

To the soldiers who have passed through the gates of Fort Benning and to those yet to come, may we never forget your service to our nation.



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Fort Benning
Cultural Resources Management Program
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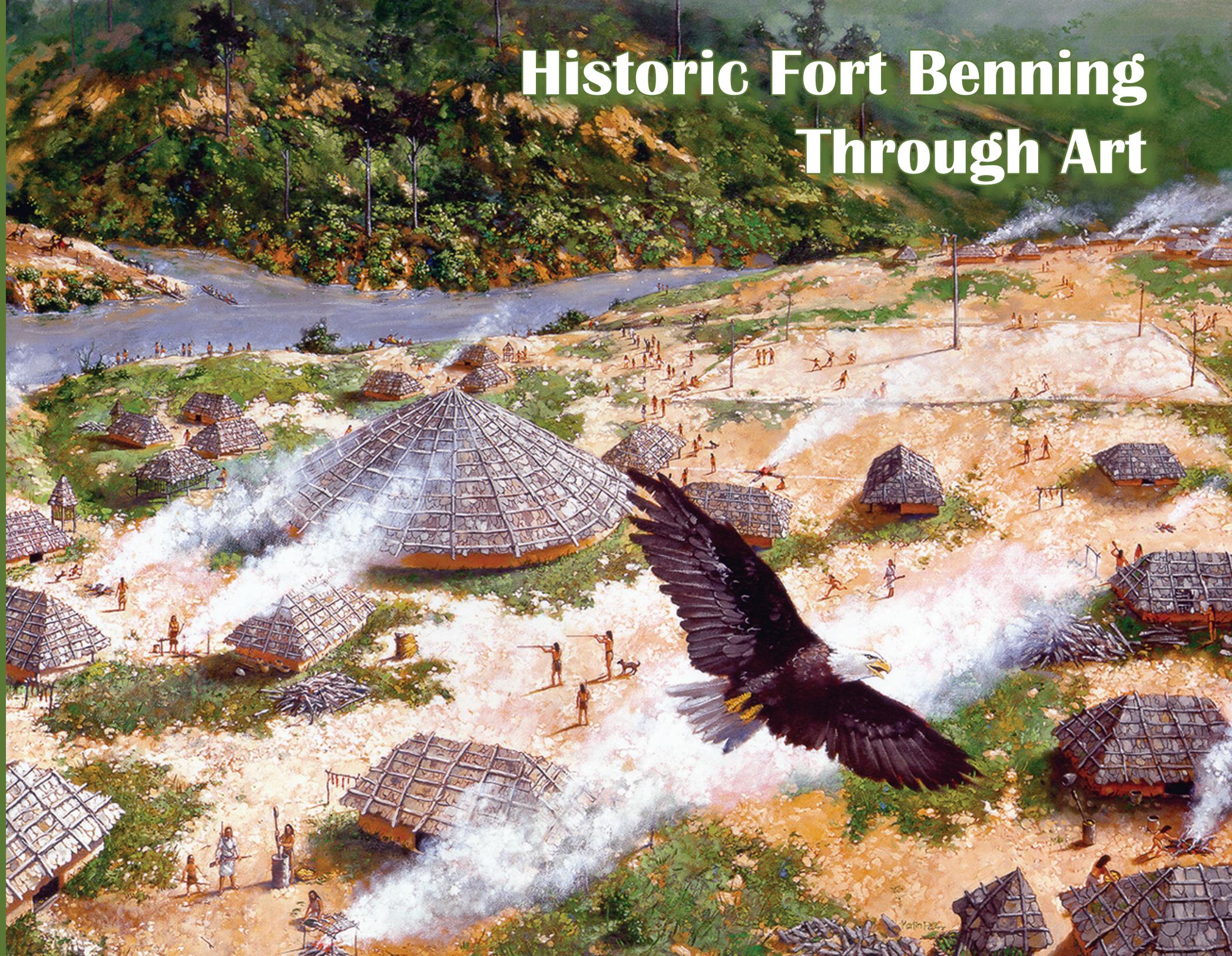
Produced by:
Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC)
National Park Service
Tallahassee, Florida

