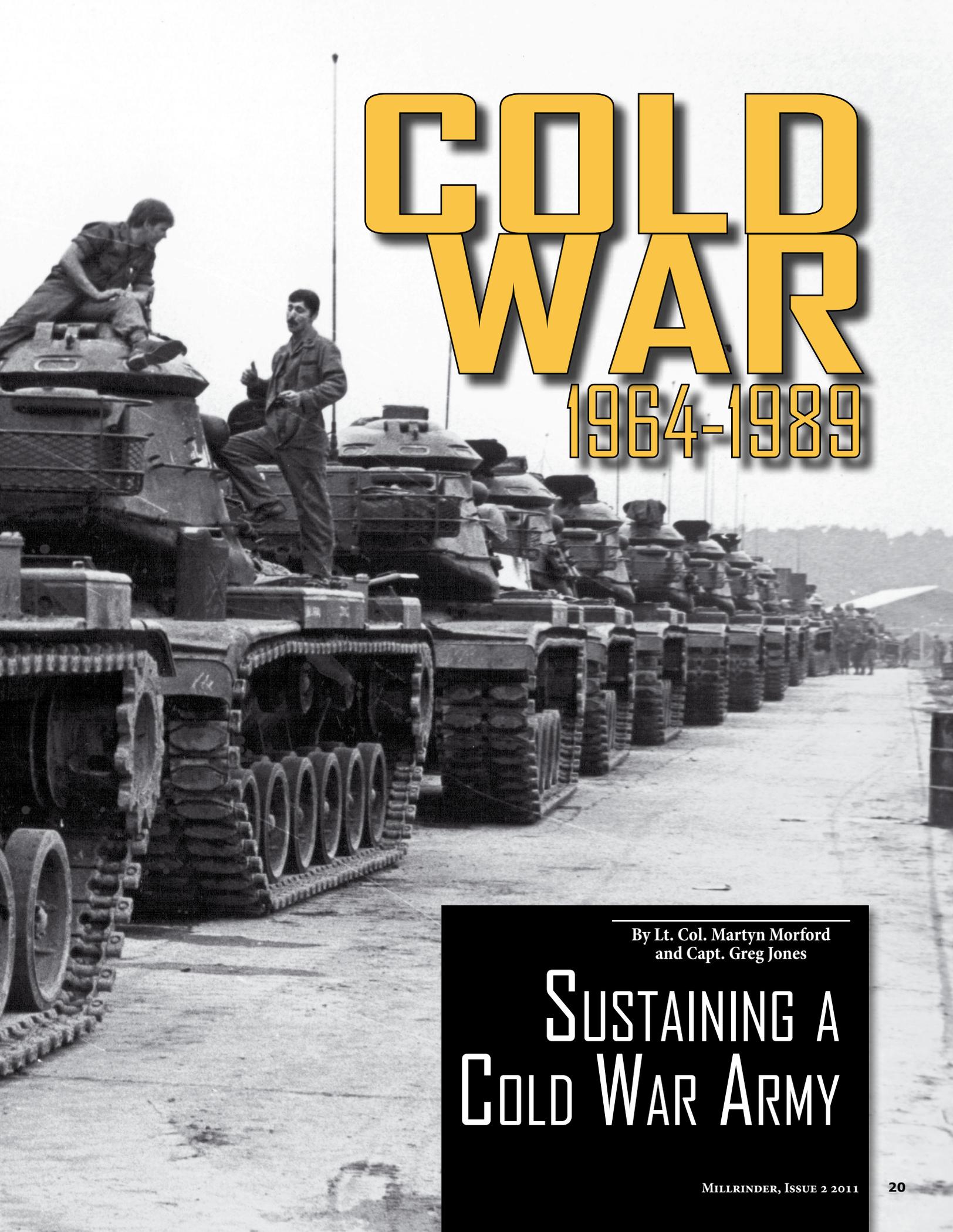




M60 tanks waiting for maintenance and turn-in after REFORGER 80 at the Prepositioning Of Material Configured in Unit Sets or POMCUS storage site of Germersheim Army Depot, West Germany, Sept 30, 1980. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Harold Hopewell)



COLD WAR

1964-1989

By Lt. Col. Martyn Morford
and Capt. Greg Jones

SUSTAINING A COLD WAR ARMY

A marker on the border between east and west Germany during the Cold War served as a reminder to those seeking to escape the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (East Germany) where they were.



What's in a Name? Theater Army Support Command, Europe

April 29, 1969 to Sept. 30, 1974

Mission

The mission of the TASCOM was primarily the same as that of the COMZEUR. It was to support ongoing operations in theater, and prepare to support major conflict within the theater in case of war with the Soviet east. By this

time, however, the unit had moved from France, and the mission of liaison with local government and military officials as the primary representative of the Commander in Chief, Europe, did not follow the unit to its new location in Germany. The official mission statement as of 1969 was: 'To operate and manage specified theater logistical systems affording support to US Army Forces, their personnel and dependents.'

