



Bullet'n Backstory

Joint Munitions Command

Volume 13, Issue 6

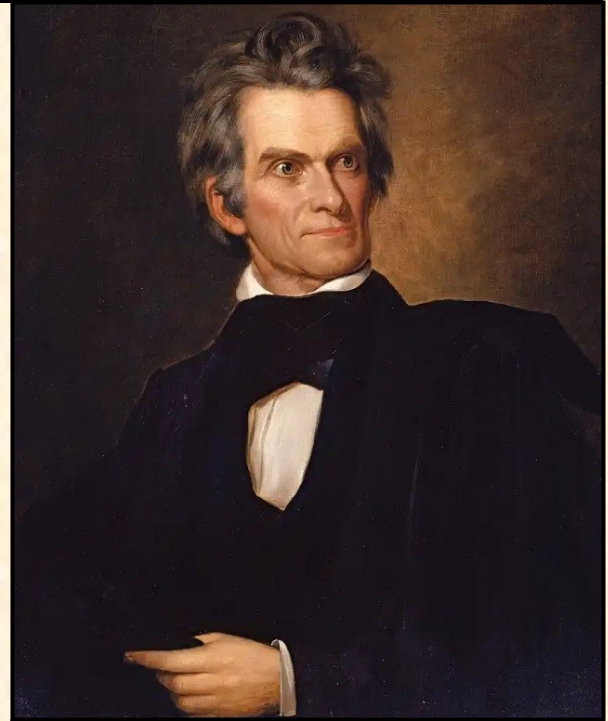
July/August 2025

Commemorating the 250th Birthday of the U.S. Army

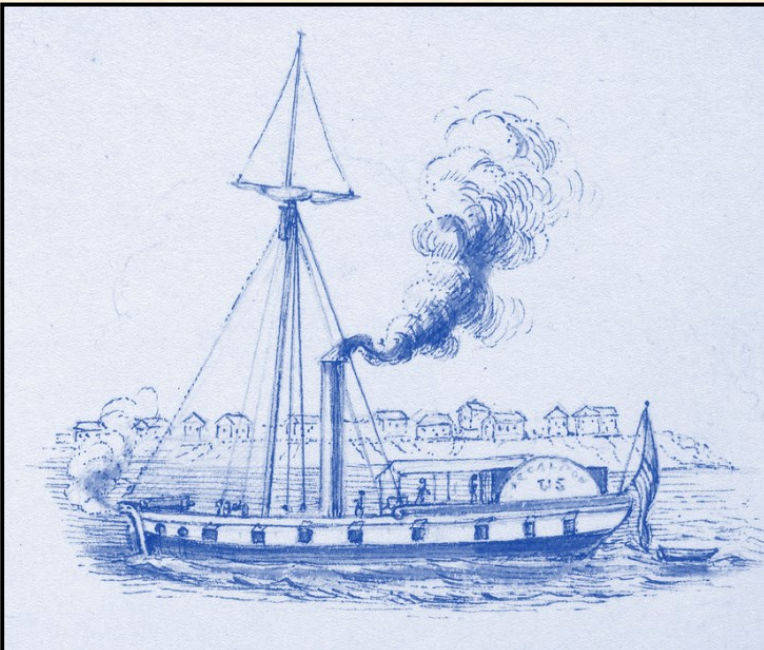
The Army of Manifest Destiny: Westward Expansion (1815-1842)

In 1815, the War Department proposed several changes to the Armed Forces in response to failures experienced in the War of 1812. Though the United States and Britain had resolved many of the issues which had led them to war - in terms more favorable to the U.S. than its military performance would suggest - Army leaders largely viewed the conflict as a failure when compared with the American Revolution. Waves of attempted invasions of Canada had been stopped in turn, largely due to overreliance on state militias. These units had likewise proved insufficient to the task of defending the homeland, fleeing in the wake of a British invasion and allowing the burning of Washington, D.C. The Regular Army fared better in the Niagara Campaign under Gens. Winfield Scott and Jacob Jennings Brown, but reforms were needed.

