

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

2nd Regiment, Infantry

10th Regiment, Infantry

5th Battalion, Infantry

Squadron D, Cavalry

2nd Field Hospital

1st Regiment, Infantry

Total – 3,444

Total – 5,437

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

Squadron B, Cavalry

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.