

August 22, 1951

AUDIE MURPHY TO HELP
36th Division Creates New Rookie Battalion

By THOMAS TURNER
News Staff Writer

CAMP POLK, La., Aug. 21.—Capt. Audie Murphy of Farmersville, who was the nation's most-decorated soldier in World War II, will help to train a newly created battalion of the 36th Division.

Murphy, now a movie star, joined the Texas National Guard outfit a few months ago.

His assignment at this year's summer camp of the infantry division is instructor in a new training battalion. This battalion is made up of the division's soldiers who have had no previous military training. It is the first time the division has ever set up a separate unit strictly for rookies.

The new battalion was given a fancy start Tuesday. The division's top officers, Maj. Gen. H. Miller Ainsworth of Luling and Brig. Gen. Carl Phinney of Dallas, took part. The division's white-helmeted band was on hand to furnish music. It was embarrassed when Ainsworth suggested that it play the division's official song, "The Eyes of the World Are on You, 36th." The music had been left behind.

The band substituted "The Eyes of Texas," as a tribute to the new battalion. This prompted Ainsworth, an ardent Texas A&M College supporter, to comment that since that song was the University of Texas pep tune, the Aggie fight song was in order. The band promptly gave out with it.

Most of the ceremony had a more serious tone, however.

Ainsworth told the hundreds of young recruits, sitting under tall pine trees, that they were selected for the battalion because they were fine prospects as soldiers, either as National Guard Civilians or professional soldiers.

"You are a guinea-pig outfit, a lot of eyes are on you, you have the best officers and instructors we have, and we expect great things of you," the 2-star general told the youngsters.

Phinney, the assistant division commander, added that "What you learn now is setting you up to be good soldiers in the division later on. Like this entire division,, we want this unit to be a ball of fire."

A young lawyer in Phinney's Dallas law firm, Ralph Pulley, is a member of the training battalion. He played on Baylor University's championship basketball team of a few years back.

A crusty, veteran regular Army officer, Col. A. J. McNab, senior Army instructor for the division, told the new soldiers he was a damn-yankee with a great liking for Texans. They boast a lot, he said, but they make good their boasts. Some of the best soldiers he formerly

commanded in the 32d Division were Texans, he said.

Another regular Army man, Col. R. R. Louden, reminded the GI's that the Army has announced it plans to call more guard divisions.

“If this division should be federalized,” he said, “this training not only would be good for you, but this group that will train you would stand General Ainsworth in good stead with their experience.”

The training battalion will be headed by Col. M. B. Etheridge of Huntsville, a Texas legislator, and one of the division's most decorated officers. His right-hand man will be young Maj. William Wood of Texas A&M, also holder of a fine war record. They have a picked crew of noncommissioned helpers.

The division Tuesday was settled down into its detailed training schedule. Brief showers which visited the picturesque camp periodically served only to make the blistering heat more humid. Every soldier was taking salt pills, on orders, and the division was in good physical condition.