

Cpl Ivan B. MacKen

823 RD



TANK
DESTROYER
BATTALION



LEST WE FORGET



Colonel CHARLES B. MC CLELLAND, 36, former commanding officer, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, class of 1929. He was born at Greenwood, Mississippi, and attended Byardshall High School at Covington Kentucky.

Went with the Air Corps in 1929 but from 1930 to 1933 served with the Fifth Cavalry at Fort Clark, Texas; thence to Fort Riley, Kansas for Cavalry School and duty with Second Cavalry from 1934 to 1937; and was with the Third Cavalry at Fort Myer, Virginia and Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia from 1937 to 1942.

Married Anita Anthony in Texas in July, 1931. They have two children, Marion D., 9, and Jean Anthony, 4.

Hobbies: hunting, horse shows, all equestrian activities and polo.

Is now stationed at Fort George Meade, Maryland.



Lt Col. ROBERT W. RAYBURN, 36, former executive officer, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point class of 1933. He is a native of Alpena Michigan.

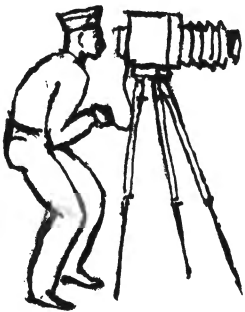
Ten years service includes 2nd Infantry from 1933 to 1935; 5th Cavalry from 1935 to 1937; Troop Officers Course, Cavalry School from 1937 to 1938, and 14th Cavalry from 1938 to 1942.

Hobbies: polo, horse shows, hunting, horse training.

Unmarried..For the past seven months has been undergoing treatment at the Winter General Hospital, Topeka, Kansas.



LEST WE FORGET



Lt Col. PAUL B. BELL, 41, former commanding officer of 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, attended the following schools: University of Oklahoma; University of Wisconsin; University of Minnesota. He was Communications Officer, Battery F, 189 F.A., 1926-1927, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Battery Commander, Battery F, 189 F.A., 1927-1938, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 189 F.A., 1938-1941, Camp Berkeley, Texas; Battalion Commander, 45th Antitank Battalion (Prov), 1941; Battalion Commander, 645th Antitank Battalion, 1941-1942, Fort Devens, Mass.; Battalion Commander, 138th TD Training Battalion, 1942-1943, Camp Hood, Texas; Battalion Commander, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, 12 June 1943 to 24 November, 1943.

Attended the following military schools: C & GS School, 1940, F.A. School, BOC in 1939; Officers Advanced Tactical Course, Tank Destroyer School, 1943.

Married and has three children. Family at present resides at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Hobbies: Photography, electricity, skiing, flying, football. His motto is and was "ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION".

OUR BATTALION COMMANDER



MAJ. EDWARD A. COSTOMIRIS

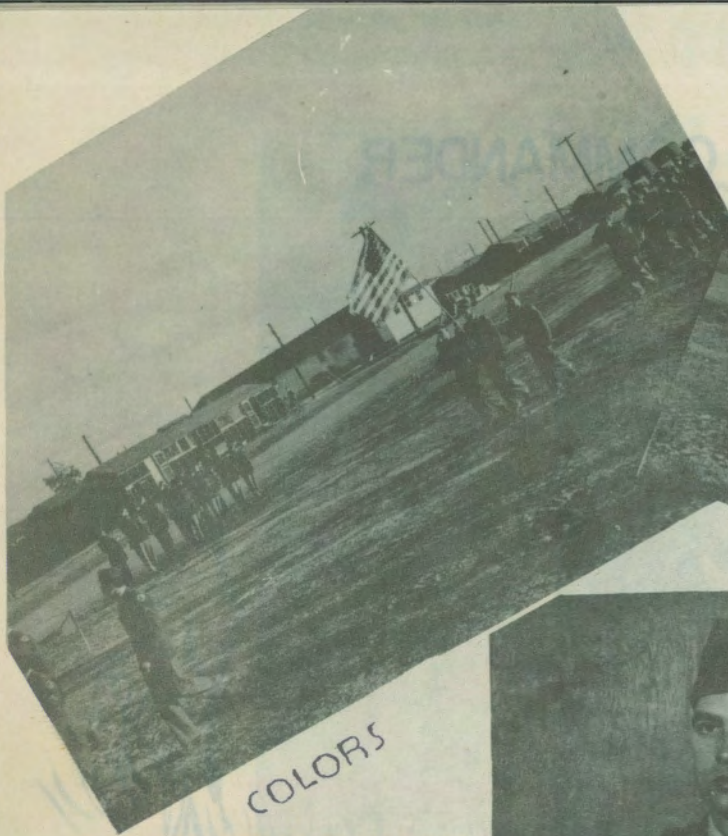
Major EDWARD A. COSTOMIRIS, 26, Commanding Officer, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. He was born at New Haven, Connecticut, and attended Northern High School at Detroit, Michigan.

Served with the National Guard from 1936 until January 17, 1941, at which time he entered the armed forces of the United States as a Second Lieutenant; served with the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion as a company commander from 15 August 1941 to 25 July 1942. He was later transferred to the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion..... A conscientiously hard worker, his efforts were rewarded by promotion to captain on 16 April 1942 and on 15 July 1943 became Major. He assumed command of the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion on 24 November, 1943.

