

Quartermaster Corps



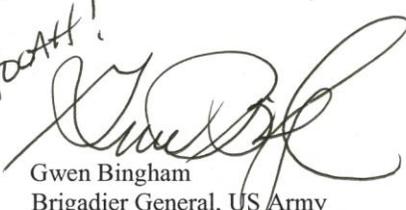
U.S. Army



The history of the Quartermaster Corps dates back to the beginning of our Army and continues through all of its conflicts. Through all this time, the individual Soldiers have relied upon the Quartermaster Corps for the support that enables victory on the battlefield. The specific tasks and methods of operation have changed greatly, but the tradition of superb logistical support has remained constant.

This short booklet provides an introduction to the proud history of the Quartermaster Corps. I hope that you enjoy reading it.

*Supporting
Victory - That!*



Gwen Bingham
Brigadier General, US Army
51st Quartermaster General

QUARTERMASTER CORPS

U.S. ARMY

Origins

On June 16, 1775, just two days after it authorized the formation of an Army, the Continental Congress authorized the position of Quartermaster General for the new Army. Shortly afterwards it also authorized a Commissary General. As the new Soldiers were gathering outside of Boston, they required food, shelter, clothing and all of the necessities for sustaining an Army in the field. Two months later, George Washington appointed Thomas Mifflin to be the first Quartermaster General.

Despite their recognition of the need for a Quartermaster General, Congress and the nation were poorly prepared for the task of supporting the Continental Army. Without a viable national government, the Army depended upon contributions from the states, which was uneven at best. Even when food and supplies were available, the Quartermasters often lacked the means to transport the goods to the troops. The miserable winter at Valley Forge was perhaps the best-remembered example of hardships suffered by the Revolutionary War Soldiers, but other winters were comparably bad.

Nevertheless, Thomas Mifflin, and later Nathaniel Greene, created some semblance of order within the supply system. By establishing a system of depots, or advance supply points, they supported the Army for most military operations. The French alliance further eased shortages of money and supplies.

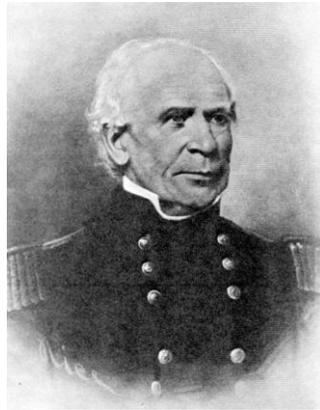


Valley Forge was one of many hardships endured for lack of supplies during the Revolution.

Following the Revolution, the position of Quartermaster General was considered to be appropriate only for wartime, and it was allowed to lapse. Quartermasters were authorized for specific Indian expeditions. Later a civilian Quartermaster General was employed during the Adams administration only to have the position replaced by purchasing agents during the Jefferson administration. Shortly before the War of 1812, Congress re-instituted the position of Quartermaster General as a military rank, with military subordinates; but these changes came too late to allow for a satisfactory supply system. The logistical problems of this war convinced the government of the need for a permanent Quartermaster Department.

Quartermaster Department 1818-1912

Thomas Jesup became Quartermaster General in 1818; and during his long tenure, he established enduring policies and practices that earned him the moniker as “Father of the Corps”. Jesup envisioned the role of the Quartermaster as a military position rather than a business position in order to ensure priority for support to the operations. Nevertheless, he also insisted upon strict accountability for all transactions. Officers and NCOs were assigned to the Quartermaster Department for extended periods of time, often for the duration of their careers.



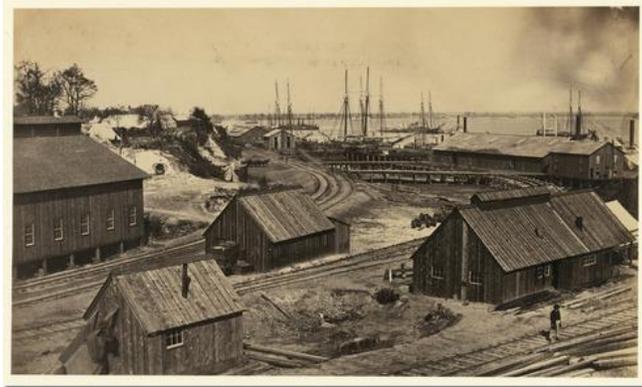
*Thomas Jesup
Father of the Quartermaster Corps*

Unlike today, the Quartermasters of that era relied upon civilian labor or detailed Soldiers to perform the actual labor. Finding teamsters to drive the wagons proved to be one of the greatest challenges in keeping the widely dispersed Army properly supplied. The Quartermaster Department continued to manage a wide variety of commodities ranging from forage for the horses, uniforms, construction of quarters (where feasible), plus tents and field equipment. Various Indian campaigns, including the Seminole Wars, kept the Quartermaster Department fully engaged.