Background

The TASCOM started as a subordinate unit to the COMZEUR, acti-

Events and decisions of 1972-1974 would have a profound impact on how the 21st Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) was created as a modern logistics command. While Watergate and the end of America's involvement in the Viet Nam War would dominate the nightly news, decisions to end the U.S. Military draft and to consolidate headquarters across Europe would shape the foundation of the 21st TSC as a headquarters which would support not only European forces, but also support combat operations in the Middle East.

The Theater Army Support Command, Europe (TASCOM) helped set the stage for transformation of the U.S. Army from a conscription-based force to the current all-volunteer force. Starting on Jan. 1, 1972, USAREUR began operating under the DA Reenlistment Controls Program which included controls and a ceiling for reenlistments. TASCOM reenlistments averaged approximately 125 during the first quarter.

With increased command emphasis and better understanding of the

program, fourth quarter reenlistments rose to over 200 per month with a doubling of first term Soldiers reenlisting. On May 1 1972, the TASCOM, Europe Noncommissioned Officer Academy (Provisional) opened its doors in Bremerhaven. The Academy operated on a four week cycle with courses in leadership, map reading, tactics, and general subjects. Eight classes were held annually with 120 NCOs in each class.

Criteria for attendance was: rank of sergeant through sergeant first class (waiver required for corporals); recommendation from attendee's commanding officer; high school diploma (or GED); GT score of 90 or higher; six months retention in command (or one year retention on active duty) upon graduation; and good physical conditioning. In January 1973, the Secretary of Defense announced the end of the draft; TASCOM was well positioned at this time with its reenlistment program and NCO Academy operational in support of the new all-volunteer force.

In early February 1974, the Commander-in-Chief of USAREUR

(CINCUSAREUR) approved the concept to consolidate headquarters and support districts. By March 22 the concept had become a detailed plan with TASCOM being merged into USAREUR headquarters and three support districts for logistics & engineering. V Corps, thru the 3d Corps Support Command (COSCOM), would provide support in Central Germany; VII Corps, through the 2d COSCOM, would provide support in southern Germany; and the 1st Support Brigade would provide support in northern Germany, England, and the Saarland-Kaiserslautern-Heidelberg area.

Engineer base support functions transfers were complete on July 1, 1974 and TASCOM officially went to zero manning as part of its merger with USAREUR on Dec. 31, 1974.

Emerging from the ashes of the TASCOM was the official ancestor of the modern day 21st Theater Sustainment Command. In January of 1975, the 1st Support Brigade began operating all missions remaining from TASCOM. The theater logistics scene into which the

vated to oversee depot operations for the numerous ammunition and supply depots throughout the unit's area of responsibility. The TASCOM then began to oversee more varied logistical func-

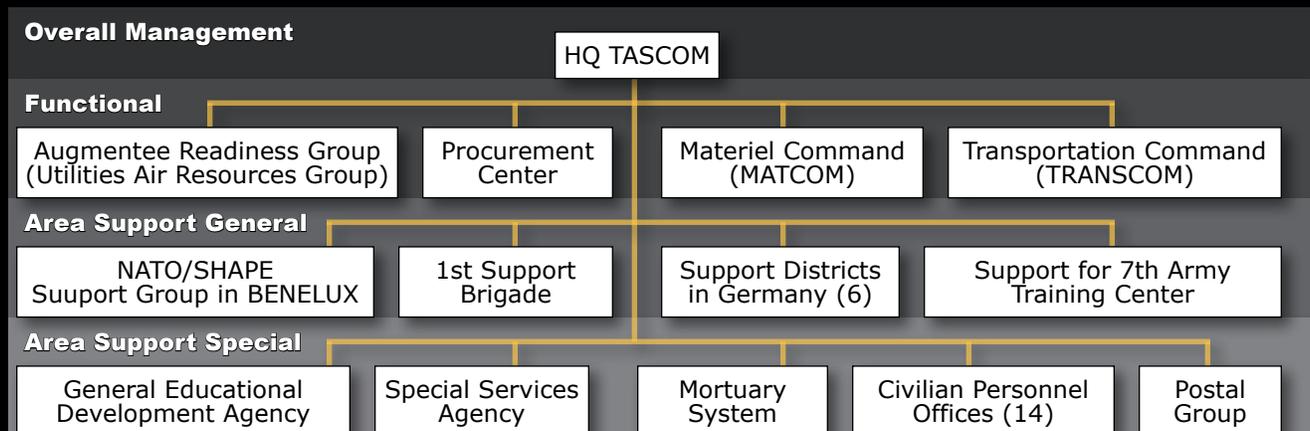
tions, and finally in 1969 the TASCOM essentially 'became' the COMZEUR by taking over the remaining logistical functions, while several of the command and control functions of COMZEUR

were moved up to USAREUR staff.

