

HEADQUARTERS
894th AAA (AW) Bn
APO #758, U.S. Army

23 January 1945

SUBJECT: Unit History, 894th AAA (AW) Battalion.

TO : Public Relations Officer, Headquarters, First TACAF (Prov).
APO #374, U.S. Army.

1. GENERAL

- a. Designation894th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion.
- b. Activation Activation, 10 February 1941 as Second Battalion, 67th Coast Artillery Regiment (AA) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
- c. 1st ReorganizationAt MASS PISCICELLY, ITALY, 20 March 44, under T/O & E 44-25, Dated 30 September 43, in compliance with Ltr., Hq, NATOUSA, File AG 322/418, AA & CD-O, dated 7 March 44, subject, "Reorganization and Disbandment of Coast Artillery Regiments (AA) and Certain Antiaircraft Battalions".
- d. 2nd Reorganization At RADICOFANI, ITALY, 1 July 44, under T/O & E 44-25, dated 22 April 44, in compliance with GO No, 109, Hq, Fifth Army, Dated 28 June 44, subject, "Reorganization of certain Antiaircraft Artillery Battalions".

2. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION.

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Warrant Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted men</u>	<u>total</u>
As of 15 January 1945	34	3	756	793

3. NARRATIVE OF HISTORY.

The History of this organization will be divided into four periods. The first period will cover the time from activation till departure overseas. The second will cover its departure from the UNITED STATES to AFRICA and its participation in the TUNISIAN Campaign. The third period will cover the period after sailing from AFRICA to the ITALIAN Campaign and the fourth period will be the arrival in FRANCE and our present operations here.

a. IN UNITED STATES

The activation of this organization took place at FORT BRAGG NORTH CAROLINA on February 10, 1941. The unit was designated the Second Battalion 67th Coast Artillery Regiment (AA). Original personnel to form the battalion were cadred from the first battalion of the same regiment. Shortly after, additional strength was obtained from selective service men recently inducted. The following months were spent in organization, training and maneuvers. Upon the declaration of war, the battalion was ordered out to set up a defense for the Wright Aeronautical Plants in Paterson, New Jersey. The unit remained there until October 30, 1942, after which, it moved to FORT HANCOCK, NEW JERSEY. Intensive training was scheduled but the battalion was ordered to move to CAMP A.P. HILL VIRGINIA. Here training was conducted to prepare the unit for combat and eventually overseas movement. The movement from CAMP A.P. HILL was made 27 December 1942 to the overseas staging area at FORT DIX, NEW JERSEY. On 9 January 1943, the Battalion moved to the Fort of Embarkation on STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK.

b. TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN

On 14 January 43, personnel of the 894th AAA (AW) Battalion, then the Second Battalion 67th Coast Artillery Regiment (AA), sailed from Staten Island, New York, POE, New York, for a destination unknown. On 28 January 1943, they landed in ORAN, ALGERIA, NORTH AFRICA and within ten days was set-up in tactical positions providing anti-aircraft protection for ORAN City, installations and harbor.

Shortly after, the battalion was relieved and moved to SOUTHERN TUNISIA to defend installation of the American II Corps near TEBESSA and THELEPTE. With the success at EL GUETTAN, the entire II Corps moved to the north to support the French in keeping the enemy hemmed in to the coastal area. Units of the battalion moved into the line east of BEJA defending Corps Field Artillery and II Corps supply points. The breakthrough at MATEUR occurring 3 May 1942, became the deciding factor of the AFRICAN Campaign and end came 13 May 1943. During this campaign our units received confirmation for destroying nine (9) enemy aircraft. Twenty-five engagements were made, all except one occurring on the Northern front from BEJA to BIZERTE. No claims on probably destroyed or damaged aircraft was made.

With the close of the TUNISIAN Campaign, the battalion had various missions defending airfields in TUNISIA where planes were based while the softening up process in SICILY and ITALY was in progress. The batteries during this course defended airfields at SOLIMAN, GROMBALIA, EL BETHAN and MASSICAULT.

14 September 1943, brought an end to mission for the Battalion in AFRICA. By 29 September 1943, the battalion was in the Eastern Base Section Staging Area in BIZERTE and on 13 October 1943 sailed for ITALY to enter a new campaign.

e. ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

On 15 October 1943, the battalion landed by Lutz's in the GULF of POZZOULI, five (5) miles west of NAPLES. Within three (3) days, batteries were in position on the VOLTURNO RIVER defending river crossings and field artillery of the American VI Corp.

Shortly after arriving in the VENAFRO-CASSINO area in November, the VI Corps was withdrawn and replaced by the French Expeditionary Corps (CEF). The battalion then received missions defending field artillery units of the 13th Field Artillery Brigade. It was in this period, our men got their first taste of battle. Casualties within the battalion steadily increased due to shell fire. Christmas of 1943, was spent in the cold hills of VENAFRO, ACQUAFONDATA and ST. ELIA. On 14 March 44, all our units were withdrawn from the CEF Sector and moved south to the British 10th Corps front along the GARIGLIANO RIVER. This front was being turned over than to the CEF who with the support of the American Fifth Army were going to attack and drive to ROME. Our batteries were again assigned to defend field artillery units.

