

CHAPTER XIII  
MEXICAN BORDER SERVICE 1916-17

THE MEXICAN SITUATION 1910-1916—NATIONAL DEFENSE ACT OF 1916—NATIONAL GUARD “CALLED” INTO THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES, JUNE 18, 1916—COLORADO’S QUOTA—MOBILIZATION AT THE RIFLE RANGE, GOLDEN, COLORADO—REORGANIZATION OF THE 1ST INFANTRY, C. N. G.—MUSTER-IN TO THE FEDERAL SERVICE—INTENSIVE TRAINING—DEPARTURE FOR THE MEXICAN BORDER—BORDER PATROL DUTY AT DOUGLAS, ARIZONA—TO FORT D. A. RUSSELL, WYOMING—RETAINED IN FEDERAL SERVICE—RETURN TO COLORADO—DETACHED DUTIES.

General Porfirio Diaz assumed the presidency of Mexico in 1876, and remained the virtual dictator of that country until 1910. Dissatisfaction with his rule, however, had been steadily growing, and in November of the latter year a revolt led by Francisco Madero broke out in Chihuahua. The revolution was successful, and Madero was chosen president of Mexico on November 6, 1911, one year later. His rule, however, was short-lived. Revolutions broke out in various parts of the country, and Madero having been deserted by his military leader, Victoriano Huerta, was deposed and finally murdered. Huerta then became provisional president. No sooner had he taken office, when a counter-revolution, headed by Venustiano Carranza, governor of Coahuila broke out. The revolt spread rapidly, and Huerta’s position was made more difficult by the fact that the United States Government refused to recognize him as president on account of charges that he had been responsible for Madero’s death.

The trouble in Mexico had a very disturbing effect on the border along the Rio Grande, and on March 6, 1911, orders were issued for the concentration of a “maneuver division” at San Antonio, Texas. This division, composed entirely of regular troops, together with a provisional brigade of Coast Artillery troops at Galveston, Texas, remained on duty in Texas until early in 1912, when they were ordered to their home stations. But the border raids still continued, and troops that had hardly had time to settle down in their regular garrisons were again hurried to the border. At length, the trouble became so acute that orders were issued on February 21, 1913, for the concentration at Texas City and Galveston of the Second Division under Major General Wm. H. Carter, a force of approximately 11,450 officers and men. Other troops were concentrated at strategic points along the international boundary, and the task of guarding 1,600 miles of border from the Gulf of Mexico to thirty miles west of Nogales, Arizona, was an onerous one indeed.

Huerta was formally elected president of Mexico in October 1913, and despite President Wilson’s protests the election was declared valid. The revolution of Carranza continued to spread. Francisco (Pancho) Villa and Alvaro Obregon assisted Carranza, and by March, 1914, the Constitutionalists, as Carranza’s party called themselves, were in virtual control of all the northern states of Mexico. Huerta’s position, at best a precarious one, was made still more dangerous by the so-called Tampico incident. American marines at