How it was different

The major difference in the TASCOM was that it was entirely functionally organized. The 'area' support functions had been

consolidated under an area support command to provide base sustainment, and all of the direct support and other logistical activities had been organized along functional lines.





Vehicles that will be issued to the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Inf. Div., are inspected by members of the unit and members of the 5th Maintenance Bn. (Combat Equipments Group), prior to moving out to their assembly area, Oct. 1, 1971. The prepositioned equipment was inspected at the Pirmasens Army Depot. The 1st Inf. Div. was flown from Ft. Riley, Kansas, to Germany to participate in NATO Exercise REFORGER III. (Photo by Spec. 5 Robert Tousignant, 69th Signal Co.)

1969 Apollo Moon Landing

On July 16, 1969, three astronauts, Michael Collins, Neil Armstrong and Edwin ‘Buzz’ Aldrin Jr., launched the Apollo 11 mission which would four days later, be the first mission to land humans on the moon. Armstrong and Aldrin landed on the moon surface on July 20, while Collins remained

in the command ship orbiting the moon. The two gathered 47 pounds of samples from the moon’s surface and planted the U.S. flag on the moon in what is now one of the most iconic images of the times.

Like many other scientific and military efforts of the time, this mission

was also a product of the Cold War, as President Kennedy vowed in 1961 to land Americans on the moon before the Soviets could land their astronauts there.

Meanwhile, from within the ranks of the TASCOM, the 1st Support Brigade, the source of the official lineage of the modern-day 21st TSC, was taking on more and more of the support missions that the TASCOM conducted for US Army Europe.

What’s in a Name? 21st Support Command

August 19, 1976 to October 17, 1988

Mission: The mission of the 21st SUPCOM much more closely resembled that of the TASCOM than the mission of the 1st Support Brigade did. However, at this time, the major Corps operating in theater had significant support commands within their own structure, and the 21st SUPCOM’s role was more of a theater wide facilitator than a di-



1st Support Brigade stepped was one in which the Corps had robust support commands internal to them, and the role of the 1st Support Brigade was to coordinate for theater-wide logistics, and in general pick up where the corps support commands left off.

Prior to the July 1974 transfer of base operations support, the 1st Support Brigade's missions were essentially Direct Support/General Support maintenance, corps backup, and Prepositioning of Materiel Configured to Unit Sets (POMCUS). With the increased logistics and area support missions taken from TASCAM, it quickly became apparent that the designation as a brigade was neither organizationally nor doctrinally appropriate to the roles performed.

As a result, by mid-July 1976, USAREUR recommended the change in title from brigade to command and increasing the commanding general billet to a two star position. Effective Aug. 19, 1976, DA approved the re-designation to the 21st Support Command (TAACOM). The TAACOM, Theater

Army Area Command, was included for force structural purposes only and was not a part of the official title of the command. Retention of 1st Support Brigade colors, unit crest, insignia, and lineage was included in the re-designation.

Along with the re-designation came expectations to fill a command and control mission plus the role as USAREUR's Executive Agent for theater logistics. The 21st Support Command (SUPCOM) became a test bed in many respects for assessing how the all-volunteer U.S. Army would sustain an expeditionary force with echelons above corps support.

Amid the constant restructuring of the organization in the late sixties and early seventies, emerged an annual exercise that would soon come to be the primary focus of USAREUR and its subordinate commands for more than twenty years.

The Returning Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercises were annual NATO exercises in which a division or more of combat troops deployed rapidly to West Germany

to conduct maneuver training. The intent of the exercise was three-fold: first, to demonstrate the capacity of NATO to deploy major combat forces to Western Europe rapidly, second to maintain the readiness and training of NATO troops involved in the exercise, and third to continually re-validate contingency plans developed to respond to an attack by the Warsaw Pact.

These exercises were conducted on a massive scale, and meeting the logistical demands of such an undertaking was one of the greatest challenges facing the 21st Support Command throughout the rest of the Cold War. These exercises peaked with the 1988 REFORGER which included about 125,000 NATO troops, the largest single military maneuver in Europe since World War II.

