

## CHAPTER VII

### REORGANIZATION OF DIVISION



It will be remembered that prior to the official declaration of war on April 6, 1917, certain regiments of the National Guard had been called into the active federal service by Presidential proclamation for the purpose of guarding public utilities. As it had been determined to compose the tactical division of the same units that had constituted it during the period of the Mexican border service, it was the desire of the Division Commander to secure, as soon as practicable after the declaration of war, the release from such service of the regiments to be designated as part of the tactical division. This was gradually accomplished, and so the first of the General Orders of the 27th Division, already referred to in Chapter IV, composed the divisional infantry of the same regiments that had served on the border. Accordingly this order organized the 7th, 12th and 69th Infantry Regiments in the 1st Brigade; the 1st, 23d and 71st Regiments in the 2d Brigade; the 2d and 3d and 74th Regiments in the 3d Brigade. At the time this order was issued the new tables of organization prescribing four infantry regiments to the tactical division had not yet been published.

Prior to the departure from New York the 69th Infantry had been detached from the division and assigned to the newly organized 42d or "Rainbow" Division. At the time of this assignment, and in order to bring the regiment to war strength, it was directed by the War Department that 346 men from each of the other regiments stationed in New York City should be transferred to the 69th. This detachment of men from one regiment to another on the eve of war activity was a great shock to all the regiments concerned. It constituted a severe blow to their morale. Each of these regiments had its own traditions. In each regiment the men were led to believe that their regiment was the best. Actually, and by tradition as well, the 69th Infantry was an Irish or Irish-American regiment. This regiment could have been recruited to the new war strength within a week's time after they were designated for early overseas service. It could, furthermore, have been recruited by men whose traditions were of the same character as the men already in the regiment, and who for that reason would fight all the more determinedly. This would have avoided the transfer to it of men from the other regiments. None of the other regiments wished to give up any men for transfer to the 69th. To take a man away from his own regiment and place him in another is like taking a child away from its own home and placing it in the home of some other family. But so high was the standard of discipline and so strong the spirit for what was said to be the common good that these transfers were in fact made with a minimum of friction. Detachments were formed of men to be trans-

