

CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY MUSEUM ARCHIVES
2814 B Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Escondido Armory
Thomas F. Durban Gunnery Range

DO NOT REMOVE FROM MUSEUM

Historical Record – Do Not Destroy



COMPANY C
2D BATTALION 185th ARMOR
CALIFORNIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
304 E. PARK AVENUE
ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA 92025
(714) 746-1351



THOMAS F. DURBIN RANGE

The "Thomas F. Durbin Range", a laser tank gunnery range, at Escondido armory is a unit initiative undertaken as part of the 2nd Brigade 40th Infantry Division five year plan for development of home station training facilities. Use of this facility will minimize the impact of constraints on training ammunition while maximizing the limited training time available to our soldiers; this savings is estimated to be thousands of dollars and hundreds of man-hours yearly. It will increase the flexibility of unit training managers in scheduling required gunnery training. Throughout the training year it will provide tank commanders with a valuable tool with which to conduct supplemental gunnery training, realistic crew battle drill, and will help provide for more efficient use of unprogrammed training opportunities. The range has already been shown to be of peripheral benefit in the recruiting effort and if as expected, the quality of training is enhanced, then increased retention must logically follow. Used in conjunction with existing facilities at the San Diego Training Base it helps provide our trainers and soldiers with gunnery training facilities which are unrivalled in the Reserve Components.

