

CHAPTER II  
THE 168th FIELD HOSPITAL  
(FIRST COLORADO FIELD HOSPITAL COMPANY)  
117th SANITARY TRAIN, 42nd (RAINBOW) DIVISION

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The First Colorado Field Hospital Company left Camp Baldwin, Overland Park, Denver, Colorado, by rail, at 4:30 P. M., September 8, 1917, and arrived at Camp Mills, Long Island, New York, on the morning of September 12, 1917. Here it was assigned to the field hospital section of the 117th Sanitary Train, 42nd (Rainbow) Division, as the 168th Field Hospital.

The 42d Division, one of the first American divisions to be assembled for the World War, was drawn from twenty-six of the states and the District of Columbia, and comprised twenty-seven selected units of the National Guard of the respective states and district. The 117th Sanitary Train represented seven of these states and the District of Columbia as follows: The 165th Ambulance Company from New Jersey; the 166th Ambulance Company from Tennessee; the 167th Ambulance Company from Oklahoma, and the 168th Ambulance Company from Michigan; the 165th Field Hospital from the District of Columbia; the 166th Field Hospital from Nebraska; the 167th Field Hospital from Oregon, and the 168th Field Hospital from Colorado.

During its stay at Camp Mills the 168th Field Hospital, as with other units of the division, completed its organization according to the new war-time tables (an animal drawn field hospital company of 6 officers and 88 enlisted men), underwent intensive basic military training and participated in practice marches and reviews.

The 42d Division started its overseas movement on October 18, 1917, and the 168th Field Hospital was among the first units of the division to leave Camp Mills. The company entrained at Mineola, Long Island, at 9:00 A. M., October 18th, and arrived at Hoboken, New Jersey, via rail and ferry at 2:00 P. M., of the same day. There it embarked on the *S. S. Covington* at 4:00 P. M., and the convoy, which was made up of the following transports in addition to the *Covington*:—the *S. S. President Lincoln*, the *S. S. President Grant*, the *S. S. Tenedaros*, the *S. S. Pastoris* and the *S. S. Mallory*—stood out to sea at 2:00 A. M., October 19th. Escorting the convoy was a cruiser and two destroyers, later joined by additional destroyers and a transformed German raider. The voyage across the Atlantic was uneventful, and the convoy anchored in the harbor of St. Nazaire, France, late at night, October 31, 1917. The *Covington* docked at 3:30 A. M., November 1, and the 168th Field Hospital finally disembarked from the transport at 2:00 P. M., on the 2nd, proceeding at once to Rest Camp No. 1 on the outskirts of the city.

On arrival in France the Rainbow Division (less artillery) was assigned for training purposes to what was known as the Vaucouleurs area, midway between Nancy on the east, and St. Dizier on the west. Accordingly at 8:00 P. M., on November 6, the 168th Field Hospital left Nazaire in the traditional box car troop train of France, "40 men or 8 horses" as the legend read on each diminutive car, and reached Mauvages in the new training area at 6:00 P. M., on the eighth. Here the company as part of the 117th Sanitary Train underwent fur-



ther intensive training. During the first two weeks the train was short of ambulances and other necessary equipment, and much improvisation was resorted to for technical training and the care of the sick of the division. For the latter purpose, on November 11, 1917, the 168th Field Hospital opened the first hospital to be operated by the 117th Sanitary Train in France. The building used for the hospital was a neglected, moldy, old chateau, and it took two days of hard scrubbing and cleaning to make it fit for use. An epidemic of mumps broke out among the 117th Engineers, who were also billeted in Mauvages, and with the ordinary sick there were 74 patients in the hospital when the 167th (Oregon) Field Hospital relieved the 168th on November 15th. On being relieved the company marched to Chalaines, twelve kilometers east of Mauvages, on November 17th, and opened hospital here in a fine old chateau overlooking the Meuse River. This hospital handled the sick from the division, many mumps, and the usual influenza and throat ailments. A detachment of medical officers and female nurses from Base Hospital No. 36 were attached to the 168th while it was operating at Chalaines. At this time, also, three four-mule teams and wagons with six Ford ambulances were issued to the company, and furnished the unit with much needed transportation and means of collecting patients from the regimental infirmaries.

