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The 279th AFSB (ANG)

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

Army National Guard. The unit has a long history of different names and functions, with the number 279th and association with the Alabama National Guard being the connections from World War II to the present.

The earliest ancestor of the 279th Army Field Support Brigade was organized 21 December, 1940 in the Alabama National Guard at Huntsville as Headquarters, 1 Battalion, 151st Engineers. It was inducted into federal service 27 January, 1941. On 1 April, 1942 the unit was re-designated at Headquarters, 151st Combat Engineer Regiment. It was again reorganized and re-designated as 151st Engineer Combat Battalion on 11 July, 1944. On 27 December, 1945 it was inactivated at Camp Kilmer in New Jersey. The unit was reorganized and federally recognized on 16 January, 1947 in the Alabama National Guard at Huntsville as Headquarters, 151st Engineer Combat Battalion, and then ordered into active federal service on 14 August, 1950 at Huntsville and deployed to Korea. Finally, it was released 21 February, 1955 from active federal service, reverted to state control, and was at the same time consolidated with 279th Antiaircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion and designated as the 279th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion.

The 279th number line began in July 1944 when Headquarters, 279th Coast Artillery Battalion was activated at Shemya, Alaska. It was inactivated 28 November, 1945 at Fort Lawton, Washington and was re-designated 22 January, 1951 as Headquarters, 279th Antiaircraft Gun Battalion and allotted to the Alabama Army National Guard, then deployed to Korea. On 1 October, 1953 it was again re-designated as 279th Antiaircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion. In February 1955 it was consolidated with the 151st Engineer Combat Battalion and re-designated the 279th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion. On 2 May, 1959 it was converted and re-designated as Headquarters, 279th Signal Battalion. On

1 September, 2008 the unit was converted and re-designated as Headquarters, 279th Army Field Support Brigade.

Based on its previous history as an engineer and anti-aircraft unit the 279th Army Field Support Brigade has campaign credits for participation in World War II and throughout the Korean War. The unit also earned a Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.

More currently, 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. 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 commands and controls the 440th Transportation Theater Opening Element, the 1169th Contracting Battalion, and the 1960th Contingency Contracting Team.

The 1169th Contracting Battalion deployed four contracting personnel to Afghanistan in April 2009, October 2012, and July 2013 to support contingency contracting at various locations. The 1960th Contingency Contracting Team also deployed to Afghanistan in April 2010 with 2 personnel supporting the Contingency Contracting Center at Bagram Airfield and two personnel supporting the Contingency Contracting Center at Kandahar Airfield. The 1960th Contingency Contracting Team will deploy to Kosovo in 2015. 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."

Creation of the Arsenal Siblings

On 11 July, 1862 Congress passed legislation that required the establishment of certain national arsenals. The 37th Congress first debated the issue on 5 June 1862 and passed the act just 5 weeks later. After deliberation and politicking, need was determined for arsenals to be used for the deposit and repair of arms and other munitions of war. The amount of \$100,000 was allocated to establish each of these arsenals.

The most commonly recognized arsenal from this Act is the Rock Island Arsenal; yet it was not the only arsenal birthed from the legislation. Arsenals were also developed in Columbus, Ohio and in Indianapolis, Indiana for purposes similar to those of Rock Island. In Columbus, the arsenal became active in 1864 following the completion of the shot tower. It continued under its original mission of munitions depot only until 1875. From this point it was renamed the Columbus Barracks and transferred to the General Recruiting Service. This was its primary function until its second name and function change. In 1922 it

was re-designated Fort Hayes and used for recruiting intake and as a training facility. This assignment lasted until 1947 when it was transferred to the Department of Defense, under the same name. The final assignment was the shortest of all, lasting a brief three years before being shuttered.

As for the third member of this arsenal trio, the Indianapolis Arsenal was constructed in 1862, and utilized by the Army beginning in 1863. Operations and functions remained static until 1902 when the Arsenal was excessed. It was then quickly purchased by the Winona Agricultural and Technical Institute in 1903. Almost as quickly as the company had purchased the former arsenal, in 1909 it went bankrupt. Once again on the market, the previous arsenal was then purchased by the local school board and from there transformed into the Arsenal Technical High School. It remains a school today in the Indianapolis Public Schools District.

Only RIA remains an active arsenal.

This Month in Military History

- ◇ **1775:** U.S. Marine Corps established as part of Navy
- ◇ **1783:** British Troops leave NYC
- ◇ **1862:** Richard Gatling patented first rapid fire machine gun
- ◇ **1864:** Colorado Militia massacre Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians at Sand Creek, Colorado
- ◇ **1942:** Operation Torch – Allies land in North Africa under command of General Eisenhower
- ◇ **1942:** Five Sullivan brothers from Waterloo are killed
- ◇ **1943:** The Teheran Conference begins
- ◇ **1947:** First and final flight of the "Spruce Goose" flying boat
- ◇ **1950:** President Truman was target of unsuccessful assassination attempt by two members of the Puerto Rican nationalist movement.

