



WORLD WAR II

MILITARY HISTORY

- 1732 George Washington is born in Westmoreland County, Virginia.
- 1848 The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is signed.
- 1865 Fort Sumter is recaptured by Union forces.
- 1898 The U.S. Battleship *Maine* explodes in Havana.
- 1902 Charles Lindbergh is born in Detroit, Michigan.
- 1942 The first Medal of Honor of World War II is awarded.
- 1943 U.S. forces take Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.
- 1989 Soviet Russia completes its withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- 1991 Desert Storm ends as Allied troops enter Kuwait.
- 1994 NATO conducts its first ever combat action.

DID YOU KNOW?

When the Arsenal was established in 1862, there were several cemeteries that were plotted on the island. When GEN Rodman created his plan for the new stone shops, he consolidated the site for these cemeteries on the upper end of the island. The National Cemetery includes remains from the old post cemetery, the Fort Armstrong Cemetery, and other surrounding area cemeteries. The oldest marker is dated from 1832.

TRIVIA

- ① What abbey built by the Benedictine Order in the sixth century was destroyed during World War II?
 - ② How many occupants did Quarters One at Rock Island house from 1872 thru 2008?
 - ③ Before Rock Island Arsenal converted to steam power, what system utilized pulleys and belts in the shops?
- Last Month's Answers:**
- ① Who was the arsenal commandant that was influential in the establishing of the golf club house?
COL Blunt
 - ② What was the westernmost battle that occurred during the War of 1812?
The Battle of Credit Island
 - ③ What was the first naval battle that was fought entirely with air forces?
Battle of the Coral Sea

Answers to trivia and more are available on the ASC History Office's SharePoint page.



The Battle of Kasserine Pass

The successful execution of Operation Torch on 8 November 1942, positioned the Allied forces in northern Morocco and Algeria. GEN Dwight Eisenhower and other Allied leaders believed French soldiers would welcome Allied troops. The French resisted at nearly every landing point, however, by 13 November dissenters from the French factions had rejoined the British and American troops. After consolidating their forces, Allied focus shifted to beating Germany in the race to control Tunisia.

GEN Kenneth Anderson, commander of the British First Army, directed the Allies into western Tunisia along the Great Dorsal Chain of the Atlas Mountains. Meanwhile, Axis forces under Germany GEN Erwin Rommel had been arriving from Sicily and had successfully established a bridgehead along Tunisia's eastern seaboard. The Allies planned to trap Rommel's forces between Allied troops heading east from the Atlas Mountains and GEN Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army heading west from Libya.

Despite several encounters with Rommel's forces, the Allies failed to capture Tunis or Bizerte throughout November and December. By Christmas Eve, Eisenhower realized the Allies had lost the race and needed to halt operations in northern Tunisia. He looked south between Tebessa and Kasserine as the new zone for a continued Allied offensive. The area offered the American forces the opportunity to have a front of their own while reinforcing the French forces already located in the region. Eisenhower also believed forces between Tebessa and Kasserine could protect against a likely Axis offensive in the area to gain a getaway into Algeria at Kasserine Pass and subsequently the critical Allied supply hub of Tebessa.

The Germans captured Faid Pass, expanding their

bridgehead in Tunisia, at the end of January 1943. From there, the Germans attacked French and American positions at Sidi Bouzid on Valentine's Day. Allied forces attempted a counterattack the next day, but it was ineffective and morale dropped after the Germans captured over 1,000 troops. The Axis forces fought almost twenty-five miles beyond Sidi Bouzid, also seizing Sbeitla on 17 February. Although the Americans rushed to establish a new defensive position in Kasserine Pass, the Axis forces continued their momentum westward and took advantage of faulty Allied leadership and inexperience. By 20 February, Axis troops had control of Kasserine Pass.

Despite the appearance of a quick defeat, Allied soldiers rallied and managed to regroup. The United States II Corps along with British reserves successfully sealed Kasserine Pass on 22 February with a massive artillery bombardment halting the German offensive. As the Allies received more reinforcements and the Germans expected a British attack in Mareth, Rommel admitted the Axis could not take Tebessa and failed to achieve their operational objective.

The Allies once again controlled their original defensive positions, including the Fondouk and Faid Passes. As the troops gained more experience and grew stronger, the Allies continued attacking eastward and slowly chipped away at German forces. The slow-moving ships carrying insufficient quantities of supplies across the Mediterranean added further stress to the German troops. By May 1943, the Axis troops on the African continent surrendered. The success of the campaign opened up the use of the territory to launch attacks against Italy and other parts of Southern Europe.

Camp McClellan, Iowa, 1861-1865

Shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter, all of the Northern states began recruiting volunteers and setting up training camps to prepare them for combat. Iowa followed suit and built a number of training camps across the eastern portion of the state. One of these camps was established near the village of East Davenport in August of 1861. The camp was to be named after the Union GEN George McClellan and would occupy more than 300 acres of land in the area known today as McClellan Heights. The camp was designed to house 1,352 Soldiers, stables for 130 horses, a mess hall, commissary, canteen, granary, and officers quarters. Overall it was well regarded by Soldiers due to the good living conditions as well as support from the local civilians who would bring food and throw parades for the Soldiers.

Camp McClellan would evolve over time to meet the ebb and flow of Soldiers heading off to fight the war. In 1862, a hospital would be established in one of the barracks buildings and was described as one of the finest hospitals in the area due to the guidance of Sanitary Agent Annie Wittenmyer. By 1863, an additional camp would also be formed within Camp McClellan named Camp Reynolds to house 277 Sioux prisoners from

fighting in Michigan territory.

Over the course of the war, Camp McClellan would train more than 40,000 of the nearly 72,000 volunteer Soldiers that Iowa would send to fight.

RATIONS.—One day's rations for one man at Camp McClellan is

3-4 lb of pork or bacon ; or
 1 1-4 lb. of fresh or salt beef.
 18 ounces of bread or flour.
 12 ounces of hard bread.
 1 1-4 lb. corn meal.

In addition to this are the following articles —the list being made up for 100 men :

6 quarts of peas, beans or rice.
 6 lbs. of coffee.
 12 lbs of sugar.
 4 quarts of vinegar.
 1 1-2 lbs. tallow candles.
 4 lbs. of soap.
 2 quarts of salt.

From these lists it can be calculated what the extent of the rations will be for the three Regiments when all are in quarters.

Whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times.