

PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO

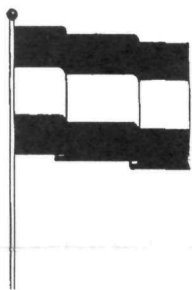
Under Three Flags

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF MILITARY HISTORY

The Presidio of San Francisco has served as an almost continuously active military garrison under three countries for the past 200 years. In 1776 it became the most remote military base of the Spanish Empire in North America. As an outpost of the Mexican Republic it decreased in

importance, but under American control it became the most important military post on the west coast.

Today, over 200 years of history, architecture and historical landscapes are preserved here for you to enjoy.



Spanish Years:
1776 to 1822

In 1769 a Spanish expeditionary force marched up the coast from Baja California, establishing presidios (military outposts), and missions. During this early colonizing expedition the great inland harbor of San Francisco Bay was discovered, and plans were made to fortify and settle the area. In June of 1776, a colonizing expedition of soldiers and their families marched north from

Monterey to San Francisco. These colonists, under command of Jose Joaquin Moraga, built an adobe quadrangle and living quarters, and dedicated the Presidio de San Francisco on September 17, 1776. In 1794 a thirteen-gun battery was constructed to defend the bay entrance. The presidial forces represented the northernmost expansion of Spanish rule in North America.

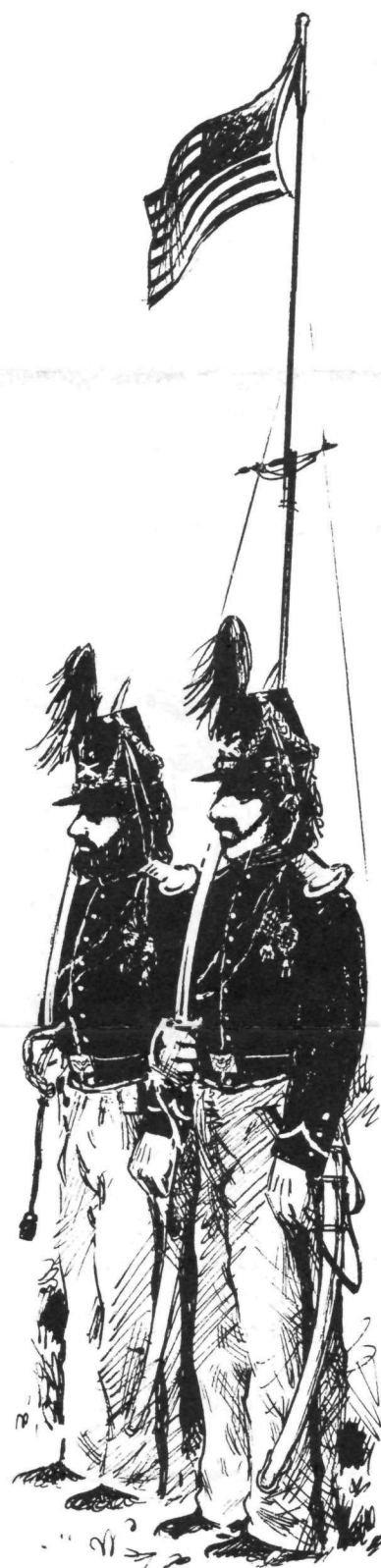


Mexican Years:
1822 to 1848

In 1821 the newly independent Republic of Mexico included California as part of her territory. For the next 13 years Mexican soldiers served at the Presidio. In 1835 the post was temporarily abandoned when General Mariano Vallejo trans-

ferred the military headquarters north to Sonoma. Over time, the Presidio's adobe walls slowly dissolved in the winter rains. American forces landed at San Francisco in 1847, during the United States' war with Mexico. The ruins of the Presidio were occupied

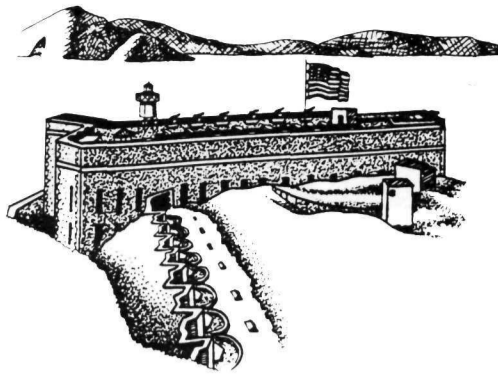
by the New York Volunteers of the U.S. Army, who repaired several of the old buildings. In 1848, California was transferred by treaty from Mexico to the United States and the Presidio flew a new flag as the nation stretched from coast to coast.



