

## Fort Chaffee History

Fort Chaffee was established in western Arkansas in September 1941. Originally designated as Camp Chaffee, the site included 76,075 acres of predominantly farmland.

Combat training was initiated at Camp Chaffee in 1941 and most of the major buildings on the site were completed in 1943. From 1942 to 1946, Camp Chaffee was also used as a German prisoner of war facility. For several years after World War II, Camp Chaffee was placed on inactive standby status until the advent of the Korean War in 1950, which resulted in its reactivation as the Headquarters for the 4th Armored Division.

In 1956, the site was chosen as the U.S. Army Training Center for Field Artillery and the name of the Facility was changed to Fort Chaffee. Between 1961 and 1974, Fort Chaffee was declared inactive and placed under caretaker status, and then reactivated on several different occasions.

In 1975, Fort Chaffee was used as a relocation center for the Vietnamese refugee program and then for Cuban refugees from 1980 to 1982. Fort Chaffee also served as the temporary home, between 1987 and 1993, for the Joint Readiness Training Center.

In 1995, the defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommended the permanent closure of Fort Chaffee. The federal government turned over 66,000 acres to the Arkansas Army National Guard to be used for training. The remaining 7,000+ acres were turned over to local communities for redevelopment. The Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority was formed in 1997.



The Maness School House is the only building in the entire area that was not moved or destroyed when the Department of Defense acquired 72,000 acres to build Camp Chaffee. The schoolhouse was completed in February 1937, and German POW's built the back porch in 1943. The school was added to the National Register of Historic Places on May 29, 2003.



Fort Chaffee barber shop where Elvis Presley received his first Army hair cut on March 25, 1958.

The flower of America's youth walked past these native sandstone gatehouses, bound for overseas combat. Many boys left Fort Chaffee to fight under Eisenhower, Patton, MacArthur, McAuliff, Clark, Bradley and Ridgeway.



You will become steeped in the history of Fort Chaffee. This archway into a recreational area is one of many landmarks throughout Chaffee Crossing that recall the role this site played in shaping world history.

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