Tampico, Mexico, were arrested while landing from a launch flying the American flag. President Wilson demanded an apology which was refused. This resulted in the sending of American war ships to Vera Cruz, followed by a bombardment of the city, which was captured on April 21, 1914. On April 23, Brigadier General Funston was ordered to Vera Cruz with an expeditionary force of 225 officers and 3,832 enlisted men of the regular army. Here he was joined by 113 officers and 3,333 enlisted men of the U. S. Marine Corps, and the city was placed under the absolute control of the American force. Actual war with Mexico was averted only by the action of Argentina, Brazil, and Chili, who offered their services as mediators. Huerta resigned the presidency in the face of continued successes of revolutionists, on July 15, 1914. After a brief interval, Carranza became provisional president, and almost immediately Villa turned against him. Carranza resigned, and Villa practically controlled the entire country. However, the Constitutionalist forces under General Obregon defeated Villa at the battle of Celaya, in April 1915, and Carranza again became the supreme power in Mexico. Carranza was recognized by the United States government, and this apparently incensed Villa all the more. The killing of defenseless Americans in Mexico and along the border increased, and finally on March 9, 1916, Villa rode across the border with about 1,500 bandits and attacked the town of Columbus, N. M. He looted the place with his usual brutality to women and children, killing 11 civilians and 9 soldiers, wounding many others, and burning several buildings. A detachment of the Thirtieth U. S. Cavalry, stationed at Columbus, eventually fought Villa off, and pursued the raiders into Mexico killing 40 and wounding several more. Inasmuch as Carranza had shown himself incapable of protecting the border and American lives it was found necessary to at once send a punitive expedition under Brigadier General John J. Pershing into Mexico to capture or destroy Villa and his bandits. In spite of Carranza's protests the expedition crossed the border on March 15, and at once began to encounter all kinds of difficulties. To quote from Ganoe's "History of the United States Army"; "the march south was exceedingly difficult both because Carranza refused the use of the railroads to the troops and because the villages, in most cases could not be used. The available motor truck and pack train supply was far from adequate, almost disgraceful. As the troops proceeded farther and farther from their base, their hardships increased. The expedition, too, had orders from Washington which embarrassed it. It was to proceed against Villa without occupying towns and without coming into conflict with Carranza forces. It was difficult proposition thus to march in the waste places and to keep out of the way of the Mexicans who were actively hostile to the Americans."

The search for Villa was futile, and the nearest our troops ever got to him was in an engagement at Guerrero where Colonel Dodd with about 400 men of the Seventh Cavalry defeated the Villistas without, however, capturing the elusive "Pancho". Skirmishes with bandits and regular Mexican troops were frequent, and despite all precautions raids on border towns continued. Practically all regular troops within the continental limits of the United States were concentrated on the border, and to augment these forces the President in May, 1916, directed the governors of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to mobilize the National Guard of their respective states and have them report for duty under the Commanding General of the Southern Department.

The critical situation on the border brought home to the American people the utter inadequacy of our forces to cope with even a minor emergency, and Congress, sensing the popular feeling, on June 3, 1916, passed a National Defense Act which was the greatest advance in military legislation that this country had ever experienced. Its provisions were far reaching, and it at last



gave the country a really concrete and workable military policy. It would be tedious and unnecessary to enter into the details of the act in this history, but it might perhaps be well to call attention to the more important provisions affecting the National Guard. Briefly these were that the National Guard was to be a definite component of the Army of the United States when "called" or "drafted" into the federal service, and provisions were also made for the payment of this force for armory and field training in time of peace. A dual oath of allegiance to the United States and to the state was prescribed for both officers and enlisted men, and measures towards greater efficiency in organization, training, and administration were also incorporated in the new law.

Meantime affairs in Mexico and along the border were steadily growing worse, and the situation at last became so alarming that the President on June 18, 1916, issued a proclamation "calling" practically the entire National Guard of the nation into the federal service. The official telegram from the Secretary of War to the Governor of Colorado announcing the call reached Denver shortly after midnight June 19, 1916, and from which I quote the following:

"Hon. George A. Carlson, Governor of Colorado

"Having in view the possibility of further aggression upon the territory of the United States from Mexico and the necessity for the proper protection of that frontier, the president has thought proper to exercise the authority vested in him by the constitution and laws and call out the organized militia and the national guard necessary for that purpose.

"I am, in consequence, instructed by the president to call into the service of the United States forthwith thru you the following units of the organized militia and the national guard of the state of Colorado which the president directs shall be assembled at the state mobilization point Rifle Range near Golden (or at the places to be designated to you by the Commanding General, Central Department) for muster into the service of the United States: two battalions of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, two batteries of field artillery, two companies of engineers, one company of signal corps, and one field hospital. \* \* \*."

