

# Soldiers, Settlers and Stockyards

90th ASB reflects on its 97 years of service and contribution to the frontier post of Fort Worth

---



Story and photo collage by Rusty Baker. Article ran in NAS Fort Worth JRB Sky Ranger newspaper on June 6, 2014.

*Editor's Note: With the U.S. Army's 239 of service to the nation celebrated on June 14, one would be remised not to cite the 165 years of the continuous Army presence where the West begins in Fort Worth, Texas. Well before Carswell Air Force Base or the nation's first Joint Reserve Base hung their hats in Cowtown, a current Army Reserve tenant had called Fort Worth its home. Now, 90th Aviation Support Battalion is answering the nation's call to begin yet another overseas deployment.*

Fort Worth's entrenched soldierly roots are as embedded in its own namesake as those familiar surnames in and around the city's surroundings. Decades before cowboys, cattle drives and commerce, U.S. Soldiers such as Gen. Edward Tarrant, brevetted Maj. Jonathan Bird, Capt. Middleton Johnson and Maj. Ripley Arnold contributed to the establishment of an obscure military outpost looking over the bluff where the West and Clear forks of the Trinity River met.

On June 6, 1849, Arnold established and named the small fort after his former commanding officer during the Mexican-American War, Gen. William Jenkins Worth. Thanks in part to the Soldiers garrisoned along the far most northern post in the Army's frontier line of Texas, Fort Worth and its swelling ranks of settlers survived and soon thrived as its stockyards and industry propelled forward.

Nearly 70 years later the nation declared war against Germany. Fort Worth business leaders saw this as a potential opportunity of prosperity for the town and made haste to secure a military training camp located near its Arlington Heights area. Named after the Texas Revolution icon of the Alamo, Camp Bowie was a training ground to more than 100,000 officers and men in its two years of service, many of which were sent to France to fight alongside their allies. At the conclusion of the war to end all wars, many units returned to Camp Bowie to disband. Of note was the June 6, 1919, demobilization of the 315th Supply Train of the Army's 90th Division, which had earned the first of many Meritorious Unit Commendation streamers with its participation in Lorraine, St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne, France campaigns of World War I.

This particular supply train was reconstituted as the 90th Division Train, Quartermaster Corps, in the Army's Organized Reserves in June of 1921, and saw much reorganization and redesignation until it was ordered into active military service on March 25, 1942, at Camp Barkeley, near Abilene, Texas. Eventually outfitted as the 90th Quartermaster Company, the Texas unit saw action in Normandy, Northern France, the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe. Its decorations included Meritorious Unit Commendations embroidered with both streamers for England, France, Germany, the Invasion Arrowhead for Normandy, and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm Device for participation around the Moselle and Sarre River campaigns.

Flash forward yet another 70 years later, and now redesignated as a multifunctional support element of the 244th Aviation Brigade, the 90th Aviation Support Battalion is more than capable of full-spectrum support of the aviation war fighter. Reestablished in the Army Reserves in September of 2010, 90th ASB is the most seasoned unit within the brigade, carrying with it a distinctive lineage of honors dating back nearly 100 years.

The battalion is amply represented on NAS Fort Worth JRB by Baker Company; an aviation intermediate maintenance company whose primary mission is the repair and refurbishment of Army aircraft and components. Baker Co. is capable of repairing the UH60 Blackhawk, CH47 Chinook and AH64 Apache helicopters.

"Prior to becoming part of the 90th Aviation Support Battalion over four years ago, Baker Company was based at Fort Hood, TX designated as Mike Company, 158th Aviation Regiment. Today we are proud to call NAS Fort Worth our home and be part of a battalion with an impressive lineage," said Baker Company Commander, Maj. Nicholas Dille.

90th ASB recently received the warning order to deploy to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, as part of U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility to support the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade, an Army National Guard unit from Minnesota.

“We will be part of a multi-component brigade consisting of Army Reserves, National Guard and active component units,” said Lt. Col. Lee Hyder, 90th Aviation Support Battalion Commander. “Our mission is to provide combat service support to the combat aviation brigade.”

That support entails providing intermediate aviation maintenance support, ground maintenance support, fuel quality analysis and refueling support, limited distribution and movement support, and medical support.

“In short, we will provide the logistical support to the brigade we will be supporting as they conduct aviation missions in Kuwait and participate in regional multinational exercises throughout the CENTCOM AOR,” said Hyder.

The battalion has been preparing for this deployment for the past two years, as this their first full deployment since World War II. According to Hyder, as part of the battalion’s departure ceremony, two iconic vehicles will be set on display for all members of the NAS Fort Worth JRB to see. One is a 5-ton truck that represents the battalion’s past as a quartermaster unit and the other is a UH-1 helicopter which represents the unit’s current aviation designation.

“The 90th looks forward to answering the nation's Call to Duty,” said Hyder. “We are excited and motivated to add to the great history of the 90th ASB and the Army, and can't wait to get at it. Fear the bite [90th ASB’s motto].”