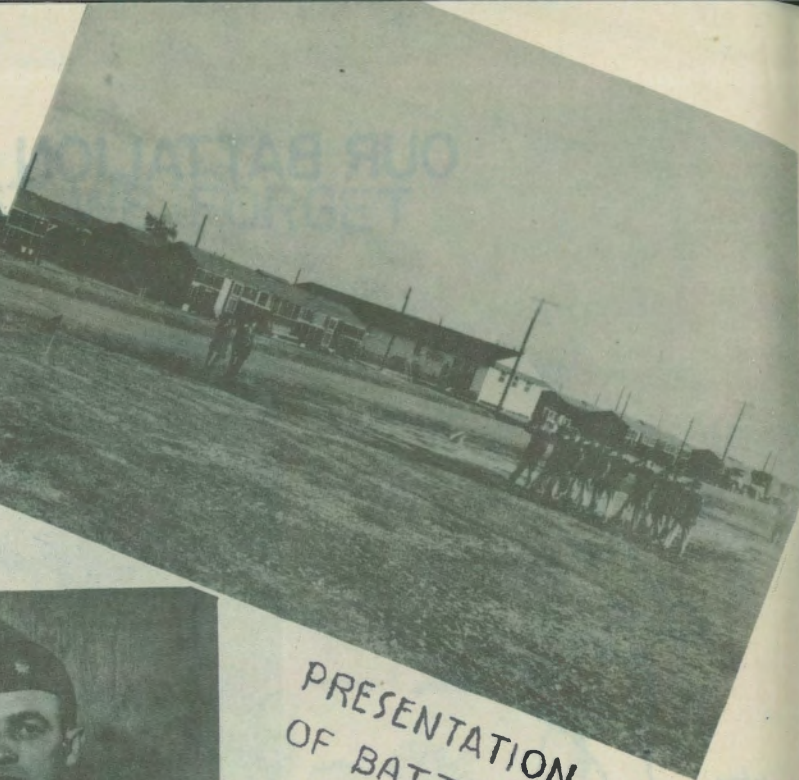
Married Lois Jean Kaiser in Hattiesburg, Miss. in 1941. They have one child; Wanda Jean age 2.

Hobbies: hunting, basket ball, baseball.

Lives at Officers Quarters, Camp Claiborne, Louisiana.



COLORS



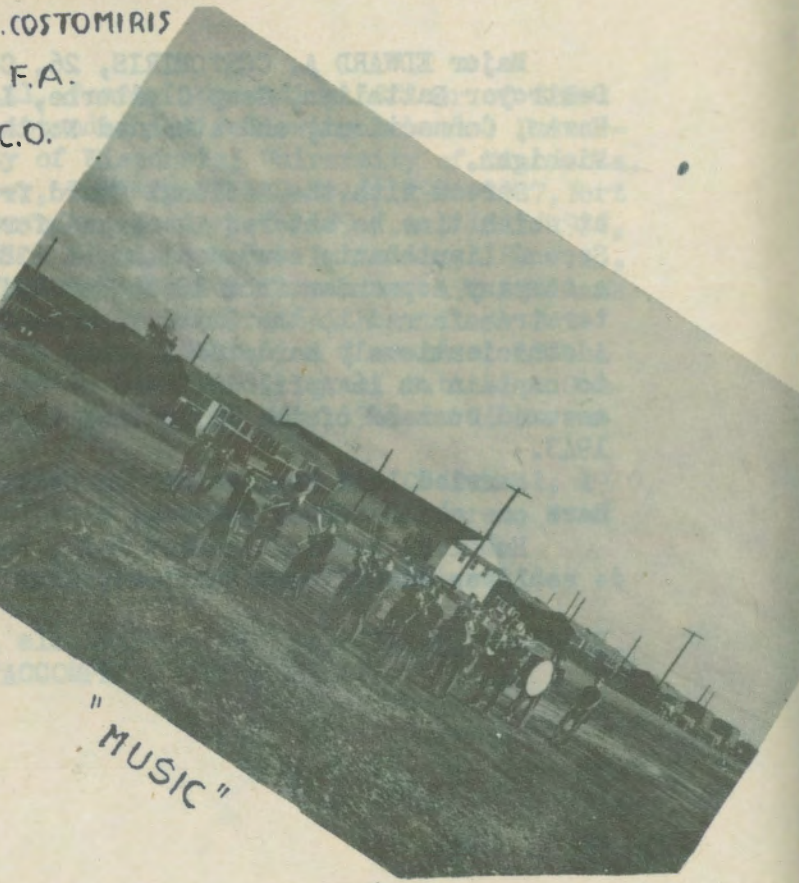
PRESENTATION
OF BATTALION



EDWARD A. COSTOMIRIS
MAJOR F.A.
BN. C.O.

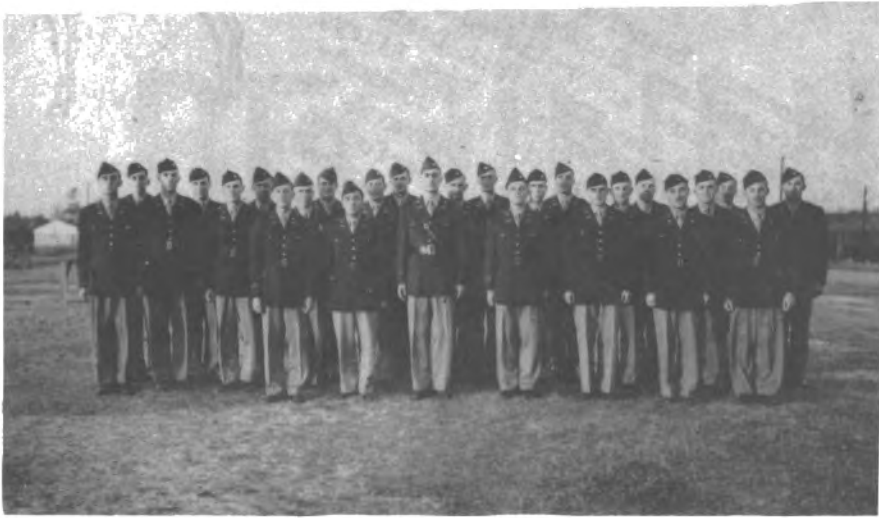


PASSING IN REVIEW



"MUSIC"

OUR OFFICERS



MAJOR EDWARD A. COSTOMIRIS, BATTALION COMMANDER.

CAPTAINS: BRUCE A. CRISSINGER, ASHBY I. LOHSE, MELVIN SCHUELLER, SAMUEL D. SWANSON, GEORGE W. SITZ, FRANCES WILTS.

