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History of Fort Ord, 1917-1972

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A
HISTORY OF
FORT ORD
CALIFORNIA
1917 to 1972

Ft Ord Historian
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FORWARD

The Fort Ord Military Reservation is located on the Monterey Bay adjacent to the city of Seaside and approximately 6 miles from the City of Monterey, the first capital of the State of California as a part of the United States of America.

The area of the Fort Ord Military Reservation consists of some 29,610 acres and is fairly regular in shape averaging approximately 7 square miles. The terrain varies from gently rolling hills along the $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of beach bordering on Monterey Bay to mildly rugged area, intermittently covered with sage brush, manzanita and scrub oak trees.

The climate at Fort Ord is moderate at all seasons. The average temperature varies less than 10 degrees the year around ranging from about 50 degrees in winter to 70 degrees in summer. An average rainfall of approximately 17 inches usually occurs between November and February.

The post was named after Major General Edward Ortho Cresap Ord.



DEDICATION

GENERAL ORDERS, HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
No. 54 Washington, July 24, 1883

With profound sorrow, the General of the Army announces the death at Havana, Cuba, at 7 o'clock on the evening of the 22d instant, of Major General Edward O. C. Ord, retired, and lately brigadier general and brevet major general on the active list.

General Ord was graduated at the Military Academy and appointed 2d lieutenant in the 3d Artillery July 1, 1839. Having passed through the several grades to include that of lieutenant colonel in the artillery arm, he received his appointment as brigadier general of the permanent establishment on the 26th of July, 1866. He had, on the 14th of September, 1861, for service in war, been appointed brigadier general of volunteers. He was mustered out of the volunteer service September 1, 1866.

For gallant services in action at Drainesville, Virginia; Iuka, Mississippi; the Hatchie, Mississippi, and at the assault of Fort Harrison, Virginia, he received, successfully, the brevets of lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general and major general, U.S. Army. He served in the Florida War against the Seminole Indians; on the Pacific coast in the war against Mexico; and in Indian campaigns on the same coast.

In the Army of the Potomac, he was a brigade and division commander; in the Army of the Tennessee, he commanded the left wing from August to September, 1862; and subsequently he commanded, successively, the 13th, 8th, 18th and 24th Corps, and the Army of the James. He was severely wounded in the battle of the Hatchie, Mississippi, and was wounded in the assault and capture of Fort Harrison, Virginia.

Since the late war he has at different times commanded the Departments of Virginia, the Ohio, Arkansas, California, the Platte, Texas, and the 4th Military District.

He was retired on the 6th day of December, 1880, and by act of Congress approved January 28, 1881, he became a major general on the retired list. Retirement did not close his active life, for immediately thereafter he engaged in civil pursuits and continued therein until death suddenly came upon him.

Distinguished among his country's defenders, General Ord was a soldier of national repute. Through his long military service, reaching towards half a century, his career has been marked by faithful, devoted and intelligent discharge of duty, by personal gallantry, by honest administration, and by a firmness which was not weakened by his great kindness of heart.

CHAPTER I

1917-1940

On 4 August 1917, the War Department acquired an area of some 15,809 acres of land by purchase from the David Jacks Corporation.¹

The area was located on the Monterey Bay some six miles east of the city of Monterey and consisted of various types of terrain, from sandy beaches to low rolling hills to rugged hills. The area is ideally suited for the conduct of military training and maneuvers.

Between 1917 and 1939 the area was used primarily as a maneuver and field artillery target range for the 11th Cavalry and the 76th Field Artillery which were stationed at the Presidio of Monterey. During the summer, the 30th Infantry Regiment from San Francisco also used the area as did Reserve and National Guard units.

During this period the reservation was known variously as, United States Field Artillery Range-Presidio of Monterey, Gigling Reservation and Gigling Field Artillery Range.² In 1933 the reservation was designated Camp Ord³ in honor of Major General Edward Ortho Cresap Ord, United States Army. General Ord had established the Presidio of Monterey as a United States military post on 28 January 1847 as a Lieutenant commanding Company F, 3rd Artillery.

Until 1938 virtually no improvements were made on the reservation. The lands were brush covered and almost impenetrable in many places. A rough dirt road connected the East Garrison and the Gigling railroad spur on Highway 1.

The first real work on the reservation started in 1938 under the direction of Colonel (later Major General) Homer M. Groninger, commanding officer of the Presidio of Monterey. With the aid of the WPA, he built a large camp about a mile east of the Gigling railroad spur and cleared brush areas for future construction. Colonel Groninger was working with an original WPA appropriation of \$800,000. Eventually, the WPA received more than \$6,000,000 for construction work at the post.

In 1940, the WPA built concrete mess halls, wooden barracks, and tent platforms in the East Garrison area. During this same year work began on the million dollar Soldiers Club overlooking Monterey Bay. This was a project conceived by General Joseph W. Stilwell, commanding the 7th Infantry Division which had been activated on 1 July 1940 at Camp Ord. Donations from soldiers and WPA grants helped finance the building.