From 1846 to 1848, the Mexican War provided the U.S. Army’s first experience at major overseas campaigning. The Quartermaster Department kept the Army supplied in this challenging environment, often relying upon local agents to purchase supplies.

Massive mobilizations created by the Civil War challenged the Army’s logistical systems in ways not previously imagined. Unprepared for the hundreds of thousands of troops mustered into the Union Army, the system could not provide sufficient supplies during the first few months of the war. In their haste to meet the demands of the Army, Quartermasters allowed bad practices, including price gouging, defective merchandise, and outright fraud. Initially, tactical logistics also suffered from problems caused by inexperience and sudden growth.

Over time, the supply systems improved. As the new Quartermaster General, Montgomery Meigs instituted discipline into the system. Commanders learned how to plan their operations within the logistical constraints. The scale of the logistical operations was massive, especially for personnel accustomed to a small, stable Army, but the logisticians learned to adapt. They used forward depots to support operations and employed new technologies including railroads and steamboats. During the Petersburg Campaign, the Union depot at City Point became one of the busiest ports in the world.



*City Point Depot
(Supporting the Siege of Petersburg)*

For the first time, the Army cared for the remains of the casualties in a systematic manner. The War Department initiated a network of national cemeteries under the supervision of the Quartermaster General to provide an honorable burial for Soldiers who died serving their country. This marked the beginning of the mortuary affairs mission, which continues to the present time.



*Gettysburg Cemetery was one of the
Civil War cemeteries established by
the Quartermaster Department*

Following the Civil War the Army returned to its former duties of enforcing the peace within the trans-Mississippi West. Primarily this work consisted of extended campaigns against Indians in areas ranging from the plains of the Dakota territory to the mountains of Arizona. The Quartermaster Department arranged for the supply support throughout these dispersed campaigns thus providing a vital advantage to the Army.

Unfortunately, the experience of supporting major military operations was forgotten while the Army was operating in the West. The lapse in logistical expertise proved to be a serious deficiency once the United States entered war with Spain in 1898. Once again, purchasing

practices created a climate for waste, fraud, and abuse. The temporary camps created to hold the rapidly expanding Army were so poorly designed that Soldiers died from disease in shocking numbers.

For the U.S. Army this was the first overseas deployment since the Mexican War; but as of this time, the Quartermaster Department had no organized military units. The support structure still functioned by contracted labor, which did not work well outside the United States. The Army had no knowledge of how to load or unload the ships used for the invasion of Cuba. Resupply operations in Cuba were plagued with difficulties, especially for medical supplies. Spain surrendered before the logistical deficiencies created even more problems.

Quartermaster Corps 1912-1962

Learning from its bitter experience in the Spanish American War, the Army instituted a number of reforms that encompassed almost all aspects of its organization, such as creation of an Army Staff, or establishing a system for professional education. The Army was changing to a professional force, and the Quartermaster Corps was changing too.

Beginning in 1912 the Quartermaster Department became the Quartermaster Corps, with a new way of operating. For the first time the Army recognized that, trained Soldiers were required to support military operations, especially in combat or overseas situations. It created entire units of Quartermaster Soldiers performing support activities. Sustaining the Army became an integral military function.

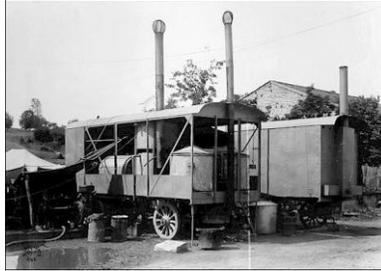


*Quartermaster Supply Depot
Philadelphia
First home of the Quartermaster School (1920)*

Other changes came at the same time. The Commissary and Paymaster Departments were consolidated into the Quartermaster Corps (although the Paymaster became Finance in 1920). A school in Philadelphia trained Soldiers in their duties. Along with other supporting branches, the Quartermaster Corps came to be called one of the “technical services”.

