

**History of
453rd Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA)
Automatic Weapons (AW) Battalion**

The following document was obtained from 453rd AAA-AW file of the National Archives and Records Administration. It appears to be the hand-written notes outlining the history of the 453rd AAA-AW Battalion from its' organization on August 1, 1942 through January 1, 1944.

The original of this document was approximately 11x17 inches, and has been reduced in size.

An official typed copy of the Battalion's history was issued on January 1, 1945. The official history of the Battalion was likely extracted from these hand-written notes. These notes were written by three different individuals, none of whom were cited as its' author.

1. Designation -

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Four Hundred Fifty Third (453rd)
Separate Coast Artillery Battalion
Anti-Aircraft Automatic Weapons

2. Date of Organization -

August 1, 1942

3. Place of Organization -

Fort Bliss, Texas

4. Authority for Organization -

General Order Thirty (#30), paragraph one
(per 1), Headquarters Anti Aircraft Command,
Richmond, Virginia, dated July 12, 1942
By Command of Major General Green

5. Sources from which Personnel Obtained -

Officers comprising the original cadre
group with former stations and duties
assigned in the Battalion:

Lt. Col. George W. Fisher, O-138868

Commanding Officer - from Harbor Defenses of
San Francisco
Major Harold R. Greenlee, Jr. O-19801

Executive Officer - formerly 52nd
Coast Artillery (Ry) Fort Hancock, New Jersey

Captain Stewart M. Chambers, O-338364

Adjutant - formerly 5th Coast Artillery,
Fort Hamilton, New York

Captain Charles A. Browne, O-292150

S-3, formerly 6th Coast Artillery,
Fort Winfield Scott, California

1st Lieutenant Samuel Cohen, O-385879

S-4, formerly 14th Coast Artillery,
Fort Worden, Washington

Headquarters Battery

1st Lieutenant Robert K Clark, O-451470

formerly 6th Coast Artillery, Fort Scott, California

Battery A -

Captain Phillip C. Ritterspecher O-297704
formerly 249th Coast Artillery, Fort
Stevens, Oregon

Battery B -

Captain William R Ward, O-321774, formerly
19th Coast Artillery, Fort Rosecrans, California

Battery C -

Captain Kenneth J Silberberg, O-341030, formerly
14th Coast Artillery, Fort Worden, Washington
1st Lieutenant Stanley A. Gammon, O-392051
formerly 130th Coast Artillery, Fort Winfield Scott, California

Battery D -

1st Lieutenant Blaine G. Schmidt, O-361442, formerly
6th Coast Artillery, Fort Winfield Scott, California
1st Lieutenant Gordon R. Newell, O-451563, formerly
18th Coast Artillery, Fort Stevens, Oregon

Enlisted Cadre -

was furnished from the 604th Coast
Artillery (AA) which was, on the date of
activation, stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas

Fliers were furnished as follows -

Battery A 105 enlisted men from Fort Hayes,
Ohio, arrived October 9, 1942

34 enlisted men received from Camp
Perry, Ohio, arrived October 10, 1942.

Battery B 103 enlisted men from Camp Perry,
Ohio, arrived October 10, 1942
37 enlisted men from Fort Benjamin
Harrison, Indiana arrived October 12, 1942

Battery C 63 enlisted men from Fort Thomas,
Kentucky and 77 enlisted men Fort
Benjamin Harrison, Indiana arrived Oct 12, 1942

Battery D 68 enlisted men from Fort
Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, arrived
October 12, 1942

Headquarters Battery 86 enlisted men from
Fort Thomas, Kentucky arrived October 12, 1942