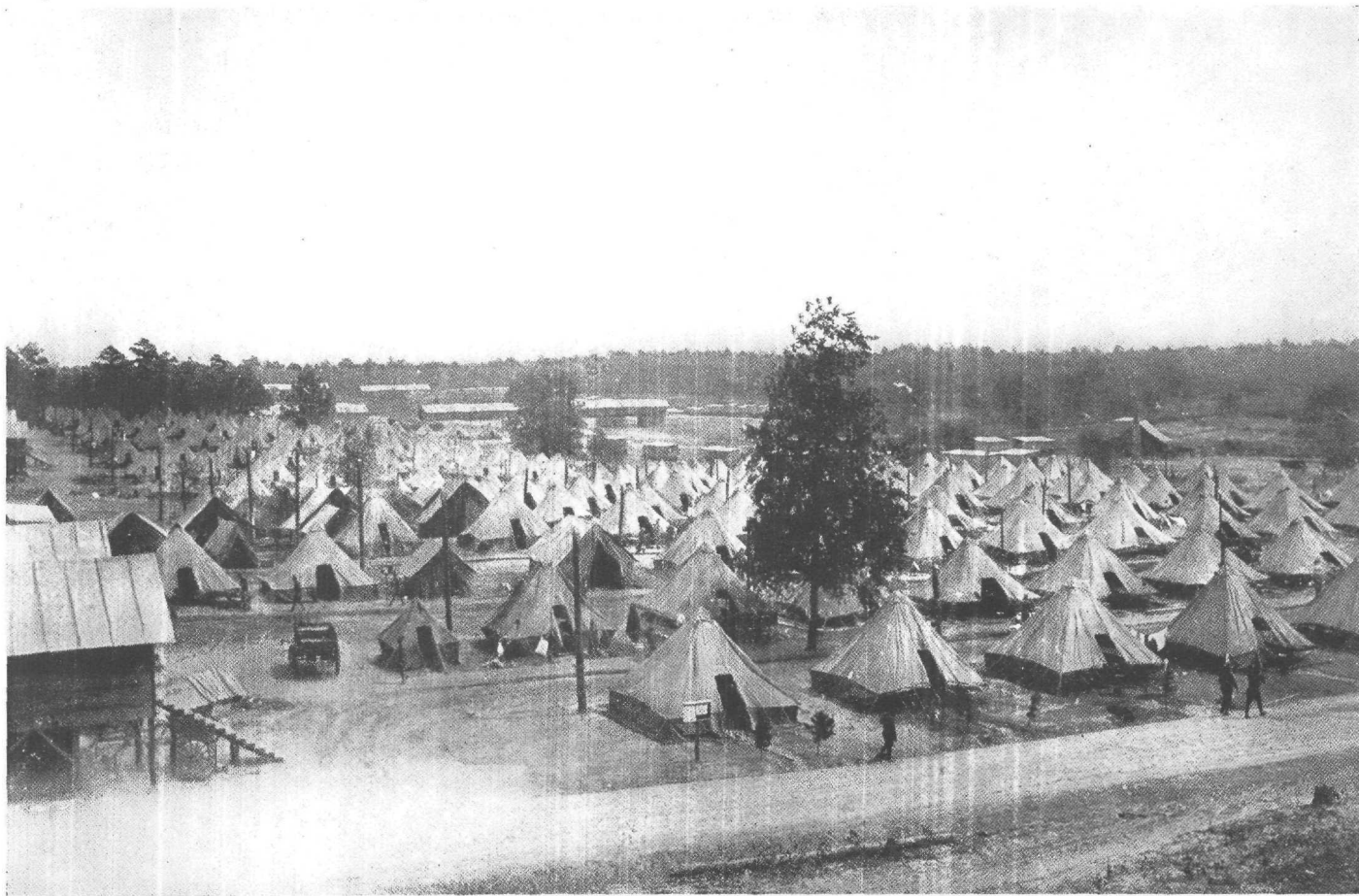
ferred and with due ceremony they were marched to the armory of the 69th Infantry and there turned over to the commanding officer of that regiment, Colonel Charles D. Hine, who left nothing undone to reconcile the newcomers to their new environment. The 69th Infantry was, therefore, temporarily out of the division. It served throughout the war with the 42d Division and added new glory to the already magnificent war record and traditions of the old regiment. Upon the detachment of the 69th Infantry from the 27th Division the 14th Infantry was assigned to the 1st Brigade in its place.

General Orders No. 5 of the 27th Division, issued from the Municipal Building, New York City, under date of August 27, 1917, directed the movement of the division from New York to Spartanburg, South Carolina. Almost as soon as the division had arrived at Spartanburg it was rumored that the new infantry divisional organization would provide for but four regiments of infantry. It can well be understood what this meant in a division of nine regiments of infantry, each regiment with its own pride of organization and record of service.

About the middle of September the War Department sent alienists to the various camps for the purpose of testing the personnel of each division in relation to mentality and nervous durability. Every man was examined by officers expert in nervous diseases and all peculiarities were carefully noted. All those who seemed likely to break down under the nervous strain of battle were checked for transfer to some character of work not involving battle strain. These examinations, of course, developed the presence of a few men suffering from mental disorders of a character necessitating their discharge. It is worthy to note, however, that the officers who came to Camp Wadsworth to make these examinations stated after their work was done that the men of the 27th Division were the finest body of men they had seen at any of the camps.

The Division Commander had determined tentatively in his own mind the four infantry regiments which should constitute the division as reorganized. He required to be prepared by each of the several staff officers intimately familiar with the record and personnel of all the regiments, a statement of recommendations of regiments to be chosen, given in the order of their merit. The result was practical unanimity concerning three of the four regiments to be chosen. There was some difference of opinion concerning the fourth regiment. The four selected were the 2d, 3d, 7th and 23d, and these served in the war as the 105th, 108th, 107th and 106th Infantry Regiments, respectively.

It was realized that the coming reorganization would result in an excess of officers in the higher grades, thus making necessary a selection of officers to serve in the regiments as reorganized. This subject was very carefully and exhaustively considered, with the result that when the reorganization was directed by the War Department to be made it was done pursuant to General Orders No. 9, Headquarters, 27th Division, under date of October 1, 1917. This order was executed with a minimum of discontent and without any outside interference whatever. The officers affected



©Western Newspaper Union

*General view of the camp of the 107th Infantry at Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, South Carolina*

favorably and unfavorably realized that the reorganization was made necessary by the experience abroad and they knew that the selections, whether or not acceptable in the case of particular officers, were nevertheless the result of sincere conviction that they were in the best interest of the service. The selections were not made on the theory that the best officers would all go with the tactical division. Numbers of officers were selected to remain with the depot units, by reason of their special experience or capacity in school and training work. Others were retained for other reasons in the interest of the service.