During the stay at Chalaines the officers and men of the company had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with the French people and their ways. Sergeant Andrew L. Watne, 168th Field Hospital, in his diary, has the following to say of one incident that happened at Chalaines that reflects in some measure the reaction of our men to French ways. He says, "November 21st. A large barn filled with hay caught fire about 8:30 P. M., as I was just starting to do some type-work. The Town Crier made an awful racket with a herder's horn and drum, and our bugler blew fire call. All the town responded and formed a bucket line to river; we all had a bucket and worked until we were soaked and muddy. Americans did most of the work. The Frenchmen seemed to have no pep. Local fire department, hand pumps and men with brass helmets pulling it, arrived when fire was out." However, the men of the 168th soon made friends with the French villagers, and did much in the way of sight-seeing which included visits to nearby points of historical interest. In the valleys in which the Rainbow Division was now located Joan of Arc was born, had heard her mission, and had assembled her army for the liberation of her country. It was an inspiring atmosphere in which to train, and quoting from Major Wolf's story of the division, "The Rainbow was stirred with the very martial spirit that she had, in her lifetime, inspired in others. It worked hard and hoped the day when it would move out along these valleys to the line would be advanced."

On December 11 the division was ordered unexpectedly to the La Fauche area, 55 kilometers to the southwest. The 168th Field Hospital left Chalaines at 1:00 P. M., on the twelfth and, in full field equipment, marched via Maxey-sur-Vaise, Maxey-sur-Meuse, Domremy (the birthplace of Joan of Arc) and Goncourt, finally arriving at St. Blin in the new area on the fourteenth. Here it spent its first Christmas in France, and on December 26 the Rainbow Division commenced its march to still another training area at Rolampont between Chaumont and Langres. This march will never be forgotten by any of the men who participated therein, and there is no doubt that it was one of the most trying and arduous tasks with which the division was ever confronted. The march was a long one, and the roads were deep with snow with a slippery base and full of long grades. Quoting again from the story of the division: "Over an average of three full march days and 75 kilometers distance, the division bucked the ad-





(Photo by Signal Corps, U. S. Army)

## THE LONG, COLD MARCH BLIN TO ROLAMPONT, FRANCE

December 26-30, 1917.

versity of a blizzard and pushed steadily ahead on the slippery roads. It did its work uncomplainingly. Many a foot left a red trail on the snow and many a soldier, if not all, was chilled from start to finish of this magnificent effort. In the history of this division there is no page more full of courage and determination than that on which this journey is recorded. The columns, with gallantry and grit, drove ahead at least 25 kilometers a day and came in well closed and accounted for. \* \* \* It was all summed up by a soldier of the foot column who, limping and with his feet in rags, crossed the bridge at Rolampont. Sliding and slipping under the weight of his pack and covered with snow from the gale that he was combatting, 'Valley Forge—Hell!' he said, 'there ain't no such animal'." Just how the 168th Field Hospital fared on this march, let Sergeant Watne tell us through the medium of the diary previously referred to:

"Night of December 26 I walked up and down the hills in the snow trying to get my strength back and get the bronchial congestion worked out of my chest to carry pack without hurting too much. Morning of twenty-seventh up early, rolled field packs, everything we had, 3 blankets, extra suits underwear and uniform and shoes. Left St. Blin 9:45 A. M., hiking thru blinding snow storm until 10:00 P. M. Dinner corned bill and bread frozen. Hiked hours at a time and when allowed to rest all dropped like Eskimo dogs in the snow and got so stiff, hard to get up to help one another raise packs. Arrived Forcey all in at 10:00 P. M. \* \* \* The only thing that warmed us was a dish of hot corned beef slum and hot coffee—it never tasted so good before in my military life.

"December 28, 1917: Left Forcey 10:00 A. M., all foot-sore and swollen and shoes frozen, and marched thru heavy snow and ice arriving at Nogent 4:00 P. M., and didn't get billets until 6:30 and all unslung packs and walked around public square to keep from freezing our feet. Very cold. Slept on hard, cold floor miserably cold and some went to hospital next day. Most of us slept on our shoes to keep ice out but to little avail. All in and too cold to sleep. I

cut up a pine when no French were around and we built a fire and at 4 not being able to sleep went to drying some of the shoes and helped to get breakfast as cooks were pretty tired. Managed to "glom" onto a sack of dry wood for noon coffee just at last minute while the Frogs were "parlezvousing" about the condition and pay for billets. (Alvin P. Smith fell early in the day and the column parted marching on each side; he was then picked up and sent to hospital).

"December 29: Left Nogent 9:00 A. M.; quite a few of the boys didn't start and lots dropped their packs as last night was hard on all. \* \* \* Hiked thru heavy snow arriving at Rolampont 1:00 P. M. No billets until 4:30 P. M., and no supper; all footsore. \* \* \* The whole hike was not according to A. Regulations as we had very little rest so when we did we lay out like beaten dogs and got stiff from snow and cold. Some of the boys of Div. froze and also a couple mules froze to death, later reported.

