



## Military Corner

# Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg, California

Camp Stoneman was located in N. California, at Pittsburg, 40 miles NE of San Francisco. A staging area and rifle range for troop training by the Army, and established as a Class I installation, it was also used as a facility of the San Francisco Port of Embarkation.

Though the sound of thousands of marching feet is but a memory today, Camp Stoneman was once the principal "jumping off point" for more than one million soldiers destined for operations in WW II's Pacific Theater, and again several years later during the Korean War. Consisting of more than 2,500 sprawling acres, it sprang to life in 1942. Its function was to rapidly process troops for overseas service by completing paperwork and updating records, arranging for last minute training, providing medical and dental care, and issuing and servicing equipment.

Camp Stoneman, named after George Stoneman, a Civil War cavalry commander and early Governor of California, had a lifespan of only 12 years, being activated on May 28, 1942, and decommissioned on August 30, 1954. The day-to-day operation of the camp was a tremendous task. In addition to receiving, processing and embarking thousands of troops each week, waiting soldiers were housed and fed, medical and dental examinations and corrective work conducted, clothing, equipment and records put in proper order, final training provided, and numerous other odds and ends taken care of.

Camp Stoneman consisted of more than 800 cream and khaki-colored buildings, capable of accommodating 20,000 troops at peak capacity. The average length of a stay for troops bound overseas was one to two weeks. When soldiers returned at the conclusion of World War II and the Korean Conflict, the average person was cleared out in less than 48 hours. A number of conveniences were maintained at the installation for use by the soldiers who were often restricted to post during their entire stay. The camp boasted three motion picture theaters, a ten-thousand seat outdoor theater, weekly USO shows throughout much of World War II, eight well-stocked branches of the Post Exchange, a huge service club, and much more. USO show entertainers included Hollywood stars such as Groucho Marx, Garry Moore and Red Skelton. The largest telephone center in the world was operated at Camp Stoneman in 1945.

[<http://www.militarymuseum.org/CpStoneman.html>]

