



Military Corner

Fort Benning

Fort Benning, GA, is named for Brigadier General Henry L. Benning, a Confederate army general and a native of Columbus. It was established in October 1918 as Camp Benning, and was assigned permanent status in 1918. The base covers 182,000 acres. During World War II, Fort Benning included 197,159 acres and had billeting space for 3,970 officers and 94,873 enlisted persons. The Chattahoochee River runs through Fort Benning, which straddles the Georgia/Alabama state line; 93 percent of Fort Benning is located in Georgia and 7 percent in Alabama.

Fort Benning's first mission was to provide basic training for units participating in World War I. With the end of that war, Benning was closed until the Army could find another use. The first tenant unit was the Infantry School, which General George Marshall commanded beginning in 1934. The Infantry School is still located at Fort Benning, as are the wooden permanent buildings completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

In 1940, the 2nd Armored Division was formed at Fort Benning; it first saw action in North Africa (Operation Torch) and the Pacific Theater of Operations. During World War II, Fort Benning became home to the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, known as the Triple Nickel. Their training began in December 1943 and was an important milestone for black Americans, as was explored in the first narrative history of the installation, *Home of the Infantry*. The battalion, later expanded to become the 555th Central Postal Directory, was trained at Fort Benning but did not deploy overseas. During this period, the specialized duties of the Triple Nickel were primarily in a firefighting role, with over one thousand parachute jumps as smoke jumpers. The 555th was secretly deployed to the Pacific Northwest of the United States in response to the concern that forest fires were being set by the Japanese military using long-range incendiary balloons.

Fort Benning was the site of the Scout dog school of the United States during the Vietnam War, where the dogs trained to detect ambushes in enemy terrain got their initial training, before being transferred to Vietnam for further advanced courses. In 1984, following the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty, the School of the Americas relocated from Panama to Fort Benning. The school was renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

In 1988, Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier (the Oklahoma City bombing conspirators) met while in training at Ft Benning.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Benning]