Original oil on canvas paintings:
Martin Pate, Newnan, Georgia

Booklet design: Virginia Horak, SEAC

2007

Historic Fort Benning Through Art



Camp Benning in Columbus, Georgia, was officially renamed Fort Benning in 1922 when it was designated the permanent home of the U.S. Infantry School of Arms. The long-held belief by many Army leaders that infantry and armor training should be combined was realized at Fort Benning in 1932 with the creation of the Tank School. Eventually the school transferred to Fort Meade, Maryland, and then, in 1940, to Fort Knox, Kentucky, as the Armor School.

Under the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2005, Congress authorized the transfer of the Armor School—now known as the Maneuver Center of Excellence—from Fort Knox back to Fort Benning. Thus, Fort Benning’s tradition of combined armor and infantry training has come full circle.

In November 1990, Congress created the Legacy Program to protect, enhance, and preserve the diverse natural and cultural resources on some 25 million acres of Department of Defense (DoD) land in the United States. The goal of the program is to find a balance between intensive military use and the DoD’s role as steward of the land. Fort Benning’s Environmental Management Division was among the first of the DoD agencies to partner with the National Park Service’s Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) to create media to advance the mission of the Legacy Program.

In their first collaboration, they awarded artist Martin Pate a contract to produce three paintings representing various cultural periods on the land where Fort Benning is today located. *Yuchi Town*, *Loading Meal at Eelbeck*, and *Doughboy Stadium* portray, respectively, an Indian village in the 1700s, a nineteenth-century historic scene predating the military post, and an early sporting event at Fort Benning. The images from these original oil on canvas paintings were subsequently used for posters, brochures, and other media that were distributed to both military personnel and the public through Fort Benning’s public outreach programs.

The Fort Benning cultural series was so well received that additional paintings were requested. This time Pate focused on the installation’s military history, producing *Play Ball*, *Gowdy Field* (a companion to *Doughboy Stadium*), *The Twenty-Fourth Infantry*, *Lawson Field*, and *Eubanks Field*. These images were also used for posters and brochures.

In 2006, Pate began work on a third series, again depicting scenes from the post’s military history. He completed *Mountain Training at Dablonaga*, *The 29th on Parade*, *Tank School*, and *The 2nd Armored Stands Up* that same year.

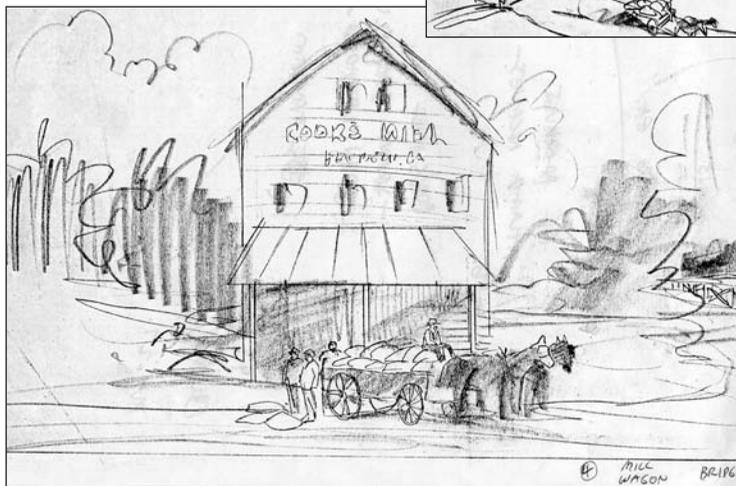
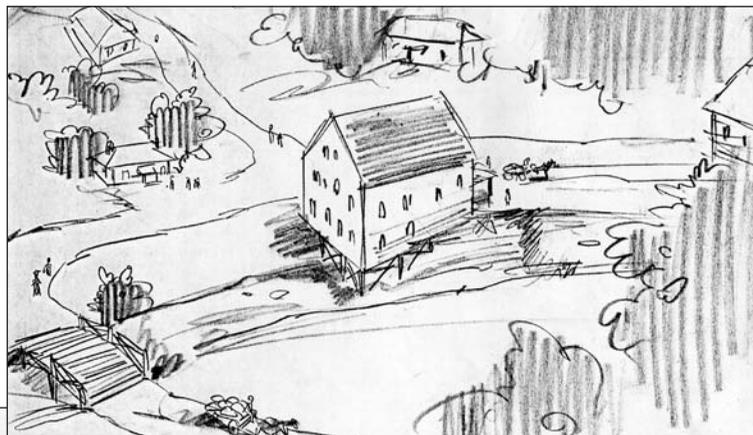