In view of the trouble experienced by the War Department in relation to similar reorganization at other camps, it is a source of pride to be able to record that the War Department received no protests and heard no criticism on behalf of the 27th Division in relation to its reorganization. Blanket authority was given the Division Commander by the War Department to effect the reorganization of the division, and before it was actually made, the Division Commander publicly assumed responsibility for everything that was to be done.

The command of the four infantry regiments therefore fell to Colonels James M. Andrews, who commanded the 105th Infantry, with Morris N. Liebman as Lieutenant Colonel; Frank H. Norton, the 106th Infantry, with John B. Tuck as Lieutenant Colonel; Willard C. Fisk, the 107th Infantry, with James M. Hutchinson as Lieutenant Colonel, and Edgar S. Jennings, the 108th Infantry, with William A. Taylor as Lieutenant Colonel.

The assignment of Majors gave to the 105th Infantry two of its own Majors, Everett E. Pateman and Jesse Scott Button, and added Major Sidney G. DeKay, transferred from the 12th Infantry. The 23d Infantry, when it became the 106th Infantry, did not retain any of its Majors and gained by transfer Majors Walter A. Delamater from the 71st Infantry, Gabriel G. Hollander from the 14th and Harry S. Hildreth from the 12th. The 7th Regiment, when it became the 107th, retained Majors Robert Mazet and Nicholas Engel and received by transfer from the 1st Infantry Major Thomas M. Sherman. The old 3d Infantry as the 108th retained all three of its Majors, namely, Frederick S. Couchman, William A. Turnbull and Otto I. Chorman.

As illustrating the demands of the military service in relation to the use of the officers in fields taking them away from their organization, it is interesting to note how few of the field officers originally assigned to the infantry regiments of the division, remained with their units throughout. In the 105th Infantry Colonel Andrews served throughout. Lieutenant Colonel Liebmann was killed in action in Flanders, Major Pateman was detailed to the Army School of the Line at Langres, France, and after graduation therefrom was assigned to the Motor Transport Corps. Major Button served with the regiment until transferred to the 106th Infantry. Major DeKay, ill for a time with pneumonia, rejoined the division in August and served with the 106th Infantry until detailed to the General Staff College at Langres, from which he graduated. After graduation he was assigned as Assistant G-3 of the division. In the 106th Infantry Colonel

Norton was discharged for physical disability before the departure of the division for overseas. Lieutenant Colonel Tuck after arrival in France was sent to the Army School of the Line and General Staff College, from which he graduated and was then sent to the 1st Army Headquarters as an acting General Staff Officer. Major Delamater went abroad with the regiment, but like Colonel Tuck was detailed to the Army School of the Line and General Staff College, upon graduation from which he was assigned to the 1st Army Headquarters. Both of these officers won distinction in these later assignments. Major Hollander was transferred to the 2d Pioneer Infantry while the division was at Camp Wadsworth and was replaced by Major Ransom H. Gillet, at one time a Major in the old 2d Infantry, who was a graduate of the Third Officers' Training School at Camp Wadsworth.

Major Harry S. Hildreth went overseas with the regiment, participated in some of its engagements and was later transferred to the 7th Regular Division, where he won distinction as a battalion commander in active operations. In the 107th Infantry Colonel Fisk took the regiment overseas, but was forced to retire because of serious illness. Lieutenant Colonel Hutchinson never served with the division, being retained by the War Department on special duty. Major Engel was promoted to be Lieutenant Colonel in his place. Captain Roland Tompkins was promoted to fill the



*Colonel Willard C. Fisk, commanding 107th Infantry*

vacancy. Major Mazet went overseas with the regiment, but was later retired for physical disability. Major Sherman went overseas with the regiment and served with it until sent to the Army School of the Line and General Staff College, from which he was graduated with distinction.



