



The ASC History Newsletter

Army Field Support Command 2003-2006

*This MONTH in
military history...*

- 1814: Future Pres. Zachary Taylor defeated at Battle of Credit Island
- 1855: US Army avenges the Grattan Massacre
- 1864: Atlanta falls to Union troops
- 1886: Geronimo surrenders
- 1917: Soldier's first brush with poison gas
- 1943: Allies invade Italian mainland
- 1945: Allies celebrate V-J Day
- 1950: US Military Assistance Advisory Group arrives in Saigon
- 1968: Fighter pilot LTC William A. Jones nominated for Medal of Honor

The Army Field Support Command was established in January 2003. The creation of this command was another step in the evolution of commands at Rock Island Arsenal. Since 2000, the Operations Support Command had undergone several rearrangements—one of which moved the Field Support Command (FSC) LOGCAP, LAP and AMC Forward missions over to HQ, OSC, leaving FSC primarily responsible for APS. This had proven to dilute some of the focus on these missions as the headquarters was also responsible for the ammunition mission. With the ramp up to Operation Iraqi Freedom increasingly consuming the staff, moving those missions back to a separate subordinate command became increasingly attractive. At the same time, the OSC leadership was concerned with impending BRAC studies and thought that highlighting the joint nature of ammunition management would bolster the need to retain the ammunition missions. The result of these concerns was the changing

of the name of OSC to the Joint Munitions Command in January 2003 and the simultaneous change from Field Support Command to Army Field Support Command (AFSC). The return of the LOGCAP, LAP and AMC Forward missions to the one-star subordinate command created a more clear separation of mission while highlighting the big Army focus on the AFSC missions.

The AFSC expertly managed the ongoing download of APS in Kuwait in the Spring of 2003 and then demonstrated its critical support of Army units during the invasion of Iraq. Not only did APS work as envisioned, but LAP and LOGCAP rapidly followed Third Army units into Iraq providing state of the art communication support to support operational logistics as well as base camp life support. The AMC Forward SWA shifted to wartime doctrine and was called Logistics Support Element SWA. LSE SWA helped push the divisional LSE's into the fight as well as issuing equip-

ment. In May 2003 AFSC created LSE Iraq to focus management of the LSEs in Iraq, allowing LSE SWA to manage the theater base in Kuwait and Qatar as well as the LSEs operating in Afghanistan. As the war began to stabilize, leadership in Rock Island reassessed the entire JMC mission and realized that the field support aspects continued to increase. The result was that in July 2003 AFSC was elevated from a one-star to a two-star command and a MSC of AMC. The JMC was assigned as a subordinate to AFSC in anticipation of its eventual move to a life-cycle command. The AFSC continued to manage the war effort and began gaining other missions over time, such as TPE, armor upgrade, PDTE, LBE and other missions. At the same time AFSC looked forward to the final step in the evolutionary story we have been telling with the creation of ASC in October 2006.

Berchtesgaden

By May of 1945, with World War II drawing to a close in Europe, Allied leaders desired to capture not only Berlin, but also Hitler's famed mountain resort, Berchtesgaden, or better known as the "Eagles Nest." However, with Berlin already firmly in Soviet control, US troops recognized the symbolic value of capturing Hitler's mountaintop retreat, a place where Hitler planned his conquest of Europe and viewed by many as the second seat of government outside of Berlin.

After many years of fighting Axis forces in North Africa and Europe, the 7th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division fought its way to Salzburg, Germany by the beginning of May 1945. Recognizing their proximity to Berchtesgaden and the prestige incumbent upon whatever unit captured Hitler's mountaintop retreat, the commander of the 3rd ID, MG John O'Daniel, instructed Col. John Heintges, commander of the 7th Infantry Regiment, to take Berchtesgaden. Simultaneously, O'Daniel also instructed his troops to create a roadblock at the bridges over the Salaach River in southern Germany with orders prohibiting any unit from crossing without O'Daniel's permission. After giving this order, O'Daniel quickly set out to make himself

difficult to contact, thereby giving the 7th Infantry a head start on their way to Berchtesgaden and effectively denying the French and the 101st Airborne the glory of capturing Hitler's retreat.

Facing little resistance, the 7th Infantry entered Berchtesgaden on 4 May 1945 and quickly liberated the town and captured the Eagles Nest. Once the 7th Infantry confirmed that they had secured Hitler's Eagles Nest, O'Daniel allowed the 101st Airborne and



French forces to enter the area to assist with securing the town. On 5 May, just a day after capturing the Eagle's Nest, the 7th Infantry received orders to leave Berchtesgaden and return to Salzburg. By this time, Berchtesgaden was filled with Allied soldiers, especially paratroopers from the 101st, many of whom believed they had reached Berchtesgaden first since the 7th Infantry

quickly departed the town. As the war ended, the 101st occupied Berchtesgaden and the mistaken belief that the 101st was the first to capture the Eagles Nest took hold. Especially with the popularity of Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Band of Brothers" and the subsequent miniseries, the myth that the 101st captured the Eagles Nest proliferated. Ambrose heard many accounts of Easy Company veterans believing they had been the first to liberate Berchtesgaden, yet, Ambrose failed to corroborate these accounts with official or outside sources. The Army's official history of WWII notes that "motorized troops of the 3rd Division got there first, in the late afternoon of 4 May." In fact, both Generals Eisenhower and Maxwell Taylor, commander of the 101st, credit the 7th Infantry with capturing Berchtesgaden before the 101st.

The story of Berchtesgaden is one of intrigue and drama, serving as a reminder of the importance of thoroughly documenting our own history as an Army command to ensure future generations of scholars and researchers possess an accurate understanding of the work performed throughout the Army Sustainment Command. At the end of this FY, be sure to document your history!