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English 310

Camp Livingston

Camp Livingston is a former military base that spans an estimate 47,000 acres located in Grant Parish, Louisiana. The camp opened in 1940 and five years later closed in 1945. During the short time span of Camp Livingston’s active existence the military base served as a prisoner of war camp, an infantry replacement training center, and a station for various infantry divisions (28th, 32nd, 38th, and 86th ) during World War II. Since the camp’s closure it has become a part of the Kisatchie National Forest.

An interesting tidbit regarding the camp concerns the name. The camp's orginal name was Camp Tioga. However the name was changed, as a means to honor Chancellor Robert R. Livingston. Chancellor Livingston is the man who negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, thus exchanging ownership of the property from the French to the United States of America.

In regards to being an infantry replacement training center the base played an important role in Louisiana Maneuvers, mock battles which helped strategists and soldiers prepare and plan for the rigors of World War II. These war games expanded over 2,400 miles and started out as divisions against divisions, corporations and against corporations, and finally armies against armies. One of the more famous maneuvers involved General George Patton and consisted of 400,000 men divided into two fictional countries Kotmk and Almat. Such games were applied as training techniques at the camp up until 1944, due to the need for soldiers for the D-day Invasion over sea. The maneuvers at Camp Livingston are remembered as the greatest and largest maneuvers to be executed in American History.

The camp became a Prisoner of War Internment for Japanese, Germans, and Italians prisoners in 1942. The first prisoners of war to arrive were captives obtained from the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941. They consisted of three Japanese men who saw to the maintenance and running of a miniature submarine, and provided help from the ocean depths on the airborne invasion of Pearl Harbor. The prisoners of the camp were referred to as, "internees," and their duties consisted of supplying labor to the local farming and logging industries. It has been rumored Camp Livingston is haunted by the prisoners of war not due to unjust treatment but because of an incident in 1947 where the tomb stones of the POW graveyard in Camp Livingston were relocated to Fort Sam Houston leaving the corpses behind and unmarked.

Infantry Divisions with historical value in American history called Camp Livingston home. First, the 28th Infantry Division is the oldest infantry division in America and their history can be traced back to 1747. Then, the 32nd Infantry Division which fought more than any other division in World War II. Their battles preceded four major campaigns which encompassed six major battles over a period of 654 days. Finally, the 38th Infantry Division gained the title as, “Avengers of Bataan” in 1945 for their victory against the Japanese, who years before hand lead many American Prisoners of War to their death.

Camp Livingston is a valuable part of not only American History but Louisiana History. It was home to many brave soldiers and famous incidences during World War II. The camp also provided a way for Central Louisiana to boost its agriculture production by means of using internees for labor. Although short lived, Camp Livingston’s mark on the map still remains because of its value to America in time of war and in civilian matters.

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