

Marshalltown, Iowa
November 1983

Dear 634th Buddy,

I'm using this method to report on the 2nd National TD Reunion at Fort Hood, because the only alternative I could think of was to wait two years and report at our next B Company reunion.

The Fort Hood reunion was held Thursday PM, all day Friday and Saturday AM Oct. 20-22, 1983. Nearly all the activities were on the post.

If you haven't seen Fort Hood since it was Camp Hood in 1942, I think you would be surprised. It is the Headquarters of the III Corps, and is the home base for two divisions - the 1st Cavalry and the 2nd Armored. Fort Hood is said to have the largest concentration of armor in the free world. A drive down motor pool row is very impressive.

There were 450 people at the reunion - including 254 TD vets. These 254 represented 68 TD Battalions, 7 TD Groups, one TD Brigade, and a TD Replacement Training Center. My only disappointment was that Rex Gates and I were the only two from the 634th - nobody from A, C or Recon Cos. It was good to see Rex and he sends his regards to all of you. I spent a couple of hours with him Thursday PM reminiscing about the old TD days. Rex, as some of you know, makes his home in Copperas Cove where he decided to live after retiring from the Army in the mid 60's as a Division Command Sergeant Major.

The three main events of the reunion were a visit with E Co., 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 41st Infantry, 2nd Armored Division; a visit with a helicopter anti-tank unit of the 6th Air Cavalry; and the dedication of the TD War Memorial.

E Company, 41st Infantry is an anti-tank company and is the nearest thing to a tank destroyer company in our present day army. The Tank Destroyer Association formally "adopted" this company in a ceremony Friday morning and the company personnel spent the rest of the morning demonstrating their equipment. Their tank destroyer is the TOW Vehicle M901. "TOW" means Tube-launched, Optical-tracked, Wire-guided missile. This guided missile has an effective range of about two miles and can penetrate any known armor. The M901 has a crew of four - driver, gunner, loader and squad leader. Note in the picture that the launcher has two missile tubes. Ten more missiles are stored inside. Note also on the side of the launcher that E Company has adopted our old black panther insignia as a result of the TD Association adopting the company. The men in the company were extremely eager to show us their equipment and to learn from us about our M3's, M10's, M18's and M36's. Morale appeared very high and the men were very pleased that they were chosen as our adopted unit.

The afternoon visit with the air cavalry unit was also interesting. This outfit had just returned from Egypt where they participated in desert maneuvers. Their primary mission is to destroy enemy armor, so they too are "tank destroyers". Their main weapon is also a TOW missile - plus conventional rockets.

The main event was the dedication of the TD memorial on Saturday morning. The monument is granite and is 9 feet high, 6 feet in diameter, and weighs 22,000 lbs. It is located at the intersection of Tank Destroyer Boulevard and Fort Hood Road in a very prominent spot. It is something we all can be proud of. The dedication speeches were made by a Lt. General (I don't have his name) and the TD Association president, Mr. Warren Mitchell. The memorial cost \$9400 and was funded entirely by individual and TD Battalion association donations.

I picked up a few statistical tid-bits about WWII TD units which I've enclosed. This information (except for the reunion attendance) came from the office of The Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington Nov. 2, 1982. I had no idea there were as many as 106 TD battalions formed and that 61 of them served in Europe, although not all saw combat duty.

I also learned that the 634th TD Battalion was re-designated the 634th Armored Infantry Battalion sometime in late 1945 or early 1946. Some of you probably already knew this. The 634th Armored Infantry is presently inactive but I don't know how long ago it was inactivated.

The TD Association has four goals - create a national TD roster, establish a TD memorial, write a comprehensive TD history book, and establish a TD museum and library. The first two have now been accomplished. The TD history is being written by a professional historian, Lonnie Gill. Mr. Gill was at the reunion and stated the book should be published within the next 2 or 3 years. The TD museum is 3 to 5 years away. The next national reunion will be held when the museum is dedicated.

All in all, I thought the reunion was a big success. There was tremendous cooperation from the military and the city of Killeen. Lots of local TV and newspaper coverage.

We owe a lot to the TD Association officers and their wives who have devoted thousands of hours of their time - free. It is no coincidence that all but one are from California. It had to be that way in order to hold meetings and resolve problems on short notice. The one exception is a TD vet in Washington D.C. who acted as the liaison with the Pentagon in getting approval, etc. for establishing the memorial at Fort Hood.

Best wishes to all of you and I hope to see you at our 1985 B Company reunion.


Myron Piper

Tank Destroyer Units Activated During WWII

TD Battalions (Total: 106)

601	X	E	643	X	E	670		P	808	X	E
602	X	E	644		E	671	X	P	809	X	E
603	X	E	645	X	E	672		P(1)	810		N
605	X	E	646		N	679		E	811	X	E
606	X	N	647	X	N	691	X	E	812		N
607	X	E	648	X	E	692	X	E	813	X	E
608		N	649		N	701		E	814	X	E
609	X	E	650		N	702	X	E	815	X	P
610	X	E	651		N	703		E	816		N
611	X	N	652	X	N	704		E	817	X	E
612	X	E	653		N	705	X	E	818	X	E
614	X	E	654	X	E	706		N	819		P
626		N	655		N	771	X	E	820	X	E
627	X	P	656	X	E	772	X	E	821	X	E
628	X	E	657		N	773	X	E	822	X	E
629	X	E	658		P(1)	774	X	E	823	X	E
630	X	E	659		N	775		P(1)	824	X	E
631	X	E	660		N	795		N	825	X	E
632	X	P	661	X	E	801	X	E	826	X	P(1)
633	X	E	662		N	802	X	E	827		E
634	X	E	663		P(2)	803	X	E	828		N
635	X	E	664		N	804	X	E	829		N
636	X	E	665		N	805	X	E	846		N
637	X	P	666	X	P(2)	806	X	P	893	X	E
638	X	E	667		N	807	X	E	894	X	E
640	X	P	668		P(2)	776	X	E	899	X	E
641		P	669		N						

TD Groups (Total: 24)

1st	X	E	7th		E	13th		P	19th		N
2nd	X	E	8th		E	14th		N	20th		E
3rd	X	E	9th	X	E	15th		N	21st		N
4th	X	E	10th		N	16th		E	22nd		N
5th	X	E	11th		N	17th		N	23rd		E
6th		E	12th	X	E	18th		N	24th		N

TD Brigades (Total: 2)

1st	X	E
2nd		N

X - Unit was represented by at least one person at the 1983 Fort Hood reunion.

E - Served in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater.

P - Served in the asiatic-Pacific Theater.

N - No overseas service.

(1) - These four units were converted to and served in combat as Amphibian Tractor Battalions.

(2) - These three units were converted to and served in combat as Armored Field Artillery Battalions.