

ACTIVATION



The actual chronicle of our Regiment began August 15, 1942, exactly three months before we were activated; that meant that the War Department acknowledged that we were officially alive. However, we are even older than that. Yes, we have a past. Not a deep and checkered one, but it was in 1920 that we were organized as part of a reserve division. We really only began to do things and make history in August 1942 when the War Department, The Commander of A.G.F., the Service of Supply, and the Commander of the Second and Third Armies began assigning cadre officers. Colonel William A. Ellis became our Regimental C.O.

The cadre officers, soon after their designation as such, attended refresher and special training courses to better equip them for the hard and tedious work ahead. The courses were given at schools that were scattered up, down, and across the country. The officers were given schooling and training in multiple subjects. The military objective at this time was to have officers all knowing in all things.

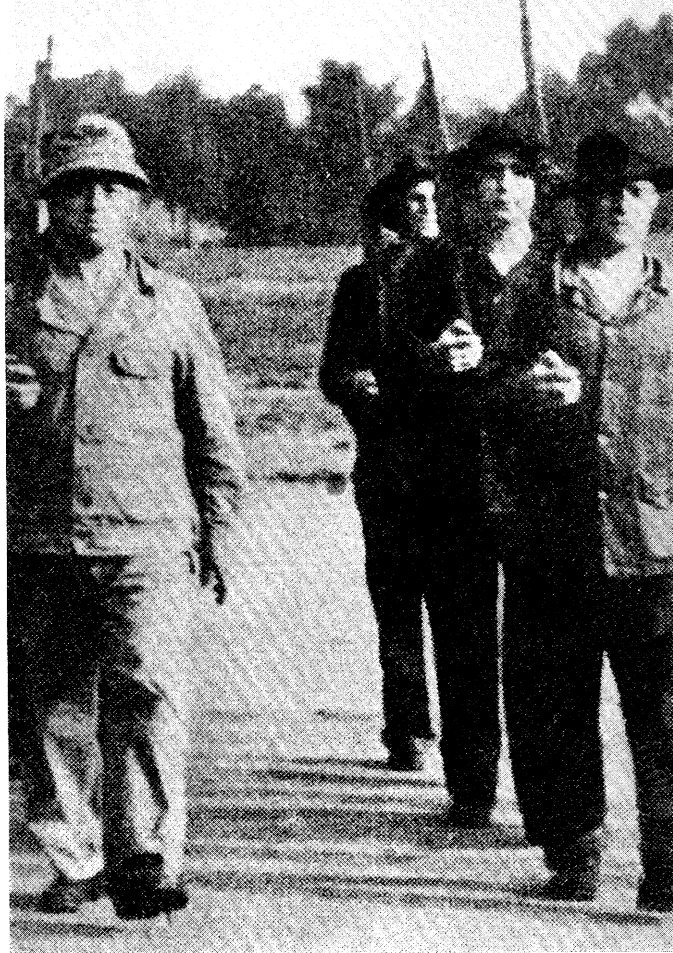
The first officer members of our regiment arrived on October 19 at our first home, Fort Jackson, Columbia, South Carolina. During this month the rest of the filler officer personnel kept arriving either from officer candidate schools or from activated units. The latter supplied those who had demonstrated marked ability in training.

The child began to walk when, on October 15th, a large number of non-commissioned officers, forming the enlisted cadre, selected from the 76th Infantry Division at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, arrived. Then came the body building process when men from replacement training centers, schools, and other units began arriving in droves.

October was consumed as was the first half of November in preparing for personnel arrival, facilities for living, and future training. The area allotted to the entire 100th Division had been inherited from the 30th Division. Interrupting the monotony of this sandy flat stretch of 1½

miles in length and $\frac{3}{5}$ miles in width were about 1100 to 1200 buildings. These structures were mainly 15-man hutments, mess halls, day rooms, orderly rooms, supply rooms. Of course, there were the special buildings such as the service club, movie house, and post office.

There were some very elaborate ceremonies to mark our activation and they were held in the open air theatre fronting the service club. Present were prominent military and civilian personages to give the occasion the prestige it merited. Major General William A. Simpson, as Commander of XII Corps of which the Division was to be a member, outlined the severe trials facing us. He has since that time been promoted and has distinguished himself as Commander of the Ninth Army in Germany.



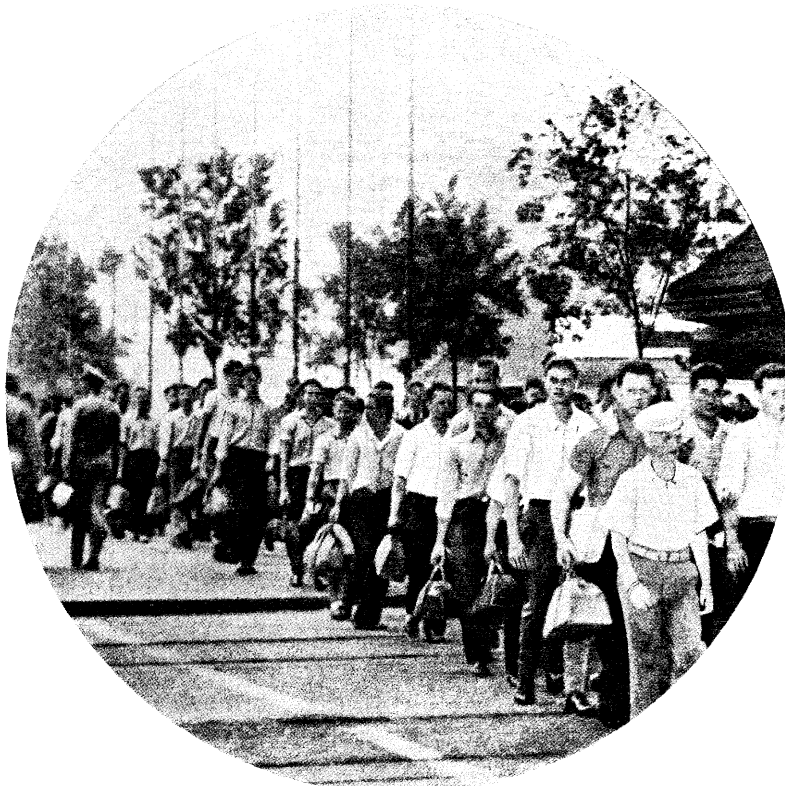
Ties of the Division were symbolized with the passing of the Division flag from the hands of Major General Emil F. Rechardt, 76th Division Commander from which the body of enlisted cadre had been drawn, to Major General Withers A. Burrell, Division Commander. The initial arrival of filler replacements was in the early part of December. In a scant month we were up to T/O and ready for action, which then only involved training. Our regiment was the first to receive its quota of men from the reception center at Fort McPherson, Georgia.