On 20 March 44, the Second Battalion of the 67th Coast Artillery Regiment (AA) was disbanded and reorganized as the 894th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion at MASS PISCICELLI, ITALY. This reorganization caused a change of staff assignments and equipment. On 11 May 44, the Fifth Army launched an all out attack against the "GUSTAV" and "HITLER" defense lines. With continued striking force, the drive reached ROME on the 3rd of June 1944. The ANZIO beach-head forces had been relieved and commenced driving north. Units of the battalions continued supporting American field artillery battalions operating with the CEF. Enemy air activity was almost nil.

The CEF here was withdrawn from the line but re-entered after a six (6) day reorganization period. By the 1st of July we reached SIENA and on the 23rd, the CEF was relieved by the 8th Indian and 2nd New Zealand Divisions. It became apparent, we were then destined for a new mission. After a one week mission of defending the headquarters of Fifth Army during which the King of England made an inspection, we moved to NAPLES where the battalion was assigned to the Seventh Army. A temporary mission defending NAPLES while the invasion forces for FRANCE loaded was assigned. Six (6) days after the invasion of SOUTHERN FRANCE by the Seventh Army, the battalion was relieved of the NAPLES mission and ordered to prepare for water movement. Thus after this last relief, the battalion was prepared to embark from ITALY, 322 days after its arrival 13 October 42, of 123 engagements with enemy aircraft while in ITALY, confirmation was received for 27 destroyed and 4 probable aircraft. Thus the total of aircraft destroyed reached 36.

d. WESTERN CAMPAIGN

On 5 September 44, the battalion landed D plus 20 on ALPHA BEACH in the GULF of ST. TROPEZ in SOUTHERN FRANCE. Batteries were immediately assigned to defend local port installations but orders were received to move north and set up defenses of airfields of the 12th Tactical Air Command. On 15 November 1944, the battalion was relieved of assignment to the Seventh Army and assigned to Sixth Army Group. Additional attachment put the unit under operational control of the First Tactical Air Force (Prov). Our batteries are defending five airfields of this command as of this date.

4. BATTLE STARS

The battalion is entitled to wear five battle stars. They are:

TUNISIA
NAPLES-FOGGIA
ROME-ARNO
SOUTHERN FRANCE
GERMANY

5. CLAIMS ON AIRCRAFT

<u>Engagements</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Probable Destroyed</u>
149	36	9

6. LOSSES IN ACTION

The battalion has received its share of casualties. To date, 13 men have been killed and 63 wounded in action against the enemy. Shell fire was the cause in almost every case.

7. ROSTER OF OFFICERS

Martin B. Chandler, Lt. Col., Battalion Commander
Walter B. Marble, Major, Battalion Executive
Edmund Castle, Major, Battalion S-3
Joseph E. Hodgin, Capt, Headquarters Battery Commander
Chester F. Johnson, Capt., Battalion MTO
Brian T. Murphy, Capt., Chaplain
Charles I. Olson, Capt., Battalion S-2
Raymond L. Regan, Capt., Battalion S-4
Robert B. Averill, 1st Lt., Battalion S-1
Robert H. Burrell, CWO, Personnel Officer
John M. Contaryk, CWO, Reconnaissance Officer
Robert W. Mass, CWO, Assistant S-4
Edward J. Hickey, Capt., Battery Commander, Battery "A"
John B. Strater, 1st Lt., Executive "
John B. Wagner, 1st Lt., Platoon Commander "
George M. Whitley, 1st Lt., Platoon Commander "
Leo F. Burks, Jr., 1st Lt. Asst Plat. Cmdr "
Harold C, Nagle, 1st Lt., Asst Plat. Cmdr "
Sherman E. Lyke, Capt., Battery Commander, Battery "B"
James A. M. Hoff, 1st Lt., Executive "
Victor R. Gilly, 1st Lt., Platoon Commander "
Bruce H. Simmons, 1st Lt. Platoon Commander "
Allen L. Hovey, 1st Lt. Asst Plat. Cmdr "
Roland E. Hassell, 1st Lt. Asst Plat, Cmdr "

Roster of Officers (Cont'd)

Samuel J. Hirsch, Capt., Battery Commander	Battery "C"
Robert Z. Belles, 1 st Lt., Executive	"
Nelson R. Collings, Jr. 1 st Lt., Platoon Commander	"
Robert T. Israel, 1 st Lt., Platoon Commander	"
John J. Murphy, 1 st Lt., Asst Plat. Cmdr	"
Robert W. Young, Capt., Battery Commander	Battery "D"
Mortimer E. Unger, 1 st Lt. Executive	"
Eugene Coppols, 1 st Lt. Platoon Commander	"
Gordon A. Fairbairn, 1 st Lt. Platoon Commander	"
Robert C. Gross, 1 st Lt. Asst Plat. Cmdr.	"
Samuel J. Berenson, Major, Battalion Surgeon	Medical Detachment
Ralph E. Rosen, Capt., Dental Surgeon	"
Lyle D. Green, 2 nd Lt. Medical Administrative	"

CHARLES I. OLSEN
Capt., 894th AAA (AW) Bn,
Historian