Yuchi Town

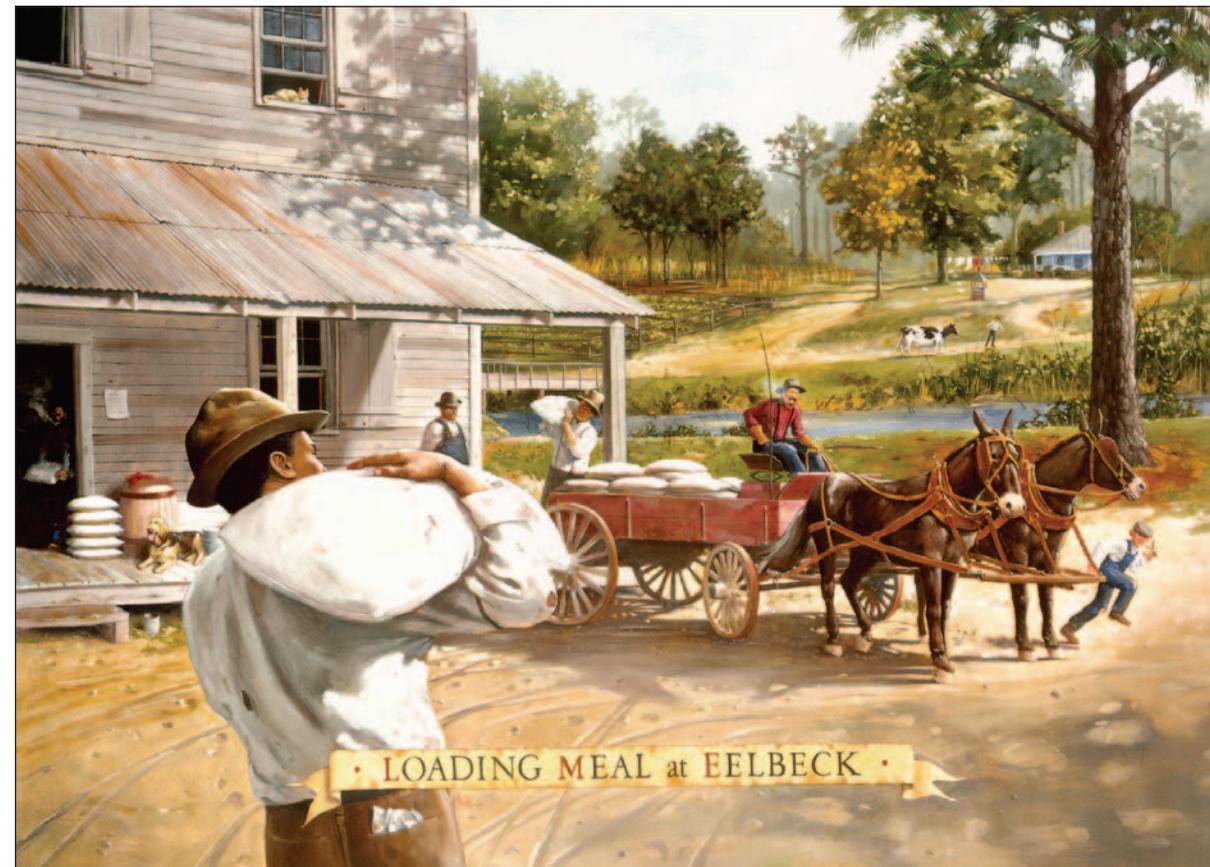
The first painting in the Fort Benning cultural series, *Yuchi Town* portrays a Creek Indian village on the Chattahoochee River in Georgia around 1776. The scene is based on naturalist William Bartram’s eyewitness accounts. *Yuchi Town* was the largest and best situated Indian town he had ever seen. He described it as “populous and thriving, full of young people and children.” The walls of the houses were “plastered with reddish well-tempered clay,” the roofs “covered with cypress bark or shingles.”

