



Fort Devens

William J. Craig

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The geographical location of Fort Devens has a military history that dates back to the 1600s, when the area was first garrisoned by British troops. In 1915, the region was again chosen for a cantonment, one of only sixteen in the country. In order to build the camp, the War Department assembled the largest labor force in history. New buildings sprang up at the rate of about ten per day and supported more than one hundred thousand troops that were processed at Camp Devens, as it was originally named, during World War I.

Fort Devens is the first book to trace the military activity in this area. Throughout the twentieth century, troops were trained and deployed from Fort Devens for every major conflict the United States was involved in. During World War II, Fort Devens inducted more than six hundred thousand men into the army from the New England area. The list of individuals who have served here included Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Bill Mauldin, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, and Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Even NASA can trace its birth to Fort Devens by way of Dr. Robert Goddard's liquid-fueled rocket experiments.

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