

**PLANT GUARD FORCE, WWII
(Auxiliary MP)**

A Research Note

During WWII, civilian guards at plants with government contracts were partially militarized as a manpower expedient. In December 1941 both the War and Navy Depts received presidential authority to establish military guards at defense-related facilities. The Army performed this guard mission initially with its available combat troops augmented by State Guards (q.v.) and other state and local forces, including the civilian guards already employed by various industries. The combat troops were gradually withdrawn as new military police units became available for guarding public works and installations. Meanwhile, the security of defense-related plants depended on their own private guard forces, which came under a degree of Army operational control.

"Militarization" of these private guards rested on presidential authority to protect vital facilities and began in the spring of 1942 with the promulgation of general standards. Army Service Forces exercised control through the Provost Marshal General and the nine service commands into which the continental U.S. had been organized. This guard force, initially termed the Plant Guard Force and later re-designated as the Auxiliary Military Police, reached a peak strength of some 20,000 in mid-1943. After the surrender of Japan, demilitarization of the guards began until finalized by Nov 1946.

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See esp pp. 6-7 on types of forces available.

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