



WORLD WAR II MILITARY HISTORY

- 1812 War of 1812 begins.
- 1862 Siege of Vicksburg begins.
- 1919 World War I formally ends.
- 1941 Germany invades Russia.
- 1942 Battle of Midway.
- 1948 Russia begins the blockade of Berlin.
- 1950 The Korean War begins.
- 1971 N.Y. Times begins the publication of the Pentagon Papers.
- 1989 Chinese Armed Forces open fire on civilians at Tiananmen Square.
- 1994 The Soviet occupation of East Germany ends.

DID YOU KNOW?

An artificial lake used to be the dividing line between living space and work space on Rock Island Arsenal. This lake was situated due north of building 64. A stone bridge that was flanked by lions heads was built to span the lake. This bridge allowed faster access to the manufacturing areas by alleviating the need to detour to East or West Avenues. The lake was drained shortly after it was established due to insects. The bridge fell into a state of disrepair in 2015.

TRIVIA

- 1 In what year did the role of “close air support” become formally assigned to an aircraft?
- 2 How many complete rail bridges have spanned Rock Island since the first in 1856?
- 3 Who was the commanding general when ASC was stood up in 2006?

Last Month's Answers:

- 1 Which U.S. president issued the charter for the golf club at Rock Island Arsenal?
William Howard Taft
- 2 What was the name of the “shot” that the atomic cannon participated in during the Upshot-Knothole tests?
Shot Grable
- 3 Where was the body for the “Fat Man” atomic bomb constructed?
Rock Island Arsenal

Answers to trivia and more are available on the ASC History Office's SharePoint page.



The Landings at Normandy

Codenamed Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy was the largest amphibious military invasion in history. On the morning of 6 June 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower signaled the beginning of the invasion and sent a message out to his troops: “Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely. But this is the year 1944... The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!”

In the early hours of 6 June, the first paratroopers of the United States 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions, and the British 6th Airborne Division, landed throughout Normandy. Few landed in their intended target area with many others being killed, captured, or drowned in fields flooded intentionally by the Germans. Due in part to poor weather conditions and the thorough deception plan the Allies had carried out in the months prior to the invasion, the Germans were caught off guard by the invasion. General Erwin Rommel was in Germany celebrating his wife’s birthday and the headquarters in Normandy did not expect a threat. The German 15th Army in Pas de Calais went on alert due to the successful Allied efforts to convince German leadership that the invasion would occur there which delayed in its response to the invasion at Normandy.

Over 150,000 Allied troops landed on five beaches along the Normandy coast facing overwhelming odds. Despite such harsh conditions,

the Allies persevered and eventually fought their way off the beaches.

The Allies suffered approximately 10,000 casualties with almost 4,500 confirmed dead on the first day. Due to the successes of the first day the Allies were able to breakout of the beachhead, push through France, and finally liberated Paris in late August. Thanks to the bravery of the thousands of young men who landed on the beaches on 6 June, the Allies demonstrated the tide had truly turned and paved the way for a victory over all of Europe nearly one year later.



BG Thomas J. Rodman

“A National Calamity. The melancholy duty devolves upon us of recording in our columns this evening... that General Rodman dies this morning at 1 ½ o'clock.” This was the report of the Daily Davenport Democrat on 7 June 1871. Brigadier General (Brevet) Thomas J. Rodman attracted a lot of attention upon his assignment here to the newly established Arsenal. His arrival signaled change and growth for the area that still resonate today. BG Rodman was innovative throughout his time in the Army, personally inventing both the Rodman gun and a new faster burning gun powder formula. He spent time as the Commanding Officer of three different arsenals until he was tasked with the development of a “national” arsenal at Rock Island, Illinois.

Rodman arrived at Rock Island and assumed command 3 August 1865. His significant skills in engineering and architecture helped him come up with an ambitious master plan for the manufacturing and aesthetic of the arsenal. While commandant, he oversaw the completion of Storehouse A (the Clock Tower Building), the water reservoir, and the 1866 wagon-bridge crossing the Mississippi River. He also began the construction of the ten core limestone buildings lining today’s Rodman Avenue, as well as Quarters One. Unfortunately, he did not live to see his grandiose vision completed due to his death in 1871 at only fifty-six years old. The coroner’s report listed overwork as the cause of death, however the paper reported that his death was a result of cardiac

arrest.

Rodman’s successor, Captain Daniel W. Flagler, continued on with Rodman’s plans for the arsenal. As a testament to Rodman’s influence in the area, over one -thousand people attended his funeral. Today known as the father of Rock Island Arsenal, General Thomas J. Rodman is buried in the National Cemetery accompanied by two Rodman guns on his gravesite.



A generation which ignores history has no past and no future.

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