The reform effort was spearheaded by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, South Carolina Congressman John C. Calhoun. During the conflict with Britain, Calhoun had been the most important War Hawk in Congress, working tirelessly to raise money, secure volunteers, and ensure that men and materiel went where they were needed. After the war, Calhoun worked to correct what he saw as mismanagement of the war effort by centralizing the War Department and planning a permanent, professional military that would no longer be reliant on state militias.



John C. Calhoun



Steamboat Western Engineer
Titian Ramsay Peale - 1819

In 1816, Calhoun made a number of proposals: a navy anchored by steam frigates, a standing army, a system of permanent roads to improve transportation, increased domestic manufacturing to limit imports, a system of internal taxation to reduce the nation's reliance on tariffs from maritime trade, and the establishment of a national bank to control the economy. In 1817, President James Monroe invited Calhoun to be Secretary of War, a position he would hold until 1825. As head of the War Department, Calhoun was in the position to advocate for improvements, but Congress frequently stood in the way of his proposed reforms. States Rights advocates who were suspicious of standing armies, and political rivals who personally disliked Calhoun and wanted to thwart his political ambitions, teamed up to restrict the military. In 1821, for example, Congress passed the Reduction Act, which shrunk the army from 11,709 to 5,586 men.

One aspect of Army operations that experienced growth in the post-war period was the exploration and pacification of the West. To facilitate transportation, the Army Corps of Engineers conducted expeditions

up the Missouri River from 1818 to 1825. This led to improvements in navigation and the development of shallow draft boats, spearheaded by the *Western Engineer*, the first steamboat to explore the Missouri River. However, maintaining peace in the region required the presence of garrisoned soldiers. Frustrated with the lack of Congressional support for building new forts in the west, Calhoun unilaterally reorganized the army into a system of bureaus. One of these was the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which would operate in the War Department until 1849, when Congress transferred it to the Department of the Interior. The BIA was organized by region, with prominent local citizens appointed as superintendents with the authority to negotiate with local tribes.

From 1815 to 1860, the primary missions of the U.S. Army were maintaining order in the West and manning coastal artillery sites. The Army's biggest concern in the West was ever-increasing tension between indigenous tribes and encroaching settlers. Such conflicts had existed since the first Europeans settled on the Atlantic Coast in the 1600s. Beginning in the late 1700s, the newly formed U.S. Army took the lead in subduing tribes in the Northwest as part of the conflict with Britain in both the American Revolution and War of 1812. Following the latter war, Calhoun proposed simultaneously



protecting the expansion of settlement and preserving the sovereignty of indigenous peoples by relocating Eastern tribes to federally controlled reservations established west of the Mississippi River. President Monroe accepted the proposal, leading Calhoun to negotiate relocation treaties with 40 different tribes.

The largest Native conflict to emerge in this era was with the Seminoles of Florida. In the early 1800s, many escaped slaves from southern states fled to Native areas of Spanish Florida for protection, prompting slaveowners to raid the region. These raids led to reprisals by the Seminoles. Gen. Andrew Jackson took the initiative and invaded without orders, sparking the First Seminole War (1816-1819). The War Department responded with a retroactive order authorizing Jackson to subdue the Seminoles. His invasion continued, over the objections of Spain, which proved unable to protect its colony. As a result, the United States and Spain signed the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819, which ceded Spanish Florida to the U.S. and defined the border between the two nations in the Southwest. The transfer of territory took place in 1821, but the treaty only remained in place until August of that year, when Spain recognized the independence of Mexico and withdrew from the North American mainland.

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek (1823) was the first U.S. effort to establish a Seminole reservation. It set aside a large area of central Florida for the purpose, but also specified that the indigenous population must leave Florida after twenty years. With the election of Andrew Jackson to the



Andrew Jackson

This Month in Military History

July 2, 763: Following the death of his father, Smoke Shell, Yax Pac becomes the 16th and final ruler of the Mayan K'inich Yax K'uk Mo' dynasty, ruling from Copán (Honduras). His agricultural and architectural improvements brought the culture to its peak.

July 5, 1601: Spain lays siege to the Dutch city of Ostend (Belgium). Less than 2,000 Dutch held off the initial 12,000 Spanish, leading each side to seek reinforcements. Spain will not succeed for three years, at the cost of 60,000 casualties, twice those of the Dutch.