Accounts written by Benjamin Hawkins, who visited in 1799, and data gathered from archaeological excavations also informed artist Martin Pate in creating this scene. He portrays Bartram and his fellow traders on the far riverbank, just entering the village and being welcomed by the Yuchi Indians. The eagle soaring over the landscape is a symbol of continuity between the past and present.

Right: In preparation for the Eelbeck painting, Pate sketched the site from a bird's-eye perspective.



Left: A second preliminary sketch by Pate focused on the mill and the men loading meal onto a wagon.



Loading Meal at Eelbeck

Eelbeck (1828–1941) was one of many farming communities that dotted the rural landscape of Chattahoochee County, Georgia. It developed around Cook's Mill—a water-powered saw- and gristmill on Pine Knot Creek—at a time when Georgia's frontier was expanding west to the Chattahoochee River. Eelbeck prospered until 1941 when the Army, mobilizing for World War II, purchased this property and many others to establish Fort Benning. The Eelbeck community vanished shortly thereafter.

Loading Meal at Eelbeck, the second painting in the cultural series, depicts a typical morning at the gristmill. The two sketches on the facing page illustrate some of the preparatory work that went into the final painting.

Right: This 1940's postcard was discovered after Pate completed the painting. (John Mallory Land, from "Images of America: Fort Benning" by Kenneth H. Thomas Jr., p. 18. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, SC, 2003)





Doughboy Stadium

Doughboy Stadium, as it appeared during a 1928 football game, is the theme of the third painting. During the 1920s, the Infantry School at Fort Benning was unique in that it was the only military post to sponsor collegiate programs in all the major sports: baseball, football, boxing, polo, track and field, swimming, tennis, and wrestling. Fort Benning was even admitted to the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association, then the most powerful athletic organization in the South. A vast complex of sports facilities was built at Fort Benning over the years. Doughboy Stadium, erected in 1925, was a memorial to the infantry men killed during World War I. Amazingly, the construction was funded entirely with donations from Army infantrymen across the nation.



Play Ball, Gowdy Field

Gowdy Field, Fort Benning's baseball stadium, is located southeast of Doughboy Stadium. The Enlisted Men's Gym in the background has since been replaced with a modern gymnasium. The playing field was named for baseball great Hank Gowdy, the first major leaguer to enlist for military service during World War I. Gowdy had been stationed at Fort Benning.

This scene takes place on March 31, 1925, when Gowdy Field was the setting for the Little World Series, a celebrated rematch of the 1924 World Series between the New York Giants and the Washington Senators. The two teams, each eight men strong, slugged it out before an enthusiastic crowd of 6,500 fans. Southworth, playing for the Giants, hit a home run over the right field fence in the eighth inning with teammates Groh and Gowdy on base, taking the Giants to a 9 to 6 victory over the defending world-champion Senators.

Play Ball, Gowdy Field is considered the fourth painting in the Fort Benning cultural series, even though it was produced several years after the first three paintings. A poster using the Gowdy Field scene was designed as a companion to the Doughboy Stadium poster. Both were distributed through Fort Benning's public outreach initiative.



The Twenty-Fourth Infantry

From 1922 to 1942, the 24th Infantry was stationed at Fort Benning. All the enlisted men of this unit were African American. In this scene, the men of Company D have just disembarked from the troop train and lined up for early morning drill.

