

## **Tank Destroyer History including OCS (1942-1944)**

Tank Destroyer Officer Candidate School was activated by the Tank Destroyer Command and assigned to the Tank Destroyer School on 16 July 1942.

The first Tank Destroyer School Officer Candidate Course began on July 20, 1942 with 150 students reporting to Gatesville, Texas. The War Department directed that a new class was to begin each week with the first four classes reporting to Gatesville. Class # 1 graduated on October 16, 1942

The movement of the Tank Destroyer Command from the Temple Texas staging area began on August 14, 1942 and formally opened on Camp Hood on September 18, 1942. The Headquarters was opened on August 20, 1942. On that date all the operations were carried on at Camp Hood.

Before moving to the Headquarters to the cantonment, the Tank Destroyer School had already given instruction to 496 officers and had begun the training of approximately 600 officer candidates.

A Tank Destroyer Replacement Training Center was developed at Camp Hood for tank destroyer replacements and an Advanced unit Basic Training Center was temporarily activated at Camp Bowie on November 28, 1942.

The 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated at Camp Carson on 25 July 1942 and arrived at Camp Bowie at the newly activated Advanced Unit Training Center on December 18, 1942.

By December 28, 1942 the OCS had increased to its peak enrollment of 2,005 students with the entry of the 23rd Class. There were 5,299 graduates of the OCS program.

An Officer Candidate Preparatory School was established on 22 February 1943. Altruistically, this was designed to select the best officer candidate material possible. It consisted of a two-week course of instruction for men with Reserve Officers Training Corps experience and for volunteer officer candidates and selected trainees. If able to pass the examination, selectees were sent before the Post Officer Candidate School board where, if they failed entrance requirements, they continued instruction in the Officer Candidate Preparatory School. This school served a worthy purpose in helping find officer material when needed but was discontinued by directive of the Replacement and School Command on 8 May 1943.

On 10 July 1943, the length of the officer candidate course was increased to seventeen weeks. Instruction was increased in all courses, but principally in tactics, weapons, and automotive training. Much of the increased time was devoted to practical work, the students receiving a total of 471 hours of such instruction.)

In addition, the time devoted to command and physical training exercises and school of the soldier, under the supervision of Officer Candidate School Regiment company officers, was increased. With the lengthening of the course to seventeen weeks, the number of classes reporting was cut from one each week to one every two weeks. In August 1943, this was further cut to one new class per month, and the number of

companies in the regiment was reduced from twelve to eight. By 30 October 1943, a total of 4,929 candidates had graduated from the Tank Destroyer Officer Candidate School. On 15 November 1943, six officer candidate companies, totaling 275 students, were in training. Of these, 175 were candidates from the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

Late in 1943 the Officer Candidate School Department at the Tank Destroyer School experimented with a Combat Adaptability Test developed by Dr. Ernest Ligon, Expert Consultant to the Secretary of War, with the object of discovering a reliable method of selecting successful combat officers. The approach involved an analysis of the "Job elements" of the combat leader's work; among these were ability to instruct his men in their mission, to reach his objective, to get his men to cooperate, to keep his head when things went wrong, to foresee what the enemy would likely to do, etc. A rating scale was developed to record the Judges' estimate of the candidate's possession of these traits, and the candidate was placed in several test situations in which, presumably, the traits or their absence would be revealed. While a group of four or five judges observed and rated the candidate, he was first interviewed for ten or fifteen minutes. On the basis of his answers to a list of questions--all questions were the same for all candidates--the judges were to rate some of the desired "Job elements"; thus, ability to get men to cooperate was inferred from the subject's response to such a question as "How would you deal with stubborn subordinates?" After the interview, the candidate was given a short time in which to prepare and deliver a two-minute talk to an imaginary platoon about to go into battle for the first time. This test revealed to the Judges something of the candidate's performance under stress, his power of expression, and his ability to command attention. To get more direct evidence on the subject's ability to work under pressure, the judges placed him in two "stress situations." Against time, he was required to solve a map problem and to translate two different codes sent alternately by two senders. As he worked, he heard a battle noise recording through an earphone, felt periodic shocks applied through a shock device strapped to one wrist, had his chair violently shaken by a vibrator, and breathed with difficulty through the partially closed intake of the gas mask he wore.