Along with the REFORGER exercises, which maintained the ability to deploy forces into theater, the 21st SUPCOM was heavily involved in the POMCUS program which kept prepositioned equipment and stockpiles in the case of

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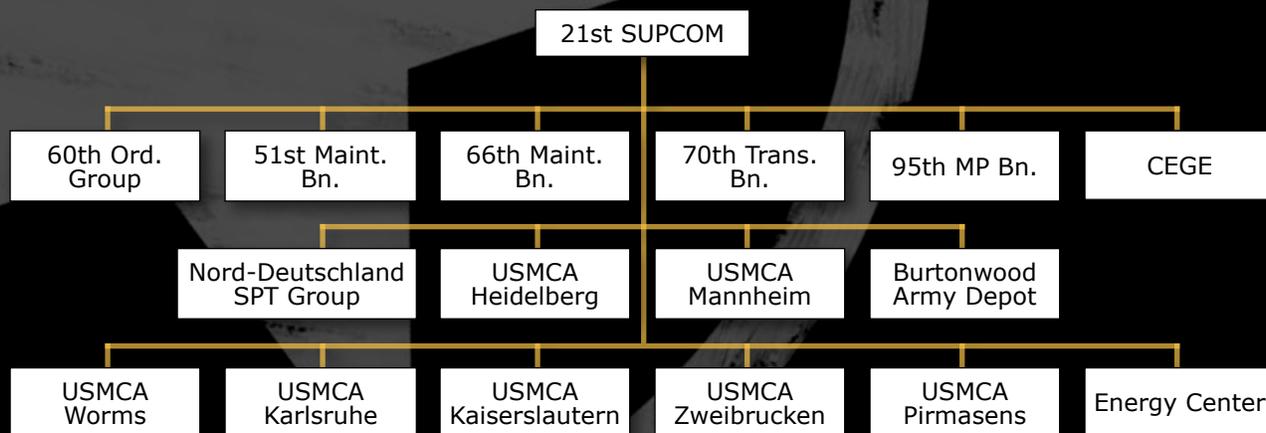
direct support provider to combat units.

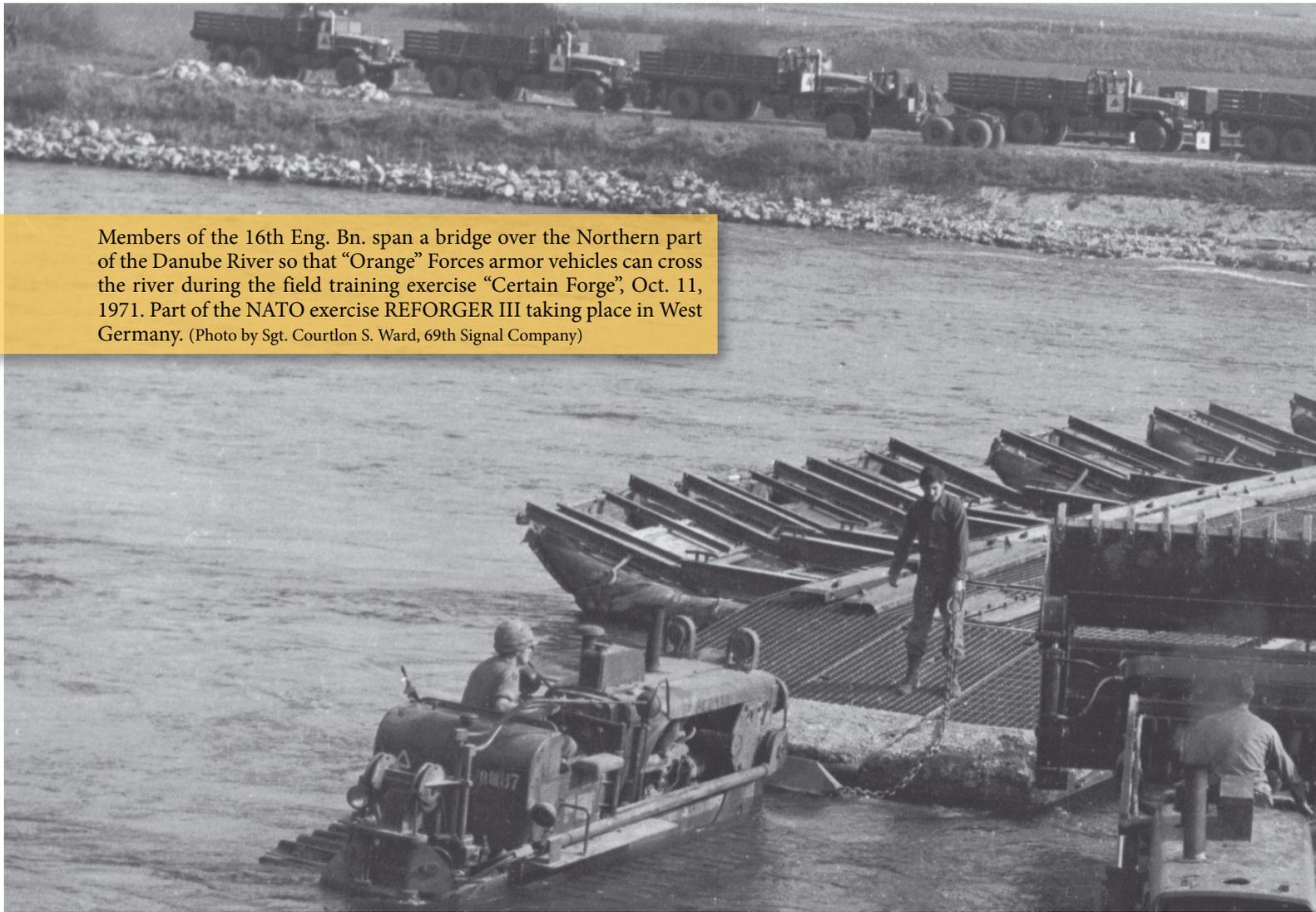
Background: As the 1st Support Brigade's mission set and capabilities continued to increase, USAREUR eventually upgraded the unit to a two-star command and