The call received immediate response, and Adjutant General Harry P. Gamble under date of June 19, 1916, issued General Orders No. 25, directing the mobilization of the Colorado National Guard, extracts from which follow:

"II. It is further ordered that the First Squadron of Cavalry, National Guard of Colorado, Companies A and B, Engineers; Batteries A and B, Field Artillery; Company A, Signal Corps; Company No. 1, First Field Hospital, and Companies C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, and L, First Infantry, and such officers of the Medical Corps as may be necessary, be mobilized at their respective home stations, for federal service there to await further instructions.

"III. Upon the completion of the mobilization, all organizations commanders will report to The Adjutant General."

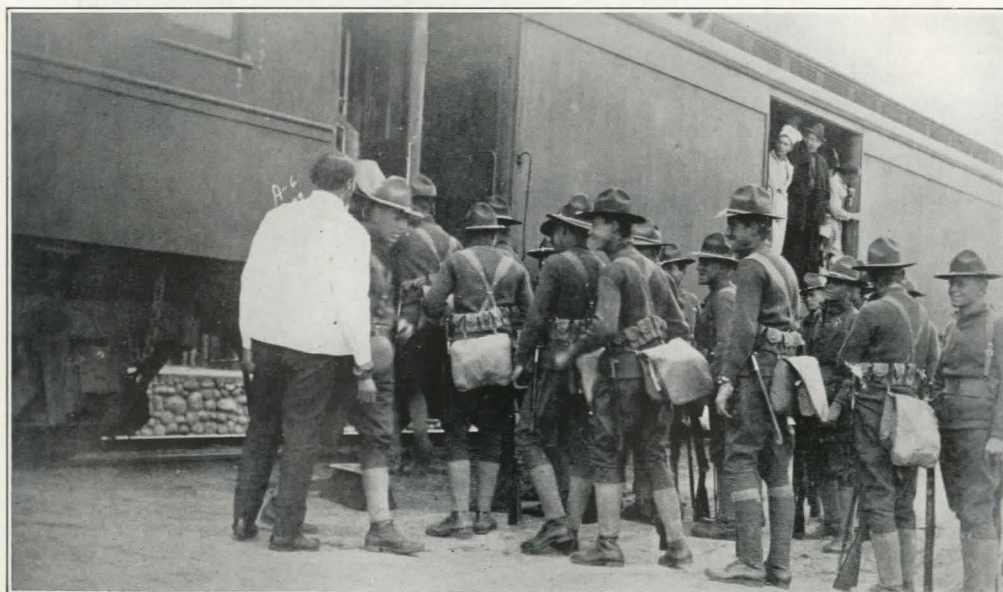
Inasmuch as the President's call specifically restricted the infantry to two battalions, and in view of the fact that Companies A and B of the First Infantry, C. N. G., had become practically ineffective through reduced strength, these two companies were not included in the call. All Denver organizations were at once ordered to the Rifle Range near Golden, and the companies throughout the state directed to recruit to minimum strength (3 officers and 65 enlisted men) before orders would be issued for their removal to the mobilization camp. This order was later modified and by the middle of July all units included in the call were encamped at the Rifle Range. Active preparations