1ST LTS: LESTER J. BARANOV, ELMER L. MILLER, CLYDE W. BURTON, ELLIS W. MC INNIS, THOMPSON L. RANEY, ARTHUR D. CUNNINGHAM, JOE BRUTON JR., FRANK DEUPREE, WARREN PFAFF, CEPHUS WRIGHT, LEON NEEL, DONALD H. JONES, THOMAS SPRINGFIELD, FRANCIS J. CONNORS, JOHN E. BARRON.

2ND LTS: LOWEL SMITH, WILBUR LAWLESS, LAWRENCE KRESS, LOUIS GOFF, ALBERT KUSTER, DOMINIC A. MOTT, FREDERICK V. KIMBALL, GEORGE PETERS, WILLIAM G. COWELL, HERMAN MEIR, LAWRENCE LEWIS, CARL JEFFERSON, JOHN MEISE, EDWIN ROBERTS, PAUL HAYWARD.



THE "OLD" AND THE "NEW"

RESTRICTED
THE CAVALRY SCHOOL
Fort Riley, Kansas

July 18, 1942



E X T R A C T

Pursuant to instructions contained in Replacement Transfer Order No. 15)
15)
headquarters Replacement and School Command, Birmingham, Alabama, dated
, 1942, each of the following-named Second Lieutenants are relieved from
ary duty at The Cavalry School, and are assigned to the 823rd Tank Destroyer
alio, Camp Carson, Colorado, and will proceed without delay from Fort Riley,
sas, to Camp Carson, Colorado, reporting upon arrival thereof to the Command-
ing Officer, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, for assignment and duty. Travel by
privately owned conveyance is authorized if desired, and if travel is performed
in this manner, detached service for a period of two (2) days is granted. The
travel directed is necessary in the military service. FD 31 P431-01, 02, 03,
07, 08, A 0425-23:

Bruton, Joe Henry Jr., O-1030225
Burton, Clyde William, O-1030226
Cunningham, Arthur Dean, O-1030232
Deupree, Frank Earl, O-1030234
McInnis, Ellis Winton Jr., O-1030268
Miller, Elmer Lavern, O-1030271
Osborn, Bill Earl, O-1030279
Pfaff, Warren Raymond, O-1030283

Raney, Thompson Lamar, O-1030291
Reynolds, Charles William, O-1030294
Sitz, George Washington Jr., O-1030307
Swanson, Samuel Donald, O-1030302
Ulmschneider, Robert Walter, O-1030311
Wilts, Francis Edward, O-1030316
Wright, Cephus Arthur, O-1030319

*
*
*
General RODGERS:

McDONALD,
try,

OFFICIAL:

By



D. Cunningham
CUNNINGHAM
Cavalry
Adjutant

FROM THE BEGINNING UNTIL NOW

The 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated the 25th of July 1942 at Camp Carson, Colorado. Major CHARLES B. MC CLELLAND was the commanding officer; Captain ROBERT W. RAYBURN was Battalion executive officer. Officer cadre was supplied by the 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion; other officers were assigned from the Cavalry Replacement Pool from Cavalry officers candidate school at Fort Riley, Kansas. Enlisted Cadre (77 enlisted men) was supplied by the 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

On arrival we found the region surrounding Camp Carson beautiful beyond description, studded with delightful spots such as The Broadmoor, Antler Hotel, Cooking Club, Manitou Springs, the Denver Scenic Railroad and Royal Gorge Bridge, all of which were immensely enjoyed by both officers and men.

Our training, ably directed by the youthful Captain COSTOMIRIS consisted of lectures and training films in the morning and practical work in making the area livable in the afternoon. Miles of duck boards were constructed with Master Sergeants as carpenters and ditches were lined with rock by non-coms on fatigues. When our jeeps and motorcycles came - afternoons were spent in mechanics and drivers training over the pleasant Colorado roads and byways. Weekly we would take a battalion road march up one of the adjoining mountains, and on successive Thursdays climbed Cheyenne Mountain, Mount Rosa and Pikes Peak. It was nothing extraordinary to see Master Sergeants drenched to the skin, walking guard in the rain or Technical Sergeants, Staff Sergeants doing K.P. The officers spent all their leisure hours "being social" at the Broadmoor, etc.

About this time we received twenty motorcycles and eight jeeps. The officers began learning to ride motorcycles, however we won't mention the motorcycle ride around Pikes Peak!

Captain RAYBURN was promoted to Major!

The battalion began a physical conditioning schedule which included climbing one major peak after another. Among those were Cheyenne Mountain, Mount Rosa and Pikes Peak. In climbing Pikes Peak the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion were the first United States military unit to climb the Peak in formation and on the same climb they reach-

ed the highest altitude ever attained by a United States ground force unit up to that time, August 1942.

One of the "high lights" while at Camp Carson, Colorado, was the reception held by Major MC CLELLAND at the Cooking Club now referred to with reverence as the "Cooking Club Party".

Major CHARLES B. MC CLELLAND is promoted to Lieutenant Colonel!

Romance blossoms in the Broadmoor!!! Ask Sitz and Reynolds...

Then the sky fell! On the 9th of September 1942 the battalion moved by rail and private conveyance to what we thought was the end of the world -- Camp Livingston, Louisiana. Lt Col. MC CLELLAND leaves for Fort Leavenworth to attend Command and Staff School..... Major RAYBURN assumed command during Lt Col MC CLELLAND's absence. Surprise!!! On 1 October 1942 we received 200 men from Camp Robins, Arkansas, followed by 50 more men a few days later. Basic training begins, each Saturday on schedule was climaxed by a gruelling 4.8 mile cross-country run. Our vehicles began to arrive, these were broken-in by a motor march to Natchez, Mississippi!!!!

Thanksgiving day is here, fine thanksgiving parties were arranged and enjoyed by all companies - mess halls were beautifully decorated. While on the subject of pleasant things, lets not forget the Officers Club at Camp Livingston, and for those whom it may concern "Barracks D" (N.B.Q.).

