The New York Guard in WW I  
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When most people think of the New York Guard during World War I, the First Provisional Brigade is usually what comes to mind. They guarded all 96 miles of the Aqueduct that served New York City. Being charged with safeguarding the water supply of America’s own Emerald City, The First Provisional and its’ officers were celebrated, and mentioned rather often in newspaper articles of the day. Naturally, then, it seemed to the general public that they were it…the only game in town, the whole shooting match, the New York Guard in toto.

However…there were four brigades organized to replace the NYNG and under the command of the State Headquarters. The First Provisional Regiment plus a Second Provisional Regiment and Provisional Brigade were only the State Active Duty members from the NYG, very similar to the Task Force Empire Shield of today.

The National Defense Act of 1916 provided cursory authority to organize “State” forces as the last sentence of Section 61 stated, “that nothing contained in this act shall prevent the organization and maintenance of state police or Constabulary.” Governors used this clause as permission to begin preparations for organizing replacement National Guard units. On 3 August 1917, the Adjutant General of New York, in order to comply with the provisions of the State Constitution requiring that troops be available to the Governor for the protection of life and property of the citizens of New York, organized a State Military Force known as the New York Guard under the Home Guard Act of 1917, and the subsequent War Department Circular #3 of March 1918. The NYG was later re-organized on geographical lines under GO# 58 AGO November 1917.

1st Brigade – HQ, New York City  
4 Sept. 1917 to 19 Feb. 1918 –  
BG George R. Dyer  
19 Feb. 1918 to 29 Dec. 1919 –  
Unidentified

1st Battalion, Signal Corps  
22nd Regiment, Engineers  
Squadron A, Cavalry  
1st Field Artillery  
8th Coast Artillery Corps  
9th Coast Artillery Corps  
1st Field Hospital  
3rd Ambulance Corps  
7th Regiment, Infantry  
12th Regiment, Infantry  
15th Regiment, Infantry  
69th Regiment, Infantry  
7th Regiment, Infantry

2nd Brigade – HQ, Brooklyn  
22 Dec. 1917 to 19 Feb. 1918-  
BG James Robb  
19 Feb, 1918 to 31 March 1919-  
BG George R. Dyer

Squadron C, Cavalry  
2nd Field Artillery  
13th Coast Artillery Corps  
3rd Field Hospital  
14th Regiment, Infantry  
23rd Regiment, Infantry  
47th regiment, infantry  
6th Battalion, Infantry
Total – 8,777

3rd Brigade – HQ in Albany
23 Nov. 1917 to 30 April 1919 -
BG F. DeForest Kemp
30 April 1919 to 29 Dec. 1919-
BG James Westcott Lester

4th Brigade – HQ in Buffalo
24 Sept. 1917 to 18 April 1919-
BG Louis L. Babcock
29 Jul. 1919 to 13 September 1919 -
BG Newton E. Turgeon
13 Sept. 1919 to 29 Dec. 1919
BG Edgar Stilson Jennings

2nd Regiment, Infantry
10th Regiment, Infantry
5th Battalion, Infantry
Squadron D, Cavalry
2nd Field Hospital
1st Regiment, Infantry

Total – 3,444

2nd Ambulance Company
3rd Regiment, infantry
4th Regiment, infantry
65th Regiment, Infantry
74th Regiment, Infantry

Total – 4,739

Total New York Guard – 22,397

Command of the NYG was directly by the Adjutant General of New York, and included BG Charles H. Sherrill until 13 Jan 19 then BG Charles W. Berry until 30 Mar 1919. After the Armistice was signed and the Federalized New York National Guard units were returned to state status, MG John Francis O’Ryan was named Commander of the NYG on 31 March to merge the NYG and returning troops back into the New York National Guard. This was completed and New York Guard units were deactivated and any troops not reassigned to the NYNG were discharged on 29 December 1919. Official disbandment orders were not published until AGO#4 dated 12 Jan 1923 effective 16 Jan 1923.

…Now you know.