

~~HISTORICAL RECORD~~

On 26 Jan 44 at Fort Ord California the 727th Amphibian Tractor Battalion was activated as per G.O. 6, Fourth Army, Presidio of Monterey, California dated 10 Jan 1944, under command of Major Frank R. McLavy. The cadre consisted of 17 officers and 156 enlisted men most of whom had been assigned to the 18th Armored Group personnel pool.

From the time of activation until the unit departed for overseas the battalion was assigned fillers to bring organization up to full strength. The majority of enlisted men assigned as fillers joined the battalion in the period March to May and were immediately POM qualified as overseas movement warning orders had been received.

The above POM qualifications allowed little or no amphibious training for the bulk of the troops. A number of Group Amphibious problems, in conjunction with other Amphibian Battalions, were held under direction of the 18th Armored Group. Due to the small numbers of LVT's available for training purposes and preparation for overseas movement this battalion needs more training before being employed as combat troops.

The battalion was extremely fortunate in the caliber of enlisted men assigned as fillers. The great majority came from Ft Knox and had Tank training which facilitated training and maintenance on LVT's. Others were former ASTP students who joined the battalion when the program was discontinued.

On 2 June 44 the battalion moved to Camp Stoneman to stage for overseas movement. After a 13 day staging period the battalion boarded the USAT Willard A. Holbrook at the Oakland Naval Pier. The Willard A. Holbrook left San Francisco on 16 June 44 making stops at Morbae Bay and Finchhaven before arriving at our destination, Hollandia, on 16 July 44.

On arrival in the SWPA the battalion was assigned to the Sixth Army. Battalion set up bivouac on Twejeri Beach and prepared for an intensive training period to commence on the arrival of the LVT's which were enroute on Liberty ships.

On 22 July 44 Battalion reorganization orders were received and put into effect. Company "A" was disbanded and its personnel divided between "B" and "C" Companies. "C" Company was then redesignated "A" Company. ~~Due to the limited space for training on Twejeri Beach the battalion moved to Tam Beach Twelve miles away.~~

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On 4 Sept 44 a second instruction team was organized to train the Cavalry Rcn Troop of the 24th Inf Div. in use of LVT's. The Rcn troop moved in an area adjacent to the battalion for this training. The school was operated for approximately one month.

A week after the battalion's reorganization verbal orders were received from Commanding General Base "G" for the battalion to function as a shore battalion in unloading ships at Hollandia Docks. Line companies "A" and "B" alternated each week so that each company would have one week on the day shift while the other company worked the night shift. The battalion was relieved of this detail on or about 12 Aug 44. Due to the limited space for training on Twejeri Beach the battalion moved to Tami Beach twelve miles away.

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On 26 Aug 44 while battalion was following daily schedule a C-47 carrying stretcher patients made a forced landing in the surf a mile to the South of the Battalion area. Tractor crew composed of T/5 Walker; PFC Bova, and Pvt Sapp immediately went to the rescue in an LVT and evacuated crew, Australian Nurse, and patients. An attempt to salvage C-47 by LVT towing failed and the plane submerged.

Intensive training of individuals, crews, sections, and platoons continued until warning orders were received for the battalion's participation in the Leyte Operation.

On 5 Sept the battalion (less "B" Co) was alerted for the (King 2) operation. "B" Company was relieved from assignment to the Sixth Army and reassigned to the Eighth Army effective 12 Oct 1944.

See "ANNEX A" "Historical Report of Leyte Operation" for activities of Battalion (less "B" Co) during the above mentioned operation.

Company "B" embarked on LST's at Pie Beach, Hollandia on 10 Nov 44 and departed for Sansapor. Shortly after "B" Company's arrival at Sansapor the company was relieved from assignment to Eighth Army and assigned to Sixth Army for attachment to the 6th Inf Division.

On 19 Nov the 6th Div placed four Officers and one hundred and twenty five enlisted men on temporary duty with "B" Co for purpose of training as LVT operators. This provisional company received a month of intensive training so as to be prepared to form a provisional battalion under command of "B" Company Commander for the impending Luzon (Mike 1) operation. On 26 Dec 44 "B" Company and newly trained company embarked on LST's for the Luzon operation.

See "ANNEX B", Letter of commendation for Commanding General 24th Infantry Division.

See "ANNEX C", Letter of Commendation from Commanding Officer, 34th Regimental Combat Team.

On 14 Dec 44 the battalion (less "B" Co) was relieved from attachment to X Corp and moved to Camurus Point, Leyte for purpose of staging for the Luzon (Mike 1) operation. At this staging area 24 new LVT's were issued to the battalion to replace those transferred to the 728th Amphibian Tractor Battalion upon release of this battalion from X Corps. On 25 December 1944 five men of "A" Company were killed and one seriously injured in an accident involving a P-47 aircraft and a LVT in which the men were riding.