The combat adaptability test was used on the last three officer candidate classes at the Tank Destroyer School. No relationship was discovered between the test ratings and the regular Officer Candidate School rating scale, or between the test and the AGCT scores, age, height, weight, or education. There was a slight correlation with scores on the Officer Candidate Test (OCT). Since the Tank Destroyer School closed soon after the experiment was undertaken, no complete findings or revisions were possible.

Of the three principal ratings made on each man--academic rating, tactical officer's rating, and fellow candidate's rating--the last two carried the greatest weight because they revealed the candidate's leadership ability. A man whose leadership ability was high but whose academic average was low would probably be commissioned; a man whose grades were high but whose leadership was thought mediocre, or poor would probably not be commissioned.

The Officer Candidate School Regiment was disbanded 16 May 1944 with the completion of its 54th class.

## Tank Destroyer OCS - Camp Hood Texas 1942-1944

# OCS Here Has First Birthday

With graduation of the 38th officer candidate class Friday, the Tank Destroyer Officer Candidate School observed its first anniversary.

During its first year of existence, the School developed numerous training facilities for officers of the Tank Destroyers. It is now one of the leading schools in the country.

So vital was the need for officers, a year ago, that the first class was enrolled July 20, 1942, even before the opening of Camp Hood.

The people of Gatesville answered the need by opening their homes and public buildings to the officer candidates. Gunnery classes were conducted on the front lawn of the high school.

Exercises for the 38th class were held in the 24th Street Theater, and Major Park Bailey, director of the communications department, spoke.

*Hood Panther 7-2--1943*

# Last 13-Week OCS Class Graduated

Graduation of the 47th Officer Candidate School Class Friday marked the last 13-weeks OCS Class to pass its men on as second lieutenants.

All OCS classes starting with the 48th, embody a 17-week curriculum, with the additional four weeks allowing for more thorough instruction in the many courses, at the same time providing the candidates with additional time for studying and relaxing.

The new schedule calls for two incoming classes each month, and two classes graduating each month, starting Nov. 5th with the 48th Class.

*Hood Panther 9-30-1943*

# TDS Commander In Talk To Final OC School Class

Col. E. J. Dawley, commandant of the Tank Destroyer School, told graduating members of the 54th and last officer candidate school class last Friday that the United States now sees its way out of the worst jam in its history, but warned that "everytime we get too cocksure we get a wallop."

The graduation exercises marked the close of the officer candidate program of the Tank Destroyer school. When Marlin E. Zimmerman walked smartly across the stage of the 24th St. theater to the resounding cheers of his classmates, he became the last of more than 5,000 men to receive commissions as second lieutenants under the TDS officer candidate program.

The first OCS classes were held 20 months ago in temporary quarters at Gatesville. Later they were moved into the Camp Hood cantonment area west of 32nd street, and ultimately into the present school area east of 24th Street.

Many graduates of the early classes went directly into action in North Africa where several were in units cited for outstand-

ing gallantry under fire. Others participated in the Sicilian campaign. Some are presently commanding tank destroyer units in Italy.

Colonel Dawley urged the new officers to so indoctrinate their men in the use of their weapons and physical fitness that they, and their fellow soldiers, will have a chance to come back to their homes and their jobs.

As an aid in their military life, Colonel Dawley offered the officers a nine-point check list of military functions. They are: reconnaissance and security, observation, communications, marching and movement, liaison, security against air attacks, camouflage, supply, and maintenance.

"All these functions go into every operation you will be called upon to consider in the military. There is nothing new in them. You have only to adopt them to military uses. Take care of these nine functions and you take care of your operations. They form a criterion. Though you may be new to the military, carry these ideas with you and you will come out all right."

*Hood Panther 3-16-1944*