When America entered World War I, these reforms proved their value. Although the mobilization was not perfect, problems were far fewer than the Spanish American War, especially in view of the size of this war. The new organization proved more adept at supporting the Army overseas, as the Quartermasters established a support structure in France that included port operations, advanced depots, and salvage depots. This conflict also marked the beginning of

modern war with the introduction of petroleum and repair parts to the logisticians' load. Recognizing that personal cleanliness reduced the spread of disease, the Quartermasters introduced laundry and bath operations, including lice removal.



*A World War I
laundry truck*

World War II was unlike all previous conflicts in the size, geographic dispersion, and modern nature of the war. The Army expanded to over eight million Soldiers by 1945; and all of them required support from the Quartermaster Corps. The Quartermaster General supervised the initial construction for the war effort including training camps and ammunition production facilities. Within the United States, the Quartermaster Corps procured clothing and equipment for climates ranging from arctic to tropical. It also managed the distribution of supplies. Until the Transportation Corps became a separate organization in 1942, the Quartermaster General also supervised movements of personnel and materiel.



*Baking Biscuits during the battle
For Bataan, February 1942*



A hot meal in the Ardennes

Overseas, Army logisticians learned to support large armies in a swiftly moving offensive. The rapid advances in Europe in 1944 stretched the ability of the supply lines to keep up with the offensive, and eventually shortages of petroleum produced a pause in the attack. Winter weather required distribution of heavy uniforms during offensive operations. In the Pacific logistical support depended upon delivering the correct quantities of supplies to units on islands scattered throughout the various areas of operations.



Unloading supplies in Europe

Modern warfare produced its own set of challenges during World War II, and military logisticians responded. Petroleum and repair parts first appeared as logistical issues in World War I; but this time they were critical to operational success. Because the Air Corps was still part of the Army, the Quartermaster Corps supplied the specialized needs for aircrews. Aviation also opened the possibilities for airborne operations and aerial delivery of supplies. Five years after WWII ended, rigging and aerial delivery became another mission for the Quartermaster Corps.

Hopes for an enduring peace following World War II were illusory, as the United States entered into a protracted period of armed tensions with the Communist Bloc known as the Cold War. The Army and the Quartermaster Corps adapted to the new requirements. No longer able to rely on time for mobilization, the Army needed to be prepared for war on short notice, including materiel readiness, forward deployed units, and forward depots in case of war. Quartermaster Soldiers performed the work within almost all levels of Army organizations.

In June 1950, North Korea crossed the dividing line into South Korea, and the U.S. Army led the international effort to halt the aggression. Once again, the Quartermaster Corps entered the fighting. By locating and delivering excess World War II supplies, the logisticians overcame the problems of initial supply shortages. Aerial delivery officially became a part of the Quartermaster mission. Rigger units proved their value in delivering supplies when other transportation was not available, including air delivery of bridging equipment that enabled the Marines to evacuate from the Chosin Reservoir. During the conflict, the Quartermaster Corps began returning remains of fallen Soldiers to their families during the conflict, rather than waiting for the end of hostilities.



*Aerial delivery during the
Korean Conflict*

Present times 1962 – forward

In 1962, another reorganization significantly changed the way that the Quartermaster Corps functioned. Until this time, the Quartermaster General, like the other chiefs of the technical services, exercised control over all Quartermaster activities from acquisition to distribution, along with personnel oversight. Now a new organization, designated as Army Materiel Command, assumed responsibility for the acquisition and materiel management functions of all the technical services. The position of Quartermaster General was terminated until later revived. This change marked a paradigm shift away from stovepiped logistical functions and towards integrated logistical functions within the Army.



*Mifflin Hall, Ft. Lee
Home of the Quartermaster School
1961-2010*

Nevertheless, Quartermaster remained as a career branch for Soldiers of all grades. Quartermaster Soldiers continued to provide supplies and services, increasingly in cooperation with Army logisticians from the other branches. The Quartermaster School, now at Ft. Lee, Virginia, remained the centerpiece for branch activities. In 1981, the commandant of the Quartermaster School assumed the re-instituted title of Quartermaster General. The activation of the Quartermaster regimental affiliation in 1986 gave further recognition of the enduring nature for this branch.

