### THE ASC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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# Reopening of the Rock Island Arsenal Museum

## **FROM THE ARCHIVES**



MG John C. Raaen, Jr.

#### WECOM-ARMCOM CDR 1972-1975

"I was the Headquarters Commandant and HQ Company Commander of the 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion. I landed in the third wave of Ranger Force "C" on Omaha Dog Red at about 0750 on D-Day. The 5th Rangers landed INTACT as a battalion and thus became the dominant influence on Omaha Dog Beach. We fought our way into Vierville in the late afternoon, but were stopped from proceeding to Pointe Du Hoc by the 29th Division command group. Gen Cota was probably right on that point, we were needed to secure a very fragile beachhead from expected German counterattack, and since the German guns at Point du Hoc had not influenced the landings, protection of the beachhead was more important than relief of the 2nd Rangers at Point du Hoc.

On D+1, I was with the relief force for Point du Hoc and ended up in command of that force the evening of D+1 as it dug in at St. Pierre du Mont for the night of D+1. The next morning, D+2, the rest of the 5th joined us with LTC Schneider in command, and we relieved the force at Point du Hoc."

## **MONTHLY TRIVIA**

- **1** Approximately when did the loss of American shipping begin to wane during the Battle of the Atlantic?
- 2 What was the original date that the Allies had planned for the D-Day Invasion?
- **3** When was Operation *DRAGOON* supposed to have been kicked off in Southern France?

#### ANSWERS FOR MAY 2023 QUESTIONS

- **1** Approximately when did the loss of American shipping begin to wane during the Battle of the Atlantic?
  - > In mid 1943.
- **2** What was the original date that the Allies had planned for the D-Day Invasion?
  - >> 5 June 1944
- **3** When was Operation *DRAGOON* supposed to have been kicked off in Southern France?
  - 6 June 1944 however the Allies could not support two large invasion forces at the same time so the landings were delayed until 15 August 1944.

The Rock Island Arsenal Museum originally opened to the public on 4 July 1905 as the Ordnance Museum at Rock Island. Since then, it has changed and evolved to inform and educate the public and soldiers about the history of the Arsenal, its commands, its products, and its people. In March 2020, the Museum closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a closure that was extended for a planned renovation of the Museum which began later that year.

After more than three years of work, the Museum will be reopening to the public on 29 June 2023 with brand new exhibits exploring the history of Rock Island and the Arsenal from 1805 to the present day. The new exhibits utilize



a chronological approach
to the history of the Army
in this region, starting with
the mapping of the
Mississippi River in 1805 by
then-Lieutenant Zebulon
Pike, to the present-day
manufacturing of Joint
Manufacturing and
Technology Center.

Visitors will also discover how Rock Island Arsenal fits into the larger Army Organic Industrial Base. The exhibits include more than 250 artifacts and hundreds of photos and archival documents from the history of the Arsenal and the Army. Among some of the highlight artifacts are a wall gun produced at Rappahannock Forge during the American Revolution, Rock Island Arsenal -produced Serial No. 1 M1903 Springfield Rifle, a stuffed horse, and equipment 3-D printed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Museum features all-ages experiences from a bridge-building activity to equipment you can try on to digital media interactives. It also tells the stories of those who were at the forefront of a changing workforce at the Arsenal including Milton Howard, - one of the longest –tenured employees - who was the first black employee at the Arsenal. Everyone will be able to find stories that resonate with them, whether they are a soldier, a veteran, a student, or a visitor looking to learn more about the Arsenal.

The Museum will reopen to the public on 29 June 2023 and its hours will be Tuesday—Saturday from 1000 –1600.



The museum also hosts programs exploring the history of the Arsenal and the Army which can be found listed on its Facebook page and is available for special events by request.

### **Pride Month**



The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes June as Pride Month, celebrating LGBTQ+ Service members who have courageously served and sacrificed in the U.S. military. Pride Month also upholds the Department's commitment to diversity and inclusion in all military branches. Throughout American history, LGBTQ+ Service members have fought to defend our rights and freedoms from the founding of our nation, to the Civil War, through two World Wars, to Korea and Vietnam, and from Afghanistan to Iraq.

Diversity is more than race, gender, and ethnicity—it means diversity of thought, ability, background, language, culture, and skill. As we celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month, let us take PRIDE IN ALL WHO SERVE.

this command.



H istory is L Headline Photo: Newly renovated RIA Museum. Article written by: Patrick Allie, RIA Museum Director.

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