"December 30: Left Rolampont 8:00 A. M. Hiked thru snow and it was icy underfoot from columns of troops and wagons, and footsore, the boys kept falling down and also the mules and they were all in. \* \* \* The hills were fierce. \* \* \* They marched us at attention up the steep hill into the historical walled city of Langres and after passing the 1st draw bridge or gate they stopped us that were left and took a snapshot. We tried to stand straight but from our necks down we must have been at parade rest. When we stopped for dinner I didn't think I could go on but after resting over noon I got all right but afternoon we linked a long stretch at 130 steps per min. by actual count. Some of us were whistling but we didn't feel like it. There was only one non-com carrying his pack and two others with us and one officer, Capt. B. W. Bancroft, and part of the way he carried Grant's pack. When we finally hobbled into Longeau we were all in and only about fifteen with packs, all the way. Arrived Longeau 1:00 P. M., December 30. \* \* \*"

The stay at Longeau was not a pleasant one; snow fell practically the whole time, and the weather was raw and bitterly cold. On January 7, 1918, the company was saddened by the death of Private Neil J. Sharp from bronchial pneumonia, and, quoting Sergeant Watne again, "The company was pretty blue, about seventeen sick in quarters and twenty in hospital, and then Neil's going." Drill and school every day, with one hike a week occupied the time of the 168th while at Longeau, and it was with little regret that orders were received to move to new billets at Humes just north of Langres. The march to Humes was made on January 19, and here the company was fortunate enough to secure much better quarters than those at Longeau. On February 14 the 117th Sanitary Train received its much needed organization field equipment, and the 168th Field Hospital was finally outfitted with its full complement of escort wagons, horses and mules. In fact the Colorado unit fell heir to all the mules and wagons held by the rest of the hospitals and became the motorless hospital of the 42d Division; thereafter, the 168th was facetiously referred to as the "Hundred and Galloping 68th." Captain R. C. Cook and First Lieutenant Joseph Snedec who had been detailed to attend the First Corps School at Gondrecourt in November, 1917, rejoined the company at Longeau shortly after January 1st, and on February 3, 1918, Private William H. Baker, 168th Field Hospital, was appointed First Lieutenant, Dental Corps.

The final phase of the division's training, the occupation of a so-called "quiet sector" on the Lorraine front, was now at hand, and on February 16, 1917, the 42d Division began its movement toward the Luneville, St. Clement and Baccarat sectors.



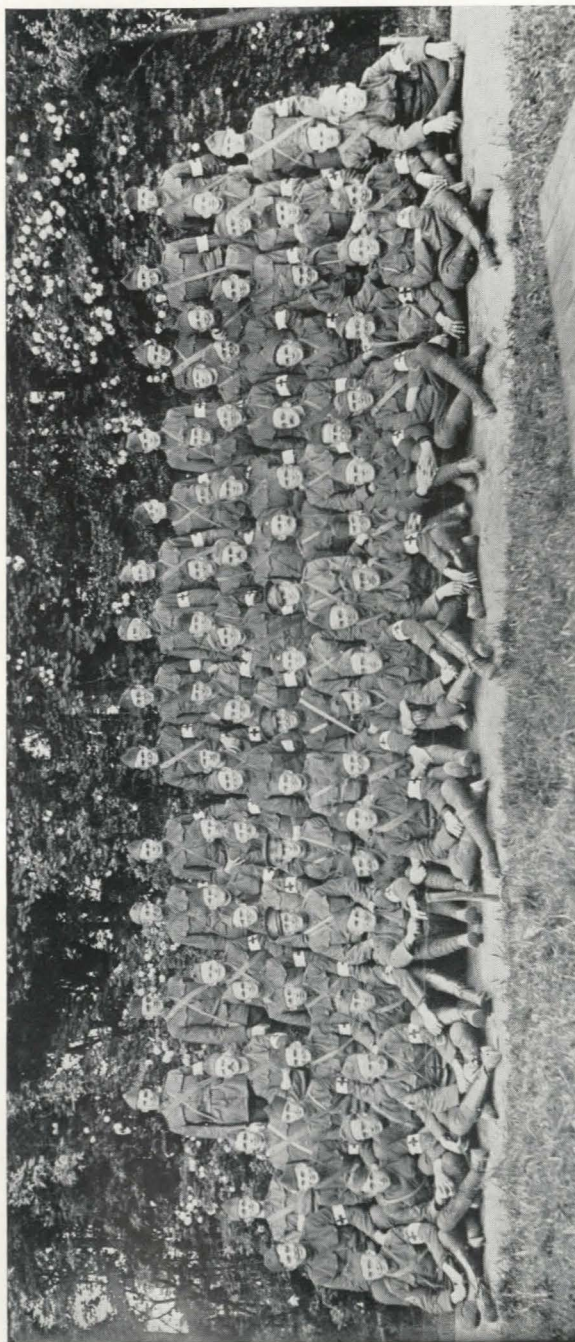
The 168th Field Hospital left Humes by marching at 5:00 P. M., February 17, arriving at Rolampont at 8:00 P. M., same day; here it entrained, and arrived at Moyon 7:30 P. M., on the eighteenth. Detraining, the company marched via Loromontzey to Baccarat, arriving at the latter point at 4:30 P. M., on February 22. The 42d Division was now split up and the various units attached for front line training to the French VIIth Army Corps which was temporarily holding the extreme right of the line in Lorraine on a front which extended from Dombasle to Baccarat. The Baccarat sector was held by the 128th French Division, and the 167th Infantry and 168th Infantry of the 42d American Division were attached to the French Division for training. The 168th Field Hospital was assigned to this sector, and its personnel detailed to the French hospitals for training and to assist in the care of the sick and wounded of the American troops in the sector. The advent of the American troops had transformed the hitherto quiet sectors into rather active fronts, and the subsequent trench raids, Allied and German, gave the 168th Field Hospital plenty of actual experience in the care of the resultant casualties.