Lt. Col. MC CLELLAND returned from Command and Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, assumed command of Battalion. Captain SMITH is promoted to Major and shortly after was transferred to the 824th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which he now commands.

Christmas comes, more fun, more parties!!! We received 400 men from Camp Beauregard and San Antonio reception centers.

We move again. On the 5th of January 1943 we arrive at Camp Bowie, Texas. Shortly after our arrival, Major RAYBURN is transferred to Fort Riley. A farewell party was tendered by the Officers. The officers presented Major RAYBURN with a beautiful leather travelling bag.

We now just received the balance of our men from Fort Douglas, Utah and Fort McArthur, California, and our complete basic course begins!!!! Captain ANDERSEN is promoted to Major and succeeds Major RAYBURN as Executive Officer.

Gruelling range practice begins, long hours and plenty of hard work our efforts were rewarded by marvelous scores. While on the ranges, Miss Joan Blondell visited our Battalion, she fired the .30 caliber Machine Gun but declines to fire the rifle.

We have just been informed that we are to become a "Towed Battalion". At Camp Bowie we successfully passed on individual training.

We move again! On 13th of April 1943 we moved by motor march to Camp Hood, Texas.

We begin on a five weeks weapon training schedule. Received eighteen three-inch guns, Pistols, rifles, machine guns ----- and gun drill for hours and hours!!! Again we set new records. This time on the firing of 3" gun. Many of the old officers are transferred or sent to various school.

THEN COMES THAT WEEK ON THE BATTLE CONDITIONING COURSE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Remember?? Shortly after Lt. Col. MC CLELLAND receives word of his transfer to the 101st Cavalry---a grand farewell dinner was held for him at the Kyle Hotel in Temple, Texas. Temple was dry for one week thereafter!!!

Lt. Col. PAUL B. BELL joins us to assume command. We begin our tactical training.

The battalion is now one year old, and we celebrated by going to Panther Park at Lampasas, Texas ----- guys, gals, games, food and dancing.

Tactical firing and proficiency tests, two and three day problems we worked night and day, but we finished in superb fashion, surpassing all other battalions-----so all's well that ends well.

On the 31st of July 1943 we moved again. Lo and behold! back to Louisiana. This time to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. We caused quite a stir by falling out each morning for calisthenics dressed in GI shorts. Individual basic tests were given by the 1st TD Brigade - again we-pass with flying colors! Then came thos marches!!!! 6 miles, 12 miles, miles, **18** miles - ye gads **25** miles!!!!

Then it came, orders for maneuvers. One Saturday afternoon in the midst of a blinding rain storm we left for the woods. It rained every day for the first two weeks --- mud, mud, everywhere! While on maneuvers we were attached to the 84th Division, 99th Division, 102nd Division, 103rd Division, 6th TD Group and 11 TD Group. Ah!! maneuvers, rain, mud, "pigs", kitchen inspections, "clean your vehicles" breaks? blackout drives, no fires, late chow, umpires, FOX-HOLES, weekly arrival of PX, pine fires, bathing a la September morn in 3" deep creeks, cold water shaves, river crossings. Despite all this - morale was surprisingly high among the men. We hear sweet music - "Armstice" has been declared - our maneuver period ends.....so, we start on a 100 mile march back to Camp Claiborne.

Home again!! beds, hot showers, tables, chow on time, huts, leaves, and furloughs begin. EXTRA! EXTRA!!! While on an inspection tour thru the battalion area Major COSTOMIRIS was shot in the hip by a stray bullet. Lt. Col. BELL is transferred to the 2nd TD Group where he becomes Executive Officer. Major COSTOMIRIS assumes command of battalion. A formal review and parade was held in honor of the departing Lt. Col. PAUL B. BELL. Arrangements were made by Lt. DOMINIC A. MOTT, Special Service Officer, to have pictures made of the Review - this was followed by a farewell dinner in Lt. Col. BELL's honor at the Hotel Bently, Alexandria, Louisiana. Battalion undertakes a cleanup training schedule. 85 EM and 11 Officers are sent to Fort Bliss, Texas, for Anti-Aircraft training. A huge Christmas dance was held at the Bolton Street USO.

Promotions - SWANSON, SITZ AND WILTS become Captains. BARRON AND CONNORS become first Lieutenants.

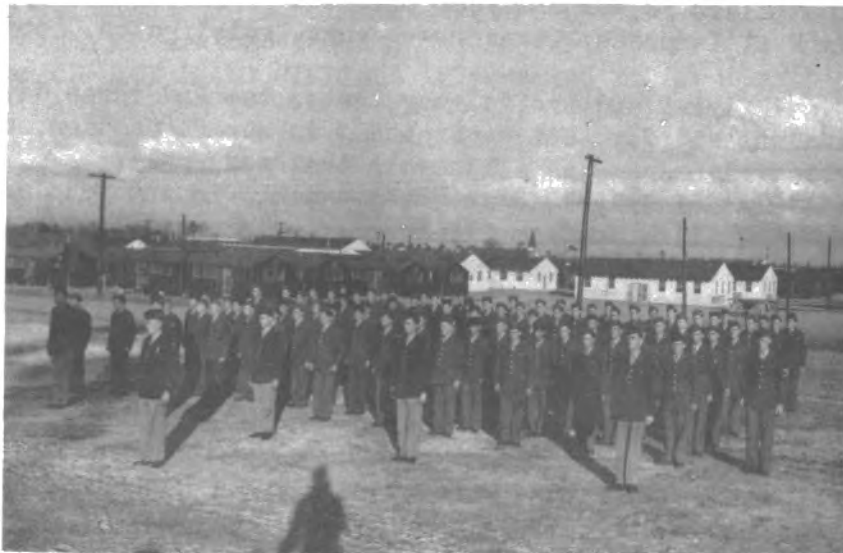


TRIBUTE TO THE JUNIOR TANK DESTROYERS

Pfc ROBERT LEE POLEY
Pfc D. ARTHUR MOTT JR.
Pfc PAT MC INNIS, WAAC Det.
Pfc DONNA HELEN JONES, WAAC Det.
Pfc LARRY FREDRICK SITZ

NOTE: Lt Col CHARLES B. MC CLELLAND has been promoted to Colonel and is now in command of the 101st Cavalry Group.

