

The ASC History Newsletter



Army Sustainment Command

This MONTH in military history...

- **1777:** Washington learns of Conway Cabal trying to oust him.
- **1804:** Treaty ceding huge section of Midwest, including Arsenal Island, to U.S. is signed by Harrison and members of the Sauk and Fox tribes.
- **1861:** McClellan replaces Scott as Commander of the Union Army.
- **1871:** 1st machinery for the Rock Island Arsenal is ordered.
- **1901:** Teddy Roosevelt establishes a naval base in the Philippines.
- **1941:** FDR puts Coast Guard under control of the Navy for the duration of WWII.
- **1946:** Army and Notre Dame fight to a draw.
- **1952:** United States tests first hydrogen bomb.
- **1979:** 63 Americans taken hostage in Tehran
- **2004:** Saddam Hussein sentenced to death.

The Army Sustainment Command (ASC) was activated on 1 October 2006 at Rock Island. The focused command, JMC having been split off as a separate unit in anticipation of becoming a Life Cycle Management Command, was the result of a decade of evolution that shifted the command at Rock Island from being wholesale ammo-centric focused to being a global, operational level logistics provider and AMC's single point of entry to the Army at peace and war. Many aspects of the ASC current mission set are rooted in Army Transformation from the 2000-2005 timeframe. As the Army decentralized to Brigade Combat Teams and flattened the rigid structure of permanent divisions and corps, other gaps were created in logistics support to include the loss of materiel management centers at higher levels. Also missing was higher level logistics expertise in a central command. The ASC was designed to fill that gap by becoming the CONUS Theater Support Command with the Distribution Management Center not only managing materiel, but also working to move materiel to the Army in the field. At the same

time, portions of ASC were already engaged in worldwide operations through LAP, APS, and LOGCAP- the ASC was never intended to be 'just' a CONUS TSC. Whatever the full concept behind the ASC in the 2001-2003 time frame, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated the continuing and compelling need for an operational arm of AMC in every theater to manage readiness, the logistics of equipment fielding, property, and to assure that units in the field had reachback to all of AMC's capabilities. The AFSBs were designed to meet those needs. In another example of "what is new is old" the AFSB construct looked strikingly similar to the old 1970s vintage AMC structure in Europe and Asia with one AMC commander creating an umbrella over all AMC activities in theater and simplifying customer access to AMC. One wonders what would have happened to the ASC and AFSB concepts had it not been for the war? The concepts had moved forward slowly since 2000 and before, but the war crystallized the requirement for a new operational arm of AMC. At the same time structural

transformation, high combat OPTEMPO, increased fielding of new equipment, and the need for in-theater repair and upgrade demanded speedy solutions. The competence of the ad hoc AMC structure in SWA, followed by the smooth integration of the AFSBs and ASC after 2006 cemented the consensus that the AFSBs and ASC were the right structure at the right time. The hierarchy in place that could synchronize as no other command could the wide-ranging aspects of readiness, LAP, LOGCAP, DMC invited even more missions. Today ASC has added on the LMI mission and ownership/management of the Army's Directorates of Logistics. In six short but action packed years ASC has moved from experiment to a key, dependable element in managing the Army's logistics above the brigade level. From a resource linked at the theater level ASC is represented on every post, camp, and station providing daily life support and the whole range of combat service support functions less medical. The command is a critical and integral part of Army life and will continue to be so in the future.

Cher Ami: Bird of Battle

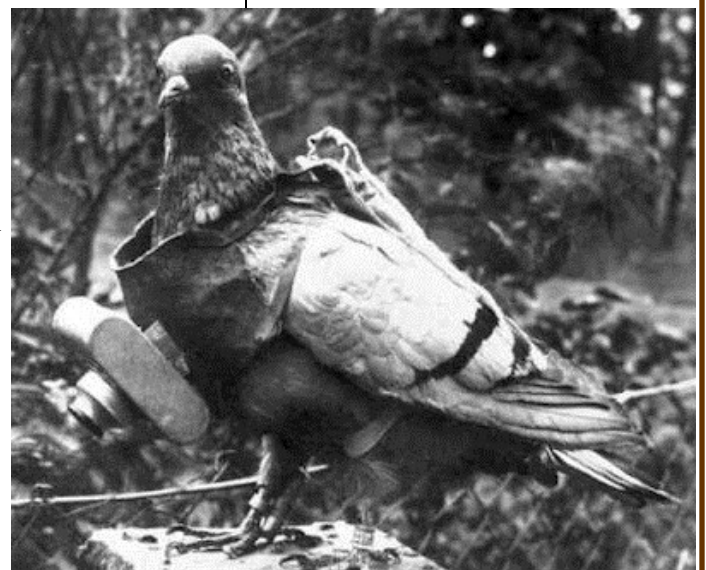
"Cher Ami" was a registered Black Check Cock carrier pigeon, one of 600 birds owned and flown by the U.S. Army Signal Corps in France during World War I.

He delivered 12 important messages within the American sector at Verdun, France. On his last mission, "Cher Ami," shot through the breast by enemy fire, managed to return to his loft. A message capsule was found dangling from the ligaments of one of his legs that also had been shattered by enemy fire. The message he carried was from Major Whittlesey's "Lost Battalion" of the 77th Infantry Division that had been isolated from other American forces. Just a few hours after the message was received, 194 survivors of the battalion were

safe behind American lines.

"Cher Ami" was awarded the French "Croix de Guerre" with Palm for his heroic service between the forts of Verdun. He died in 1919 as a result of his battle wounds.

"Cher Ami" was later inducted into the Racing Pigeon Hall of Fame in 1931 and received a gold medal from the Organized Bodies of American Racing Pigeon Fanciers in recognition of his extraordinary service



during World War I.

"Cher Ami" is on display at the National Museum of American History, Behring Center, in the exhibition *The Price of Freedom: Americans At War*.