The narrow-gauge train in the background was one of twenty that made up the Fort Benning Light Railroad, also known as the Chattahoochee Choo-Choo. In operation from 1919 to 1946, the railroad transported tens of thousands of soldiers and tons of supplies to various training areas on the installation. Today, only one engine and one transport car still remain; they are prominently displayed in front of the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning.



Lawson Field

Between 1919 and 1923, a small airfield and two hangars—Buildings 303 and 304—were constructed at Camp Benning for lighter-than-air craft. Three Douglas O-25s constituted the 16th Observation Squadron. One early mission was to determine if data obtained from balloon observation had any potential infantry use. In 1931, the old field was reactivated and officially named Lawson Army Airfield in honor of the World War I ace pilot and Georgia native Captain Walter R. Lawson. Historic photographs of hangars and aircraft were consulted for the painting, which features Curtiss A-3s flying over the old hangars.



The 29th on Parade

Arriving at Camp Benning in 1919, the 29th Infantry Regiment assumed duties as the Demonstration Regiment for the new Infantry School. The 29th was charged with building the post's infrastructure, including three housing units called cuartels (Spanish for barracks). Completed between 1927 and 1935, the cuartels are the result of the Army's intensive push to construct permanent quarters for the troops. Monumental in scale, each of these horseshoe-shaped buildings encompasses a sixteen-acre parade ground. In the painting, which depicts a scene from circa 1939, the 29th is marching in review from the east portico of its cuartel.



Tank School

The Infantry Tank School was established at Fort Benning in 1932. One mission was to test and evaluate tanks for possible deployment. The sketch depicts a Christie T-4 in front of Building 67 circa 1937. Developer J. Walter Christie had designed a new track and track suspension system for the T-4 to eliminate some of the major mechanical failures that had plagued tanks during World War I. The T-4, however, never entered production; the military decided it lacked offensive firepower and was underpowered, as well as too costly. Ironically, both the Germans and the Russians embraced the Christie suspension system in their famous Panzer and T-34 tank designs, respectively.



The 2nd Armored Stands Up

In 1940, Colonel George S. Patton, the future general, was assigned to Fort Benning where he was put in charge of training the newly formed 2nd Armored Division. During his short tenure there, he molded the 2nd into a highly effective fighting force that earned the nickname “Hell on Wheels.”

The painting portrays Patton at one of the many field and combat exercises he commanded between July 1940 and March 1941. Christie T-4 Medium tanks advance in the background, while Curtiss XA-14 Shrikes fly overhead.

