



This MONTH in military history...

- **1777:** Patriots learn of increased French support
- **1780:** Benedict Arnold accomplice hanged
- **1835:** 1st shots of the Texas Revolution fired at the Battle of Gonzales
- **1864:** Confederate spy Rose Greenhow dies
- **1873:** US Army hangs four Modoc Indians for the murder of a Civil War hero
- **1881:** Shop C at RIA suffers a \$35,000 fire
- **1917:** War Revenue Act passed in U.S.
- **1918:** Germany telegraphs President Wilson seeking armistice
- **1944:** General Eisenhower warns of the risk of "shell shock"
- **1961:** South Vietnam requests a bilateral defense treaty

50 Years of the Logistics Assistance Program in Combat

Since its creation in the Revolutionary War (and reconstitution in 1812) the Ordnance Department has employed civilians to complete its missions.

Over time, and especially in World War II, the Ordnance Department used civilian technical experts to train Soldiers how to maintain specific pieces of equipment and to provide general logistics assistance to combat and support units. Known as Master Mechanics, these civilians taught operation and repair procedures to Soldier operators and Soldier mechanics. Their duties were strictly hardware and equipment oriented. During the early 1950's, the Master Mechanic role expanded to include teaching, advising, and management of supply systems, but the experts now tended to be contractors, not Army civilians. The program appears to have ended after the Korean War.

With the establishment of the AMC and its subordinate Commodity Commands in 1962 the use of contractors for overseas technical assistance discontinued and contractors were replaced with

Department of the Army Civilians. Called Maintenance and Supply Technicians, these civilians assumed responsibility for worldwide supply, maintenance, and technical assistance. These technicians were scattered wherever they were needed. The new command rapidly realized they did not have the right structure in the field to work with units. In early 1965 AMC created Customer Assistance Offices (CAO) in Korea and Europe to fill the gap in providing support to the field. A CAO was in direct support of the Theater Army commander with a mission to resolve non-routine AMC logistical issues as well as train Soldiers. The earliest offices reported directly to HQ AMC and were led by a colonel and small staff augmented by the civilian commodity command Maintenance and Supply Technicians.

At the same time they established the first CAO's, AMC realized they needed a similar program on the ground in Vietnam to support that growing war effort. On 2 November 1965, fifty years ago, establishment of a CAO was

approved. The element was fully operating early in 1966.

The Vietnam CAO was attached to HQ, Army Vietnam, and civilian experts came from the AMC commodity commands in a wide variety of specialties to fill gaps. For example, by late 1969 there were dozens of different types of power generators in Vietnam, many fielded without a chance to train Soldier operators and mechanics. Civilian experts were deployed to train and advise.

In 1972 the name was changed to Logistics Assistance Office, but the focus remained at the theater-level. The next year the role of the Logistics Assistance Office was expanded to include supply support, management of modification work orders, and select item management. Unfortunately, very few documents remain explaining how the CAO operated in Vietnam. However, we can expect that the demands of logistics support in combat in Vietnam led to new methods and the ability to test and refine those methods, just as we have seen over the past decade in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Comanche: Survivor of Custer's Last Stand

Despite what you may have been told in the past — that there were no survivors from LTC George Custer's immediate command at the Battle of the Little Big Horn — there was a survivor. Comanche.

The U.S. Army purchased Comanche, a six-year-old bay gelding horse, at an 1868 auction in St. Louis, Missouri. The horses purchased at the auction were then transported to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where Comanche caught the eye of Civil War veteran CPT Myles Keogh of the 7th Cavalry. Keogh purchased Comanche as his personal mount from the Army for

\$90.00. Although Keogh owned multiple horses, Comanche would become his battle mount and would only be ridden into battle. The name Comanche was given to the horse after a battle with the Comanche tribe in Kansas, where the horse bravely continued to carry Cpt. Keogh even after receiving an arrow to the hindquarters. Comanche would exhibit his toughness and bravery a multitude of occasions before his last battle in the western plains of Montana.

On 25 June 1876, Keogh rode Comanche into the infamous Battle of Little Bighorn under the command of LTC George Custer. Two days after the battle, U.S. Soldiers found the severely wounded horse, standing in the midst of Custer's shattered command. Many other 7th Cavalry horses probably survived the battle and were taken off by the victors as spoils of war. The Native Americans probably left Comanche believing its wounds were too grave to carry on. Comanche had seven wounds but was nursed back to health during a lengthy recovery at Fort Abraham Lincoln, North Dakota. On 10 April 1878, an order was issued prohibiting Comanche from ever being ridden or al-

lowed to work. Comanche was transferred to Fort Mead, South Dakota and then to Fort Riley, Kansas where he lived out his days as a symbol of the 7th cavalry. Besides grazing, Comanche often led the unit in parades with boots reversed in the saddle symbolizing the unit's fallen Soldiers.

Comanche died at Fort Riley, Kansas at the age of 29 on 7 November 1891, where he received a military funeral with full honors. Only one other horse has received this honor. That horse was Black Jack. Black Jack, had served in the Caisson Platoon of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Unit and was the riderless horse in more than 1,000 Full Honors Funerals.

Comanche's remains were sent to the famous taxidermist, Lewis Dyche, who mounted the old war horse for display. Comanche was an exhibit at the 1891 World's Fair in Chicago and then returned to Kansas. In 2005, Comanche underwent a full restoration in order to preserve him for generations to come. You can still see Comanche on display at the University Of Kansas Natural History Museum in Lawrence, Kansas.