HQ. CO.



1st Lt THOMPSON L. RANEY - Commanding Officer

S
T
A
F
F

Capt R.G. TULANE
Capt B.A. CRISSINGER
Capt A.I. LOHSE
Capt M.J. SCHEULLER
Capt E.R. CURTIS
Capt G.W. SITZ
Lt. L.J. BARANOV
Lt. I.R. POLEY
Lt. C.W. BURTON
Lt. E.W. MC INNIS
Lt. A.D. CUNNINGHAM
Lt. D.H. JONES
Lt. H.D. SWILLEY
Lt. J.H. BRUTON JR
Lt. L.R. JOHNSON
Lt. W.R. PFAFF
Lt. W.D. LAWLESS
Lt. H.L. GRIFFIN
Lt. R.L. WELK
Lt. M. SABELLA



"PASSING IN REVIEW"

CO. "A"



1st Lt. ELMER L. MILLER, Commanding Officer

Lt. T. SPRINGFIELD
Lt. F.J. CONNORS
Lt. D.A. MOTT
Lt. A.J. KUSTER
Lt. J.M. MEISE
Lt. E.W. ROBERTS
Lt. P.B. HAYWARD
Lt. T.J. DUNN



"PASSING IN REVIEW"

CO. "B"



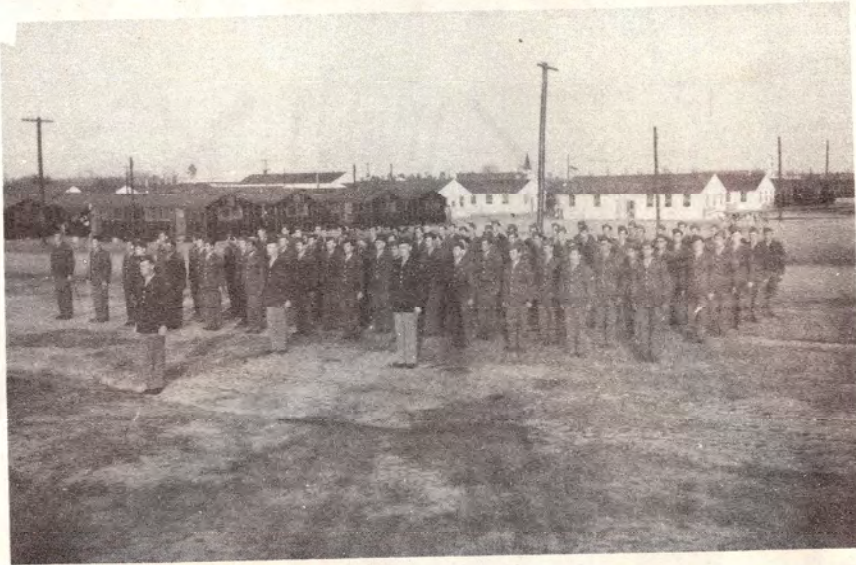
Captain FRANCIS E. WILTS, Commanding Officer

Lt. L.L. NEAL
Lt. J.E. BARRON
Lt. W.H. MALCOMSON
Lt. L.R. SMITH
Lt. L.H. KRESS
Lt. C.E. JEFFERSON
Lt. J.S. FISHER
Lt. H.E. MEIR



"PASSING IN REVIEW"

CO. "C"



Captain SAMUEL D. SWANSON, Commanding Officer

Lt. C.A. WRIGHT
Lt. J.P. FASONE
Lt. F.V. KIMBALL
Lt. L.E. GOFF
Lt. L. LEWIS JR
Lt. G.W. PETERS
Lt. W.G. COWELL



"PASSING IN REVIEW"

LOUISIANA



Note

ANY RESEMBLANCE TO
PERSONS LIVING OR DEAD
IS PURELY T.S. ✓

MANEUVERS



UP CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN

13 August 1942.....Men of the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion marched out from Camp Carson, Colorado, Thursday morning at 8 o'clock on a hike that took them approximately 20 miles over the roughest country in the region up to the summit of Cheyenne Mountain.

The Battalion led by Colonel CHARLES B. MC CLELLAND picked their way up Fischer Canyon, carrying light field packs, until shortly before noon they reached their destination, 9,300 feet above sea level. After a healthy meal the men explored the summit house, wandered around the top of the mountain and admired the view. The return hike was begun about 2 o'clock, setting up a brisk pace down the Broadmoor-Cheyenne highway.

PIKES PEAK OR BUST!!!

27 August, 1942.....The 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, under the command of Colonel CHARLES B. MC CLELLAND, went all out in its training program Friday scaling the heights of Pikes Peak. Trucks carried them out to their starting place, the Cog Rail Depot in Manitou, and at 7:30 the long trek began. The first group arrived at the summit of the peak at 3:30 in the afternoon, having spent 5 hours and 23 minutes of actual walking time and two hours and 44 minutes in rest periods.

This hike was the third that the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion has taken within a period of about two weeks (Having previously climbed Cheyenne Mountain and Mount Rosa). All the men were agreed on this one point: that the twelve miles from Manitou to the summit of Pikes Peak, 14,110 feet in the air, were the roughest, toughest twelve miles that they had ever covered. In climbing Pikes Peak the Tank Destroyers were the first United States military unit to climb the peak in formation, and on the same climb they reached the highest altitude ever attained by a United States ground force unit up to that time, August 1942.

ROUGH AND TOUGH

15 October 1942.....Camp Livingston, Louisiana. "Get Tough" is the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion's motto---and there is nothing half way in the manner it goes about achieving its goal, at Camp Livingston.

Every Saturday morning the entire battalion, from the Commanding Officer down to the last private, runs a rugged 4.8 mile cross-country obstacle race.