July 8, 1853: Commodore Matthew Perry sails into Tokyo Bay, 200 years after Japan closed its doors to the West. Perry orders his ships to fire “ceremonial” shots from 73 massive cannon, using “gunboat diplomacy” to force Japan to trade with the U.S.

July 11, 1690: At the Battle of Drogheda Boyne, William of Orange defeats and formally deposes King James III and confirming himself as King William III of England, by right of his wife, Mary II, daughter of James.

July 14, 1789: The people of Paris storm the Bastille, a royal prison, to free political prisoners and seize weapons. The incident is the symbolic start of the French Revolution. The date is celebrated as the equivalent of French Independence Day.

July 17, 1203: Soldiers of the Fourth Crusade lay siege to the Orthodox Christian city of Constantinople instead of proceeding to the Holy Land. Their seizure of the city on behalf of Catholicism ends the crusade.

June 20, 1917: The Pact of Corfu, signed by Serb, Croat and Slovenian leaders, forms the country of Yugoslavia, which is created in 1918, after World War I. It lasts until the Yugoslav Wars lead to its dissolution in 1992.

June 23, 1777: King Louis XVI authorizes his ambassadors to supply the American Colonies with munitions and funds in support of their fight against Great Britain, turning the tide of the American Revolution.

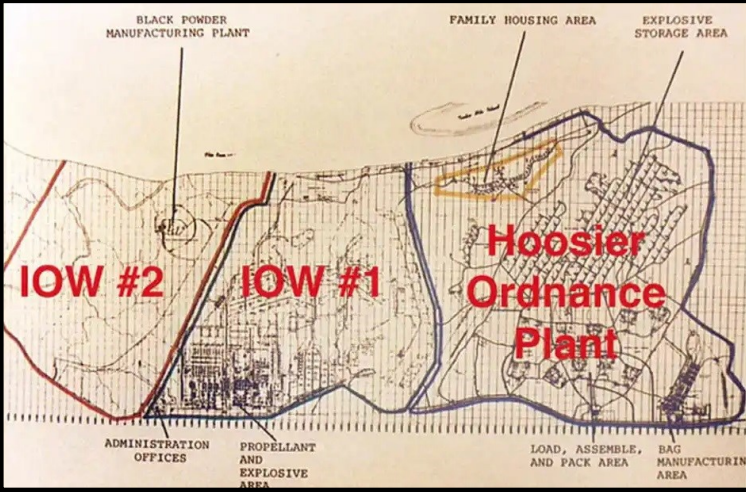
June 26, 1533: On behalf of Spain, Francisco Pizarro captures Emperor Atahualpa at the Battle of Cajamarca (Peru) and orders his death, ending the Incan Empire, known as the “Realm of the Four Parts.”

June 29, 1279: Five emissaries sent by Kublai Khan from the Mongol Yuan Dynasty are beheaded by the government of Japan. The Mongols respond with an invasion in 1281, with 40,000 men on 800 ships. The invaders briefly conquer the islands of Tsushima and Iki before meeting defeat on mainland Japan.



Hunting for Natives during the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842

JMC Archives Spotlight — Indiana Army Ammunition Plant was built to produce materiel for World War II. Construction of IOW #1 began in August 1940 and production of smokeless powder started in April 1941. During the war, it produced more powder than every U.S. plant combined in World War I. Hoosier Ordnance Plant, a bag manufacturing and propellant charge loading facility, started operation in September 1941. IOW #2, designated for rocket propellant was not completed by the end of the war. At present, the JMC Archives on Rock Island Arsenal maintains more than 32 cubic feet of historical records related to Indiana Army Ammunition Plant.



This Month in Military History

August 3, 1492: Christopher Columbus sets sail from Spain with three ships - *Niña*, *Pinta* and *Santa Maria* - on his first voyage of exploration to the "Indies."

August 6, 1824: Simón Bolívar, at the head of 1,000 Peruvian soldiers, defeats 1,300 Spanish at the Battle of Junin, a key moment in the Peruvian War of Independence. Spain's final defeat came in December.

