

A Regimental Organization for the Coast Artillery Corps

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On February 27, 1924, the War Department issued a General Order effecting a reorganization of the Coast Artillery Corps. Before 1901, the Artillery of the United States Army was organized into regiments, each regiment consisting of twelve heavy batteries and two light batteries. The heavy batteries corresponded to those organizations which now man the heavy guns located in our harbor defenses; the light batteries, to the present-day Field Artillery batteries.

At the close of the Philippine Insurrection in 1901, the Army was increased in size and was given a general reorganization. At that time, the Artillery consisted of seven regiments. These regiments were designated the 1st to the 7th Artillery, inclusive. In the reorganization of 1901, the Artillery became a Corps consisting of a number of separate companies of Coast Artillery, and a number of separate batteries of Field Artillery, these separate companies and batteries not being grouped into battalions, regiments, or any higher organizations.

In 1907, the Artillery was again increased, and the Coast and Field Artillery were separated. The Field Artillery was then organized into regiments and has retained that organization up to the present time. The Coast Artillery, however, continued its Corps organization and has, since 1901, never been organized into higher Units than a company, except for the regiments which were organized during the World War, and for such provisional battalions and regiments as have from time to time been temporarily organized for specific purposes. These temporary organizations, in all cases, when the specific purpose for which they were formed has been accomplished, have been disbanded and their identity has been lost. Thus, the esprit, which throughout the history of military organizations, has always attached to regiments of whatever arm of the service—Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, or whatnot—and which is such an important factor in building up the morale of military forces, has been almost wholly lacking in the Coast Artillery Corps, although all other combat arms of our Army have benefited by its effects.

The governing reason for eliminating the regimental and battalion organizations from the Coast Artillery Corps seems to have been that such an organization, consisting of units of uniform strength and personnel composition, did not fit the requirements of the armament emplaced in our harbor defenses, varying so widely as does the latter in different localities. While it has always been recognized by Coast Artillerymen that such an organization was not conducive to a high degree of esprit, it was adopted and has been continued because of these considerations concerning the harbor defenses which it was the mission of the Coast Artillery Corps to man and operate.

In 1917, when the United States entered the World War, there was a demand in Europe for personnel to man heavy artillery on movable mounts—railway and tractor drawn. There was also a demand for units of antiaircraft and trench mortar artillery. The War Department decided to draw these personnel from the Coast Artillery Corps, the troops of which were probably best fitted for these tasks and, under the existing conditions, were not required in our harbor defenses. For the accomplishment

of these missions, it was necessary to organize battalions and regiments, utilizing the existing separate companies to affect such organizations. This was done and the Coast Artillery Corps regiments, which were thus formed, rendered valuable services in the operations of both the French and American armies. However, the path of those responsible for creating these organizations was beset with many and great difficulties.

At the conclusion of the World War, the responsibility for the future development and operation of railway, antiaircraft, and trench mortar artillery, and of the heavy tractor artillery designed for use in coast fortifications, was definitely placed upon the Coast Artillery Corps, and certain units which had served during the war with these various activities, were continued in existence. The final result, from an organizational standpoint, was that the Coast Artillery had now developed into a Corps, consisting of a number of separate companies assigned to the duty of manning the armament in the harbor defenses, a regiment and three battalions of antiaircraft artillery, a regiment and a battalion of railway artillery, and three regiments of heavy tractor artillery. Such a mixture of organizations was most undesirable. Furthermore, it was very noticeable that esprit was being developed in the battalions and regiments to a much higher degree than in the separate companies, and, as time went on, these differences became more and more noticeable. It was necessary to take some action to remedy this condition.

A regimental organization for all units of the Coast Artillery Corps was most desirable for the following reasons: First, to promote esprit uniformly throughout the Corps. Second, to avoid any necessity in future for the hasty organization of regiments such as confronted the Coast Artillery Corps authorities in 1917.

The great difficulty in the way of effecting this organization lay in its being made to fit the varying conditions in our harbor defenses.

After long study of this problem by various officers on duty in the Office of the Chief of Coast Artillery, a plan was evolved by which this purpose could be accomplished in a most satisfactory manner. This plan is embodied in the General Order, above mentioned as affecting this most important organization.

The order provides, in addition to the battalions and regiments of Coast Artillery already in existence, for sixteen regiments composed of Americans, and two regiments composed of Filipinos, for duty in the harbor defenses, and one additional regiment of antiaircraft artillery for duty in the Panama Canal Department.

