition to its century-old record, the 802d claims the title of being the first National Guard anti-tank organization in the United States, for its establishment as the 102d Anti-tank Battalion on September 1, 1940, preceded the designation of any similar unit in the nation.

Well equipped with a splendid background, the 802d is also proud that among the men included in three cadres it has furnished for other organizations are men who are now serving with distinction in North Africa.

Since the present war began, the 802d has called Camp Shelby, Miss.; Camp Claiborne, La.; Camp Sutton, N. C.; Camp Burt, N. C. (Fort Bragg); Camp Hood, Tex., and Camp Polk "home". In addition, it has participated in maneuvers in Louisiana in 1941 and in North Carolina in 1942.

But not until the unit reached Camp Polk did the 802d encounter the comforts of barracks life. After months under tents, shelter halves, and in the wide open spaces, members of the 802d have accepted the title of "the under-canvas boys."