The Guard Belongs — Maybe you belong in the Guard

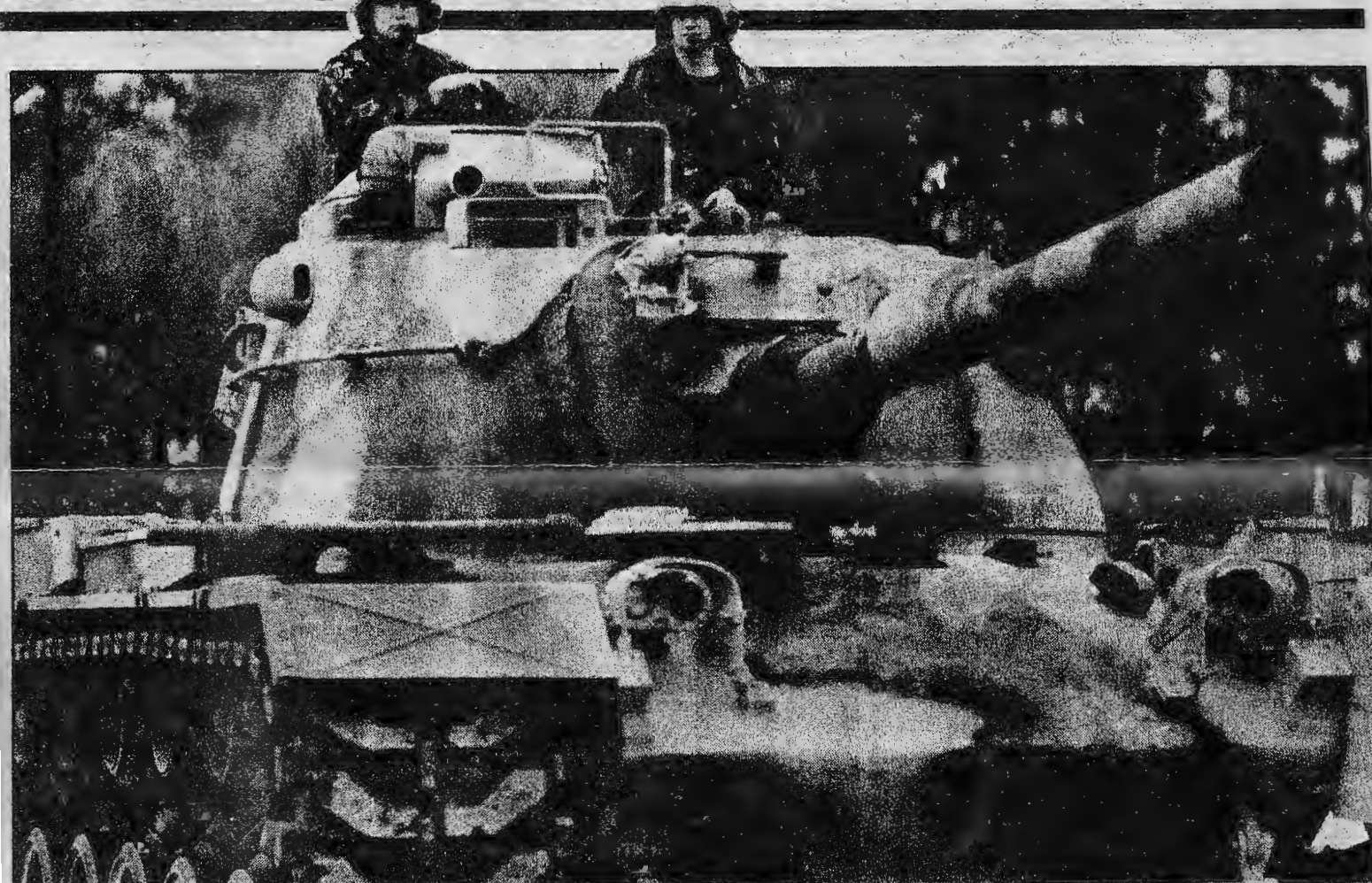
THOMAS F. DURBIN RANGE

Private First Class Thomas F. Durbin was born in San Diego, California on November 8, 1945. After graduating from Escondido High School he studied two years at Palomar College and one year at San Diego State with a major in veterinary medicine. He entered the US Army on January 9, 1967, attended basic and advanced combat training at Fort Ord, California. Private First Class Durbin died on September 21, 1967 from enemy fire while serving in South Viet Nam. Private First Class Durbin distinguished himself while serving as a radiotelephone operator in Company C, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Division, operating near Tam Ky, Republic of South Viet Nam. His platoon was returning from a search and destroy mission when it was fired upon by a viet cong element using automatic weapons. Because the squads of the platoon were widely dispersed, radio communication was of utmost importance in coordinating the response to the attack. Throughout the action Private First Class Durbin kept his squad constantly in contact with the Platoon Leader, relaying forward essential information and receiving back directions, although he was frequently exposed to enemy fire. Though his heroic action resulted in his being mortally wounded, he had made a contribution of immeasurable value to the unit's performance in the battle. His bravery and aggressiveness are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on himself, his unit and the United States Army. For these reasons this range is dedicated in memory of Private First Class Thomas F. Durbin.



His decorations include:

Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device
Purple Heart Medal
National Defence Medal
Vietnam Service Medal
Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
Gallantry Cross Medal
Military Merit Medal
Combat Infantry Badge



Donna Cosentino/The Times-Advocate

Gunnery range dedicated

The Thomas F. Durbin laser-tank gunnery range, named after the first enlisted man from Escondido to be killed in action in Vietnam, was officially dedicated at the Escondido Armory Sunday. Durbin was killed in September 1967. Bottom left, his mother, Ann Durbin, receives a plaque and a T-shirt from the men of Company C

of the National Guard Armory, Escondido, presented by Sgt. L.D. Gustafson, left, and Sgt. Maj. Charles J. Dorsey. Following the brief dedication ceremony, spectators, including Mayor Ron Bittner, watched an M48A5 Tank, above, fire its laser gun-simulator at miniature targets. Bottom right, guests line up to watch.

PROCLAMATION

In Honor Of

THOMAS F. DURBIN
Private First Class, U.S. Army

WHEREAS, military preparedness is a proven deterrent to enemy aggression; and

WHEREAS, America has suffered needlessly in past wars from lack of adequate preparedness; and

WHEREAS, home-station training provides greater flexibility in achieving and maintaining a state of combat readiness; and

WHEREAS, advanced techniques of modern laser gunnery practice greatly enhance unit adaptability to wartime needs;

NOW, THEREFORE, in memory of the supreme sacrifice of PFC. Thomas F. Durbin during the Vietnam war, I congratulate the members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor, California Army National Guard, upon the dedication of "THE THOMAS F. DURBIN RANGE" for tank laser gunnery practice.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have set my hand and affixed hereto the official Seal of the City of Escondido, California, this thirteenth day of December, Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-one.


RON BITTNER
MAYOR

S E A L