The designation of companies of the Coast Artillery Corps by serial numbers is abolished, and all units of the Coast Artillery Corps, heretofore designated as companies, will hereafter be called batteries.

All regiments of the Coast Artillery are hereafter to be designated as "1st Coast Artillery", "55th Coast Artillery", etc. Existing battalions are to be expanded into regiments, the additional units so provided in each regiment to remain for the present, inactive. Existing regiments, and those regiments expanded from existing battalions, are to retain their present numerical designations.

The sixteen new regiments of American Coast Artillerymen are given numbers from 1st to 16th inclusive. The new antiaircraft regiment for duty in the Panama Canal Department is to be designated the 65th Coast Artillery. The two Filipino regiments are to be designated the 91st and 92nd Coast Artillery (P. S.)

Each of the regiments formed in the harbor defenses in the continental United States is organized into a headquarters battery, and either seven or ten lettered batteries (A, B, C, etc.) In those regiments having seven lettered batteries, Batteries A and B will constitute the 1st battalion, C and D the 2nd, and E, F and G the 3rd. In those regiments having ten lettered batteries, Batteries A, B and C will constitute the 1st battalion, D, E and F the 2nd, and G, H, I and K the 3rd.

These regiments have been given this organization so as to facilitate their conversion from harbor defense regiments into railway and either heavy tractor or antiaircraft regiments, should another war present requirement similar to those which confronted Coast Artillery authorities in 1917. In that event, as the Coast Artillery will be organized under this order, if railway artillery be needed for duty with the field armies, any harbor defense regiment, which is composed of a headquarters battery and seven lettered batteries, can be converted readily into a railway regiment, which latter consists of a headquarters battery, a service battery, and six firing batteries. Similarly, any harbor defense regiment, which is composed of a headquarters battery and ten lettered batteries, can be converted with facility into a heavy tractor or an antiaircraft regiment, since both of these latter consist of eleven units. Thus, is this organization made use of to eliminate in future, any difficulties in organizations such as those which confronted the Coast Artillery Corps authorities in 1917.

One of the most desirable features of this reorganization, from the standpoint of esprit, is the reconstitution of the old artillery regiments, which were done away with in 1901, when the Artillery was first organized as a Corps. The regiments provided in this order and designated as the 1st to 7th Coast Artillery, inclusive, are each made up of units which were formerly batteries in the regiments having similar designations prior to 1901. For instance, the 1st Coast Artillery will be composed of a headquarters battery and seven lettered batteries (A, B, C, etc.) The present-day companies of the Coast Artillery Corps which will compose this regiment are the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 10th and 11th. These companies were formerly (prior to 1901), batteries B, C, D, F, H, I, M and N, respectively, of the 1st Artillery. Thus, while some of the batteries will have to be given lettered designations different from those they formerly had in the old regiment, the regiment as a whole will be reconstituted by having certain of its original constituent elements again brought together in a regiment bearing the same number as formerly, and its personnel can, therefore, claim as their own, the past history of that regiment. In some cases, the histories of these regiments go as far back as 1812 and include participation in battles of practically all wars in which American troops have participated since that date.

In effecting the reconstitution of these old regiments, it has been necessary to transfer from one coast defense command to another, eighty-eight of the present-day companies of the Coast Artillery Corps. These transfers, however, are affected in all cases without any movement of personnel or materiel except for the transfer of organization records.

The problem of fitting the organization of these regiments to the requirements of the harbor defenses, as finally solved, was quite simple. The War Department allots certain personnel of the various grades and ratings to each Coast Defense Command in the Continental United States. The size and composition of the various batteries of a regiment is not fixed definitely, but, as has been done for a number of years in the case of the separate companies of the Coast Artillery Corps, is determined by the Coast Defense Commander, who will, by sub-allotment of the strength allotted by the War Department to his command, make the strength of each battery such as to fit the requirements of its individual assignment. Each battery, which is assigned to man a specific element of the defense—such as a gun or mortar battery, or an element of the mine defense, will consist of the personnel, of the various grades and ratings, required to man that element of the defense, plus the battery administrative personnel—1st sergeant, mess sergeant, supply sergeant, cooks, etc. All other personnel allotted by the War Department to a coast defense command, will be assigned by the coast defense commander to what will become a General Utility Battery. These personnel will consist of the non-commissioned staff, the band, if a band be provided, and all other miscellaneous personnel not assigned to other batteries. In a coast defense command to which is assigned a regimental headquarters battery, that battery will become the General Utility Battery. In a coast defense command to which no regimental headquarters

battery is assigned, one of the lettered batteries will be utilized for this purpose but will retain its letter designation. The allotment of personnel to the foreign garrisons will be made by the War Department in bulk, and it might be said, to each Department. The Department Commander will then sub-allot these personnel to the various Coast Artillery Corps regiments and coast defense commands in his department and, in the case of the harbor defense regiments, the Coast Defense Commander will again sub-allot and organize his personnel as is done in Coast Defense commands in the United States.