TANK BUSTERS CLAIM STUDY HONORS

The 823rd Tank Destroyers claim to be one of the school goingest units in the Army. Over 60 percent of the officers and 20 percent of the enlisted men have attended Special Service Schools.

Personnel from the outfit have studied at everything from Command and General Staff School to Bakers and Cooks School.



823RD TD BATTALION SMASHES RECORD WITH 3" GUN

Company 'C', 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, broke the AUTC record for the three-inch gun, setting an official company score of 78.2 seconds. Battalion average was 84.7. This was the first "Excellent" rating for companies in standards set up by AUTC.



823RD TD BATTALION ADOPTS INSIGNIA

A black horse-head in profile, is now the official insignia of the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, and has been placed on all vehicles. The sable equine was chosen because Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. CHARLES B MC CLELLAND, and a considerable part of the officer personnel come from the Cavalry.

Backgrounds for the insignia are: Headquarters Company, black; Company 'A', red; Company 'B', white; Company 'C', blue.

The design is the joint product of Cpl Henri P. St Charles, Headquarters Company, and Pvt Manuel G. Gonzales, Company 'B'.



GUYS AND GALS

the 164th WAAC Hq. Company entertained the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion with a picnic held at Crossville Peak. Men from 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion enjoyed the fine hospitality as set forth by the WAACS which was under the direction of 2nd Officer ELIZABETH L. FLANAGAN, commanding Officer of the 164th WAAC unit, and 1st Lt. IRVING R. POLEY, of the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.



INVASION BY NIGHT

After careful planning, Lt. DOMINIC A. MOTT worked for four days on the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion sand-box. He finished it late one night and returned early next morning to view his handiwork. It looked good, but it looked strange--there seemed to be hills and roads which were not in his original design. Study proved that something new had been added during the night---details of terrain by a colony of ants that had moved in.



HAPPY



BIRTHDAY

MEN OF 823RD TD BATTALION CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY AT PANTHER PARK

The 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion celebrated its first anniversary at Panther Park, Lampasas, Texas, the week of July 25. At Panther Park, the men took advantage of all the recreation facilities, and in the evening the 2nd TD Orchestra played for dancing.

YEAR OLD 823RD TACKLES TOUGH PHYSICAL GRIND

The 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, now settled in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, recently celebrated its first anniversary.

The battalion is now following a vigorous physical training schedule here, falling out for reveille dressed in GI shorts and shoes, and going through calisthenics before breakfast. A march schedule includes 6, 12, 18 and 25 mile marches consecutively.



MANEUVERS!!!!!!

The 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion has just completed nine weeks maneuver training. We were the only Tank Destroyer Battalion to receive a mark of "Excellent" during this maneuver period.



PROMOTIONS

Comgratulations to Captains SWANSON, WILTS AND SITZ; First Lieutenants CONNORS, BARRON.



CHRISTMAS DANCE

A Christmas dance was held by the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion at Bolton Street USO, Alexandria, on December 20th.

Plans were arranged by Lt. DOMINIC A. MOTT, Special Service Officer, assisted by S/Sgt Carl P. Burgoon, T/IV Eberts and T/V Stanley. Refreshments and a bevy of beautiful girls were part of the happy occasion. Lt MOTT served as Master of Ceremonies. The atmosphere was in tune with the holiday spirit - decorations being abundant.



Rough and Tough!

*By 1st Lieutenant Clarence T. Lantz, Cavalry**

“**T**ANKS and armored cars can be destroyed only by tough and determined fighting men who are masters of their weapons. Tank destroyer soldiers are taught that they must be superior soldiers. The moral qualities of aggressiveness, group spirit, and pride in an arduous and dangerous combat mission must pervade each tank destroyer unit. All ranks must possess a high sense of loyalty and confidence with regard to their comrades and leaders, and a conscious pride in their organization.”

The above description, taken from the Tank Destroyer Field Manual, gives the reader a fair idea of the type of men that a tank destroyer outfit must have. But, as almost everyone already knows, the average trainee

who comes from the Replacement Training Center is far from being the superman that the field manual so glibly describes.

The question then seems to be one of making the new “fillers” into the tough killers that a tank destroyer unit needs in order to accomplish its mission with minimum losses.

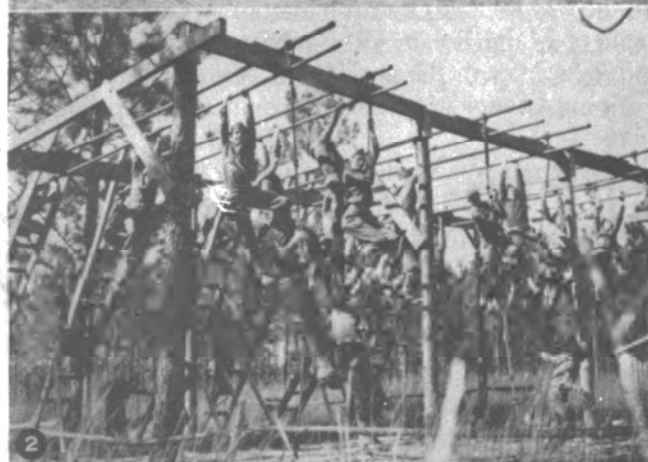
The 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion, under the command of Major Robert W. Rayburn, Cavalry, has been and is faced with the problem of turning Replacement Training Center material into commando-like fighting men.

A program was worked out for the battalion with a threefold objective in mind: first, to properly condition the men; second, to install an aggressive fighting spirit

*823d Tank Destroyer Battalion.



Over the first big obstacle on the 823d “Tank Busters” super obstacle course. (Twelve feet high.)



throughout the organization; and, third, to create in the men loyalty for and confidence in their organization and leaders.

The first step in the organizational program was the establishment of a half-hour of calisthenics each morning for everyone in the battalion. This served to alert the men and start the conditioning process.

The second step in the program consisted of establishing a short but tough obstacle course, which everyone in the outfit was expected to conquer each day.

