



Go West: Aftermath of the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, 1941

After Japan's sudden attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the 27th ID was ordered to the west coast to continue training and protect vital installations. It took the 27th ID's 831 officers, 13,530 enlisted men, and 1,700 vehicles ten days to travel 2,000 miles aboard 68 trains from Fort McClellan to Ontario and Riverside, California. Assigned to the Western Defense Command, the 27th ID was spread out in and around the Los Angeles area.



Railroad caravans transported both 27th ID men and equipment from Fort McClellan to southern California following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 1941. New York State Military Museum

While stationed in California 6,000 non-New Yorkers were added to the ranks of the 27th ID, bringing it to full strength. Private William W. Ellsworth, from Iowa, joined the 106th Infantry Regiment, based primarily in upstate New York, recalled: "I felt I was fairly and adequately received in view of the unit's longer service prior to me joining and that I

was a kid from Iowa joining a unit made up of mostly New York and New Jersey men."

In late 1941, the 27th's one brief engagement with the enemy occurred near Fort MacArthur, 25 miles south of Los Angeles, when members of Battery F, 105th Field Artillery (FA) sighted a Japanese submarine off the coastline in the early morning hours of December 23, 1941. The battery fired nine rounds at the enemy target before it vanished under the ocean waves. Air Corps planes later confirmed the submarine sank from the bombing. The 105th FA was later awarded a Navy Unit Commendation for actions in the Battle of Eniwetok Atoll in 1944.



Private John Pershing Earley of New York City served as a member of the Military Police Platoon, 27th ID during World War II, 1941. New York State Military Museum



Private Stewart, 105th Infantry, 27th ID stationed at Camp Haan, just outside of Los Angeles, California during the brief time the 27th ID provided defense along the southern California coast, 1941-1942. New York State Military Museum



Soldiers of the 27th ID patrolled the California beaches against possible Japanese attack following the December 7, 1941 raid on Pearl Harbor. Fort Ord, California, 1942. New York State Military Museum