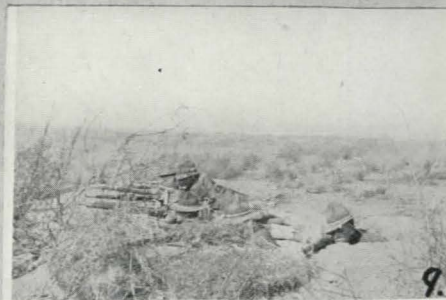
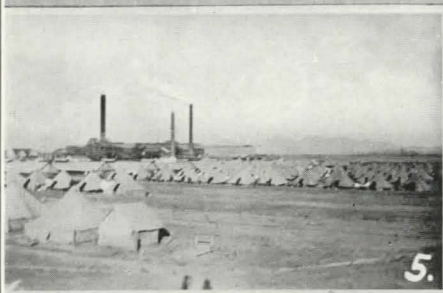
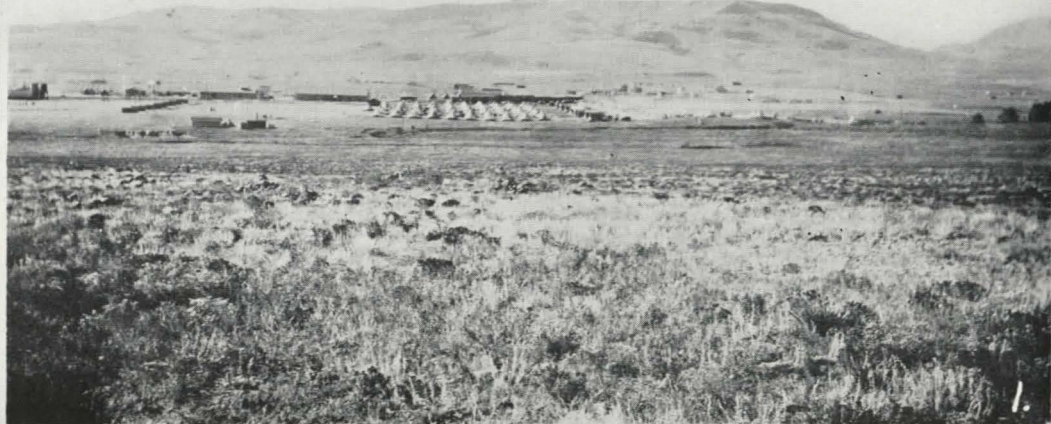
CO. B, 1ST SEP. BN. COLO. INF. (LATER CO. B, 157TH INF.),  
Mobilization Camp, Rifle Range, Golden, Colo., Sept., 1916.

Officers: Capt. J. H. Nankivell, Commnd.; 1st Lieut. S. H. Cliff; 2nd Lieut. W. N. Clinton.



CO. B, 1ST SEP. BN. COLO. INFANTRY,  
Entraining at the Rifle Range for Mexican Border Service, October 13, 1916.





1. Mobilization Camp, Colorado National Guard, Rifle Range, Golden, Colo., June to October, 1916. 2. 1st Sep. Bn. Colo. Inf. on practice march to Morrison, Colo. 3. Co. B, 1st Sep. Bn. Colo. Inf. on the hike to Morrison. 4. The Firing Line, maneuvers on South Table Mountain near Rifle Range, Sept. 1916. 5. Camp of Colorado Troops, Douglas, Arizona, Nov. 1916. 6. Watching movement of Mexican Troops across the border, Douglas, Arizona, Nov. 1916. 7. Company B, street, Douglas, Arizona. 8. Majors P. J. Hamrock and J. B. Goodman and Lieut. W. N. Clinton at Slaughter's Ranch, looking over the Carranza-Villa Battlefield east of Agua Prieta, Sonora. 9. In the Outpost Trenches.



were at once instituted for muster in, and by July 29th the last of the infantry organizations were in the federal service. Company I of Fort Morgan had reported at the camp in response to the call, but, as in the case of Company A in 1898, dissatisfaction at the proposed distribution of the officers and enlisted men of the organization, resulted in the refusal of the company as a unit to be mustered in to the federal service. As a consequence the company was ordered to return to its home station on July 14, 1916.

Prior to muster in, the letter designations of all the infantry companies, except H, were changed in order to conform to the two battalion organization of the call, and at the completion of muster in the organization of the battalions was as follows:

FIRST SEPARATE BATTALION COLORADO INFANTRY

Major P. J. Hamrock, Commanding.

1st Lieut. A. M. Head, Battalion Adjutant.