re-designated it as the 21st SUPCOM. This re-designation returned the unit to the status of a major subordinate command to USAREUR, and more accurately reflected the level of responsibility held by the organization.

How it was different: In addition to having logistics capabilities more closely resembling previous organizations like the COMZEUR and the TASCAM, the 21st SUPCOM re-assumed from the USAREUR staff many of the

functions that had moved there in the restructuring just a few years earlier. The basic mission of providing support to theater forces, in conjunction with the Corps Support Commands, did not change.





Members of the 16th Eng. Bn. span a bridge over the Northern part of the Danube River so that "Orange" Forces armor vehicles can cross the river during the field training exercise "Certain Forge", Oct. 11, 1971. Part of the NATO exercise REFORGER III taking place in West Germany. (Photo by Sgt. Courtlon S. Ward, 69th Signal Company)

1981 Reagan Assassination Attempt

Just 69 days into his presidency, Ronald Reagan was the subject of an assassination attempt by

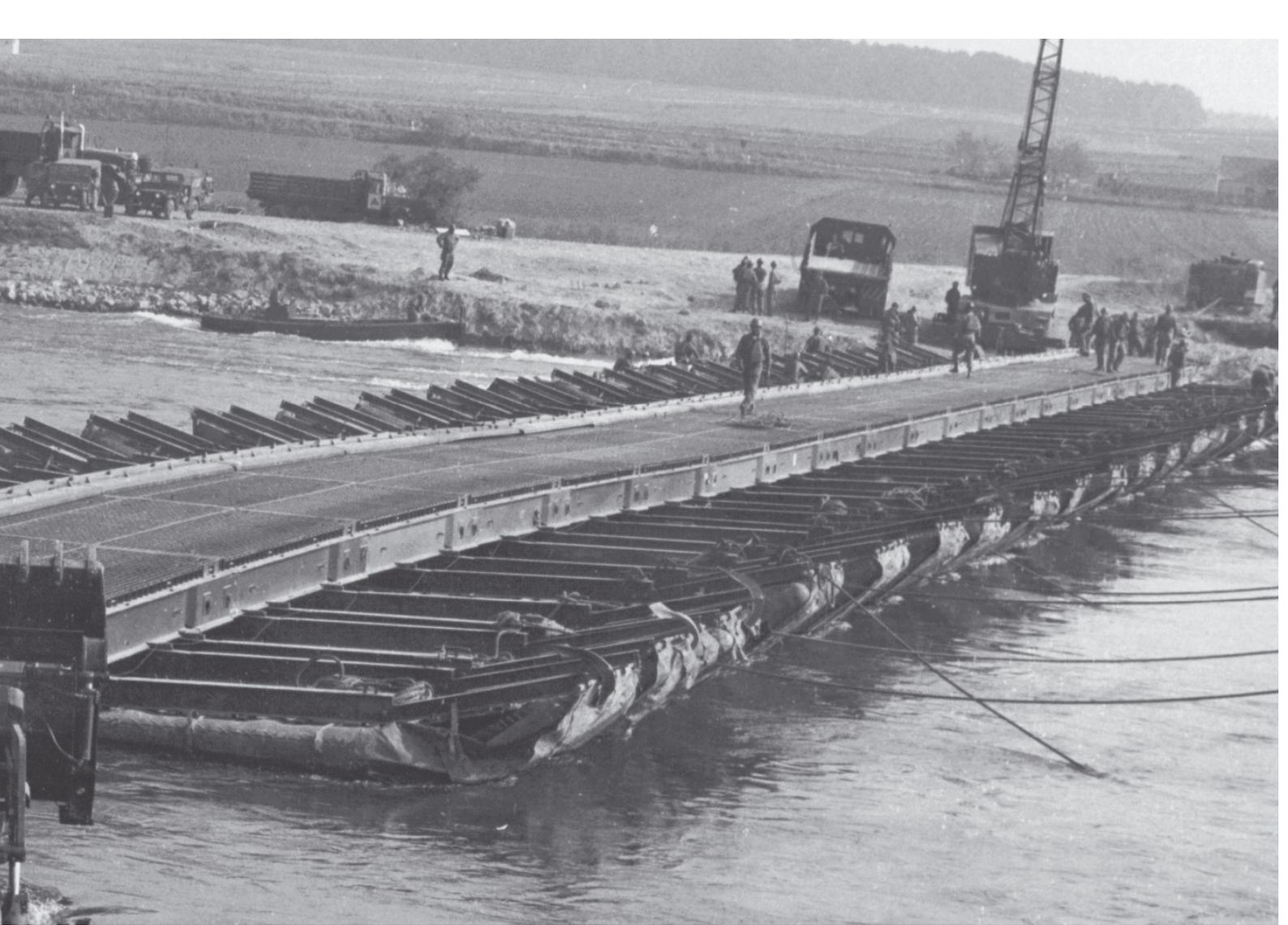
John Hinckley Jr. This attack injured the president and three others, including then Whitehouse

