

History of the 27th Infantry Training Battalion

The 27th Infantry Training Battalion had its beginning on May 6th under command of Major Jefferson B. Willis. The Battalion strength as of that date was two. Lieutenant Louis A. Larson and Major Willis have been assigned and, between the two officers, the plans for the Battalion were roughly made. Cadremen soon joined from Fort Jackson and Fort Bragg, and the companies came to life. Major Willis did not remain long, but his work was carried on by Major Russell Blair, who assumed command on May 12, 1941.

On July 15, 1941, Lieutenant Colonel Don N. Holmes was assigned to the Battalion and assumed command. Colonel Holmes immediately made plans for the creation of the Specialists Schools in which our men were to spend the last seven and the most important, weeks of training. Company A was designate to operate the Motor Mechanics School; Company B, the Chauffeurs School; Company C, the Pioneer School and the Clerk School; Company D, the Cook School, the Bugler School and the Armorer Artificers School; Company E (Colored) was divided into the Mechanics and Chauffeurs and Company F was divided into Cooks, Clerks, Buglers and Armorer Artificers,

The equipment of the early schools was meager compared to that now in use. There were no adequate buildings and in almost every case models and charts were used in lieu of originals. Classes went on and they were successful. The graduates of the first cycle have long since been transferred to duty with troops and letters of commendation are still being received from the units to which these men were assigned.

On completion of our first "go round," many improvements were made. Basic Training was eliminated to better concentrate on Specialist Training. The Classification Office selected only those men who showed special aptitude for training in one of the schools of the 27th Battalion.

Colonel Holmes bent every effort to obtain sufficient new equipment for proper instructions of small groups. Two large buildings were erected to house the motor schools. Dozens of motors were installed on stands to permit instruction and practice on "live" motors.

A large parking apron was laid out for Company B's motor vehicles. The number of vehicles at the disposal of Company B for chauffeurs instruction was increased from 18 to 190.

The Clerk School under the supervision of Company C installed in separate building, was given 90 typewriters, desks, mimeograph machines, ditto machines, a large library of textbooks, War Department forms, and plans and training data.

The Pioneers operating at this time in conjunction with the Camp Engineers used the whole outdoors for their classroom. New roads and bridges appeared. Shelters, field

fortifications, tank traps, wire entanglements and other types of Pioneer activity were made up and left as examples of their work.

The Cook School made rapid progress. Field installations appeared in Company D's area, storage boxes, grease traps, fire pits, field showers, etc. Arrangements were made whereby students could visit the storage warehouse and the bakery.

Charts were secured from various meat houses and after a short course in the theory of cooking and meat cutting, the students were farmed out to mess halls throughout the camp, for instructions in practical cooking.

The Buglers under the supervision of Company D started their instruction immediately after the first cycle of basic training. The platoon was equipped with 50 bugles and manuals. The class besides being taught to play calls and several marches were given instructions in messenger training, pyrotechnics, map reading, instruments, sketching, and message center procedure.

In every way the work of the 27th Infantry Training Battalion was improved and is constantly being improved - and for what purpose? To send out to combat units regularly every seven weeks 372 motor mechanics, 372 motor vehicle operators, 186 stenographers and clerks, 186 pioneers, 186 cooks, 93 buglers, 93 armorers artificers, a total of 1,488 qualified specialists.

Taken from "Historical and Pictorial Review, 27th ITB, 8th Training Regiment, Camp Croft, SC". Transcribed by Ron Crawley for the Camp Croft Home Page.