Containing the growth of Communism remained the dominant military threat until 1989. American forces continued to maintain a deterrent in Europe and Northeast Asia, with the Quartermasters providing the logistics.

In Southeast Asia, the Vietnam Conflict dominated American military activity for the late 1960s and early 1970s. Over time, the logistical infrastructure developed to create one of the best-supported military operations within the history of the Army. The static nature of the conflict, combined with short distances to ports, enabled the Army to construct an elaborate system of depots, with short supply lines to the units. American troops seldom lacked supplies.



Depots enabled superb support in Vietnam

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the Cold War came to an end; but military activities continued and even accelerated. Each new contingency operation presented its own logistical challenges and Quartermaster Soldiers supported each operation as part of the Army's logistical team, often working with other services or other nations.

When Iraq unilaterally annexed Kuwait in August 1990, the United States led the coalition to liberate Kuwait. Movement of forces to this theater presented an enormous logistical challenge with the movement of XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps to Saudi Arabia along with the logistical infrastructure.



A water purification specialist during Desert Storm, 1991

Supporting this conflict presented some unusual problems for Quartermaster units. The latest generation of vehicles consumed huge quantities of fuel. Total fuel consumption exceeded two billion gallons, and required construction of new petroleum facilities in addition to use of host nation facilities. The high temperatures and arid environment created unprecedented demands upon water purification units. Tragically, a water purification unit suffered the highest proportion of casualties when a rocket struck members of the 14th Quartermaster Detachment (an Army Reserve unit) hours before the truce.

Throughout the 1990s, American military intervention continued for reasons ranging from humanitarian assistance, to peacekeeping, to political interventions. Immediately after the fighting in Iraq ended, coalition forces delivered relief supplies to Kurdish refugees in the rugged mountains along the Iraqi-Turkish borders, relying heavily upon aerial delivery. Then peacekeeping within the Balkan nations, followed by the Kosovo War, again challenged the Quartermaster Soldiers to keep our forces properly supplied while minimizing the American footprint. Intervention in Haiti came with a logistical price, although support from contractors reduced the burden.

Even as the Quartermaster Corps supported a wide range of military operations, its leaders initiated improvements to the efficiency of logistical support. New means of information management and automated tracking of supplies offered the promise of precision logistics. Instead of maintaining large quantities of repair parts or other supplies, Americans henceforth would rely upon precise delivery of the required item on a timely basis. Other improvements in equipment and processes allowed for better support with fewer resources. Greater cooperation with other Army logistical branches, with other services, and with other nations further enhanced the efficiency of Quartermaster operations.



Members of the 49th Quartermaster Group operated an Inland Petroleum Distribution System

The focus on all military operations changed with a terrible suddenness on the morning of 11 September 2001, when terrorists used hijacked airliners as weapons against America, causing thousands to die in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Immediately, it became apparent that Islamic extremists based in Afghanistan conducted this attack. The United States responded by leading the international effort to topple the Taliban government in Afghanistan. In March 2003, the United States led a coalition force to remove the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.



Moving bottled water in Afghanistan

Early success in both operations was followed by prolonged insurgencies, which challenged all aspects of the coalition operations, including the logistics. In Iraq, convoy operations and movement of supplies in the face of enemy attacks and explosive devices proved to be a constant danger, especially for isolated bases. In Afghanistan the mountain terrain, lack of infrastructure, and distance from any ports presented even more formidable challenges. Soldiers developed innovative ways to reach isolated units even in the high altitudes, such as a low cost, disposable parachute that delivered supplies to small outposts.



Convoy operations in Iraq

Even as the Quartermaster Corps evolved during these prolonged conflicts, other changes were coming to all the logistical branches. Increasingly, logistical units at battalion or higher levels consisted of Ordnance, Transportation, and Quartermaster units, performing multiple logistical functions; and field grade officers needed to be competent in multiple logistical disciplines. Consequently, the Army decided to create a Logistics Branch for field grade officers and senior captains. New officers within a sustainment career field still enter the service as Quartermaster, Ordnance, or Transportation officers. Upon completing the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course (CLC3), they become members of the Logistics Branch. The change comes as part of a larger recognition of the growing interdependence of the logistical functions.

