



Fact Sheet The National Guard in World War II

1940-41 Mobilization

Beginning in September 1940, the first of 300,034 National Guard troops reported for active duty "for one year of training." This doubled the size of the U.S. Army, adding 18 infantry divisions, 80 separate regiments, and 29 Army Air Forces flying squadrons to the nation's active-duty forces. Along with the Guard's mobilization came the nation's first peacetime conscription, which put another million men in Army uniform.

In August 1941, Congress extended by one additional year the term of service for draftees and mobilized Guardsmen. Thus the entire National Guard was already on active duty when the United States entered World War II.



Guard Already Overseas as War Begins

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, California's 251st Coast Artillery had already been stationed in Hawaii for a year. Like the Guardsmen of Hawaii's 298th Infantry Regiment, they took part in the defense of Oahu.

When Japanese troops invaded the Philippine Islands three days later, U.S. troops there included the New Mexico National Guard's 200th Coast Artillery, and two tank battalions made up of National Guard units from various states. Half of these men died as prisoners of the Japanese.

Three other Guard field artillery units were in mid-ocean as the war broke out. The 147th (South Dakota), 148th (Idaho), and 2nd Battalion, 131st (Texas) were diverted from the Philippines to Australia, the first of thousands of U.S. troops to arrive "Down Under." The 131st was sent to Java, where it surrendered with the Dutch garrison to the Japanese.

First to Ship Out; First to Fight

North Dakota's 164th Infantry, sent to reinforce the Marines on Guadalcanal in October 1942, was the first U.S. Army regiment to fight offensively in World War II. They were soon joined by their sister infantry regiments in the newly-formed Americal Division, the 132nd (Illinois) and 182nd (Massachusetts).

On New Guinea, the 32nd and 41st Infantry Divisions became the first Army divisions to engage and defeat the Japanese, in late 1942 and early 1943.

The 34th Infantry Division was the first U.S. Army division to sail overseas. In North Africa, it became one of the first two U.S. infantry divisions to fight in the European theatre, and by the end of the war had spent more actual days in combat than any other U.S. Army division.

National Guard flying squadrons were also among the first to reach the combat zone. Three Observation Squadrons, the 111th (Texas), 122nd (La.), and 154th (Ark.), arrived in North Africa in the fall of 1942. In July 1944, Michigan's 107th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, which had flown pre-invasion missions over the Normandy beaches, became the first Army Air Forces unit to operate from the continent of Europe.



World War II Campaigns National Guard Infantry Divisions

European Theater

26th Infantry Division (Mass.)
N. France, Rhineland,
Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe

28th Infantry Division (Pa.)
Normandy, N. France, Rhineland,
Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe

29th Infantry Division
(Va., Md., D.C.)
Normandy*, N. France, Rhineland,
Central Europe

30th Infantry Division
(N.C., S.C., Tenn.)
Normandy, N. France, Rhineland,
Central Europe, Ardennes-Alsace

34th Infantry Division
(N.D., S.D., Minn., Iowa)
Tunisia*, Naples-Foggia, Anzio,
Rome-Arno, N. Apennines,
Po Valley

35th Infantry Division
(Kansas, Mo., Neb.)
Normandy, N. France, Rhineland,
Central Europe, Ardennes-Alsace

36th Infantry Division
(Texas)
Naples-Foggia*, Anzio Rome-Arno,
S. France*, Rhineland, Central Europe,
Ardennes-Alsace

44th Infantry Division
(N.J., N.Y.)
N. France, Rhineland, Central Europe,
Ardennes-Alsace

45th Infantry Division
(Ariz., Colo., N.M., Okla.)
Sicily*, Naples-Foggia, Anzio,
Rome-Arno, S. France*, Rhineland,
Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe

* assault landing

Pacific Theater

27th Infantry Division
(N.Y.)
Central Pacific, Western Pacific
Ryukyus

31st Infantry Division
(Fla., Ala., La., Miss.)
New Guinea*, S. Philippines,
Western Pacific

32nd Infantry Division
(Mich., Wisc.)
New Guinea, S. Philippines, Luzon

33rd Infantry Division
(Ill.)
New Guinea, Luzon

37th Infantry Division
(Ohio)
Northern Solomons, Luzon*

38th Infantry Division
(Ind., Ky, W.Va.)
New Guinea, S. Philippines, Luzon

40th Infantry Division
(Calif., Utah, Nev.)
Bismarck Archipelago,
S. Philippines, Luzon*

41st Infantry Division
(Wash., Ore., Idaho, Mont., Wyo.)
New Guinea, Luzon, S. Philippines

43d Infantry Division
(Conn., Maine, Vermont, R.I.)
Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons,
New Guinea, Luzon

Americal Division
(org. May 1942, primarily from
Ill., Mass., N.D. Guard units)
Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons,
Leyte, S. Philippines*



50th Anniversary of World War II Commemoration Committee
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