

FACT SHEET
FORT DEVENS, MASSACHUSETTS

Established as Camp Devens in 1917, Fort Devens was named for Major General Charles Devens, who in addition to his career as a soldier served his country as Attorney General of the United States and as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts.

During World War I, the 12th and 76th Infantry Divisions were activated and trained at Fort Devens. At the end of the war, the camp was maintained on a caretaker status until 1931 when the War Department officially established Fort Devens. Brick buildings were constructed to make it a more permanent installation.

With the outbreak of World War II, the land area of the Fort was increased from 1,000 acres to 10,000 acres, and more than 1200 buildings were constructed. Units that trained at Fort Devens included the 1st Infantry Division, the 32d Infantry Division and the 45th Infantry Division.

At the close of the war more than 500,000 men were processed through the Separation Center of the Fort. In the spring of 1946, the University of Massachusetts leased the permanent buildings of the deactivated post for the use of the University's extension program. The Fort was reactivated July 15, 1948.

Fort Devens has also served as a Reception Center for inductees from the Northeastern states three times in the past 50 years. In 1950 after the outbreak of the Korean conflict, the Reception Center processed 85,000 recruits in the first eight months of the operation.

Today Fort Devens is the home station of the U.S. Army Security Agency Training Center and School, the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), the 18th Engineer Battalion, the 46th Direct Support Group, and the 108th Military Intelligence Group. The average day-time population of Fort Devens is 17,000. There is a live-in population of approximately 15,400 to 17,000. Fort Devens provides week-end training on its ranges and bivouac areas for National Guard Units, Army Reserves, Air Force personnel, Navy and Marine Corp Units. On week-ends throughout the year as many as 480 ROTC cadets at a time come to Fort Devens for further training, while during the summer months over 15,500 members of Reserve Component Units receive training at Fort Devens. Naturally the population of Fort Devens varies each month.

Approximately 5,700 acres of the post is occupied by firing ranges, maneuver areas, and other training facilities. In the remaining area are 662 permanent concrete block or brick buildings and 753 temporary (World War II type) buildings, served by 88 miles of paved highway and 18 miles of gravel roads.

Fort Devens has its own hospital, two fire stations and five chapels. There is one school open on post, and two lending libraries. Recreationally, the post maintains two gymnasiums, a sports arena, a craft center, and a three-car auto craft center. A 24 lane bowling alley was constructed last year and the golf course was expanded to 18 holes. Fort Devens also maintains numerous athletic fields. All types of aircraft can land and take-off at the Army airfield here at Devens, which also includes a modern heli-port.

Fort Devens is of considerable significance to the surrounding area's economy. Total military pay approximates 65 million dollars per year, while civilian pay is more than 30 million 400 thousand dollars per annum. When accounts in the area are added to these figures, Fort Devens represents a total cash outlay of over 95 million annually.

Much of the monthly payroll is spent in the area towns and in greater Boston. The Army contracts for materials and services from local firms whenever possible.

Nearly half of the 3620 families at Fort Devens live in the 1725 family units on post; approximately 1895 families live in nearby communities, especially Ayer, Fitchburg, Harvard, Lowell, Leominster, Littleton, and Shirley.

Already the largest military installation in New England, Fort Devens makes another significant contribution to the Nation: in the past year 571 new citizens were born at the U.S. Army Hospital at Fort Devens: 391 boys and 180 girls.