Press Secretary James Brady who was badly disabled by the injury. Ultimately this would spark

the Brady gun control reform act. The assassination attempt itself came during tense times and could have potentially sparked even more than a reform act, according to Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Theodore Spellacy who served as the 21st SUPCOM command sergeant major at the time.

"Well there was talk that it might be the Russians trying to stir things up and start World War III," said Spellacy. "Of course they figured out it wasn't and it calmed things down, but it was pretty tense over here for a bit there."





A Living History Theodore Spellacy

Theodore Spellacy currently serves as the 21st TSC Deputy G-1. His military career began in 1948 and included service in Germany both as a young soldier and later as the 21st TSC Command Sergeant Major. After retiring from active duty in 1984, he remained with the 21st TSC as a civilian employee. His service with the 21st TSC has spanned several decades and included such significant events as the end of the Cold War and the resulting transforma-

tion of the 21st, and the major support provided by the 21st TSC to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. His comments appear in the Article covering the Cold War period.

“When I first got here as the Sergeant Major I was amazed when I looked at our organizational chart. I thought, ‘Where the heck are we in all of this?’ When you see where all of our units are, and what all of the soldiers are doing, you realize what a big job we do.”



cont. from P. 24

war with the Warsaw Pact.

The other staple of the Cold War U.S. Army in Europe was the POMCUS program, maintained primarily by the 21st SUPCOM. Under this program, the 21st SUPCOM maintained stockpiles of vehicles and equipment configured for various types of combat units. Complete unit sets stood constantly ready for troops to fall in and deploy. The concept was that these sets of equipment would remain forward in Germany and troops would fall-in on the equipment and use it in case of full scale war with the Warsaw Pact.

This program enabled the US Army in EUROPE to provide a very quick response in case of war, since troops could very quickly be brought in from the United States. Maintaining these stockpiles and ensuring their readiness was the responsibility of the 21st SUPCOM, and coupled with the REFORGER exercises, comprised the key elements of the U.S. Army's plan to defend western Europe from the Warsaw Pact.

Balancing the POMCUS program

and REFORGER support, the command also found itself continually meeting greater demands to support regular daily operations of USAREUR and its NATO partners.

The day to day challenge of meeting those logistics demands fell on the shoulders of an increasingly specialized and competent force of soldiers and civilian employees (both US and local national). Being able to meet that demand was a point of pride for these support soldiers who were also expected to be competent in their basic soldier tasks.

The soldiers of the command often changed minds about what it really meant to be a support soldier, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Retired Theodore Spellacy, who served as one of the command's first Sergeants Major from 1978 to 1984.

"You know in combat arms you think the support guys are hiding out in the warehouse or sitting up on a hill somewhere relaxing," said Spellacy who was an Infantry soldier prior to changing career fields

into the logistics field. "When you first get here, you don't really know all of what these guys do here. And as you work with them you get more and more proud of them when you see all that they do.

"It's like I used to tell the division and corps sergeants major when we'd meet, 'You know, our guys can fire a weapon just like yours, but they can do something more meaningful too.' That was always good for a response of something along the lines of 'go to heck.'"

As the Cold War continued to grow and the Vietnam conflict began to make its way from the headlines into the history books, the focus of the US military efforts turned more toward the European theater and the command actually found itself receiving additional funding and authorizations to meet its ever increasing mission requirements.

