



The Old Guard



The 3^d U.S. Infantry, traditionally known as "The Old Guard," is the oldest active-duty infantry unit in the Army, serving our nation since 1784.

The Old Guard is the Army's official ceremonial unit and escort to the president, and it also provides security for Washington, D.C., in time of national emergency or civil disturbance.

The unit received its unique name from Gen. Winfield Scott during a victory parade at Mexico City in 1847 following its valorous performance in the Mexican War. Fifty campaign streamers attest to the 3rd Infantry's long history of service, which spans from the Battle of Fallen Timbers to World War II and Vietnam.

Since World War II, The Old Guard has served as the official Army Honor Guard and escort to the president. In that capacity, 3rd Infantry soldiers are responsible for the conduct of military ceremonies at the White House, the Pentagon, national memorials and elsewhere in the nation's capital. In addition, soldiers of The Old Guard maintain a 24-hour vigil at the Tomb of the Unknowns, provide military funeral escorts at Arlington National Cemetery and participate in parades at Fort Myer and Fort Lesley J. McNair.

Along with these duties, The Old Guard presents historic theatrical productions to audiences in the Washington, D.C., area. The Old Guard annually participates in more than 6,000 ceremonies, an average of 16 per day.

Despite this arduous schedule, The Old Guard continuously prepares for its security and infantry missions by conducting year-round training, culminating in a rigorous evaluation of unit tactical proficiency. Because of this, all soldiers are as familiar with traditional infantry or military-police duties as they are with ceremonial duties.

The black-and-tan "buff strap" worn on the left shoulder by each member of the 3rd Infantry is a replica of the knapsack strap used by 19th-century predecessors of the unit to display its distinctive colors and distinguish its members from other Army units. The present buff strap continues to signify an Old Guard soldier's pride in personal appearance and precision performance that has marked the unit for 200 years.

A further distinction of The Old Guard is the time-honored custom of passing in review with fixed bayonets at all parades. This practice, officially sanctioned by the War Department in 1922, dates to the Mexican War in 1847 when the 3rd Infantry led a successful bayonet charge against the enemy at Cerro Gordo. Today, this distinction is still reserved for The Old Guard alone.

1st Battalion, 3^d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard)

The Old Guard's 1st Battalion conducts military ceremonies to honor our fallen comrades and instill confidence in our civilian leaders and the American people in the professionalism of the U.S. Army. On order, 1st Battalion deploys companies into theater to defeat enemy forces in support of the war on terror.

4th Battalion, 3^d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard)

The Old Guard's 4th Battalion conducts ceremonies in order to maintain the traditions of the U.S. Army, showcase the Army to our nation's citizens and the world and to defend the dignity and honor of our fallen comrades. On order, 4th Battalion protects federal property and assists civilian authorities in the National Capital Region in order to limit the effects of attacks or disasters.