At first the battalion was satisfied to go over the course once or twice a day, but after a week or two everyone was voluntarily going through the pace two, three, and four times without stopping for even a short rest. The competitive spirit of the battalion was aroused, and the officers and men tried to outdo each other in the number of times that they could struggle through without stopping. The leaders were soon galloping around approximately ten times daily without a halt; and the average man, about five times.

Feeling that the short obstacle course had reached its peak in training and conditioning the men, Major Rayburn and Second Lieutenant E. W. McInnis, put their heads together and devised the "Get Tough" obstacle course.

This new course started out as a simple two-and-one-half-mile affair, but quickly grew to a five-mile course that is now one of the roughest and toughest in existence. It starts out innocently enough with a sprint of a few hundred yards and a few three-to-four-foot hurdles. But then comes the first big barrier—a fifteen-foot water jump—where some of the less agile get wet. Next there follows a cross-country race for about a mile, then an eight-foot dugout that forces the men into a slow trot.

After some more sprinting the contestants arrive at another barrier—the camp swimming pool—and although the early mornings are usually brisk, the men plunge right into the water and swim fully clothed, across the sixty-foot pool. Then, dripping wet from their fling at "Swimmando" tactics, the soldiers once again go into a sprint. The wet clothing hampers them a little, but it is all in a day's "fun."

The more-or-less tired men next come to a grenade course. Here they flop on their bellies and crawl vigorously for about thirty-five yards to the top of a knoll, where they hurl hand grenades at a machine-gun emplacement some fifty yards away. Because of the competitive nature of the marathon, they are forced to stay at this point until they have hit the emplacement, which usually takes only one or two tries. After destroying the

SOME OF THE OBSTACLES IN THE 823D TANK DESTROYER'S "TANK BUSTERS" COURSE

1—Over the hurdles. 2—One of the more formidable barriers is sixteen feet high. 3—Up and over without the use of hands. 4—Not so high but plenty tough to get by.

enemy position, the men push on along the bottom of a draw where the grass is thick and the terrain rugged. Through weeds, underbrush, and thickly wooded areas they sprint over the toughest ground available and come to the next obstacle in the course, which consists of a twelve-foot rope to be climbed hand-over-hand (no knots to be credited with an assist). After climbing the rope, and still perched twelve feet up, the men have to walk a log sixteen feet long and jump off the far end into a sawdust pit. Here they start the last lap of the grueling marathon, and each man usually finds just a little more energy to manage a last-minute burst of speed, and possibly capture the honor of being first across the finish line.

On this last stretch, at top speed, the soldiers cross a log over a twenty-foot-wide, sixteen-foot-deep trench; climb another rope—this time sixteen feet up—and race down a ladder on the other side. Then they conquer a series of minor obstacles, climb over a few walls, crawl through some barbed-wire tunnels, and arrive finally at the last major obstacle. Here they climb a fifteen-foot ladder, hand-over-hand, continue Tarzan-fashion, hand-over-hand along a twenty-foot pipe, and slide down a rope at the far end.

After a few minor barriers and a climb over a seven-foot wall, they come at last to the pot at "the end of the rainbow"—the finish line. By this time the soldiers have run steadily over a course five miles in length, and have overcome varied and difficult obstacles for approximately thirty-five minutes.

Hot coffee and a very welcome cigarette await the men at the finish line where each company then furnishes trucks to take the tired, but happy, soldiers back to a hot shower and dry clothes.

The third step in the battalion conditioning program was the establishment of hand-to-hand fighting classes. Better than just reading a book on the subject and half-heartedly trying out a few holds, the men here are taught a few blows and holds as well. The teaching program in these classes emphasizes demonstration and practice; then more and more practice until everyone can react instantly to any bare-hand combat situation. If a man doesn't react instantly, he usually finds himself on the ground before he has a chance to figure out what should have been the proper move.

The 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion furthers its program by the use of psychology. The method employed is simple but very effective. Every press release sent out by the battalion and the camp emphasizes the toughness of the outfit. The men read and hear how tough they are supposed to be, and unconsciously try to live up to their reputation. This causes them to exert themselves



"GET TOUGH" HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT CLASS

1—The strangle hold. 2—Throw 'em hard. 3—A new technique in "getting tough." 4—Disarming an enemy soldier of his knife.

still more toward getting tough, and more important yet, toward getting into fighting trim.

By using the three physical conditioning steps, plus the psychological one, the battalion has achieved remarkable results in turning raw material into the kind of superior soldiers described in the Tank Destroyer Field Manual. In fact, the competitive spirit in the battalion has made the sometimes dreaded calisthenics a privilege, for every man wants to get in better shape, and thus beat the man on the next bunk—or the company commander—around the big course each week.

The obstacle-course program has replaced the mountain activities in which the battalion participated while

stationed in Colorado. There, it climbed one major peak each week. Among those scaled were Pike's Peak, Mount Rosa, and Cheyenne Mountain. In climbing Pike's Peak the Tank Destroyers were the first United States military unit to climb the peak in formation, and on the same climb they reached the highest altitude ever attained by a United States ground force unit up to that time, August, 1942.

As twenty-eight of the officers and the majority of the enlisted cadre were originally cavalymen, the battalion has plenty of the half-as-big-and-twice-as-tough spirit. From the "CO" down to the lowliest "buck" the men claim that they belong to the roughest, toughest outfit in the whole army, and are willing to prove it.



HEADQUARTERS
ADVANCED UNIT TRAINING CENTER
TANK DESTROYER CENTER
CAMP HOOD, TEXAS

May 26, 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : The Commanding Officer, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

1. Your Battalion completed the AUTC Proficiency Firing Test on May 21, 1943, with a score of 84.7%, which is a rating of "Excellent". To date the 823rd is the only Towed Tank Destroyer Battalion to receive such a rating in this test.

2. I wish to officially commend you and the officers and enlisted men of your battalion for obtaining this fine record. Such an outstanding record is indicated of careful instruction and preparation, a high state of morale and discipline, and attention to details on the part of all officers and enlisted men of your battalion.