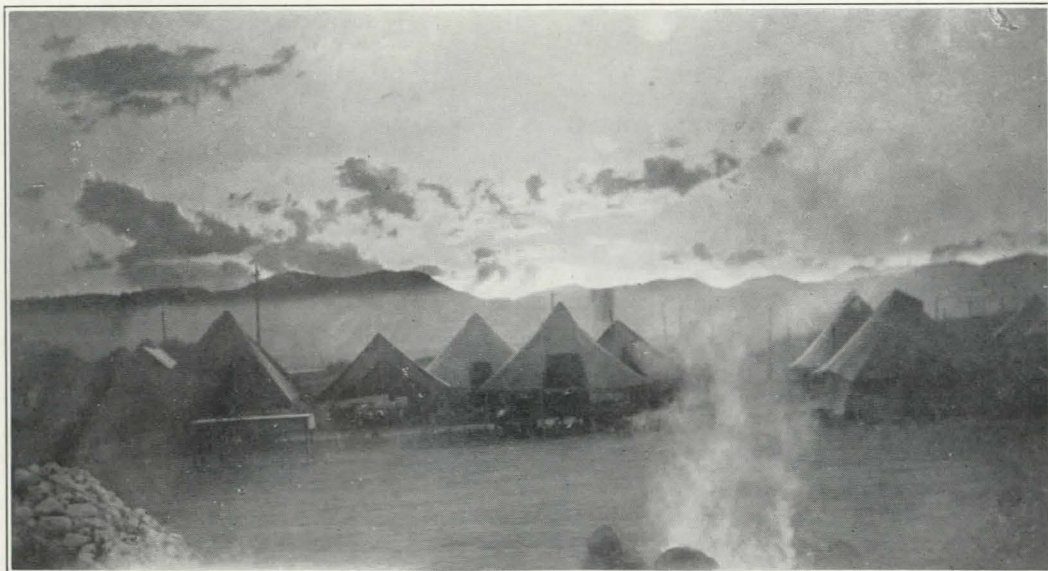
Company A, Denver, formerly Company L, Captain C. H. Doke, commanding.

Company B, Denver, formerly Company G, Captain J. H. Nankivell, commanding.

Company C, Canon City, formerly Company F, Captain A. Livingstone, commanding.

Company D, Lamar, formerly Company C, Captain E. D. Householder, commanding.

Sanitary Detachment, 1st Lieut. S. H. Savage, M. C., Commanding.



"SUNSET AND EVENING GLOW"  
Mobilization Camp, Rifle Range, near Golden, Colo., August, 1916.

## SECOND SEPARATE BATTALION, COLORADO INFANTRY

Major John B. Goodman, Jr., Commanding.

1st Lieut. Raymond B. Long, Battalion Adjutant.

Company E, Delta, formerly Company D, Captain John Charlesworth, commanding.

Company F, Rocky Ford, formerly Company E, Captain Joe G. Lill, commanding.

Company G, Fowler, formerly Company K, Captain P. P. Newlon, commanding.

Company H, Seibert, no letter change, Captain Corra D. Hutchens, commanding.

Sanitary Detachment, 1st Lieut. F. J. Pierce, M. C., commanding.

Intensive training had been instituted almost at the beginning of the camp, and in the months that followed the Colorado troops were fast developed into splendidly drilled and disciplined organizations. They were put through the whole gamut of training from basic recruit work and target practice, to tactical exercises by battalion under assumed active service conditions. Over-night practice marches offered a welcome relief from the routine of the permanent camp, and on occasions the whole command had opportunities of parading in Denver to show the citizens of the capital city how really an efficient force their citizen soldiers had become. The long months of training at the Rifle Range camp were becoming just a little wearisome to men eager for duty<sup>1</sup> in a more active field, and it was with intense satisfaction that word was received on October 10, 1916, that the Colorado troops were to move to the border at once.