Thereafter he was assigned as Brigade Adjutant of the 54th Brigade, being General Pierce's Chief of Staff during Le Selle River operations. Shortly thereafter he became Lieutenant Colonel of the 107th Infantry. In the 108th Infantry Colonel Jennings, like Colonel Andrews of the



*Brigadier General James W. Lester, commanding  
54th Infantry Brigade*

105th Infantry, served with his regiment throughout. Lieutenant Colonel Taylor became Colonel of the 106th Infantry just before leaving Camp Wadsworth for overseas and commanded the regiment during more than half the period of active operations, when he was transferred to other duty, being succeeded by Colonel Franklin W. Ward, Division Adjutant. Of the three Majors Couchman went overseas with the regiment and served with it until October, 1918, when he was assigned to other duty. Major Turnbull went overseas but was later detached to the Army School of the Line and General Staff College, from which he was graduated, returning to the division and serving for a time as Brigade Adjutant of the 54th Brigade. Major Chorman went overseas and served with the regiment

until detached for duty as an expert in the chemical warfare service.

The command of the 54th Brigade went to Brigadier General James W. Lester, who had most successfully commanded a brigade of the division during the Mexican border service, while to the 53d Brigade there was assigned Brigadier General Robert E. L. Michie of the Regular Army.

The other officers assigned to these and other units of the division are mentioned in General Orders No. 9, already referred to and included in the Appendix as Exhibit 13.

Between the date of the reorganization of the division and its departure for France there were many other changes in its officers. One of these was the promotion of Colonel Harry H. Bandholtz to the grade of Brigadier General and his departure on February 9th to Camp McClellan, Anniston, Ala., to take over command of the 58th Brigade, 29th Division. Others will be referred to in the progress of the story of the division.



*Rifle range, Camp Wadsworth*



*The long, long trail. Forced marches of from three to ten days' duration put the boys in trim for the more rigorous marching overseas*

The transfer of the enlisted men from the various regiments to those selected to constitute the tactical division left such regiments largely skeletonized. Some of these skeletonized regiments had a fine record of previous service. These were notably the 12th and 14th Infantry regiments, both of which served with great distinction during the Civil War. Colonel Reginald L. Foster, commanding the 12th Infantry, paraded his regiment before sending away the majority of his officers and men to their new units. The men of the 14th, equally loyal to their regiment, were paraded by Colonel James R. Howlett before leaving the regiment for their new assignments. In each regiment so depleted, there was left a nucleus of officers and men to maintain the entity of the unit. For some weeks the policy of the War Department, as it concerned these excess regiments, was not known, but finally orders were received that they were to be filled up by drafted men and organized as pioneer infantry regiments and anti-aircraft machine gun battalions. Under this scheme of reorganization for the excess regiments the 1st Infantry became the 1st Pioneer Infantry, the 10th Infantry the 51st Pioneer Infantry, the 12th the 52d Pioneer Infantry, the 14th the 2d Pioneer Infantry, the 47th the 53d Pioneer Infantry, the 71st the 54th Pioneer Infantry and the 74th the 55th Pioneer Infantry.

The reorganization, it will be noted, hit the 1st New York Cavalry and Squadron A particularly hard. These two fine cavalry commands, possessed of fine traditions and a high morale, were highly trained and efficient cavalry units at full strength. They had a national reputation for efficiency. They had been on the Mexican border during 1916. Indeed, the 1st Cavalry had not returned to New York State until the spring of 1917 and were back but a few weeks when they mobilized for service in the World War. Under the reorganization plan they ceased to be cavalry and became machine gunners. Naturally they were downcast. Their life preparation for cavalry service in war was apparently to be scrapped. The alternative was to remain as cavalry and go to the border to watch the Rio Grande while building hopes for ultimate cavalry service abroad. But these units were too valuable for that. The very qualities which made them such efficient cavalry units were the qualities needed in the machine gun battalions, namely, intelligence, boldness, skill and pride of organization. Colonel Charles I. Debevoise of the 1st Cavalry and Major William R. Wright were therefore told by the Division Commander to back the change by the power of their very great qualities of leadership. This they did in most loyal and successful fashion. The men responded. In each unit there was a mock ceremony and an actual burial of a yellow hat cord, to signify the end of their cavalry service. As to the handsome manner in which these organizations measured up to the requirements of their new service their battle records are abundant proof.