6. In compliance with General Order Number 44, Headquarters, Antiaircraft Command, Richmond, Virginia, dated October 1, 1942, the 453rd Coast Artillery Battalion, (AA) was reorganized effective October 10, 1942 from Semi-Mobile to Mobile under Tables of Organization 4-185, dated April 1, 1942.
7. Friday, October 30, 1942
Lt. Col. G.W. Fisher, Commanding Officer of the Battalion was host to the Officers and Ladies of the Battalion at a dinner dance.
This marked the first official dinner since activation of the unit
8. Saturday, October 31, 1942
The first Battalion Parade was held followed by Escort of the Colors.
Brigadier General James B Crawford commanding the Anti-Aircraft Training Center presented the Battalion with its National Colors.
General Crawford highly commended the Battalion in its appearance and action.
9. Saturday, November 9, 1942
The Battalion, less Battery D conducted an infantry march to Davis Ave Range where rifle qualification was held. The distance covered was twenty-four miles. The march started at 0800 and was completed at 1620. Battery D followed the same march November 9, 1942 starting at 0800 and finishing at 1530.
The Battalion returned by convoy November 12, 1942.

10. Thursday, November 19, 1942 the Battalion moved by motor convoy to Camp Huco, New Mexico for preliminary training prior to basic firing. Both 40 mm. and machine gun firing were conducted at day and at night. Approval was expressed by AAATC of conduct and of firing. The Battalion returned to Fort Bliss, Texas Saturday, November 28, 1942.
11. Friday, December 11, 1942 Lt. Col. Fisher was guest at a banquet and dance in his honor given by the Officers of the Battalion on the completion of his 30th year of commissioned service.
12. Sunday, December 20, 1942, the Battalion convoyed to Huco Firing range to remain for three weeks. Firing of the 40 MM and machine guns was accomplished both day and night. Due to bad weather, the Battalion remained until January 12, 1943.
13. Friday, January 15, 1943 the Battalion received 202 new Enlisted men from Camp Wallace, Texas where they had completed 8 weeks training.
14. Monday, February 1, 1943 Lt. Col. Fisher and Mrs. Fisher were honor guest at a dinner dance held in El Paso Club of Cortez Hotel. Music for the occasion was furnished by the versatile musicians of this organization "THE HELL-CATS" who are directed by 1st. Sgt. Dawson with 1st. Lt. Edwards as Advisor.
15. Due to inclement weather the Bn was unable to complete the Service firing at Huco Range during the time originally allotted. Therefore by sending one Battery per day to Huco Range between the days of Feb. 1st. and Feb. 5th we completed our Service Firing with the 40 MM guns. A commendable record was made.

- 16 On February 16, 1943 this Organization was ordered transferred from Fort Bliss, Texas to Fort Knox, Kentucky. This is the 1st. AA organization to be assigned to the Armored Force for training. We were chosen for this assignment because of the excellent record our Bn had made at Fort Bliss. Lt. Col. Fisher, Capt. Browne, and Lt. Garland preceded the Troop movement advance party to have most details arranged upon arrival of troops.
- 17- February 18, 1943 the first train of three left Fort Bliss, Texas to proceed to the new station - Fort Knox, Ky. The trains left at 30 minute intervals. The AAATC Band accompanied General Crawford to the train to bid us a "fare-well and Good-luck".
- 18- February 21, 1943 the Troops arrived at Fort Knox, Ky. Normal training was resumed after the new area had been made livable.
- 19- The week after arrival at Fort Knox was a very profitable one to this Organization. It was during this week - Feb. 21 - Feb 28, 1943 - that we received 171 new fillers from the Pacific Coast.
- 20- Wednesday, March 2nd, 1943 the Battalion had its 1st motor convoy since arrival at Fort Knox, Kentucky. We left Fort Knox at 0815 and returned at 1630 the same day. The Air force from Godman Field gave perfect cooperation and strafed our convoy all during the march. Hot lunches were fed the men for the noon meal.
- 21 Saturday, March 27, 1943 Lt. Col. Fisher inspected the Fillers at a Parade for Fillers only. These men had completed three weeks of training and made a fine showing.
- 22 Wednesday, March 31, 1943 Batteries B and D accompanied by Hqs Btry traveled by Motor Convoy to Glendale, Ky. airport where an AA protection was set up for this Govt. Airport.