From 1979 to 1981, particular challenges were overcome in meeting the increased support of NATO missions directed by the administration of President Jimmy Carter. 21st SUPCOM executed

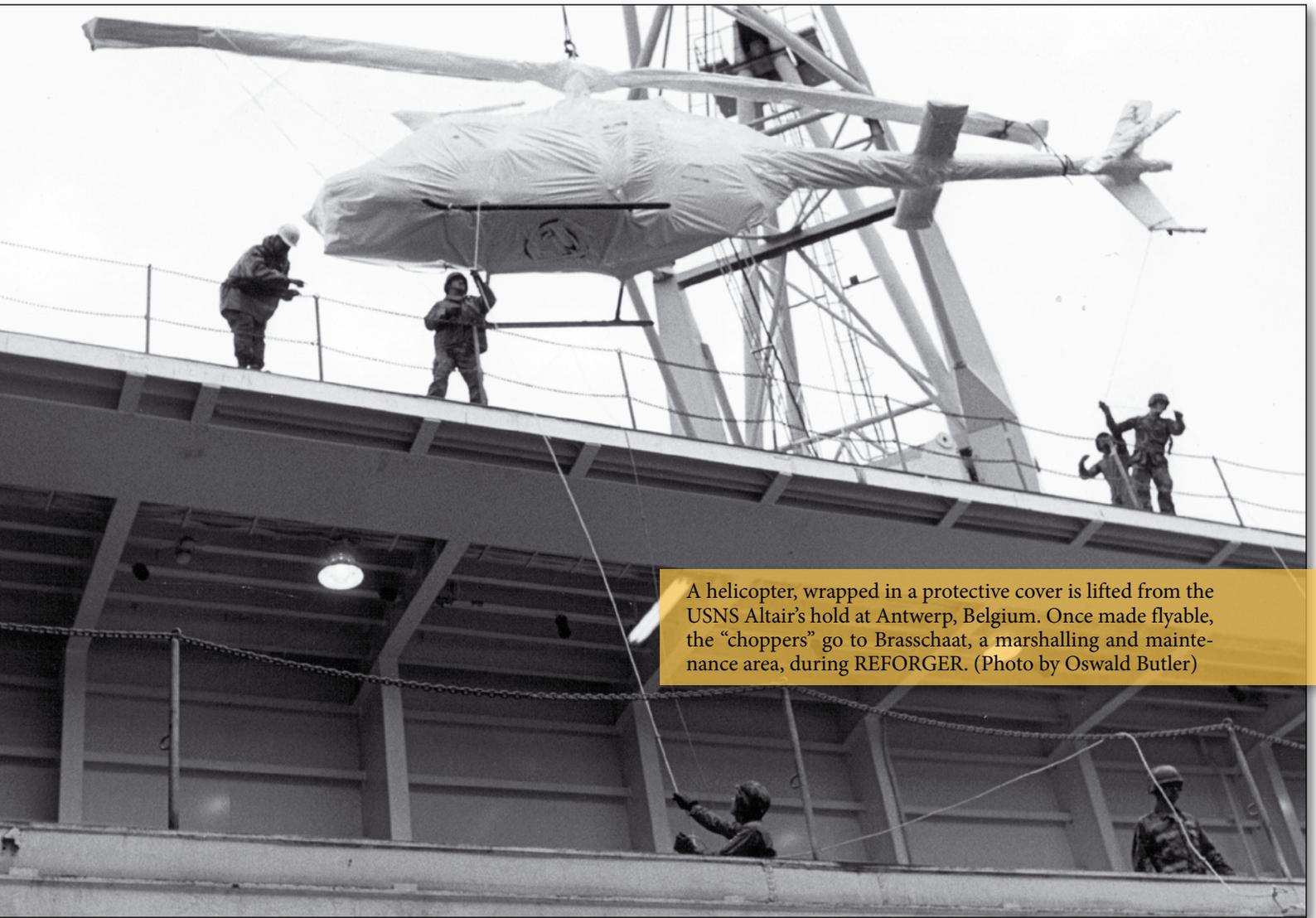


1986 challenger Explodes



In 1986 the shuttle challenger exploded right before the eyes of millions of viewers with seven astronauts on board including Christa McAuliffe, the first ever school teacher to serve as an astronaut on a shuttle mission. While not broadcast very widely on commercial television, McAuliffe's presence on board as a teacher prompted NASA to broadcast the launch to public schools across the nation on 'NASA TV' where roughly half of the nation's 9-13 year olds watched the launch live (according to a New York Times poll).

The 21st SUPCOM was nearing the end of the Cold War and at this time was primarily involved in supporting theater operations and the yearly REFORGER exercises.