1. See Page 140, Book 151 of Deeds, Records of Monterey County.
2. See Page 52, Military Reservations War Department, 20 April 1940.
3. See General Order Number 11, War Department, 1933.

CHAPTER II

1941-1945

With the advent of World War II the facilities at Fort Ord were greatly expanded. Additional land was acquired until the total area was some 29,610 acres.⁵ By the end of 1941, more than \$12,000,000 worth of construction had been contracted for.

During World War II the post was a major staging area for units deploying to the Pacific Theater of operations. Among these units were the 35th Infantry Division and 43d Infantry Division, 3d Infantry Division and the 27th Infantry Division. The 7th Infantry Division returned to Fort Ord in January 1943; after receiving amphibious training here, the Division departed in April 1943 for the Aleutian Islands. The Civil Affairs and Military Government Staging Area was also located here in 1944 and 1945. The strength of the installation averaged about 35,000 troops, however, at its peak more than 50,000 troops were stationed at Fort Ord.

With the end of World War II the 6023d Personnel Center became a large processing center for the release of personnel from the Army.

Post Commanders:

Colonel Roger S. Fitch	February 1941 - September 1943
Brigadier General H. D. Chamberlin	October 1943 - May 1944
Colonel D. R. Alfonte	May 1944 - May 1945
Colonel Charles D. Calley	May 1945 - September 1945
Colonel Max W. Sullivan	September 1945 - June 1946

5. See Military Reservations, War Department, 3 August 1943.

CHAPTER III

1946-1949

Following the cesation of hostilities of World War II, activities at Fort Ord assumed a slower pace.

In 1947 the 4th Replacement Training Center assumed the functions of operating Fort Ord. Shortly thereafter the 4th Infantry Division was reactivated and given the mission of training replacements for the Army; this mission was to continue through 1949.

Post Commanders:

Brigadier General D.A.D. Ogden	June 1945 - January 1946
Brigadier General James R. N. Weaver	January 1946 - September 1946
Brigadier General D.A.D. Ogden	September 1946 - March 1947
Major General Jens A. Doe	March 1947 - February 1949



BRIG GEN James R. N. Weaver



BRIG GEN D. A. D. Ogden



MAJ GEN Jens A. Doe

CHAPTER IV

1950-1954

With the advent of the Korean Conflict, Fort Ord was once again involved in providing training replacements to a theater of operations.

In September of 1950 the 4th Infantry Division was transferred to Fort Benning, Georgia; the 6th Infantry Division was activated and assumed the training mission of Fort Ord.⁶ The primary training was conducted by use of the faculty system which afforded maximum of instruction effort from a minimum of expert personnel.

In 1951, Congress approved funds for the construction of the first permanent type barracks buildings. Actual construction was started at the end of the year. The Fort Ord master plan calls for the eventual replacement of all temporary buildings with reinforced concrete structures.

In 1952, the first of the Wherry Housing type construction of dependent quarters was stated in the Bay View Park area adjacent to the city of Seaside. This construction was the first permanent dependent quarters for Fort Ord.

In 1953, with the inactivation of Camp Roberts, California, the areas of Camp Roberts⁷ and Hunter Liggett Military Reservation⁸ were placed under the command of the Commanding General, Fort Ord, as subinstallations.

Fort Ord continued its training mission with the 6th Infantry Division as the major command element during 1954.

Post Commanders:

Major General Robert T. Frederick
Major General Robert McClure

March 1949 - September 1951
October 1951 - April 1954

6. See General Order 140, Hq Sixth U.S. Army, 29 September 1950.
7. See General Order 242, Hq Sixth U.S. Army, 7 November 1956.
8. See General Order 73, Department of the Army, 28 September 1953.

CHAPTER V

1955-1960

Through 1955 the 6th Infantry Division was the major command at Fort Ord, conducting basic and advanced infantry training. Common specialist schools, consisting of clerk, supply, mess, transportation, and communications training were also conducted.

In January 1956 the 5th Infantry Division was assigned to Fort Ord under operation GYROSCOPE. The 6th Infantry Division was inactivated and the training mission assumed by the 5th Infantry Division. The 5th Infantry Division remained at Fort Ord until June 5, 1957 when it was inactivated and the United States Army Training Center, Infantry was organized to perform the training mission.⁹

In addition to the United States Army Training Center, Infantry at Fort Ord, the Combat Developments Command Experimentation Center was also organized. This command is a lodger unit at Fort Ord. In 1957 a Field Laboratory of CDCEC was established at Hunter Liggett Military Reservation. The CDCEC troops, although stationed at Fort Ord, perform the majority of their experiments in the Camp Roberts/HLMR area.