Second U.S. Artillery soldiers in dress uniform on the Presidio parade ground, around 1868.

American Years: 1848 to 1890

Upon the discovery of gold in California, the sudden growth and importance of San Francisco prompted the U.S. government to establish military reservations here. By executive order of President Fillmore, the United States reserved the Presidio in November, 1850, for military use. During the 1850s-60s Presidio soldiers fought Indians in California, Oregon, Washington and Nevada. To protect the Bay entrance the Army Corps of Engineers built Fort Point, a four-tiered brick and



granite fort designed to hold 126 large cannon. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 emphasized the importance of a rich California and the military significance of San Francisco harbor to the Union. This led, in 1862, to the first major program of construction and expansion at the Presidio since it was acquired by the United States.

The Indian Wars of the 1870s and 1880s resulted in additional growth of the Presidio. Soldiers stationed here saw action against the Modoc Indians in the Lava Beds of northern California and against the Apache Indians in the southwest. In the 1880s a large-scale tree planting and post beautification program was started.

By the 1890s the Presidio was no longer a frontier outpost but a major military installation and a base for American expansion into the Pacific.

American Years: 1890 to 1941



In 1890, with the creation of Sequoia, General Grant and Yosemite National Parks in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California, the protection of these scenic and natural resources was assigned to the U.S. Cavalry stationed at the Presidio. Soldiers patrolled these new parks during the summer months until the start of

World War I in 1914. In 1916 the National Park Service was created to manage the country's National Parks.

The United States' war with Spain, in 1898, increased the role of the Presidio. Thousands of troops camped in tent cities awaiting shipment to the Philippines. Returning sick and wounded soldiers were treated in the Army's first permanent general hospital, Presidio (now Letterman) Army General Hospital.

By 1905, twelve coastal defense batteries of reinforced concrete were built along the San Francisco Headlands. Presidio coast artillery units were stationed near the Bay entrance at Fort Scott, with cavalry and infantry garrisoned at the main post.

During and following the 1906 earthquake and fire, the U.S. Army at

the Presidio assisted the civilian government by providing food, clothing, shelter and protection.

In 1914 troops under the command of General John Pershing left the Presidio for the Mexican border to pursue Pancho Villa and his men. When World War I began General Pershing became the Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe.

The Presidio expanded in the 1920s when Crissy Army Airfield was established to assist in harbor defense. In 1924 the first "dawn to dusk" transcontinental flight finished here. From 1933 to 1937 the Golden Gate Bridge was built, which increased public use of the Presidio. The airfield moved north to Marin County, to become Hamilton Airfield.

American Years: 1941 to 1994

With the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States entered World War II, and Presidio soldiers dug foxholes along nearby beaches. Fourth Army Commander General John L. DeWitt conducted the internment of thousands of Japanese and Japanese-Americans on the west coast. The Presidio became headquarters for the Western Defense Command for the west coast and Alaska. The nearby Fort Mason Port of Embarkation shipped 1,750,000 men to fight in the Pacific. As it became the largest debarkation hospital in the country, Letterman Hospital peaked at 72,000 patients in one year.



In the 1950s the Presidio served as the headquarters for Nike missile defense located around the Golden Gate, and headquarters for the famed Sixth U.S. Army.

The Presidio of San Francisco was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962, with over 350 buildings having historic value.

American Years: 1994 to the Present

When Golden Gate National Recreation Area was created in 1972, the Presidio was included in its boundary. In 1989, as part of a military base reduction program, Congress decided to close the post. It was transferred to the National Park Service on October 1, 1994. The Presidio enters the 21st century as a new kind of park: one dedicated not only to preserving and protecting its resources, but also to finding solutions to environmental, cultural and social issues of global significance. From a proud past, the Presidio looks to an even brighter future.