

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Fort Ord's Ord

The story of how the name Ord became associated with the fort to the east of Monterey is a little involved but worth telling as an historical fact and because there are so many newcomers to the west coast who ask often for an explanation of the name.

We must begin with the establishment of Fort Mervine on the hill within the old Presidio reservation. This fort was started by the United States Navy in 1846 and named for Capt. William Mervine, USN. Ens. Baldwin was in charge of constructing the next level above El Castillo. The fort was completed by three Army lieutenants, H. W. Halleck, C. E., W. T. Sherman, and E. O. C. Ord.

The labor these future generals employed were troops from Company F 3rd Artillery and some New York Volunteers.

The fort consisted of earthworks and a blockhouse and was armed with guns brought on the U. S. Ship Lexington from the East coast.

The fort was dismantled in 1852. But the young Lt. Ord of that period was not forgotten - in 1933 the War Department, in General Orders No. 11, named the military reservation east of Monterey in honor of the late Maj. Gen. Edward O. C. Ord, who obviously had made great progress in his career after leaving Monterey.

In 1903 the cantonment at the Presidio of Monterey, still under construction at that time, was named Ord Barracks. The name was changed to Presidio of Monterey the following year, "to perpetuate the name of the first Spanish military station in California."

Edward Otho Cresap Ord was born in 1818 at Cumberland, Mo. He died in 1883.

Graduated from the U. S. Military Academy at West Point in 1839, he was commissioned a second lieutenant, assigned to the Third Artillery, and sent to Florida, where he saw immediate active service in the Seminole war of 1839-42.

During the war with Mexico he performed garrison duty at Monterey from 1847-49, and in 1850 was promoted to the rank of captain. During subsequent years he was

engaged in frontier duty and saw much active service against the Indians.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Ord was commissioned brigadier general of volunteers and defeated Gen. J. E. B. Stuart of Dranesville. On Dec. 20, 1881 he was advanced to the rank of major general of volunteers and sent to the west, where he commanded the left wing of Grant's army. For his services at the battle of luka, Sept 10, 1862 he was brevetted colonel in the regular army.

On July 31, 1864, Ord was appointed commander of the 18th Army Corps and took part in the Richmond campaign, but he was wounded at the capture of Fort Harrison, Sept 29, 1864, and was on sick leave until December. For his gallantry on this occasion he was brevetted major general in the regular army (March 13, 1865) and after his recovery received command of the Department of Virginia.

He was made brigadier general in the regular army in 1866 and soon afterward was mustered out of the volunteer service. He retired in 1880 and the following year, by a special act of Congress, he was commissioned major general.