



Military Corner

The United States Army Quartermaster Corps

The Quartermaster Corps started in 1775, when the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution providing for "one Quartermaster General of the grand army and a deputy, under him, for the separate army." Major General Thomas Mifflin, the first Quartermaster General, had virtually no money and authority and was dependent upon the several states for supplies. Major General Nathanael Greene, the third Quartermaster General, established the first depot system to support the Army. His outstanding service as the Quartermaster General during the darkest period of the Revolution have been almost forgotten.

From 1818 to 1860, the Quartermaster General was BG Thomas Sidney Jesup, who instituted an improved system of property accountability and experimented with new modes of transportation, including the use of canal boats in the east and camel caravans in the desert southwest, and worked some of the earliest railroads. Jesup is traditionally regarded as the "Father of the Quartermaster Corps." The supply of clothing and other items was taken over by the Quartermaster Department in 1842. During the Civil War, the Department under the leadership of MG Montgomery C. Meigs supplied the Union Army of over half a million strong, ran the Army's first major depot system, and transported unprecedented levels of supplies and personnel throughout the war. Also, in 1862, the Quartermaster Department assumed responsibility for burial of war dead and care of national cemeteries.

In 1912, Congress consolidated the former Subsistence, Pay, and Quartermaster Departments in order to create the Quartermaster Corps much as we know it today-fully militarized with its own officers, soldiers, and units

trained to perform a host of supply and service functions on the battlefield. World War I witnessed the first use of specialized Quartermaster units on the Western Front. During World War II, the Quartermaster Corps trained thousands of soldiers to fill specialized roles in every theater of operation. At the height of the war, Quartermasters were providing over 70,000 different supply items and more than 24 million meals each day. When it was over, they had recovered and buried nearly a quarter of a million soldiers in temporary cemeteries around the world. 4,943 Quartermaster soldiers lost their lives in World War II. In 1950, the Corps assumed a new mission-supply by air.

Over the past decade, Quartermaster soldiers have upheld the long tradition of service by being among the first deployed in operations Urgent Fury (Grenada) and Just Cause (Panama). History will long record the role of Quartermaster soldiers in providing the logistic support needed to defeat Iraqi forces during Operation Desert Storm. More recently Quartermasters have provided humanitarian relief to victims at home (hurricanes Andrew and Iniki) and abroad (Operations Provide Comfort, Restore Hope, Provide Promise, and Uphold Democracy). No other branch of the Army can claim so many missions, either historically or at the present.

[http://www.quartermaster.army.mil/qm_history.html]