From March 23 to 31, the company was relieved from duty in the line and was stationed at Menil, and when the Rainbow Division relieved the French 128th Division in the Baccarat sector on April 1, 1918, the 168th Field Hospital returned to Baccarat where it took over French Evacuation Hospital No. 21½. For the next three and a half months the 42d Division held the Baccarat sector



AMBULANCE DRESSING STATION, 117TH SANITARY TRAIN  
Epieds, France.

without relief, and sustained several determined assaults and heavy gas attacks by the enemy. The field hospitals of the division were continuously in service and in conjunction with the other units of the 117th Sanitary Train worked out a plan of evacuation that was a model for succeeding medical units in the sector. It was during this period that the 168th Field Hospital was put to a severe test by a sudden influx of patients with the so-called "three day fever." Every bed was filled and all the floor space used. Working beyond capacity required



168TH FIELD HOSPITAL, 117TH SANITARY TRAIN, 42ND DIVISION, BACCARAT, FRANCE, JUNE, 1918.



more men, and enlisted men were attached from other hospitals. The records show that a total of 2250 patients were handled at this time.

On June 21, 1918, the 61st French Division and the 77th American Division relieved the Rainbow Division in the Baccarat sector, and the latter division then commenced its movement to a position east of Rheims in the Champagne sector where it for the time being was to become a part of the French Fourth Army under the command of the celebrated General Gouraud. The 168th Field Hospital moved with the remainder of the division, and on June 25 detrained at Vitry-le-Francois; from this point the company moved by marching and truck transportation to Busy-le-Chateau via Soulanges, Collus and Camp-de-tracteurs. The movement had been a leisurely one, and several days were spent at the latter place enjoying a rest and a field meet on July 4. While at Camp-de-tracteurs word was received of the death of Private Charles H. Setchel, 168th Field Hospital, who had been left in Evacuation Hospital No. 2 at Baccarat, on the move of the division. The company held a memorial service in his honor under the shade of the pines of the Champagne while an aeroplane battle was going on overhead. On July 5 hospital was opened at Busy-le-Chateau, just eighteen kilometers behind the line, but was soon forced to vacate and on July 6th orders were received for the 166th and 168th Field Hospitals to move to Ecury-sur-Coole to operate with Evacuation Hospital No. 4 during the coming offensive on the Champagne front by the enemy, details of which had been discovered by the French Intelligence Service.

General Gouraud had decided to meet the impending attack by holding the first position with very few troops and making his main defense on the intermediate position some two or three kilometers in the rear. All troops were put to work organizing the intermediate position and a secondary position to be used in case the intermediate one was captured. The 42d Division was assigned the task of organizing part of the secondary line near Souain and Jonchery-sur-Suippes, and, in addition three of its battalions were placed in the intermediate position which became the first line when the attack began. The Rainbow Division and all French troops on the intermediate and second positions were directed to hold their ground at "every event and at all costs." The small covering force in the forward position was to retire in the event of a determined attack. After a tremendous artillery preparation, the bulk of which was concentrated on the abandoned first position, the Germans began their assault early on July 15, 1918, on a wide front extending to the east and west of the city of Rheims. On the front of the XXI French Corps, the Germans, finding the French first line evacuated and suffering heavily from the Allied artillery fire while in it, approached the intermediate position, where the French and Americans were waiting. The Germans attacked repeatedly, but were repulsed with heavy losses, and although they continued their efforts until July 17, their gains were negligible. The drive that was to end the war with a German victory was a failure, and from this time on until the Armistice the Germans were constantly on the defensive. The 42d Division suffered about 1,600 casualties and was highly commended by General Gouraud for its gallant conduct in the defense. It was withdrawn from the line on July 18, and started westward to take part in the operations in the Marne salient.