Names of those killed are as follows:

Black, Arthur R.	Pvt	33707719
Turner, Earl E.	T/5	36886094
Davis, Adrian J.	T/5	38563043
Bawolak, Stephen Jr.	T/5	33077949
Cook, Thomas E.	Pfc	38404258

Name of man seriously injured:

Meyers, William A. Jr	Sgt	38344238
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On 2 Jan 1945 the battalion (less Company "B") embarked on LST's for participation in the Luzon (Mike 1) operation.

See "ANNEX D", "Historical report of Luzon operation" for activities of the battalion during the operation.

See "ANNEX E", Letter of Commendation from Commanding General, Sixth Army.

On 19 March 45 the battalion received warning orders to be prepared for movement to secret destination. The following day "A" and "B" Companies were relieved of duties involving the unloading of ships in Lingayen Gulf under the direction of Base "1", and returned to Dagupan bivouac area to stage for the impending move. Same day 3rd Platoon "A" Company at Marivales Bataan embarked on LCT's for the return to the battalion bivouac area at Dagupan.

On 20 March 45 orders were received from CG Sixth Army for the battalion to move from Lingayen Gulf to Morotai on Liberty shipping to be furnished about 21 March 45. Upon arrival at Morotai the battalion was to pass to GOC 1st Australian Corp for operational control.

The battalion moved to White Beach, San Fabian on 24 March 45 and commenced loading on the two liberty ships provided. Shipping provided for the move is insufficient and necessitates the battalion leaving a rear echelon at Lingayen Gulf. The rear echelon consists of 3rd Plat "A" Company, Headquarters section of Headquarters and Service Company, and six LVT's and crews of Company "B". An advanced party of two officers left on 24 March 45 by airplane for Morotai.

Pursuant to instructions in USAFFE letter (163) dated 22 March 45 this battalion is relieved from assignment to Sixth Army and assigned to Eighth Army (Unit will be under operational control of the 1st Australian Corp)

The battalion (less rear echelon) left Lingayen Gulf on 27 March 45. After an eight day trip the battalion arrived at Morotai. On 24 March 45, Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Frank R. McLavy was transferred to Hqs 13th Armored Group. Major Howard A. Mahurin assumed command of the battalion.

Due to the shortage of Transportation Corp personnel the battalion layed in Morotai harbor for five days. It was then decided to have battalion personnel handle ships gear and do our own unloading. On 13 April 45 the unloading was completed without mishap.

The battalion set up in bivouac and started performing maintenance in preparation for the Oboe I operation. The maintenance was considerable because wear and tear suffered after nine weeks of unloading ships at Lingayen Gulf.

Liaison was established with the 9th Australian Division and on 19 Apr 45 the Provisional Company formed from personnel of "A" and "B" Companies was attached to the 26th Aust Inf Bde. LVT's were driven to the 2/43 Aust Inf Bn area where the Australian assault troops, to be transported by LVT's, were oriented on the vehicles performance and capabilities. The battalion also dispatched a gunnery team to the 2/43 Australian battalion for instruction on vehicle weapons which are to be manned by their troops. On 17 April 45 Battalion Field Order No. 1 was issued and troops briefed. During the period 22, 23 April 45 the provisional company embarked on LST's.

See "ANNEX E", "Historical Report on Tarakan Operation" (Oboe I) for the activities of the Provisional Company during the Oboe I operation.

On 25 April 45 the battalion rear echelon loaded on Liberty Ship USS John E. Ward and sailed from Lingayen Gulf three days later. They arrived at Morotai after a fifteen day journey.

With the arrival of the rear echelon on 13 May 45 and the return of the Special Platoon of "A" Co from Tarakan Island on 11 May 45 the battalion was again intact.

Orders were received from the 9th Aust Division for the employment of the battalion in the coming Oboe 6 operation. "A" Company was attached to the 20th Aust Inf Bde. and "B" Company to the 24th Aust Inf Bde. The brigades brought their troops and artillery equipment to our battalion area for LVT orientation and practice in mounting and dismounting artillery weapons. "A" and "B" Companies formed gunnery teams for the instruction of the four Australian assault battalions assigned to man the LVT weapons. On 25 May 45 Battalion Field Order No 2 was issued, and the troops briefed two days later. Embarkation of companies on LST's took place during the period 27 May to 31 May 45.

See "ANNEX G", "Historical Report of Brunei Bay Operation" (Oboe 6) for the activities of the battalion during this period.