You cannot easily forget the period of transition from the life you knew up to this point and the yet unfamiliar scenes of army life. Recall standing naked in long lines at dispensaries, coughing when ordered, and submitting to certain intrusions upon the privacy you only recently held so sacred. We ranted at the blinding uncontrolled sand blasts but soon came to see and love the beautiful landscape dotted with green pine trees. We rebelled at the painfully slow and abominable transportation to Columbia but found the city equal to catering to our varied needs and therefore worth the effort. We rapidly came to enjoy the constant reminders that our present lot was not one of pure and unadulterated regimentation. There was the service club, Post exchange, movie, chapel.

We made a conscious effort and succeeded in forming lasting friendships. This was not a mere slight by-product of those "greetings from the President of the United States." Above that, we began to feel that we were really a part of the army and from this feeling there emerged a pride in our organization ripening and flowering into complete maturity with the years.

Then you got your furlough — "The return from the damned!" "Look, Mom, there are lots of regiments in this man's army — even if Barbara is a WAC — it's still a man's army — and besides, the 397th is the best in lots of ways. No, they didn't let me bring my rifle home — it's a beaut too. The top kick is a nice enough guy when you get to know him and you do get to know him. No, I won't be an officer next week but if they ain't got a grudge against me and I'm in there punching, pretty soon I'll get to be a Pfc. and then Corporal maybe — ya can't tell about things like that — ya gotta be a man to understand."

Perhaps you did not know it then but we were indeed an amazing crew of motley recruits coming in from fourteen different reception centers which dotted the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. We were drawn from Fort Dix, N. J., Camp Upton, L. I., Ft. Devens, Mass., Ft. Jackson, S. C., and Ft. McPherson, Georgia. These huge reception centers had taken their personnel from Southern New England States, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, The Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama. You can see what a combine of city slickers, southern gentlemen and hill-billies from the corn squeezin' territory this made. A terrific combination — any cross section of the United States — was ready, able and willing to be a cog in the giant war machine of our country.





MILITARY COURTESY

FM 21

CAMOUFLAGE

Do not SIT
or SLEEP on your N

ROCKET LAUNCHER, M1A1

U. S. CARBINE CAL. 30, M1-A

MPREGNATED UNIFO

CAMOUFLAGE
BLINDS THE ENEMY
If he can't see you, he

BASIC FUNCTIONING U. S. RIFLE CAL. 30 M1

AP READING

PHASE II – TRAINING



INTRODUCTION

"Once I was happy, but now I'm forlorn"

Success in battle, the ultimate purpose of military training, provided the momentum for the kind which was supposed to transform a civilian into a fighting machine. There was an incessant conflict inherent in the business of turning us into soldiers. Ever willing we were to accept the authority of leaders but, never ready to lose our sense of individual responsibility. There could be no retreat in battle and still succeed. There could be none in training for it.

That hard tedious period of drudgery only became significant to us when we began playing for keeps in the Vosges and Rimling. Those dreary hours of drill conveyed the idea that the primary objective was to be the submission to authority. The secondary objective was that of the superior officer's moving his men from one place to another in a straight line. We were much too weary to see unity of action that would permit us to perform together, automatically, when the time came for concerted action. Recall the yawning periods on discipline and courtesy? How can we forget the vain efforts at continuing awake while we "mastered" the technical and tactical problems an ocean removed from actual contact with the real enemy? Close your eyes once more and listen without flinching . . .

"Fall in! Straighten up! Get on the ball! Okay you guys, wipe that smile off! "Tention! Hut, two, three, four!" "Hey corporal, could I . . ." "No! and besides keep in step, hut, two, three, four!" "Chees this beats all hell." "Forget it, soldier, this is it!" "I can't stand it I tell ya I just can't stand it. I'm going over the hill, you'll see. I won't stay and you can't make me, so there!" "K.P. well! They can't do this to me, not me, brother, not me. K.P. up at five in the morning, they must be crazy. There isn't enough to do, they must be nuts and I just won't get up, I just

won't do it. Its dark at five o'clock isn't it, let's start later and work later. Lines, lines, lines, and never a small one. Mess line, supply line, pay line, hell, I'll wait until the end. What! no bread? Just ran out of socks? Red-lined? Just as soon wait up front on line as anywhere's else as long as I can't go home anyhow.

"One click equals one inch at 100 yards. One mil equals one yard at 1000 yards. One degree equals 18 mils. That can't be my target. But it is, soldier, so get that arm under there, that's better, not good though! You're hitting the target but it ain't yours!"