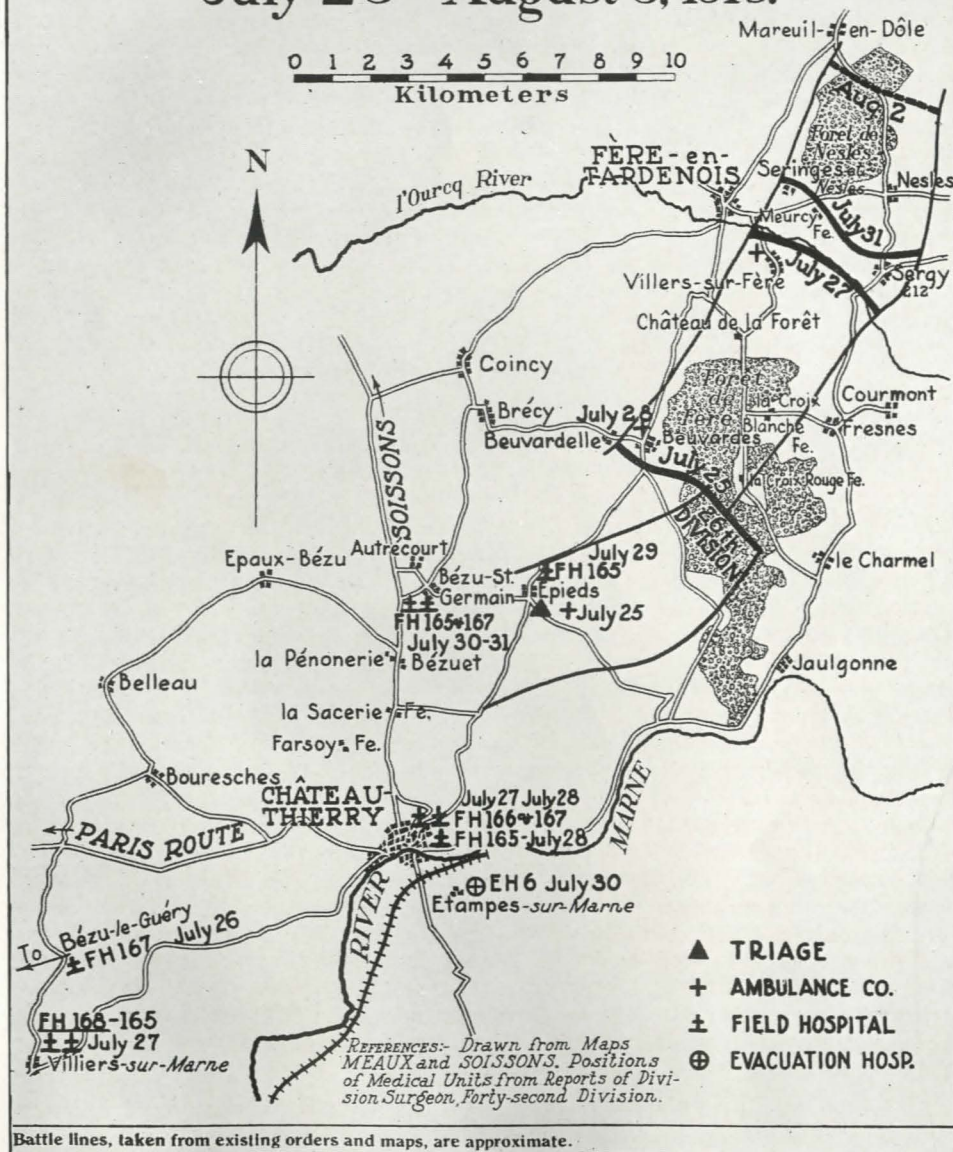
The movement of the field hospitals from Busy-le-Chateau to Ecury-sur-Coole had considerably increased the difficulty of evacuation from the line, and it was found necessary to send a surgical team and a detail from the 168th Field Hospital to Chalons-sur-Marne to assist in the care of non-transportable American wounded. However, the enemy bombed the town persistently and patients and operating personnel were moved further to the rear. Enemy avi-



# NE - MARNE OPERATION

## 42<sup>nd</sup> DIVISION

July 25 - August 3, 1918.