On September 30, 1960 in a tragic aircraft accident at Orinda, California, Major General Carl F. Fritzsche, the Commanding General of Fort Ord, and Brigadier General Thomas Hayes, Deputy Commanding General along with four other military personnel were killed when the plane in which they were traveling enroute to Sixth Army headquarters crashed and burned. Fort Ord's Fritzsche Army Airfield is named in the memory of the former commander.

9. See General Order 35, Hq 5th Infantry Division and Fort Ord, 1 June 1957.

CHAPTER VI

1961-1964

Fort Ord continued to perform its primary mission of conducting basic and advanced individual training.

Construction on permanent facilities and housing continued as a major project at Fort Ord.

Numerous aviation, engineer, transportation, medical and other TO&E units were stationed here during this period. Among these were the 52d Aviation Battalion with the 17th Aviation Company and 33d Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) attached; the 84th Engineer Battalion; the 26th Truck Battalion; the 12th Evacuation Hospital; 41st Signal Battalion; 270th Signal Company; 56th Signal Company; 79th Ordnance Company; 573d Ordnance Company; and the 758th Army Postal Unit.

Post Commanders:

Major General Orlando C. Troxel, Jr. January 1961 - April 1963

Major General Edwin H. J. Carnes April 1963 - June 1965



MAJ GEN O. C. Troxel, Jr.



MAJ GEN Edwin H. J. Carnes

CHAPTER VIII

1967-1970

Fort Ord continued performing its primary mission of conducting basic and advanced infantry training and advanced common specialist training.

Construction of permanent facilities including a new Post Engineer Complex, Post Library, a 440 bed U.S. Army Hospital, various troop barracks, Community Center Complex continued.

On 25 March 1969, the City of Seaside, California, formally annexed certain areas of Fort Ord. These lands were contiguous to the City of Seaside and added a large portion of Fort Ord's population to the reportable population of that city. The annexation, however, did not affect the military jurisdiction over the personnel or facilities.¹⁰

On July 1, 1970, the Headquarters USATC Infantry and Fort Ord was reorganized under the Directorate Staff Concept. This action eliminated the General Staff Concept for installations.

Various service TO&E units were assigned to Fort Ord including the 613th Engineer Battalion, 301st Transportation Company and the 54th Military Police Company. The 8th Medical Hospital (Evacuation) and 629th Medical Company (Clearing) were assigned from USAREUR under operation Reforger.

In 1970, Fort Ord conducted a major review of the Army Training Program with the objective of improving and enhancing training and reducing the overall cost of training.

Two new basic concepts emerged resulting in the development of a Peer Instruction Concept for certain training and a Merit Reward System. In June 1970 the Merit Reward System was introduced into all training centers in the Continental United States on a test basis.

Post Commanders:

Brigadier General C. R. Meyer	May 1967 - June 1967
Major General T. A. Kenan	June 1967 - June 1969
Major General P. B. Davidson, Jr.	June 1969 - March 1971

10. See Resolution No. 69-114, County of Monterey, filed 26 March 1969, Secretary of State of California.

CHAPTER IX

1971-1972

Starting in January 1971, Fort Ord became the primary training center for conducting training under the Experimental Volunteer Army Training Program. The Department of the Army directed Fort Ord to develop and implement "bold, innovative programs to improve dramatically the quality of instruction for the incoming basic combat soldier."¹¹

To accomplish this mission, the training center was organized into three training brigades, each of which conducted all sixteen weeks of basic and advanced Infantry Training. The Training Command was organized to teach all major subjects thus insuring uniform instruction for all trainees. A CST Brigade was organized to conduct Combat Support Training.

Under this concept the first eight weeks was utilized to produce the basic individual soldier who was available for assignment by the Department of the Army into MOS producing training.

The second eight weeks of training, through the use of performance-oriented training, enabled Fort Ord to qualify more than 90% of the graduates in two Infantry Military Occupational Specialties. On completion of the test program in late 1972, Fort Ord discontinued teaching Advanced Infantry Training.

In 1972, Fort Ord was selected by the Department of the Army as the home station for the 7th Infantry Division, thus returning to Fort Ord the colors and memorabilia of the Division which had been activated at Fort Ord on 1 July 1940. A 7th Infantry Division Museum was established to house the memorabilia.

Fort Ord again became a testing grounds for yet another Department of the Army project when in July 1972, the Chief of Staff of the Army directed the establishment of a two year "Pilot Test of Organizational Development Concepts."¹² An Organizational Development Directorate was organized in September 1972 to perform this mission.

With the drawdown of troops in Vietnam, various units were returned to the United States and stationed at Fort Ord. These units were the 14th Engineer Battalion, (Combat) (Army), 155th Aviation Company.

During 1972, various parcels of land were declared excess under Executive Order 11508, the White House, 10 February 1970. This property consisted of some 550 acres of land on the southeast boundary of the reservation and the 274 acre Castroville Amphibious Training Area.