Regiments are assigned by the War Department to man and care for the armament in one or more coast defense commands, as required.

The Commanding officer of a coast defense command, to which the headquarters of a regiment is assigned in the War Department order, becomes the regimental commander and, on June 30, 1924, the date the order becomes effective, assumes command of the regiment and effects its organization.

The new regiments are assigned in the War Department order to departments, on foreign service, and to coast defense commands in the United States as follows:

1ST COAST ARTILLERY To the Panama Canal Department.

2ND COAST ARTILLERY To the Panama Canal Department.

3RD COAST ARTILLERY To coast defenses as follows: Regimental headquarters and headquarters battery and 2 batteries in the Coast Defenses of Los Angeles; 2 batteries in the Coast Defenses of San Diego, and 3 batteries in the Coast Defenses of the Columbia, the individual batteries in each case to be designated by the regimental commander. One battery in each of the Coast Defenses of San Diego and the Columbia, will be kept on an active status as a caretaking detachment.

4TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Panama Canal Department.

5TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Southern New York, regimental headquarters at Fort Hamilton, N. Y.

6TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of San Francisco, regimental headquarters at Fort Winfield Scott, California.

7TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Sandy Hook, regimental headquarters at Fort Hancock, N. J., with three batteries, to be designated by the regimental commander, in the Coast Defenses of the Delaware, one of which will be maintained on an active status as S caretaking detachment.

8TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Portland. regimental head quarters at Fort Preble, Me., with one battery, to be designated by the regimental commander, in the Coast Defenses of Portsmouth, as a caretaking detachment.

9TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Boston, regimental headquarters at Fort Banks, Mass.

10TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Narragansett Bay, regimental headquarters at Fort Adams, H. I., with one battery, to be designated by the regimental commander, in the Coast Defenses of New Bedford, as a caretaking detachment.

11TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Long Island Sound, regimental headquarters at Fort H. G. Wright, N. Y.

12TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Chesapeake Bay, regimental headquarters at Fort Monroe, Va.

13TH COAST ARTILLERY To coast defenses as follows: Regimental headquarters and headquarters battery and 3 batteries in the Coast Defenses of Pensacola; 2 batteries in the Coast Defenses of Charleston; 2 batteries in the Coast Defenses of Key West; and 3 batteries in the Coast Defenses of Galveston; the individual batteries in each case to be designated by the regimental commander. One battery in each of the Coast Defenses of Charleston, Key West and Galveston, will be kept on an active status as a caretaking detachment.

14TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Coast Defenses of Puget Sound, regimental headquarters at Fort Worden, Washington.

15TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Hawaiian Department.

16TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Hawaiian Department.

65TH COAST ARTILLERY To the Panama Canal Department.

The War Department has already, some months ago, authorized a regimental organization for the Coast Artillery of the National Guard. The order just issued provides for the organization of the Organized Reserve Coast Artillery in the same manner as for the National Guard Coast Artillery. This organization differs slightly from that provided for the regiments of the regular Coast Artillery Corps, in that provision is made for the organization of battalions, consisting of any number of batteries from two to four, and of regiments, consisting of any number of batteries from five to twelve. This diversity in the number of units in a battalion or regiment is necessary because the allocation by the War Department of National Guard Coast Artillery to the various States, and of the Organized Reserve Coast Artillery to the various Corps Areas, cannot be made uniform as to the numbers of batteries. The necessity for the organization of the batteries into higher units—battalions and regiments—is recognized, however, and provided for in the War Department order. This organization into higher units is also provided in such manner as to facilitate the assignment of these units to elements of the harbor defenses and their utilization under these assignments in time of war.

Major General F. W. Coe, Chief of Coast Artillery, believes this reorganization to be a matter of supreme importance to the Coast Artillery Corps, and anticipates that the beneficial effects to be derived therefrom will be far reaching.