Location of units of the 117th Sanitary Train during Aisne-Marne operations July 25-August 3, 1918.  
(Map from "The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War," Vol. VIII).



ators frequently bombed the hospitals at Ecury-sur-Coole, but service was carried on uninterruptedly. A total of 2,949 cases were received here, of which 2,519 were gassed.<sup>1</sup>

The 168th Field Hospital commenced its movement to the new divisional area on July 23 amid a terrific downpour of rain that soaked every man to the skin. Entraining at Coolus, the company reached Villiers-sur-Marne on July 26 via Trilport and Luzancy, moving by rail, trucks and marching. Hospital was opened at Villiers-sur-Marne in the chateau of Madame Frances Wilson Huard, author of "My Home on the Field of Honor," on July 27, 1918. Quoting again from Sergeant Watne's diary:

"Villiers-sur-Marne: At this place we handled 3,600 wounded in three days. Had eight operating tables going night and day. Twelve operating crews, one shock crew and X-ray machine sent to us from Paris. No one slept for three days. We used same place that General Von Kluck used for his headquarters in 1914 when the Hun drove in so close to Paris."

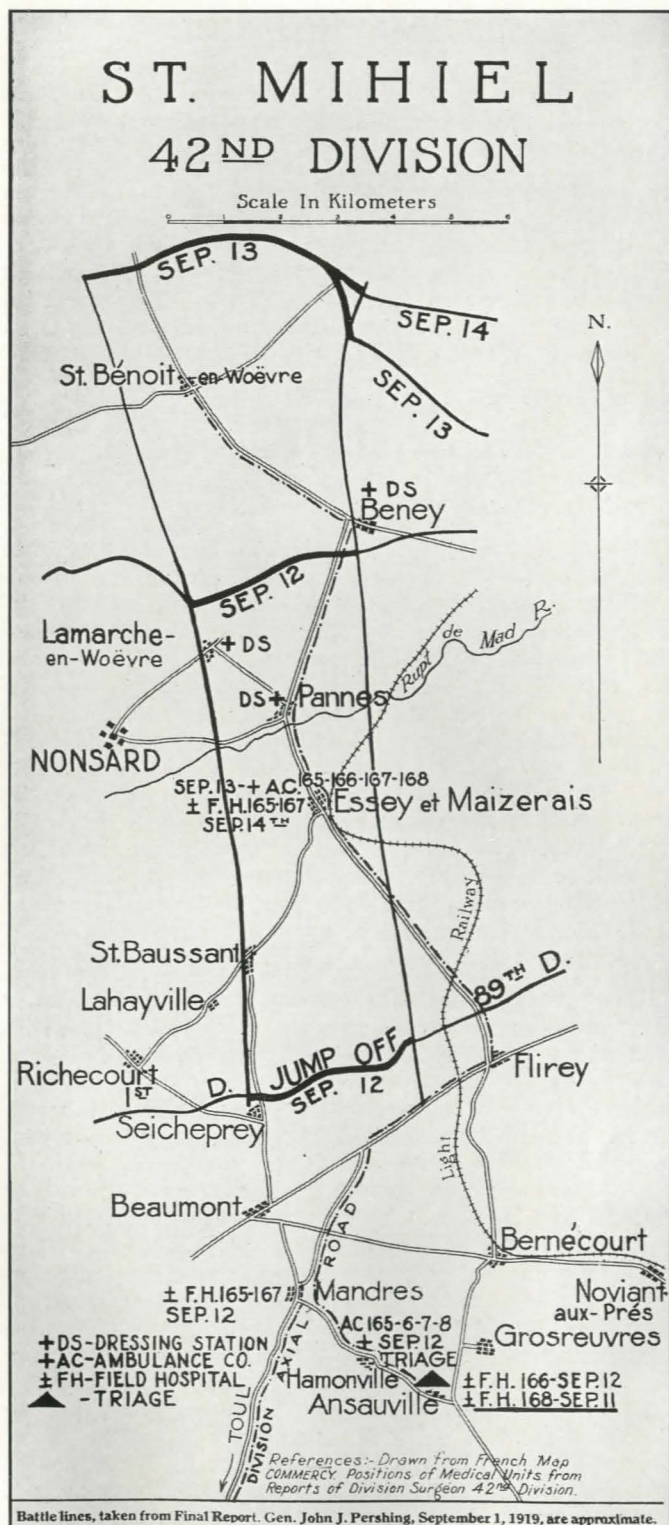
The 42d Division had relieved the 26th American and the 164th and 167th French Division in the Epieds area on July 25 and 26, and in spite of strong resistance took Croix Rouge Farm, Sergy and Nesles and reached the line; north edge Foret de Nesles—Mareuil-en-Dole on August 2. "In eight days on this front the Rainbow had accomplished one of the greatest advances that had been recorded up to that day. During this period it had progressed, in the face of enemy resistance, 18 kilometers and played a leading role in the freeing of the Tardenois, at a cost of, in killed and wounded, 184 officers and 5,469 men. \* \* \* The sanitary train evacuated more casualties than it was ever called to do before or since, and was without intermission, moving twenty-four hours a day in order to bring the wounded from the Valley of the Oureq back through Chateau Thierry to an evacuation hospital that was located an unbelievable distance of about 50 kilometers south of the Valley of the Marne. During the last few days on this front, the number of evacuated sick equalled the number of wounded that had been sent to the rear during active operations there."<sup>2</sup>