Shortly after the reorganization of the division was under way, the War Department began to make calls upon the Camp Commander for the transfer elsewhere of officers and men who possessed special capacity or experience in particular fields of activity. It was forcibly emphasized by the experience then accruing that modern war cannot be waged by an army



made up of the old-fashioned trigger-puller type of soldier. The army was a complex and vast organism. No man could know all of its parts and complexities. In every field there must be experts in charge and the efforts in all fields must be controlled and coordinated by expert staff work. Very largely is the accomplishment of modern war the result of activities that are normally civilian activities—the maintenance and operation of shipping lines, of railways, repair plants, supply depots, telegraph and telephone lines. Great fleets of motor trucks have to be maintained and operated, animal hospitals established, water supply plants, often on a scale required for an American city, installed, while from almost every field of human endeavor experts are needed to initiate, improvise, apply or develop their specialty in its relation to the requirements of the military situation. The National Guard divisions were veritable treasuries of this skilled personnel, and they had in addition the needed knowledge of military customs, habits and methods, so essential in the application of industrial expertness to the special needs of the military service. Hence followed what became unofficially known as the War Department “raids” on the divisions for this needed personnel. In the case of the 27th Division, due to the extraordinary character of a substantial percentage of its enlisted personnel, some thousands of non-commissioned officers and private soldiers had already secured commissions in the army. The New York National Guard furnished more than 5,000 officers to the American army in the World War. That will give some idea of the strain to which the division had already been subjected. Fortunately the earlier shortages were immediately made up by drawing upon the other New York units at the camp, but the “raids” were so heavy and continuous that soon this source of supply was depleted.

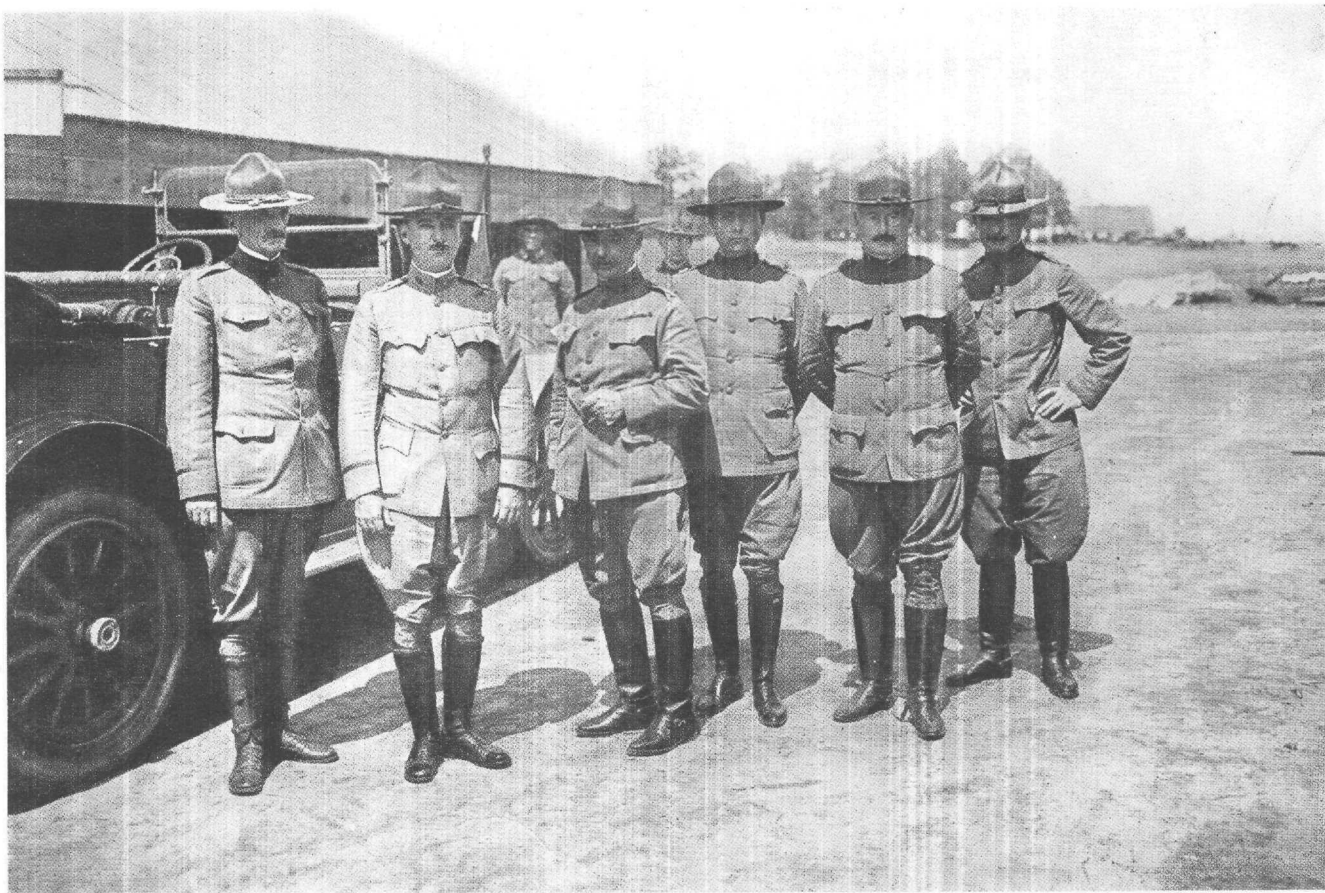
One of these man-power requisitions called for 275 enlisted men who spoke French, to be transferred to a unit destined for military police service overseas. As most of our men of this class were high-type young men of college training, many of whom had been in the division for a considerable time and had become expert in their military specialties, the division, and in consequence the army, lost the services of many trained soldiers as a result of this requisition. Later, in France, we occasionally saw some of these men walking the streets as military policemen in the ports of embarkation in France.

