



ASC History Newsletter

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This MONTH in military history...

1777: The Battle of Princeton

1834: Stephen Austin imprisoned by Mexico

1861: Delaware rejects secession

1863: Union victorious at the Battle of Stones River

1942: United Nations is created

1942: Navy opens blimp base in New Jersey

1945: MacArthur and Nimitz given new commands

1961: US severs diplomatic relations with Cuba

1961: Broken Arrow—H-Bomb lost in Spanish waters during B-52 crash

1967: US planes down 7 enemy planes over Vietnam

The 279th Army Field Support Brigade, Alabama NG

The 279th Army Field Support Brigade is headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama as an element of the Alabama Army National Guard. The 279th is the only Army Field Support Brigade in the National Guard.

While currently a logistics unit, the 279th has a long lineage in the Alabama National Guard dating back to World War II.

The earliest ancestor of the 279th AFSB, the 151st Engineer Battalion, was inducted into Federal service January 1941. The unit served in Alaska and Europe in WWII. The 151st Engineer Combat Battalion was again inducted into Federal service 14 August 1950 and deployed to Korea where they served for the remainder of the war.

The lineage of the number 279th is only slightly shorter having activated as the 279th Coast Artillery Battalion at Semya, Alaska in July 1944. The 279th was re-designated 22 January 1951 as Headquarters, 279th Antiaircraft Gun Battalion and allotted to the Alabama Army National Guard, then deployed to Korea.

In February 1955 the 279th Antiaircraft Gun Battalion was merged with the 151st Engineer Combat Battalion and re-

designated the 279th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion. Subsequently, in May 1959, the antiaircraft unit was converted and re-designated the 279th Signal Battalion. The 279th Signal Battalion was called into Federal service on 1 October 1961 as part of the US response to the Berlin Crisis and building the Berlin Wall. The unit stayed on active duty for almost a year and then was called up for shorter active stints twice in 1963. On 1 September 2008 the unit was converted and re-designated as Headquarters, 279th Army Field Support Brigade.

In its current structure the 279th AFSB's mission is to augment active component Army Field Support Brigades (AFSBs), and concurrently command, control and sustain Alabama National Guard Contingency Contracting units. The 279th AFSB commands and controls the 1169th Contracting Battalion and the 1960th Contingency Contracting Team. This contracting function makes it different than the seven active component AFSBs. In the active component all contingency contracting units fall under Contracting Support Brigades and Battal-

ions. In April 2009, the 1169th Contracting Battalion deployed four contracting personnel to Afghanistan to support the summer surge. The 1960th Contingency Contracting Team also deployed to Afghanistan in April 2010 with two personnel supporting the Contingency Contracting Center at Bagram Airfield and two personnel supporting the Contingency Contracting Center at Kandahar Airfield. Another detachment deployed in 2012.

Simultaneously, the 279th AFSB conducts Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) operations to provide logistics and contracting support to civil authorities as directed. The 279th AFSB trains on Defense Support to Civil Authorities with the 167th Theater Sustainment Command which is theater committed to US NORTHCOM. No matter the name from the past or the current

mission, the 279th AFSB acts with "Integrity Always."



To the East Bank of the Mississippi

In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson instructed the governor of Indiana Territory, William Henry Harrison, to acquire Indian lands which adjoined the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Because of Harrison's efforts, Rock Island would come under federal ownership that same year.

In November 1804, four Sauk and two Fox chiefs arrived in St. Louis to meet with Harrison regarding the release of a Sauk brave being held for killing a white man. Harrison, during the negotiations for the release of this brave, persuaded the chiefs to sign a treaty which ceded to the U.S. a vast tract of land controlled by the respective tribes. The ceded land included territory on both sides of the Mississippi River, roughly between the Wisconsin River to the north and the Missouri River to the south; and extending east to

the middle of the present Illinois River and west as far as the watershed region between Des Moines and the Missouri River. Both the Sauk villages on the Rock River and in Rock Island were included in the land purchases.

In return, the tribes were to receive the official protection and friendship of the United States and were to be paid \$2,234.50 in goods, plus an additional guaranteed annuity of \$1,000 in goods to be received annually thereafter. There have been stories regarding the unethical practices used by William Henry Harrison during the negotiations. The minor chiefs supposedly told members of their tribes that they were threatened with imprisonment if they did not sign. In addition, the chiefs contended that Harrison plied them with whiskey and kept

them drunk. It is known that the Sauk and Fox were already negatively familiar with alcohol by this point having received it from traders. The chiefs explained that the trade goods they were to receive from the federal government were instead given to Pierre Chouteau, a wealthy St Louis fur trader, for payment of the chief's expenses. As for the brave being held by the army, he allegedly was shot while running from his guards.

Regardless of the truth of the hearsay, the Sauk and Fox tribes thought the treaty illegal because not all 30 chiefs had signed, but the U.S. saw it as binding. This disagreement would lead many of the Sauk and Fox to fight along side the British during the War of 1812 and make the construction of Fort Armstrong on Rock Island necessary in 1816.



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