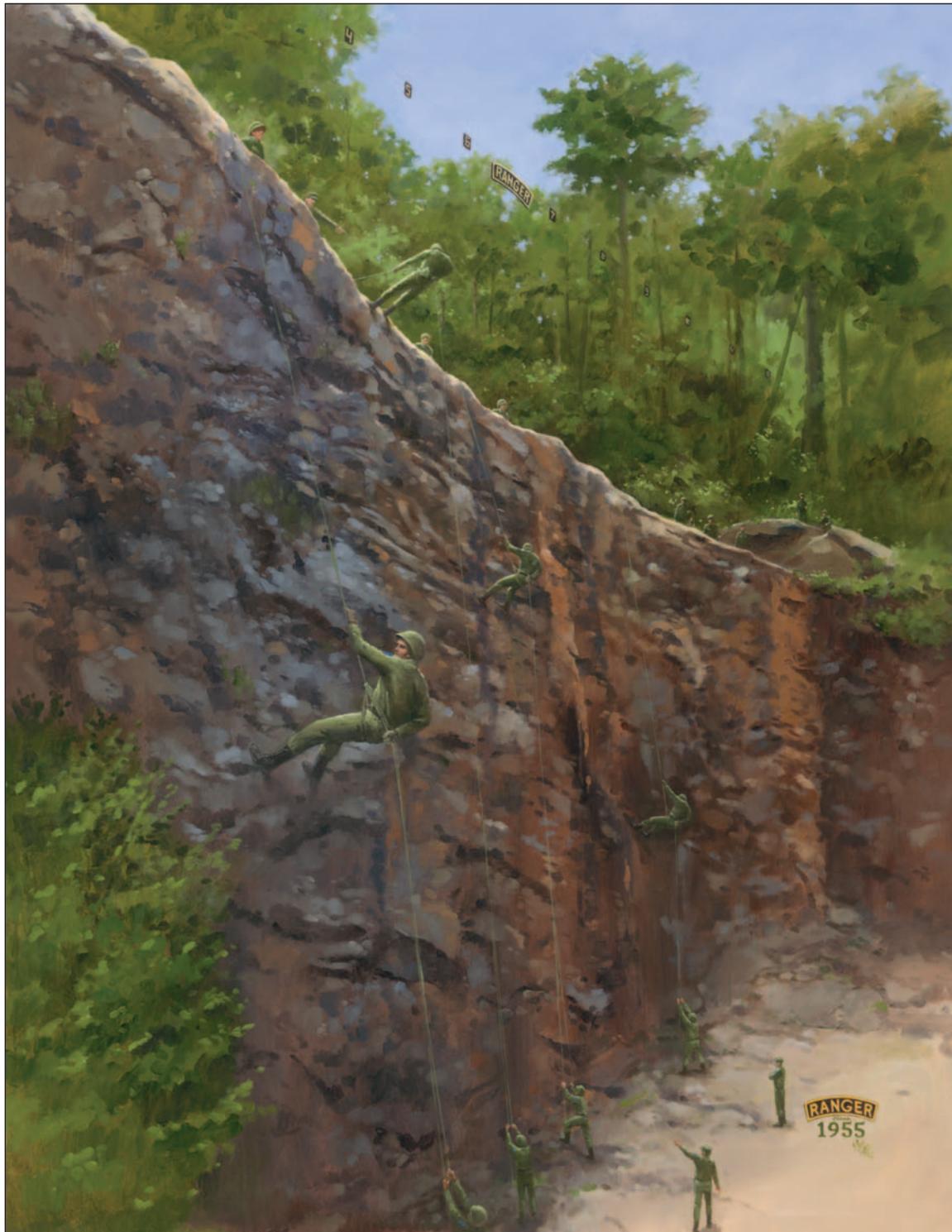


Eubanks Field

The jump towers are among the most recognizable landmarks at Fort Benning. They were modeled after a New Jersey tower that was built by the same company that had constructed parachute towers for the 1939 World’s Fair.

One of Fort Benning’s remarkable towers was completely destroyed by a tornado in 1954. Two of the remaining three towers are still used to give prospective paratroopers their first experience of free-fall with a parachute in as controlled a condition as possible.

The painting shows the four original towers in 1943. Major General Leven C. Allen, post commander at the time, is one of the two figures standing in the foreground. Structural changes made over the years were “factored out” with the help of some excellent 1940’s photographs.



← Mountain Training at Dahlongega

Camp Frank D. Merrill, located near Dahlongega in the north Georgia mountains, was named in honor of the major general who commanded Merrill's Marauders during the Burma operations of World War II. An auxiliary installation of Fort Benning, Camp Merrill is home to the 5th Ranger Training Battalion. Here young soldiers go through the rigorous mountain phase of the U.S. Army Ranger School's three-phase training program, learning the combat techniques and procedures for moving soldiers and equipment over rough mountainous terrain. The painting depicts one of the exercises young trainees must master to graduate from the Ranger School.

Cultural Resources Management Program

Although training and force deployment are the primary missions at Fort Benning, another less obvious mission is both significant and valuable. The Cultural Resources Management (CRM) program helps fulfill a mission to preserve not only those portions of the installation that are reflective of our national patrimony—archaeological sites, historic buildings, historic districts, for example—but also those characteristics that make Fort Benning unique.

Through public outreach and education, the CRM program informs soldiers, their families, and the general public about the military history and operations of Fort Benning, as well as the local history. But beyond dates and events in a timeline, the program shines light on the people who built Fort Benning; who lived and worked on the installation; and who trained there, many deploying to face dangers around the world. These men and women are the real story of Fort Benning.