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WHEN FORT CARSON REALLY ARRIVED

Posted by Dave Hughes on September 24, 2009 at 3:55pm [View Blog](#)

The period between 1968 and 1972 were the years Fort Carson arrived, after having been regarded, from 1942 on by career officers and NCOs, as a second class Army post.

Carson held boots-on-the ground Infantry Divisions during World War II and the Korean War. It grew and shrunk according to the world scene. It had its Colorado appeal for soldiers. But it was not much regarded, as a place to serve, professionally.

Then Secretary of Defense McNamara was looking for posts to eliminate to save money. He sent out senior officers to evaluate many of them. Army LTG Heintges reported back that, with marginal-value private land to the south, Fort Carson could become a Post of the future, not of the past. Carson was not only saved, it was made the home of its first Mechanized Infantry Division - the legendary Normandy Invasion 4th Infantry. While it would need more training space for its wide ranging tanks and tracks, construction of new facilities followed.

With the Vietnam War heading for closure the decision was also made in Washington to create an All-Volunteer, rather than Draft, Army. Carson was made a test post. The perfect commander to lead it arrived in 1970 - Maj Gen Bernard Rogers. Rogers implemented a radical series of 'Support the Soldier' measures that tapped into the energy of the new 60's generation of young men. He formed a series of Enlisted, Racial, Junior Officer and even junior Wives Councils which, during serious rap sessions debated how to improve the post and Army. The social climate was transformed. Crime went down, support went up. The Volunteer Army was launched. Carson became legendary.

Even Foreign Defense Ministers visited the post, for their countries were dealing, also, with the effect on their societies of Woodstock and the '60s.

Field training, the core Carson mission, became effective and exciting as soldiers who had never ridden in a tracked vehicle in Vietnam engaged in challenging 'Adventure Training' to master the skills they would need on European and middle Eastern battlefields. That brought commanders from across the Army to see the new 'Iron Horse Division' training methods. I was deeply involved as a commander and Chief of Staff in helping General Rogers transform the post and its military readiness.

By the time Rogers left to become, eventually, Army Chief of Staff and then NATO Supreme Commander, Fort Carson was the place to request to be assigned to by the professional officer and NCO Corps of the combat arms Army. As the new center of

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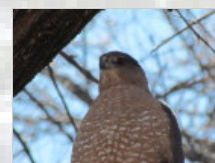


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THE VALUE OF KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

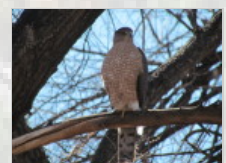
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COOPER'S HAWK

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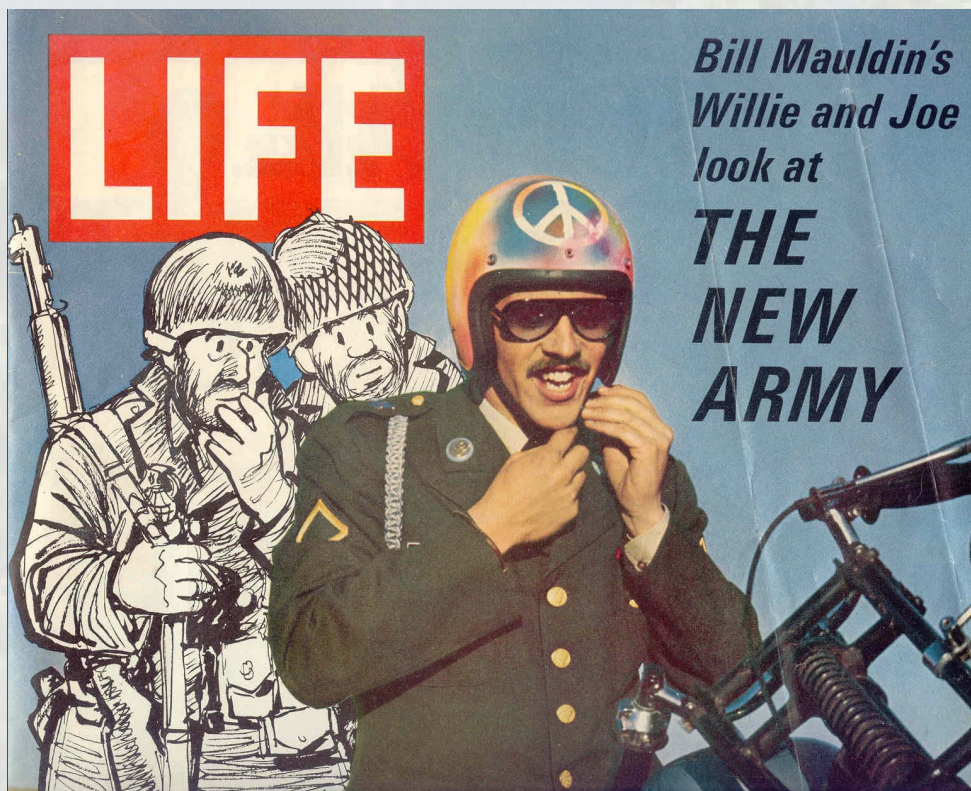
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the Mech Infantry which never had had a professional home, Fort Carson had arrived. It has never looked back.



LIFE MAGAZINE 1970



The 'New' Fort Carson and the Iron Horse Division

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PINE FOREST SPRING SHOW & SALE
[April 23, 2016 at 10am to April 24, 2016 at 3pm - Lewis Palmer High School](#)

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