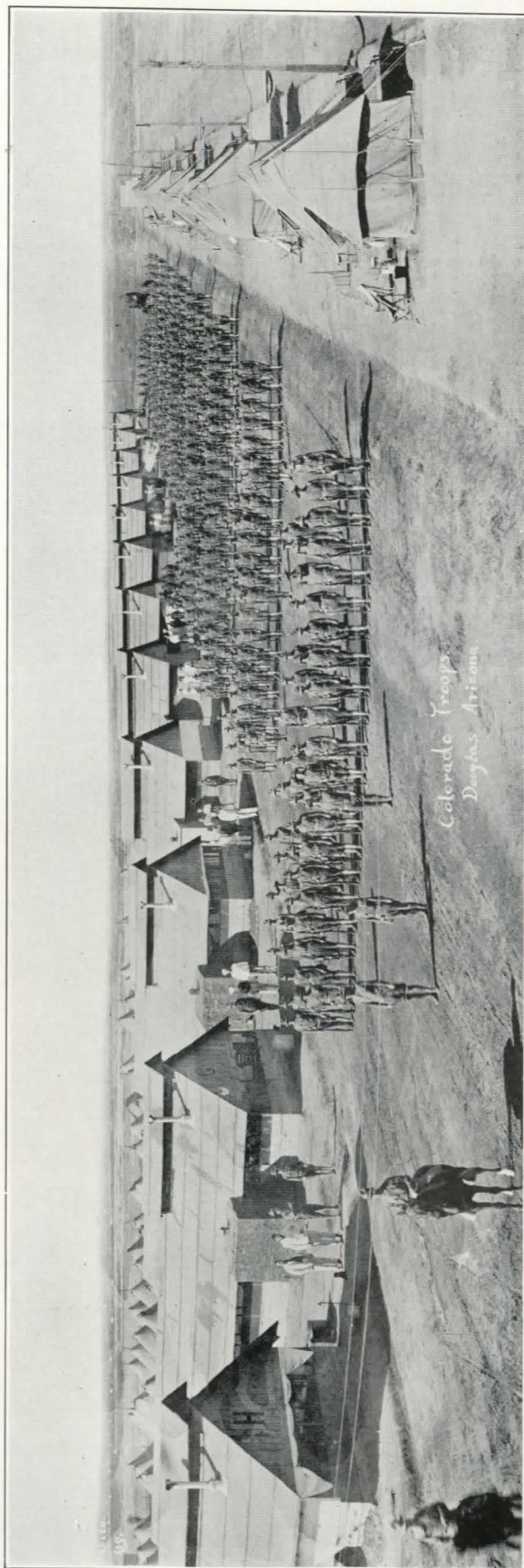
On Friday, October 13, 1916, the First and Second Separate Battalions Colorado Infantry, 23 officers and 513 enlisted men, entrained at the Rifle Range, Golden, Colorado, for service on the Mexican Border, and arrived at Douglas, Arizona, on October 16, 1916. Here they established camp on the same ground recently vacated by the 1st Montana Infantry, and near the Calumet and Arizona copper smelter just west of the town. The camp was within a few hundred yards of the international boundary line, and the business of guarding the border became an actuality from the moment of arrival. Outposts and interior guards were established, and the two battalions settled down to carry out their assigned mission as part of the Mexican Border patrol.

The Colorado Field Hospital Company and a troop of Montana cavalry were encamped with the Colorado Infantry, and Major P. J. Hamrock commanded the camp. The regular army troops were encamped to the east of the town at Camp Harry J. Jones, and other National Guard troops from New Jersey and Alabama occupied camps to the north-west of Douglas between the Colorado camp and Camp Harry J. Jones.