- 23- Wednesday, April 7, 1943 the entire Bn. was placed on an hypothetical alert to proceed to Garnettsville, Ky to protect a defile along Otter Creek. We proceeded by Motor Convoy to the gun positions specified. Much was gained by this field problem. We returned to camp the same day.
- 24- Wednesday, April 14, 1943 the Fliers began their firing with rifles. Due to snow they were forced to return to camp before completing their qualification rounds.
- 25- While the Fliers were firing, Lt. Col. Fisher took the remainder of the Bn. on a hike of 15 miles. Despite the snow and cold everyone returned from the hike in good condition. We left Bn Area at 0810 and returned at 1210 the same day - Wednesday, April 14, 1943.
- 26- Thursday, June 17th the first of three trains departed from Ft Knox, Kentucky enroute to our new station-- Camp Stewart, Georgia. This train arrived at Camp Stewart, Georgia on Saturday, June 19, 1943 with the other two trains arriving Sunday June 20, 1943. The Bn. moved from camp to Bivouac area immediately and began preparations for our firing on Camp Stewart Ranges.
- 27- In compliance with General Orders #53, Headquarters Armored Force, Fort Knox, Kentucky, dated May 07, 1943 the 453rd Coast Artillery (AA) (Av) Bn was redesignated and reorganized effective June 1, 1943, from Coast Artillery to Anti-Aircraft Artillery under Table of Organization 44-25 dated February 27, 1943.
- 28- MONDAY, JULY 19, 1943 - BATTALION CONDUCTED THE SERVICE FIRING TEST WITH 40 MMS AND 50 CAL. MACHINE GUNS. A FINE SHOWING WAS MADE.

- 29 MONDAY AUGUST 16, 1943 - LT. COL. GEORGE W. FISHER, OUR COMMANDING OFFICER, RECEIVED ORDERS TRANSFERRING HIM TO COMMAND OF THE 377TH AAA AW BN. IN TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION OF HIM AS AN OFFICER AND AS A MAN, THE OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION PRESENTED HIM A WATCH AT HIS DEPARTURE.
- 30 TUESDAY AUGUST 17, 1943 - MAJOR THOMAS W. SMITH ~~was~~ 0102761 WAS ASSIGNED TO COMMAND OUR ORGANIZATION.
- 31 MONDAY , AUGUST 2, 1943 - THE BATTALION HAVING COMPLETED FORTY-ONE WEEKS OF TRAINING ON SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1943, LEAVES AND FURLoughs BECAME AUTHORIZED LEAVING ONLY A SKELETON FORCE OF OFFICERS AND MEN ON DUTY, THE BATTALION "WENT HOME".
- 32 WEDNESDAY , AUGUST 18, 1943 - BATTALION ^{Tenn. Maneuver Area} RECEIVES ORDERS TO MOVE TO LEBANON, TENNESSEE, BY SEPTEMBER 2, 1943, TO GO ON MANEUVERS WITH SECOND ARMY. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEWS TO THE BATTALION WAS MET WITH JUBILATION AND THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.
- 33 The Battalion having completed eight (8) weeks of maneuvers, experiencing hardships of field conditions and gaining invaluable experience, it left the Tennessee Maneuver Area on November 8, 1943, and moved by motor convoy to Fort Fisher, North Carolina, using five days for the trip. A most delightful time was had by all. The first night was spent at Ft. Oglethorpe,

Georgia; the second night at Ft. McPherson, Georgia (in the environs of Atlanta); the third night at Camp Gordon, Georgia (near Augusta); the fourth night at Florence, South Carolina; and the fifth night (the night of 12 November, 1944) at Fort Fisher, N.C.

34. The Battalion was greatly thrilled to get back to a garrison setting, having endured the rigors of field conditions and continuous G.I. inspections for an uninterrupted five months. Funny thing, the organization had more sickness and colds the first two weeks after arrival in Georgia than they had had in the field at any one given period of time. During this period of time many new men arrived to bring Bn to full strength. Some from Fort Bragg, Camp Davis.
35. On December 27, 1943, the Battalion made a change of location in the Camp Davis area, moving by motor convoy from the Fort Fisher area to the Maple Hill area of the Camp Davis Reservation.
36. On Saturday January 1, 1944, New Year's Day, the Battalion experienced a change of Commanding Officers. Major Thomas W. Smith was replaced by Lt. Col. George W. Trousdale, a native Louisianian.