August 9, 48 BCE: Forces of Roman dictator Julius Caesar decisively defeat Pompey the Great at the Battle of Pharsalus (Greece), forcing Pompey to flee, seeking protection in Egypt, which had previously provided him with military aid. Hoping for favor from Caesar, Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII orders Pompey's death.

August 12, 1867: President Andrew Johnson suspends Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, violating the Tenure of Office Act, passed by Congress that March. The act leads to the first impeachment of an American President. Johnson stays in office after the vote for removal falls one vote short.

August 15, 1461: After an 11-month siege, Ottoman Turks led by Sultan Mehmed II capture Trebizond in northwest Turkey, capital of the empire of the same name, destroying the last of the Byzantine Empire's successor states.

August 18, 1940: One of the largest air battles in history occurs as part of the Battle of Britain. The German Luftwaffe loses 69 aircraft and the British RAF loses 68 in what becomes known as "The Hardest Day."

August 21, 1808: Combined British and Portuguese forces under Gen. Arthur Wellesley defeat Maj. Gen. Jean-Andoche Junot's French army at the Battle of Vimeiro (Portugal) in the first Anglo-Portuguese victory in the Peninsular War (1808-1814).

August 24, 410: The Visigoths under King Alaric sack Rome. Although the administrative capital had moved to Mediolanum (Milan) in 286 and Ravenna in 402, the successful attack - the first in 800 years - is considered a significant event in the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

August 27, 1782: Abolitionist and former aide-de-camp to Gen. George Washington, John Laurens, leads a failed charge into a British ambush at the Battle of the Combahee River (South Carolina), losing his life in the process.

August 30, 1146: Claiming a desire to end all war, European leaders ban use of the crossbow. In reality, each hoped opponents would adhere to the ban while not doing so themselves.

Presidency in 1828, U.S. policy changed. Jackson favored moving all Native Americans west of the Mississippi River. In response, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830. During the presidencies of Jackson (1829-1837) and Martin Van Buren (1837-1841) indigenous peoples from 18 tribes were removed from the Eastern United States. Most would be resettled on reservations in Oklahoma.

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek lasted just nine years before the Jackson Administration cancelled it in favor of the Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832), which called for the return of all escaped slaves and the removal of the Seminoles to a Creek reservation in Arkansas. Most Seminoles accepted neither condition and refused to move within the stipulated three-year period.

This prompted the Army to station 11 companies of 550 soldiers in Florida. On December 28, 1835, nearly 200 Seminoles ambushed two U.S. companies of 103 men under Maj. Francis Dade while marching along Tampa Bay, leaving just three survivors. Known as the Dade Massacre, the event sparked the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), by the end of which over 6,000 Natives would be forcibly removed from Florida.

The Seminoles were not the only major tribe to resist resettlement. Elsewhere in the southern states, the U.S. Army worked to remove pockets of Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw. This effort featured the forced march of over 60,000 Natives between 1830 and 1850 along routes collectively known as the Trail of Tears. More than one quarter would die on the way to reservations in Oklahoma. In the upper Mississippi River Valley, members of the Sauk, Fox, and Kickapoo tribes also resisted. Under Black Hawk they invaded Illinois from Iowa in 1832, hoping to reclaim lands lost through the disputed Treaty of St. Louis (1804). The Army quickly defeated them and resettled them in Oklahoma. By the mid 1830s, the Army had policies in place keeping peace in the West. The next challenge would stem from troubles in the southwest, starting with a fight for control of Texas.



JMC Historical Document Collection

The JMC Public and Congressional Affairs Office maintains the JMC Archives, which collects and maintains historically significant records, including: emails, manuscripts, letters, reports, studies, images, videos, films, photographs, oral history interviews, briefings, SOPs, policies, decision papers, memoranda, statistics, newspapers, newsletters, brochures, maps, blueprints, drawings, and artifacts. Such records are pertinent to the Army's knowledge of active and predecessor installations, the ammunition industrial base, and JMC missions. JMC regularly uses these materials to research command history, and to answer research queries. When JMC workers leave positions or make physical moves, it is vital that their records be assessed before disposal. If employees are uncertain about the historical value of materials, the best policy is to make the items available to Paul Ferguson (paul.t.ferguson14.civ@army.mil).

Treaty of Moultrie Creek
Seminole Reservation (green)