

HISTORY OF FORT THOMAS

The establishment of Fort Thomas was made possible in 1898 when the state of Kentucky ceded jurisdiction over the reservation to the Federal Government.

The site of the post was selected by General Sheridan and was named for General George H. Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga", of Civil War fame.

The original cost of constructing Fort Thomas was approximately three and one half million dollars. There has been added to this, however, a gymnasium, in which nearly all the activities of the post are centered, and a stable which will accommodate 76 animals.

The reservation consists of 111 acres. It is within easy reach of Cincinnati, Newport, Covington, Latonia and other small cities. It overlooks the Ohio river and is adjacent to a small city known also as Fort Thomas. This city consists mainly of fine dwelling houses and is a beautiful residential district.

There is little opportunity to carry on field training at Fort Thomas, due to the restricted area, and the garrison life is mainly confined to the usual schools and drills incident to ordinary garrison activities.

There is a target range at a distance of about 14 miles on the Licking river where target practice is held yearly and occasional demonstrations are made for class instruction purposes.

On account of its location, Fort Thomas is a show place to tourists, and in fine weather there is a continual line of cars passing through the post. During military ceremonies parking space is at a premium. Once during a ceremony by the Tenth Infantry, there were so many spectators present that they swarmed upon the parade ground in friendly curiosity.

In 1890 the first garrison, consisting of two companies of the Sixth Infantry, was sent to the post. These companies were later re-enforced by two additional companies of the same regiment from Fort Porter, New York.

Although the Sixth Infantry was the first to garrison Fort Thomas, they were followed by a battalion of native Philippine constabulary, and the Third, Fourth, Second, Ninth and Tenth Regiments of U. S. Infantry.

There are indications on every hand of the friendships formed with the civilians near the post and the high regard in which all the military organizations have been held; but a newspaper clipping of an article published at the time of the departure of the Second Infantry is, perhaps, a criterion of the feeling existing between the military and civil at the post. The following is an extract:

"With the band playing patriotic airs and with the cheers of hundreds of civilians ringing in their ears, the soldiers of the Second Infantry left Fort Thomas at 5 p. m. yesterday and marched to Brent, Ky., about a mile distant, where special trains were in waiting to convey them to San Francisco."

A large tower is located at the entrance to the post at the base of which are tablets erected by the citizens of Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport in honor of members of the Sixth Infantry who lost their lives in the Spanish American War.

At the time of the departure of the Second Infantry, the post was entirely bereft of a military garrison, there being but three men left in charge as caretakers. For over a year after the departure of the regiment Fort Thomas was practically deserted until the arrival of the Ninth Infantry, fresh from the Philippines in 1912, when the place hummed with military activity again.

At the outbreak of the war with Spain, Fort Thomas was used as a mobilization center where troops were centralized for transportation to the war zone. Later, when soldiers were being returned on account of wounds and sickness, the proud old post found itself turned into a hospital where hundreds of men were nursed back to health.

In 1916 the Ninth Infantry went to the border and three regiments of Kentucky National Guard were mobilized at Fort Thomas, they, too, were then sent to the border. For a considerable length of time again the post was almost deserted until the outbreak of the war in Europe when it was turned into a recruit depot.

About twenty temporary buildings were constructed to take care of the war-time personnel and recruits. A few of these buildings still remain and are in use.

In the early part of 1922 the recruit companies were disbanded and only a few men of the DEMS, QMC, and Medical Corps remained until the arrival of the headquarters and two battalions of the Tenth Infantry, on October 22, 1922.

PORT THOMAS, KENTUCKY

Port Thomas is a military reservation of the United States in Campbell County, Kentucky, 3 miles from Newport, on high ground overlooking the Ohio River, and about 4 miles from Cincinnati. The entire reservation, including a rifle range, embraces an area of a little over 285 acres, the reservation proper embracing a little over 116 acres and the rifle range 169 acres. It comprises also a right of way to the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and a right of way to the Ohio River for a sewer.

The post was established and lands purchased under authority of an act of Congress approved March 3, 1837 (24 Stat. L., 555).

