



ASC HISTORY NEWSLETTER



This Month in Military History

1746 — Birth of Thaddeus Kosciusko.

1848 — The Mexican War ends with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and transfer of the Southwest to the United States.

1861 — Arrest of Chief Cochise in Arizona begins the 25-year long Apache Wars.

1862 — The "Atlantic Monthly" publishes 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic.'

1893 — The US Minister to Hawaii, places the Provisional Government under formal US protection and raises the US flag over Hawaii.

1898 — Battleship Maine blows up in Havana Harbor.

1933 — An assassination attempt on newly elected U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt occurs in Miami, Florida.

1943 — US forces complete conquest of Guadalcanal.

1994 — The FBI arrests Aldrich Ames for spying for the Soviet Union.

1999 — The Morse code SOS is officially retired and replaced by the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System.

The Evolution of ASC (Continued)

Last month we started tracing the evolution of the ASC since the mid-1990's noting the creation of the Industrial Operations Command and the addition of War Reserves to the mission set. This month the focus will be on creating the Operations Support Command and the further expansion of missions.

The OSC was created in January 2000. At that time the AMC had developed concepts to enhance its role in monitoring and maintaining the readiness of the Army. The Army also needed to improve the ability to project force from home station to potential future contingency operations. This required improving the AMC's ability to understand the readiness picture across the Army, while also building a global capability to develop port facilities, and then receive, equip, and integrate deploying units. AMC assigned these missions to the new OSC to support the Army's vision.

When once asked in an interview why the old IOC received the mission, then Commanding General MG Joe Arbuckle said that it all came down to the global footprint IOC already had due to the War Reserve mission. The War Reserves were converting to Army Prepositioned Stocks with equipment afloat and in Europe, Korea, and SWA.

What were the new missions as IOC converted to the OSC? They were: LOGCAP, control of the AMC Forwards and Logistics Assistance Offices, and the Logistics Assistance Program management. These additions created a robust force set that allowed OSC to become AMC's "Single Face to the Field." Soldiers across the Army would gain access to AMC support by first coming into contact with an OSC element somewhere in the world.

The AMC Forwards and LAP/LAO were critical to improved understand-

ing of Army Readiness. One AMC CG rhetorically asked why he was being questioned about systemic readiness issues by DA before he even knew the problem existed. The combination of AMC Forward and LAP was intended to collect 'logistics intelligence' and horizontally integrate that information across the AMC commodity commands. Meanwhile, the AMC Forwards and LAOs would convert to Logistics Support Elements in contingency operations to move forward with the fighting force and report logistics information to the rear.

The final piece of the puzzle was adding LOGCAP to OSC. LOGCAP could not only build base camps, but it could then fill capability gaps created by the reduction of logistics units since the early 1990s. When 9/11 hit and the GWOT began, the OSC, with these new tools, was set to deploy, equip, and sustain the force in SWA.

The Rock Island Arsenal in the Spanish American War

U.S. Battleship Maine explodes in Cuba's Havana Harbor! Spain to Blame! US naval blockade on Cuba! U.S. demands Spain remove forces from Cuba! 24 April 1898- Spain declares war!

While the buildup to the Spanish-American War was loudly trumpeted in American papers, the US Army began the war at a materiel deficit. The Army lacked carriages and harness for the available field guns and needed more siege and field guns. The S-A War was the first true test of the Rock Island Arsenal's capabilities. The shops whirred to a higher level of life even before war was declared increasing employment from 500 to almost 3,000 in under six months. Eventually, large numbers of artillery carriages, caissons, and blacksmith shops were produced.

More than artillery was manufactured. In one department, men and resources were concentrated on repairing and refurbishing rifles. The rifles were received in poor condition, with the majority being rust-

covered and with numerous broken parts. By the conclusion of the war, a grand total of nearly 50,000 rifles and carbines had been refurbished. During the height of production, a total of 7,000 bayonet scabbards were completed per day.

RIA manufactured other items to equip Soldiers. Blanket bags were produced as a duffel style bag which was used to carry a Soldier's personal belongings. Other items included: haversacks for rations; canteens fashioned from sheet tin and covered with felt and a thick duck cover; and tin meat cans, plates, cups, and eating utensils.

Just as Soldiers needed to be properly outfitted, animals used in the war effort also needed proper equipment. The RIA provided wooden saddletrees and an assortment of rings, hooks, straps, and other paraphernalia used for carrying or holding cavalry articles. Leather was fashioned into useful supplies such as carbine scabbards, saddlebags, saddles, bridles, halters, and artillery harnesses.

In addition to production, the RIA

improved parts of the physical plant during the war. For example, a bike path was created to limit rush hour congestion. Smaller projects were undertaken to enhance and improve the general quality of working conditions throughout the plant.

This multi-focal approach and preliminary introduction to the demands of war time production displayed the abilities of the Rock Island Arsenal and resulted in a positive national image for quality and flexibility. More importantly, the lessons learned were a guidepost to an even larger expansion in WWI.



A wing of the Tin Shop in 1898. The cans were sent to food processors to can meat for the troops.

