



During the Depression, the Works Project Administration rebuilt buildings and sidewalks on the island.

observed Armed Forces Day.

Under General Drum's brilliant administrative prowess the First Army rapidly grew from its original status as a "paper" organization to a well-trained field force, and during the fall of 1941 it participated in North and South Carolina in the largest field maneuvers ever held in this country. The troops were all peacefully back in their home stations on Dec. 4; three days later Pearl Harbor was attacked and the troops returned to a combat footing. Overnight the serenity of the Governors Island scene disappeared. Officers and men, singly and en masse were there one day and gone the next, with others just as suddenly taking their places.

Warehouses, barracks and extra hospital wards went up almost overnight. A great prison stockade stretched its walls of barbed wire along the western shore line, and New York's scattered induction stations were concentrated on the island in a single unit that had its own medical, mess, and processing facilities for the reception of draftees.

But even these increased accommodations were not sufficient to take care of the continuously expanding scope of the island's war service. Extra space was requisitioned for various corps area bureaus and departments throughout New York City—in the Army Building at 39 Whitehall Street, the federal Office Building at 90 Church Street, and sundry office buildings heretofore devoted entirely to civilian usage. For a time there was even talk of moving the island headquarters to the Empire State Building, but this was judged to be unnecessary.

The ferry service, already augmented by the acquisition of the good ship Major General William H. Hart in 1940, was further improved when the Lt. Colonel Robert E. Shannon was added to the run in 1941, thus permitting trips on 15-minute schedules, day and night. So great was the traffic that a relief boat was soon necessary and the Navy helpfully provided the FB-84 a year later. All three of these boats were obtained from the City of New York and were maintained by the Quartermaster Corps until the new Transportation Corps was activated Aug. 1, 1942, and assumed administration of the island's navy.

General Drum by that time had been relieved as Corps Area Commander by Major General Irving J. Phillipson who, when the Corps Area was changed in 1942 to the Second Service Command, was succeeded by Major General Thomas A. Terry. This incidentally marked the first time the island troops could wear a shoulder patch of their own, their pleasure in this distinction being somewhat soured by their less fortunate comrades who dubbed the new design of two superimposed white rectangles on a blue field, as "interlocking blockheads."

The First Army left for overseas service on Oct. 12, 1943, just five days after the inexorable law of retirement had taken General Drum from its command. Interim administrations of the island during 1945 and 1946 were exercised by Major Generals Thomas B. Larkin and James A. Van Fleet, and then the First Army Headquarters returned in glory to its old home under the leadership of its World War II boss, General Courtney H. Hodges. In so doing, the First kept alive the symbolic tradition of its numerical identification: it had been the first on the beaches of Normandy, first to enter Paris, first to break the Siegfried Line, first to cross the Rhine, first to contact the Russians, and now it was to give to Governors Island the first four-star general ever to be stationed there.

The "Big A" sleeve insignia and the First Army shoulder cord of black, white, and red became noteworthy additions to the metropolitan picture, while the Army band and honor guard added to the impressiveness of their official activities by once again appearing in full dress blue uniforms.

In 1949 also there was completed a postwar building program to provide additional quarters for the increased personnel now permanently assigned to headquarters. Generally these consisted of apartments converted from the temporary barracks the war had brought to the open ground south of Building 400; the inhabitants were wont to refer to this new housing area as Splinter Village but it was far preferable to the alternative of living sometimes