The Future

Some parts of the future are unpredictable. We know that the nature of warfare will change, but we cannot predict exactly how it will change. We know that organizational changes will be a part of the military, but we are not sure how these changes will reshape the Army.

We do know that supply and services will continue to be an integral part of the support to the warfighter. Quartermaster Soldiers will do the necessary work for providing, food, supplies, petroleum, mortuary support, aerial delivery, laundry, showers, and other functions perhaps not even considered at the present. They will work in cooperation with their fellow Army logisticians; and they will work with logisticians from other services and other nations.

Since June 1775, Quartermaster Soldiers have provided the logistical wherewithal to enable success in combat and non-combat operations. No other branch of the service can begin to rival the Quartermaster Corps for its diversity of tasks and the many functions provided. Despite all the changes, the fundamental mission of supporting the individual combat soldier in the field has remained constant. We can expect that in the future Quartermaster Soldiers will uphold the regimental motto of "Supporting Victory".



QUARTERMASTER INSIGNIA

The sword is characteristic of military forces and symbolized the Quartermaster Corps control of military supplies. The key is representative of the Corps traditional storekeeping function. The wheel is styled after a six-mule-wagon wheel and represents transportation and delivery of supplies. The wheel has thirteen spokes, a red and white hub and a blue felloe (the outer edge of the wheel) embedded with thirteen gilt (gold) stars. The thirteen stars and spokes of the wheel represent the original colonies and the origin of the Corps, which occurred during the Revolutionary War. The gilt (gold) eagle is the national bird and is symbolic of our nation. The colors red, white and blue are the national colors.

QUARTERMASTER GENERALS 1775-2011

MG Thomas Mifflin 1775 -1776
COL Stephen Moylan 1776 - 1776
MG Thomas Mifflin 1776 -1777
MG Nathanael Greene 1778 - 1780
COL Timothy Pickering 1780 - 1785
Samuel Hodgdon 1791 - 1792
James O'Hara 1792 - 1796
MG John Wilkins, Jr. 1796 - 1802
BG Morgan Lewis 1812 - 1813
BG Robert Swartwout 1813 - 1816
COL James Mullany 1816 - 1818*
COL George Gibson 1816 - 1818**
BG Thomas S. Jesup 1818 – 1860
BG Joseph E. Johnston 1860 - 1861
BG Montgomery C. Meigs 1861 - 1882
BG Daniel H. Rucker 1882 - 1882
BG Rufus Ingalls 1882 - 1883
BG Samuel B. Holabird 1883 - 1890
BG Richard N. Batchelder 1890 - 1896
BG Charles G. Sawtelle 1896 - 1897
BG George H. Weeks 1897 - 1898
BG Marshall I. Ludington 1898 - 1903
BG Charles F. Humphrey 1903 - 1907
MG James B. Aleshire 1907 - 1916
MG Henry G. Sharpe 1916 - 1918

MG Harry L. Rogers 1918 - 1922
MG William H. Hart 1922 - 1926
MG B. Frank Cheatham 1926 - 1930
MG John L. DeWitt 1930 - 1934
MG Louis H. Bash 1934 - 1936
MG Henry Gibbins 1936 - 1940
LTG Edmund B. Gregory 1940 - 1946
MG Thomas B. Larkin 1946 - 1949
MG Herman Feldman 1949 - 1951
MG George A. Horkan 1951 - 1954
MG Kester L. Hastings 1954 - 1957
MG Andrew T. McNamara 1957 - 1961
MG Webster Anderson 1961 - 1962
MG Harry L. Dukes, Jr. 1981 - 1984
MG Eugene L. Stillions, Jr. 1984 - 1987
MG William T. McLean 1987 - 1989
MG Paul J. Vanderploog 1989 - 1991
BG John J. Cusick 1991 - 1993
MG Robert K. Guest 1993 - 1996
MG Henry T. Glisson 1996 - 1997
MG James M. Wright 1997 - 1999
MG Hawthorne L. Proctor 1999 - 2001
MG Terry E. Juskowiak 2001 - 2003
BG Scott G. West 2003 - 2005
BG Mark A. Bellini 2005 - 2007
BG Jesse R. Cross 2007 - 2010
BG Gwen Bingham 2010 - Present

* Quartermaster General Northern Division

** Quartermaster General Southern Division



Leo P. Hirrel
With Steven E. Anders

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