



U.S. ARMY

15 YEARS Issue 10

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250 U.S. ARMY THIS WE'LL DEFEND

THE ARMY OF DEMOCRACY: CHAMPIONS OF TWO WORLD WARS



Continuing in our celebration of the Army's 250 years, the period from 1940 to 1945 witnessed one of its most dramatic transformations. The Army evolved from a relatively small force to a formidable military power capable of fighting on multiple fronts and overwhelming the largest Armies during World War II.

In 1940, the U.S. Army had approximately 190,000 active-duty personnel and was rated as 19th in the world as far as size and readiness. With the threat of war and a new Chief of Staff, GEN George C. Marshall, the Army and the Nation were spurred into action. The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 implemented the nation's first peacetime military draft, significantly increasing the Army's ranks. By December 1941, the Army had grown to about 1.6 million. That number would explode to the largest Army this Nation had ever seen by 1945, growing to exceed 8 million personnel.



This huge increase in personnel necessitated major changes in training and organization. Units such as the Army Air Forces were reorganized and expanded which emphasized the growing importance of air power. The Army also reorganized into three main groups: Army Ground Forces (FORSCOM's beginning), Army Air Forces, and Army Service Forces, which managed combat and logistics. The Army prioritized advancements in strategy, logistics, and technology to improve fighting capabilities.

The influx of millions of people, both volunteers and those drafted, presented societal challenges. While women were integrated into the military through groups such as the Women's Army Corps (WAC's), Women Air Force Service Pilots and expansion of the Army Nurse Corps.

Technological progress during the war greatly expanded the Army's capabilities at installations like Rock Island Arsenal. Weapons like the M1 Garand rifle and improvements in radar were vital. The proximity fuse, significantly improved anti-aircraft and artillery effectiveness. The Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bomb, showed the impact of scientific research in warfare and helped end the war.



The extensive mobilization and fighting in World War II had a deep impact on American society. Millions served, and the war boosted economic growth and created jobs, especially in defense industries. The G.I. Bill of 1944 provided veterans with benefits like college funding and home loans, helping them return to civilian life.

The transformation of the U.S. Army from 1940 to 1945 highlights the nation's ability to quickly mobilize and adapt during a global conflict. The Army would be forever changed and it would never look back, from this point on it would serve as an example for the entire world to follow. This period's legacy includes not only the defeat of totalitarian regimes but also significant advancements in the Army's structure, and technology that still influence today's Army.

IT TAKES A NATION

Building the most lethal Army has taken grit. The fields of France and the islands in the Pacific demanded not only a trained, skilled, and determined Soldier to put their boots upon it, but it required that Soldier to be well-equipped and sustained. The might of the American forces in the World Wars and each subsequent war thereafter depended on the efforts not only its warfighters, but the men and women at home who provided the materiel necessary to bring the fight to the enemy.

Ordnance Workers during the World Wars worked around the clock in manufacturing facilities all over the country. The materiel output was essential. Items were varied ranging from forks and spoons to aircraft and vehicles. In addition, men and women at home were manufacturing parts for these large machines, researching new technologies, and studying their effects in the field. "Good enough for government work" meant that the product was well tested, well built, and guaranteed to save lives and enable a mission of enabling democracy around the world.

But it wasn't just federal employees that were in the shops. Numerous private industries launched into overdrive providing overflow support to fill in gaps where they were needed. The industrial power of the United States stood and still stands behind the warfighter, ready to ensure that none of them fight alone.

Today, that spirit continues, and has expanded into even more tasks to include logistics, base life support services, travel, and so much more. The efforts of the Civilian workforce coupled with the Warfighter truly embrace the motto of "united we stand."



AUGUST TRIVIA

1. What important award did Rock Island Arsenal receive in 1942 for its production efforts during World War II?
2. The Arsenal would produce over 85,000 of this firearm during WWII?
3. How many rounds were in one en bloc clip for the M1 Garand?

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

1. Who was the Rock Island Arsenal commander that went on to become Chief of Ordnance?
BG Daniel W. Flagler 1891
2. What Indian Wars battle was instrumental in the improvement of small arm accuracy?
The Battle of Little Big Horn
3. What future president led the 1st Volunteer Cavalry in Cuba?
LTC Theodore Roosevelt



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