Camp life at Douglas for the Colorado troops was a continual round of intensive training and guard and outpost duty interspersed with frequent practice marches. Athletics were not neglected, and the Colorado football team played in the garrison league with the regular army teams. Affairs along the border were still in a very unsettled condition, and eternal vigilance was necessary to prevent any untoward incidents as the following extract from an official communication from Headquarters Arizona District, dated October 27, 1916, will show:

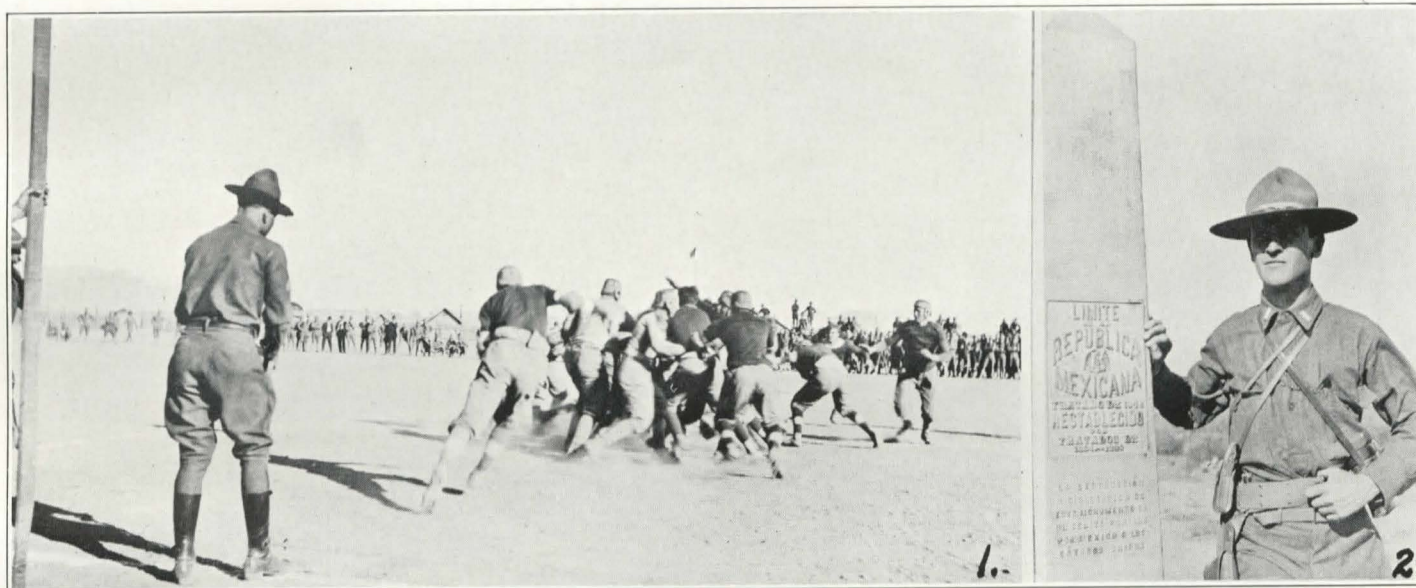
<sup>1</sup> Quite in keeping with the regimental motto.





1ST AND 2ND SEPARATE BATTALIONS, COLORADO INFANTRY, DOUGLAS, ARIZONA, NOVEMBER, 1916.





"ACTION"

Football Game Between Colorado Infantry and 22nd U. S. Infantry,  
at Camp Harry J. Jones, Douglas, Ariz., November, 1916.

1ST LIEUT. "BIFF" CLIFF,  
1st Colo. Inf., takes a look over  
the border.



"Information received by superior headquarters calls for the utmost vigilance at all stations on the Mexican border to repel possible raids of irregular Mexican forces into the territory of the United States. Rumors and information from many sources are persistent in the warning that influences are at work in the United States to bring about such raids. You will therefore take advantage of every source of information and take every precaution to safeguard American lives and property at your station. Be on the lookout for any element on our side of the line which might possibly instigate a move against the United States by cooperation of such elements with irregular forces on the Mexican side. \* \* \*".

The encounter at Carrizal, Mexico on June 20, 1916, between a detachment of the 10th U. S. Cavalry and regular Mexican troops in which 40 American soldiers were killed and wounded and 24 captured, marked the end of actual hostilities of a grave nature, and Carranza, thoroughly alarmed at the large American force concentrated on the border and in Mexico, decided to seek peace. He asked President Wilson for a conference, which was granted, and a commission consisting of three Americans and three Mexicans met in New London Conn. on September 6, 1916, to work out a plan for the adjustment of all disputes between the two countries. As a result of the conference Brigadier General Pershing and his punitive expedition were withdrawn from Mexico during February, 1917, and the National Guard was relieved from duty on the border.