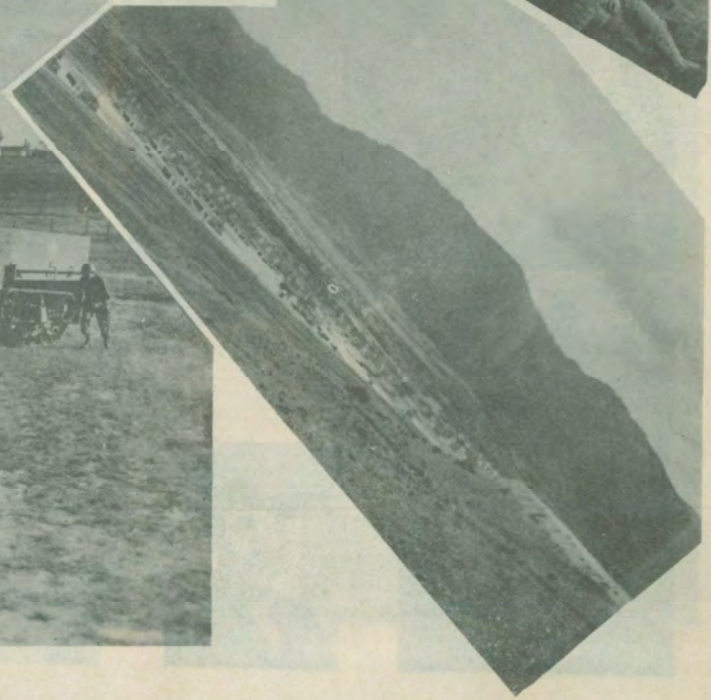
3. A copy of this communication is being forwarded to the Commanding General, Tank Destroyer Center.

/s/ Thomas J. Heavey,

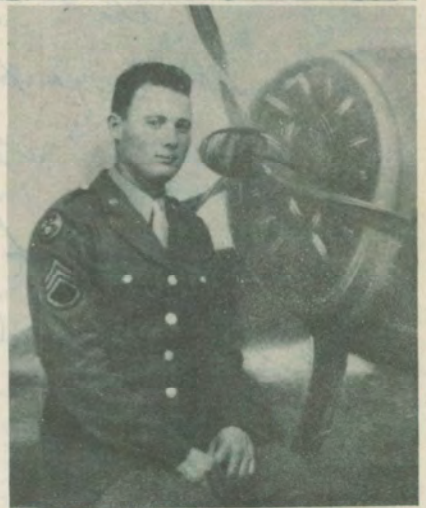
THOMAS J. HEAVEY,
Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding.

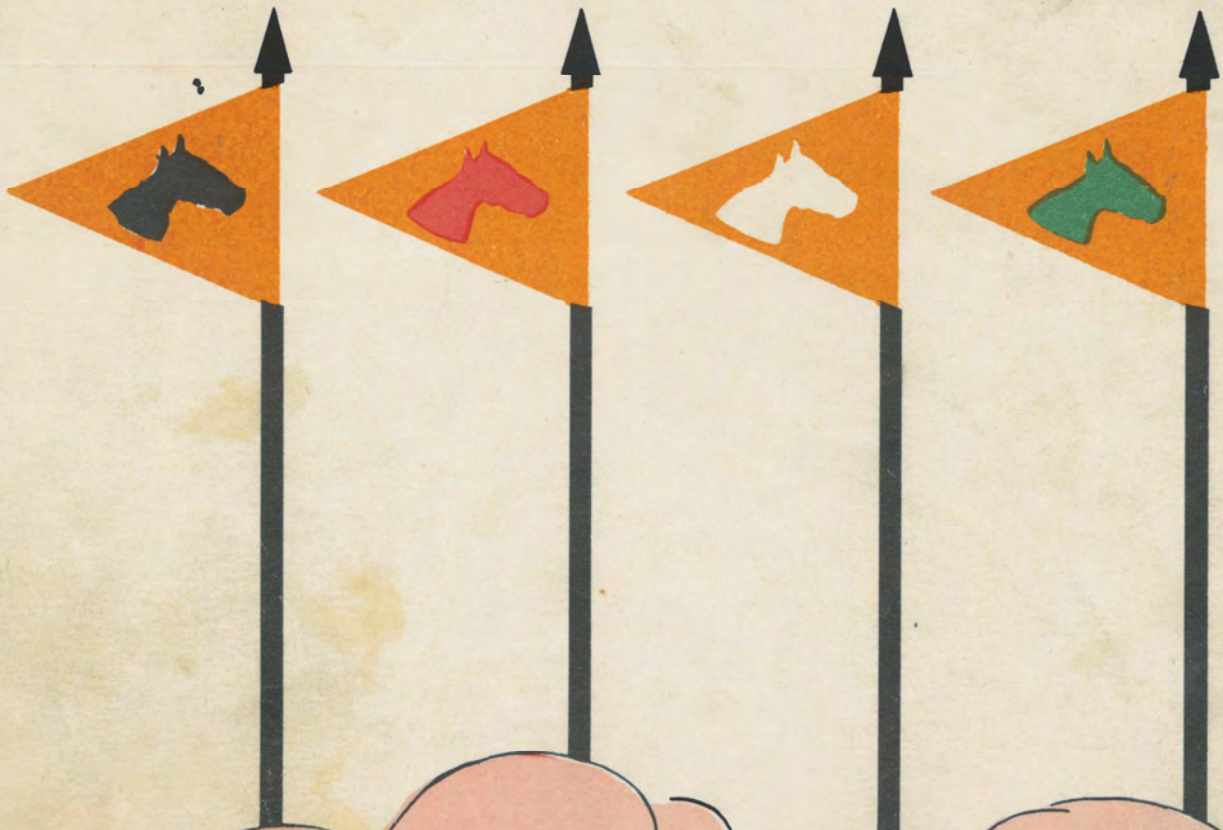
REPRODUCED HQ 823rd TD Bn.,
31 May 1943











"GET
TOUGH"