After its relief from the line the 42d Division spent a few days in the rear areas in the Marne Valley, and then on August 17-19 entrained at Trilport, Chateau Thierry and other points nearby for the Bourmont area between Neufchateau and Langres for rest, replacement of personnel and re-equipment after the arduous service in the Champagne and Marne battles. The 168th Field Hospital entrained at Trilport on August 17 and reached Bourmont on the eighteenth; here it remained until August 29, when it took station and opened hospital at Longchamp near Chatenois in the northeast section of the area. Further operations were pending, and on August 30 the division began its movement toward the St. Mihiel salient, marching via Germany, Biequely, Toul and Lagney to an assembly position in the Foret de la Reine. The marches were made for the most part under cover of darkness, and the troops were required to remain under cover during daylight hours to escape hostile aerial observation. Arriving in the Foret de la Reine in the opening days of September the division was assembled in its assigned area covered by a dripping, soggy woods in which an ever increasing quantity of rain continued to fall. The primitive roads of the forest were soon turned into veritable quagmires by the heavy traffic, and increased immeasurably the problem of supply. The 168th Field Hospital left Longchamp on August 29, and moving by means of motor ambulances, trucks, and marching, eventually reached the Foret de la Reine at 4:30

<sup>1</sup> The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War, Vol. VIII, Field Operation, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> The Story of the Rainbow Division—Wolf.





Location of units of the 117th Sanitary Train, 42d Division during St. Mihiel offensive, Sept. 11-14, 1918.

(Map from "The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War," Vol. VIII).



P. M., on September 11. However, the stay here was brief, and at 5:00 A. M., on the twelfth, the company moved to Ansauville where the 166th and 168th Field Hospitals established hospital stations prepared to serve the division during the St. Mihiel drive, which had started at 1:00 A. M. that day.

The hospital companies at Ansauville occupied a large barn which lent itself readily to their purpose and afforded facilities for a receiving ward, shock and recovery wards, and operating room. During the 24 hours following the attack, evacuation of the wounded was practically impossible because of the destruction of roads where they crossed No Man's Land, and the consequent blockade of traffic. German prisoners were used in large numbers to portage the wounded, especially across the shelltorn areas. Fortunately, casualties were few initially, but increased as the advance met more determined resistance.<sup>3</sup> On September 21 the 166th and the 168th Field Hospitals were moved forward to Beaumont, and operated hospitals here until September 30; the personnel of the companies occupied the abandoned German dugouts.

The Rainbow Division was relieved on the St. Mihiel front on the night of September 30-October 1, 1918, by the 89th Division and moved to the Souilly area, about 15 kilometers southwest of Verdun, where it passed into the reserve of the First American Army prior to its participation in the Meuse-Argonne operations. On October 4 the division assembled in the vicinity of Recicourt and was assigned to the Fifth Corps. Continuing the movement towards the front, the 42nd Division on October 12-13 relieved the 1st Division in the line on the front; just north of Sommerance, eastward to the Bois de Romagne to a point just south of the Sommerance-Romagne road. "The terrain on which the Rainbow found itself was singularly rugged, exceptionally arduous, and, during this particular season, peculiarly water-logged. For nearly two weeks it had been almost constantly rained upon \* \* \*. Rarely, and then only through Herculean effort, could an ambulance be brought to the midway dressing station. The ground was of that remarkably oily nature, which, impervious to water, seemed to be dissolved by it. The naming, centuries before, of this particular stretch west of the Argonne as the 'wet Champagne' seemed to us most accurate."<sup>4</sup>

At 5:30 A. M., on October 14, the 42d Division began its attack and by 2:00 P. M., on the 15th the hilly bastion of the Kriemhilde Stellung in the division's zone of action was taken. From October 16 until October 30 the division was employed in organizing the front for defense, and maintaining contact with the enemy by means of strong patrols pushed well out to the front. The 2d Division relieved the 42d Division on October 31, and the Rainbow again passed to the reserve of the First Army. However, the respite was brief, and the 42d Division on the night of November 4-5 bivouacked in the locality of Fontenois-Anthe north of the Buzancy-Vouziers road preparatory to passing through the 78th Division and attacking at noon on the fifth from the line Verrieres-Briulles-sur-Bar. The attack was made as directed and when relieved on November 10, 1918, by the 77th Division, patrols of the Rainbow Division had reached the south bank of the Meuse at Wadelincourt and Torcy immediately opposite Sedan. Immediately following the Armistice of November 11, the 42d Division was reassembled in the Buzancy area, and then marched to its concentration area east of the Meuse in the Breheville-Brandeville-Stenay-Baalon area where it was equipped and prepared for the march to the Rhine.

