



Military Corner

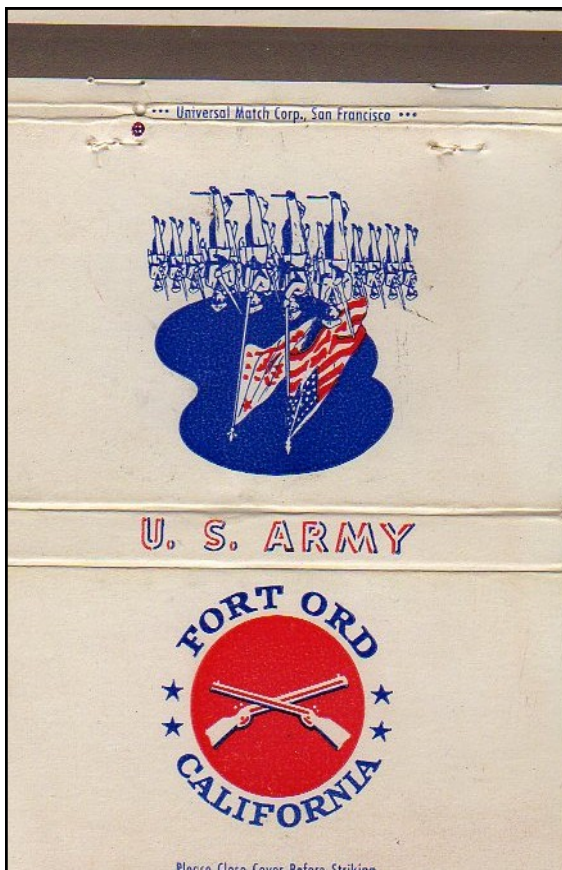
Fort Ord

In 1917, land was purchased just north of the city of Monterey for use as an artillery training field for the Army. The area was known as the Gigling Reservation, U.S. Field Artillery Area, Presidio of Monterey, and Gigling Field Artillery Range.

In 1933, the artillery field became Camp Ord, named in honor of Maj. Gen. Edward Ord, a Union Army leader during the American Civil War who also served in the Second Seminole War and Indian Wars. Primarily, horse cavalry units trained on the camp until the military began to mechanize and train mobile combat units.

In 1940, the 23-year-old Camp Ord was expanded to 2,000 acres. In August 1940, it was re-designated Fort Ord and the 7th Infantry Division was reactivated, becoming the first major unit to occupy the post. In 1941, Camp Ord became Fort Ord. For the next thirty years, the fort was the primary facility for basic training for the Army. In 1947, Fort Ord became the home of the 4th Replacement Training Center. During the 1950s and 1960s, Fort Ord was a staging area for units departing for war, and at one time had 50,000 troops on the installation. The 194th Armored Brigade was activated there under Combat Development Command in 1957, but departed for Fort Knox in 1960.

In 1957, land on the eastern side of the post was used to create the Laguna Seca Raceway which served to replace the Pebble Beach road racing course that ceased operations for safety reasons in that same year. The post continued as a center for instruction of basic and advanced infantrymen until 1976, when the training area was deactivated and Fort Ord again became the home of the 7th Infantry Division, following their return from South Korea after twenty-five years on the DMZ. In 1988, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) legislation was passed by Congress. In 1991, the decision to close Fort Ord was made.



In 1994, Fort Ord was officially closed. The fort was the largest U.S. military base to be closed at the time. During the last few years, basic training for National Guard and Reservists was conducted by regular army personnel, but there was a shift at that time to focus on the mental and emotional, as well as the traditional physical aspects of basic training. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Ord]

I did my basic training at Fort Ord in 1970. Aside from all the training, it was certainly a beautiful location...right on the beach of the California coast. I was shocked when I learned that it was going to be closed.