

CALIFORNIA MILITARY DEPARTMENT HISTORICAL PROGRAM  
North Highlands Annex, Joint Forces Headquarters  
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# Los Angeles County Fairgrounds (Fairplex) During World War II

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Pomona Relocation Center

(on West Parking Lot - Pomona Fairgrounds)

The Wartime Civil Control Administration of the Fourth Army operated "a collection center for enemy aliens and Japanese-American" in the West Parking Lot (80 acres) of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds at Pomona.

Los Angeles County Fair Association signed lease with the War Department on December 14, 1941 for entire fairgrounds (400 acres) for the duration. On March 30, 1942 materials arrived and construction began in parking lot.

April 4, 1942 - Fourth Army announced the project.

May 9, 1942 - First contingent of 72 internees from San Gabriel Valley area arrived.

Total buildings: 325 - six-man residences  
8 - thousand-man/meal messhalls  
20 - warehouses  
? - Rec halls/administration buildings

Built to be only a reception center.

On August 9, 1942 first detachment of evacuees sent to Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

~~August 27,~~

August 27, 1942 - last evacuees depart.

August 31, 1942 - center turned over to the Pomona Ordnance Motor Base (who occupied the remainder of the fairgrounds).

Buildings were then used as barracks for troops assigned to the Motor Base. For a period of time German and Italian POW's were quartered there while working in the Citrus groves.

The Ordnance Motor Base was deactivated on February 15, 1943 and the facility became part of the Desert Training Center until final deactivation on November 30, 1945 and was returned to control of the Fair Association in June 1947. Parking lot buildings were declared surplus and sold off.

First post-war fair was 1948.

78/1010-03  
mentioned 78/1012-01

## Pomona Quartermaster Motor Base

(on Pomona Fairgrounds)

Activated April 20, 1942 at Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, Pomona. Occupied total fairgrounds less eighty (80) acres in West Parking Lot which was Pomona Relocation Center from April 4, 1942.

One of five Quartermaster Motor Bases activated (Ft. Devens, MA; Ft. Lewis, WA; Holabird, PA; Normoyle, TX), first commander was COL Walter T. Wilsey. First XO was COL George D. Barnes.

Base was planned to include a vehicle replacement pool, repair shops, a large Motor Transport school and a large vehicle repair parts depot. Base Headquarters was in domestic arts building.

COL Barnes becomes commander on May 23, 1942.

Control of Base transferred to Ordnance Department on August 1, 1942 and name was changed to Pomona Ordnance Motor Base. On August 31, 1942 Base took over West Parking Lot (formerly Relocation Center). Strength in August 1942 was 35 officers and 45 enlisted men.

In January 1943 reached its peak strength of 7,000 aggregate with over 450 civilians employed. The auto mechanic school had in excess of 700 enlisted men enrolled as students.

Base came under the jurisdiction of the Desert Training Center on February 15, 1943 and began gradually to wind down activities inactivating many functions including the school. COL Benjamin S. Mesick became commander. The Pomona support base was operated until final deactivation on November 30, 1945.

78/1010-03

## Pomona Fairgrounds

Installations: Pomona Quartermaster Motor Base  
Pomona Ordnance Motor Base  
Pomona Relocation Center  
Pomona Base - Desert Training Center

Original forty (40) acres purchased in 1922 by City of Pomona. Bond issue (\$75,000) in 1923 for buildings on fairgrounds. City deeded gratuitously to Los Angeles County for fairgrounds. (78-1012/01)

Lease between War Department and Los Angeles County Fair Association signed on December 14, 1941 for entire fairgrounds (400 acres) for duration of war. On same date units of 125th Infantry arrived to stage on fairgrounds. Troops arrived and departed by rail (Pomona Station).

Most of fairgrounds became Pomona Quartermaster Motor Base on April 20, 1942. Portion of parking lot became Pomona Relocation Center on April 4, 1942. Quartermaster Motor Base became Ordnance Motor Base on August 1, 1942.

Relocation Center closed on August 31, 1942 and the Motor Base was turned over to the Desert Training Center on February 15, 1943. Pomona Base operated as part of the Training Center until final deactivation on November 30, 1945.

The War Department retained control of the Base until June 1947 when the fairgrounds were returned to the Fair Association.

The first post-war fair was in the fall of 1948. (78-1010/03).