Another requisition took from the division at one time 532 enlisted men needed elsewhere as motor mechanics. The guard officers never could understand the policy which took away from the combat division thousands of trained soldiers, selected originally for their physical fitness and martial qualities and in whose development as soldiers there had been expended much money and effort. Certainly there were many thousands of motor mechanics available through the draft to perform the non-combat work in shops and repair stations behind the lines and in the S. O. S. in France without breaking into the organism and damaging the efficiency of combat units by taking from them automatic riflemen, machine gunners, signal men, physical instructors, bayonet experts, etc., who were more valuable to the government in these rôles than they could be in the performance of work

in the field of their former civilian occupations. Many draft craftsmen and skilled mechanics relieved from military service on account of minor physical defects should have been required to render non-combat service in the army so that the combat personnel could have been relieved from these disheartening and unwise demands. The combat troops supply the battle casualties. They should not in addition be called upon to supply personnel for the service troops whose function is to serve the combat units. Exception, of course, should be made in the case of disabled soldiers whose disabilities do not prevent non-combat service.

This subject of the so-called raids upon the combat divisions is mentioned in this story because it is one of those matters which do not appear in textbooks on organization and training of military forces for war, but which is nevertheless one of great importance in the effect upon morale and efficiency and as well upon the conservation of the combat man power of the country. In another war it will recur. Those who demand the men expert in the industries are those who are close to the authority which can direct the necessary transfers from the combat units. They want skilled men and with the least delay and annoyance to themselves. They are not primarily interested in the combat forces which theoretically they are expected to serve, but in their own technical missions. Their reasons for the transfers seem plausible to the ordering authority in the absence of a hearing given the commanders of the combat units concerned, and most often they have their way to the detriment of the army as a whole. This subject might well be covered by drastic orders upon the outbreak of another war, for the tendency of those in authority in the "services," which are supposed to exist for serving the fighting men at the front, is to fight their own wars. Whether their operations become known as the "Battle of Washington" or the "Battle of Paris," or by the name of some other back area, is important only as indicating the feeling of the combat troops who often felt that service troops took advantage of their positions and were not adequately checked. The doughboys' idea was that it took seven men behind the man with the bayonet and bullet to keep the latter going. On this theory he assumed that seven bars of chocolate and seven boxes of cigarettes should be sent to him every time it was expected to have one bar and one box reach him in the trenches. His idea was that beginning in America, each of the supporting echelons would take its one-seventh share. What the doughboy bitterly complained about was that he often failed to receive even his one-seventh share under this strange arrangement.

