



THIS MONTH in MILITARY HISTORY

The Red Ball Express

- 1898 Spain severs diplomatic relations with the United States.
- 1917 The U.S. Congress approves the declaration of war against Germany.
- 1942 The Doolittle Raid is conducted on targets across Honshu with B-25 bombers.
- 1945 The largest amphibious landing in the Pacific Theater takes place on Okinawa.
- 1947 The last formal surrender of World War II occurs on the island of Peleliu.
- 1962 The *Oxcart* makes its first flight at Groom Lake.
- 1964 GEN Douglas MacArthur passes away at Walter Reed Hospital.
- 1970 The Apollo 13 mission blasts off from Kennedy Space Center.
- 1982 The Falkland Islands War begins with an Argentinian amphibious assault.
- 2003 Baghdad is taken by a U.S. led coalition force after three weeks.

TRIVIA

- 1 What was the record for the number of miles driven without incident during the red Ball Express?
- 2 What was the approximate amount of supplies needed per day for U.S. Field Armies during the Red Ball operations?
- 3 What were the origins of the "Red Ball Express" name?

ANSWERS FOR MARCH 2022 QUESTIONS

- 1 After the closing of Fort Armstrong, how many times did the Army attempt to sell or auction the island?
2 times
- 2 Who was the only delegate to the Continental Congress to be photographed?
John Armstrong
- 3 Who were the two officers tasked to accept the surrender of War Chief Black Hawk?
LT's Robert Anderson & Jefferson Davis



Countries that have not declared war on birds

Countries that HAVE declared war on birds, and have lost

Fact can sometimes be stranger than fiction. We all know about the devil spawn birds known as Geese, but an Emu can be just as bad. In the 1930s, Australia mounted a military action against the birds ... and lost. 30 years later, China mounted a military operation against Sparrows ... and lost. The moral of the story here is don't fight the birds. They can fly and they will beat you.



Trivia answers, digital newsletters, and more history is available on the ASC History website:

<https://aschq.army.mil/About-Us/History>

A common phrase used today is 'distribution to the last tactical mile.' ASC often focuses on providing materiel to the last tactical mile in support of our forces. This is critical because shortcomings in distribution rapidly lead to problems on the front lines. This focus is nothing new for the Army. During World War II, one of the more famous transportation systems was called the Red Ball Express.

Created on 21 AUG 1944, the Red Ball Express was an adhoc development in France that made sure the Allies would be able to get needed supplies nowhile more permanent supply lines, such as railroads, were being built. The Red Ball Express consisted of convoys of trucks that would run a loop of highway from St Lo northeast to the front lines. The trucks carried mainly fuel and ammo to the front lines, although other mandatory supplies were also transported.

On an average day 900 fully loaded vehicles would transverse the one-way route using round the clock drivers. These drivers were mostly African American because at the time US commanders felt they were not suited to combat positions within the Army. The route the trucks followed was marked by red balls placed alongside the road and signs depicting daily goals and inspirational messages to keep the drivers going. Civilians were kept off the specified route in order to prevent traffic jams and convoys had strict

rules placed upon them. Convoy trucks were to stay at 60 yard intervals to avoid presenting big targets for enemy bombers and not to exceed 25 miles an hour; passing on the road was also not allowed.

The Express lived up to its name, it was quick; but this focus on speed in a hastily created transportation sys-tem also caused problems. The rigorous nature of driving around the clock and the dangers of driving started to wear on the soldiers. Drivers began to ignore speed limits, weight limits for cargo, and their own fatigue. Night driving was especially hazardous as the trucks were only allowed "cat eyes", or slitted head-light covers in order to reduce the chance of being seen, but this reduced driver visibility as well. Reckless driving led to more and more single vehicle incidents, including veering off the road, collisions, and getting stuck. Maintenance was ignored and trucks broke down blocking the routes. The greatest problem was simply fuel consumption. Combat forces were racing across France further than the Red Ball could deliver fuel. By late September 1944 the trucks needed more fuel to get to the front than they could carry, even in bulk tankers. Without fuel deliveries to the last tactical mile, the advance across France ground to a halt until better distribution networks could be established. The Red Ball Express only ran for 82 days but left a lasting legacy of support.

SGT Stubby

While training for combat on the fields of Yale University in 1917, PVT J. Robert Conroy found a stray dog with a short tail. He named him "Stubby," and soon the dog became the mascot of the 102nd Infantry, 26th Yankee Division. He learned the bugle calls, the drills, and even a modified dog salute as he put his right paw on his right eyebrow when a salute was executed by his fellow soldiers.

When the division shipped out for France aboard the *SS Minnesota*, PVT Conroy smuggled Stubby aboard. After landing in Europe, however, Stubby was discovered by PVT Conroy's commanding officer, but Stubby was allowed to remain after saluting the CO.

The 102nd Infantry reached the front lines on 5 FEB 1918. Stubby soon became accustomed to the loud rifles and heavy artillery fire. His first battle injury occurred from gas exposure; he was taken to a nearby field hospital and nursed back to health. The injury left him sensitive to the tiniest trace of gas. When the division was attacked in an early morning gas launch, he recognized the gas and ran through the trench barking, saving many from injury.

Stubby also had a talent for locating wounded men between the trenches of the opposing armies, barking

until medics arrived. He even caught a German soldier mapping out the layout of the Allied trenches. When the German ran, he locked onto his hindquarters, immobilizing the soldier until the U.S. troops arrived to take him into custody. For capturing an enemy spy, Stubby was promoted to the rank of sergeant by the commander of the 102nd Infantry. He became the first dog to be given rank in the United States Armed Forces.

Later, Stubby was injured during a grenade attack, receiving a large amount of shrapnel in his chest and leg. He was rushed to a field hospital and later transferred to a Red Cross Recovery Hospital for additional surgery.

By the end of the war, Stubby had served in 17 battles and was awarded many medals for his heroism, including a medal from the Humane Society which was presented by General John Pershing.