Jurisdiction over the main reservation was ceded by the State of Kentucky by an act of the legislature approved February 29, 1838.

Before the establishing of Port Thomas there was in that vicinity, within the limits of Newport, a United States military post known as Newport Barracks, opposite Cincinnati. Newport Barracks was established about the year 1806 on land acquired in 1803, a little over 6 acres. Additional land is said to have been purchased in 1840. There is but little information in the War Department concerning that post of the period prior to the year 1839. From 1833 to 1875 it was a general depot of the Army, i.e., a recruit depot or general rendezvous for Regular Army soldiers. During the Mexican War it was also a general rendezvous for volunteer soldiers who enlisted west of the Alleghany Mountains. The site was granted by the United States conditionally to the city of Newport for purposes of a public park by an act of Congress approved July 31, 1894 (28 Stat. L., 211).

War Department
The Adjutant General's Office,
February 23, 1929.

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Campbell

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FT. THOMAS ARMY POST

Ft. Thomas Army Post, located three miles southeast of Newport, and four miles from Cincinnati, near State Highways Nos. 10 and 27 consists of a little over one hundred and sixteen acres. It was established in 1838 and was well in the country at the time; however, it is now surrounded by a beautiful city of some twelve thousand people that takes its name from the army post.

The historic water tower on the reservation was built in 1890. At the base of the tower are two cannons taken from the scuttled ships of Spain, when Admirals Sampson and Schley defeated the enemy's fleet as it tried to slip out of the harbor one quiet Sunday morning. One of the cannons was cast in the foundry at Barcelona in 1763, while the other was cast in the same foundry in 1769. These historic relics are examined almost daily by the many tourists and visitors at the army post.

The present garrison consists of the First Battalion, with Col. Charles L. Mitchell in command. There are approximately one thousand three hundred and fifty soldiers stationed here, including the officers, also the C. C. C. headquarters of the Eastern Kentucky District, embracing thirty-two companies with an approximate present strength of five thousand persons.

FORT THOMAS+

An act of Congress on March 3, 1887, authorized the purchase of land to establish a military reservation in Campbell Co. at Ft. Thomas. The grounds, which include an extensive rifle range, comprise over 285 acres.

Ft. Thomas is located 3 mi. from Newport on high ground overlooking the Ohio River.

The site of the post was chosen by Gen. Sheridan and named after Gen. George H. Thomas, famous Civil War leader.

Previous to the establishment of Ft. Thomas, a U.S. military post, Newport Barracks, was located within Newport proper. The post had been established in 1808 and comprised a total of ⁵ ~~five~~ acres. From 1833 to 1875 it served as a general army depot. During the Mexican War it was a depot for troops recruited ^{w.} west of the Allegheny ^{mts.} Mountains. In 1894 Congress conditionally granted the area to the city of Newport for a public park.

Ft. Thomas is readily accessible from Cincinnati, Newport, Covington and Latonia. Adjacent to the fort is an especially beautiful residential section.

The original cost of constructing Ft. Thomas was approximately three and one-half million dollars. There has been added to this, however, a gymnasium in which nearly all the activities of the post are centered, and a stable which accommodates 76 animals.

"A large tower is located at the entrance to the post at the base of which are tablets erected by the citizens of Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport in honor of members of the Sixth Infantry who lost their lives in the Spanish American War."

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a mobilization center where troops were centralized for transportation to the war zone. Later, when soldiers were being returned on account of wounds and sickness, the proud old post found itself converted into a hospital where hundreds of men were nursed back to health."

At the outbreak of the World War, Ft. Thomas functioned as a recruit depot. Nearly ^{2 doz.} two dozen temporary buildings were constructed to accommodate additional wartime personnel and recruits. Some few of these buildings are still in use.

On Oct. 22, 1922, the headquarters and two battalions of the Tenth Infantry were stationed at Ft. Thomas.

Garrison life at Ft. Thomas consists of typical training classes and drills. Occasional demonstrations and class instructions are given at a target range approximately 14 mi. distant on the Licking River.

In seasonable weather, a constant stream of cars passes through the post. "There are indications on every hand of the friendship formed with the civilians near the post and the high regard in which all military organizations have been held."