A helicopter, wrapped in a protective cover is lifted from the USNS Altair's hold at Antwerp, Belgium. Once made flyable, the "choppers" go to Brasschaat, a marshalling and maintenance area, during REFORGER. (Photo by Oswald Butler)

A Living History Denise Venezuela

Denise Venezuela, of Lathrop, Calif., served as an Explosives Ordnance Disposal technician in the 21st Support Command's 168th EOD Detachment 1985 to 1987. She fondly remembers the comradery shared among the soldiers of the 21st SUPCOM.

"We had great family oriented parties and celebrations for the holidays. We did Thanksgiving with all the unit members and their families pot luck style. Those were great memories of my time in the Army at the 168th EOD. I miss the sense of community."

Military robots have been around in test form at least since the 'teletanks' of World War II. One of the early practical uses for robots was for Explosives Ordnance Disposal techni-

cians like then Sgt. Denise Venezuela (at the controls in the photo), assigned to the 168th Explosives Ordnance Disposal Detachment of the 21st Support Command in 1986, seen

demonstrating an EOD robot. The EOD robots help reduce the risk EOD soldiers faced by keeping them farther away from the actual explosives to be disarmed.

"It was pretty easy to use with a little practice," said Venezuela explaining that often bomb threats were only threats, but had to be treated like the real thing each and every time. "We had so many bomb threats to respond to. While most of them turned out to be nothing after we rendered them safe, there was one real one." (Photo by Cpt. Stone A. Lee)



expansion into the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) and increased responsibilities in the BENELUX. To meet the expanded missions, the command explored many avenues including expanded contracting, Host Nation Support (HNS), and studies to accomplish a more efficient force structure.

Logistical efforts focused on refining the POMCUS thru active participation in Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER), Theater Reserve Stocks, and the Theater Area Repair Program. The units mission and responsibility grew with corresponding increases in budget and, by June 1981, the command's commanding general slot was boosted back up to Lieutenant General with a correspondence increase throughout the staff.

By 1983, the 21st Support Command was the largest forward deployed logistics command in the U.S. Army. Missions included support of units passing through its area of operation and backup support to V and VII Corps with an annual budget approaching \$1 billion.

Through much of the eighties, the command settled into a somewhat regular pattern of supporting annual REFORGER exercises, maintaining stockpiles and depots under the POMCUS program and continuing to support USAREUR and NATO operations.

This regular rhythm would abruptly end in 1989 when, just 14 months after the largest REFORGER maneuvers ever held, the Berlin Wall suddenly came down on Nov. 9. This monumental event would change the very face of the continent of Europe, and would immediately overhaul the entire mission set of the command.

The REFORGER exercises would change drastically immediately after the fall of the wall and would be eliminated completely by 1993.

The POMCUS program, the other primary logistics undertaking of USAREUR would soon be used to support the first Gulf War.

In the short but monumentally important years of 1989-1991 the command would quickly shift from supporting the Cold War to sustaining modern warfare.



1989 Fall of the Wall

On November 9, 1989 the East German government allowed refugees to cross from East Berlin into West Berlin, ending its decades long tight control of border cross-

ings. Instantly thousands began physically chipping away and destroying the Berlin Wall, long the symbol of the divide between soviet east and the west. East German authorities

did nothing to stop the destruction of the wall, and in fact opened many more border crossings in the days to follow. In the following months and years the Soviet Union as it had been known for the previous half century would crumble.

The fall of the Berlin Wall signified a monumental change for the Army in Europe, and especially so for the 21st TAACOM. The massive support network and 'line of communications' started in the early fifties to prepare for full scale war with the Soviet Union was

no longer necessary, and would very quickly be reduced and transformed. At the same time, the instability created in those former soviet republics by the end of soviet domination would be the catalyst for years of conflicts that would occupy a great portion of the command's support missions as supporting these 'peace keeping' missions became the focus of the U.S. Army in Europe.





After drawing their POMCUS equipment, the 54th Area Support Group convoys to the marshalling area. There they have a limited amount of time to become combat-ready. (Photo by Spec. 5 Mary A. Spatafore, 7th SUPCOM PAO)

What's in a Name? 21st Theater Army Area Command

October 18, 1988 to October 17, 2000

Mission

Initially the command had essentially the same

mission set that had been there for decades: Support theater operations and prepare for war with the Soviet east. Near the end of the 21st TAACOM period, however the mission changed, and the Soviet east was no longer a threat, but support to major operations in neighboring theaters became a significant part of the unit's mission.

Background

The term Theater Army Area Command reflects the unit structure on which the 21st Support Command was already based. In fact, in manning documents, orders and other official documents, the unit name of 21st Support Command was often followed by 'TAACOM' in parenthesis.

How it was different

The name change from 21st Support Command to 21st TAACOM was primarily a name-only change that reflected what was already the unit's official designation. It was upgraded from a two-star to a three-star command, but this was more a reflection of capacity than a significant mission change.