The Colorado troops left Douglas, Arizona, on March 18, 1917, enroute to Fort D. A. Russell, Wyo., (now Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyo.) for muster out of the federal service. Their stay in Douglas had been of tremendous value to them in the matter of training in view of the service that the future held, and that they had done their duty well, let the following extract from a Douglas, Arizona, newspaper of March 18, 1917, tell:

"By tomorrow afternoon, Camp Harry Clark, located near the Calumet and Arizona smelter, and the former camp of the Montana National Guard, will have passed out of existence, for the two battalions of infantry and the field hospital corps of the Colorado National Guard will entrain for their home state early this afternoon.

"Ever since their arrival on the border last October, immediately after the departure of the Montanans, the Colorado men have done their duty without a whimper, and have made themselves respected among all the business men as well as other citizens in the city with whom they have been associated.

"As Major Hamrock said, when every other National Guard faction on the border was crying to go home, 'We never asked to be sent down here, and we aren't going to ask to be sent home.' And that was the sentiment of every soldier.

"A local business man when talking to one of the officers voiced his appreciation of the fine lot of men in the Colorado infantry, and the young officer replied: 'Well, we were sent to the border to do our duty, every man knows what that duty is, and has done his best, and I guess there are lots of people in Douglas, who don't even know we are out there.'

"And that is probably the truth for they have been a quiet lot, they came without braggadocio and have been men and soldiers at all times.

"Inspecting army officers have highly commended the sanitary conditions of the Colorado camp, and have held it higher than many regular organizations,



also paying a pretty compliment to the New Jersey battery which just departed from here, saying the next to the Coloradoans that Battery C, New Jersey field artillery, was the finest camp, as far as sanitary conditions were concerned, as any regular or military camp on the border.

"The two battalions of Colorado infantry completed their annual practice shoot while here, and their scores were extremely commendable, according to men of the regular army. So it is with regret the people of Douglas will lose these hardy western men and soldiers from their midst, and they take off their hats to the men of Colorado."

The railroad journey to Fort D. A. Russell, Wyo., was uneventful except for a rousing welcome at 4:00 A. M. on the morning of March 21, 1917, at Denver, Colorado, when the troops were marched from the Union Depot to the capitol building for a dinner and reception arranged by the women relatives of the guardsmen. Leaving Denver at 7:00 A. M. the troops arrived at the Wyoming fort at 2:00 P. M., March 21, 1917. Preparations were immediately made for the muster out from the federal service of the two battalions, but before this could be accomplished orders were received on March 25th from the War Department to retain the Colorado Infantry in service. War with Germany seemed inevitable, and in view of this fact it was only logical that the Federal government should retain all of its trained forces in the service as a nucleus for the great army that the coming conflict would demand.

On April 3, 1917, the 1st Separate Battalion Colorado Infantry left Fort D. A. Russell for the Rifle Range, Golden, Colorado, with orders to protect public utilities in and around the city of Denver. Detachments of Companies A and B were placed on duty guarding the Denver Water Works, and on May 14th the battalion, less detachments, was moved to Fort Logan, Colorado, for station. Meantime the 2nd Separate Battalion (less Company E) had been ordered to stations in Colorado likewise for the protection of public utilities. Companies G and H were ordered to Trinidad on April 23rd, battalion headquarters joining them there a few days later, and Company F was sent to Glenwood Springs.<sup>2</sup> Company E was retained on duty at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming until later in May when it joined the 1st Battalion at Fort Logan, Colorado.

<sup>2</sup> A detachment of Company H under Lieut. J. P. Donovan was ordered to Alamosa for duty at this time.