The story of the reorganization of the division would not be complete without some mention of the manner in which the so-called excess organizations were affected by the reorganization. Reference has already been made to the fact that these regiments became more or less skeletonized as a result of so many of their officers and men being transferred to units of the tactical division. When these skeletonized regiments received the new drafts, the strength of the troops at Camp Wadsworth became so great that it was necessary to separate the headquarters organization of the 27th Division from that of the remainder of the camp. Accordingly a camp head-



*Commanding General and members of his staff at Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, South Carolina. Left to right: Brigadier General Charles L. Phillips, Major General John F. O'Ryan, Colonel H. H. Bandholtz, Captain Edwin W. Moore, Lieutenant Colonel Henry S. Sternberger, Lieutenant Colonel J. Mayhew Wainwright*

quarters was established and separate records kept covering the administration, discipline and supply of units at the camp which were not part of the 27th Division. Major General O'Ryan therefore had a double rôle of Camp and Division Commander.

In the spring of 1918 the strength of units at the camp aggregated about 40,000 officers and men. It was most important that the training of all units should progress with the utmost speed and efficiency and the continued training of the 27th Division should not be interfered with by demands upon the time of the division's officers growing out of the training needs of other organizations. In like manner the latter organizations were not to be neglected in relation to their training because of the demands made upon the headquarters staff by the activities of the 27th Division.



*Major General Guy Carleton, commanding Provisional Depot for Corps and Army Troops*

Early in January, therefore, the War Department directed the organization of all units other than the 27th Division into the Provisional Depot for Corps and Army Troops and shortly thereafter Brigadier General Guy Carleton, formerly of the regular cavalry, reported for assignment to command the Provisional Depot for Corps and Army Troops. Other officers were assigned by the War Department to assist General Carleton in the administration, supply and training of the corps and army troops. These were Brigadier General Christopher T. O'Neill, formerly of the Pennsylvania

National Guard; Brigadier General E. Leroy Sweetser, formerly of the Massachusetts Coast Artillery; Brigadier General William Wilson, formerly commanding the 4th Brigade of the New York Division, and Brigadier General Randolph A. Richards, formerly of the Wisconsin National Guard.



General Carleton, therefore, took over the immediate command and training of all units other than the 27th Division, which left the camp commander free to devote his time to the 27th Division, except in so far as the nominal duties of Camp Commander interfered. General Carleton, a most efficient officer, soon established a separate headquarters and organized an efficient staff to administer and train his command. Colonel John H. Gohn of the Regular Army was assigned as his Chief of Staff. One of the best officers in the old New York Division, Major Andrew E. Tuck of the 3d New York Infantry, went to him as Adjutant.

A very large number of young men well fitted for military service and affiliated traditionally or sentimentally with one or more of the organizations of the division, had withheld final action in relation to their enlistment because of rumors that particular regiments were to be broken up. They did not wish to join a regiment which was not to see service abroad. The process of reorganization served to justify this attitude in the minds of these young men and it was not until the reorganization had been completed that this class were ready to select and enlist in the regiment of their choice. But shortly after the division had arrived at Camp Wadsworth an order was received from the War Department which occasioned surprise and comment. It was to the effect that no recruiting would be permitted for National Guard units. The war was on—every day to be gained in the training of recruits was desirable. The recruits were available by voluntary enlistment in large numbers for the guard divisions. Why then this extraordinary order? No official reason has ever been forthcoming, but the criticism was constantly heard that the recruiting field was to be left to the Regular Army free from National Guard competition. If this was the motive back of the order it is not believed that it served its purpose. The two forces recruited from different fields. It is not believed that the Regular Army units gained many recruits from the National Guard field, even though the National Guard units were not permitted to recruit. The order apparently caused much resentment throughout the National Guard of the country. Whether with justification or not, it was assumed to be an order not in the interest of the army or of the country.

It was not until the spring of 1918, and after repeated requests, that the order was revoked and we were given authority to recruit by voluntary enlistment, it being specifically prescribed, however, that no men within the draft age could be recruited. Hence the recruits received were composed of youngsters under twenty-one years of age or older men past thirty-one. In a short space of time about 1,200 men, a percentage of them ex-soldiers, were enlisted in New York State and transported to Spartanburg and placed in a separate camp for special intensive training. The recruits constituting this detachment were most intelligent and zealous. Their development progressed rapidly. It was planned to keep them in the training camp for a longer period of time than was actually accorded them. Orders, however, were received in April for the overseas movement of the division and in consequence the detachment was broken up and the men assigned to the various units of the division.



