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Historically, what has been the process for naming U.S. Army Installations?

Naming Army Installations

The earliest official policy on the naming of posts and forts is found in War Department General Order Number 11, dated 8 February 1832. The order stated, “All new posts which may be hereafter established, will receive their names from the War Department, and be announced in General Orders from the Headquarters of the Army.”

At that time, both cantonment and camp designated a temporary location, while the term fort designated a permanent installation. The term post was used for any type of installation. The designation of an installation as a fort or camp was left to the discretion of division commanders (at that time the term division was used to denote a regional command such as the Division of the Pacific, the Division of the Missouri, or the Division of the Atlantic). War Department General Order Number 79, dated 8 November 1878, stated, “As the practice of designating military posts varies in the several Military Divisions, and in order to secure uniformity in this respect, Division commanders are authorized, at their discretion, to name and style all posts permanently occupied by troops, or the occupation of which is likely to be permanent, ‘Forts,’ and to style all points occupied temporarily ‘Camps.’” Additionally, the Secretary of War often delegated the authority for the actual naming of forts and camps to division and installation commanders.

The 1893 “Report of the Quartermaster-General” by Brigadier General Richard Napoleon Batchelder, Quartermaster General of the Army, suggested that the Secretary of War take responsibility for both the naming of posts and for the designation of posts as forts or camps. He deplored the use of terms such as barracks and felt that military installations should be named only after military heroes, not geographical features, Indian tribes, cities, or non-military individuals.

War Department documents indicate that the Secretary of War had assumed complete responsibility for the naming of posts by World War I. During the inter-war years, it was common for the Secretary of War to solicit recommendations for names for new posts from installation commanders; corps and branch commanders; as well as the Chief, Historical Section, Army War College. Unsolicited suggestions for names were also submitted from sources outside the military establishment, and political pressure and public opinion sometimes influenced the naming decision. As a result, in many cases camps and forts were named after local features or veterans with a regional connection....

Following World War II, a study was conducted by order of General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower regarding the procedures governing the memorialization of individuals with distinguished military records. The result of this study was the establishment of the Department of the Army Memorialization Board in 1946. The board was governed by Army Regulation (AR) 15-190, *Boards, Commissions, and Committees: Department of the Army Memorialization Board* and was given responsibility of deciding on the names of military posts and other memorial programs. AR 15-190 specified memorialization criteria, including the criterion that only deceased persons will be memorialized. It also provided five categories of individuals to be memorialized: a national hero of absolute preeminence by virtue of high position, an individual who held a position of high and extensive responsibility (Army and above) and whose death was

a result of battle wounds, an individual who held a position of high and extensive responsibility and whose death was not a result of battle wounds, an individual who performed an act of heroism or who held a position of high responsibility and whose death was a result of battle wounds, and an individual who performed an act of heroism or who held a position of high responsibility and whose death was not a result of battle wounds.

Additionally, the regulation assigned the responsibility of naming Army Reserve armories to major reserve commanders without reference to the Department of the Army; the naming of a facility, building, group of buildings, street, or driveway to the installation commander; and the naming of temporary installations to commanders of major commands.

AR 15-190 was superseded on 8 December 1958 by AR 1-30, *Administration: Department of the Army Memorialization Program*. The biggest change in this regulation is that it removes the responsibility for naming installations from the Memorialization Board and assigns it to Headquarters, Department of the Army.

AR 1-30 was superseded on 1 February 1972 by AR 1-33, *Administration: Memorial Programs*. This revision retained essentially the same memorialization criteria and the same categories for memorialization, but added a list of appropriate memorialization projects for each category. For example, it would be appropriate to name a large military installation after a person in category two, while it would be appropriate to name a building or a street after a person in category five. The final decision on naming a post was still made by the Headquarters, Department of the Army. In the 15 January 1981 revision of AR 1-33, the person responsible for the naming of installations was listed as the Army Chief of Staff.

The current version of AR 1-33 became effective on 30 June 2006. It redefines and expands the categories of individuals to be memorialized, and lists appropriate memorialization programs for each category. The criteria for memorialization are expanded and clearly defined, and the number of individuals with approval authority for memorializations is increased. The naming of installations is now the responsibility of the Assistant Secretary of Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs). The Director of the Installation Management Agency is responsible for the naming of streets, buildings, and facilities on all military installations except medical installations, where the Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command has the approval authority, and on the United States Military Academy, where the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy has the approval authority.

By James Tobias