The operations of the 168th Field Hospital during the Meuse-Argonne offensive presented much the same features as those in the St. Mihiel battle, and

<sup>3</sup> Medical Department in World War, Vol. VIII, Field Operations, pages 492-494.

<sup>4</sup> The Story of the Rainbow Division—Wolf.



it will unquestionably be of greater interest at this time to let a participant in these operations tell the story of the company's doings. Referring once again, therefore, to Sergeant Watne's diary:

"October 4-6: Dombasle. Rainy weather. Slept in pup tents which we pitched in dark as usual. Opened hospital here. Air raid night of October 5 \* \* \*.

"October 6-8: Avocourt. Town absolutely demolished. Slept in pup tents. Mine in small opening among wire entanglements. Lots of rain and muddy. Had orders to move out. Rolled our rolls (blanket) in pouring rain. Roads almost impossible.

"October 8-12: Boise de Cheppy. Open hospital in woods October 8, where we arrived about 10:00 P. M. Had air raid an hour or so later; 35 killed and wounded right around us and more of our men touched. Rain every day. Slept in tent and later in kind of shelter made from pieces of corrugated steel placed in half circle over.

"October 12-24: Cheppy. Closed hospital in woods where we located in a part of the Argonne. Went to Cheppy where we took over hospital of F. H. No. 3 in German dugout; large enough for 500 men. I had my billet in office with reinforced concrete roof and part of the time in tent. Worked every night on typewriting reports. Here we were bombed several times and shelled a little; quite a few of the boys had some close calls.

"October 26-November 6: Baulny. Here we were shelled and bombed October 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31. Most of the men in wet dugouts of Huns fifty feet under ground and which were a series of long tunnels under the entire hill, with about 15 entrances on all sides, some leading into machine gun nests of reinforced concrete and had excellent command of surrounding valleys. Big drive started at 3:30 with a terrific barrage of all caliber guns, Saturday November 2, 1918. \* \* \* and no Boche, practically, to be found on our sector after the barrage let up. They all left in a hurry and our men took up the chase in trucks. November 3, Armistice signed with Austria. \* \* \* I slept in squirrel hole on hillside like the doughboys, thru raids and all.

"November 6-14. Briquenay. Here we operated a corps hospital in a dandy German made hospital with walks and fences made of sticks sawed and made into a network; a dandy kitchen and log cabins. I slept in one and also had it for an office; every night Clifford and I worked until about 4:00 A. M., and once until 8:30 A. M. Armistice with Germany signed while we were here and hostilities ceased the 11th hour, 11th day, 11th month of 1918. We could hardly realize what happened, all was so quiet and no bombing or shell fire. Most of us were melancholy for a few days following the strenuous conditions. I am still sick since Dombasle and wearing a split shoe, foot so swollen."

The 42d Division began its march to the Rhine on November 20, 1918, and moving by way of Montmedy and Virton, entered the Duchy of Luxemburg on the road east of Arlon. Marching through Luxemburg via Mersch and Echternach, with a stop-over for Thanksgiving Day, the division finally entered Germany on December 2, and continuing the march along the Bitburg-Prum-Gerolstein-Hillesheim-Dumpelfeld-Ahrweiler road reached its assigned sector on the west bank of the Rhine between Brohl and Rolandseck in the kreis of Ahrweiler on December 15. During the march from France to the Rhine the 117th Sanitary Train, working on the "leapfrog" system, furnished for each day's march and at its end, collecting points for the disabled from all parts of the division.



A field hospital and an ambulance company constituted a team, the former housing and treating patients until the latter had cleared the particular area concerned and completed evacuations to the rear. The team then moved forward, overtook the division and in its turn again opened a division triage. Thus, at the end of each day's march a hospital was found receiving patients who should be evacuated and an ambulance company supplementing as needed the ambulances assigned to the troops.<sup>5</sup>

The 168th Field Hospital on arrival in the Rhine sector was assigned to station at Neuenahr and here operated the divisional hospital in a former fashionable hotel. Training was resumed on December 20, and until February, with a short break during the Christmas holidays, was rather intensive; however, at the beginning of March the schedule was considerably modified and the troops given more time for recreation. On March 16, 1919, the division was reviewed by General Pershing at Remagen and highly complimented by the Commander-in-Chief on its splendid record while in France and in the Army of Occupation in Germany. The division commander, Major General Flagler, shortly afterwards issued the following order which epitomizes and justly pays a high tribute to the fidelity and courage of the personnel of the 117th Sanitary Train:

"As the Rainbow Division has reached the closing days of its military service, the Commanding General desires to recite in orders the salient features of the service of the 117th Sanitary Train.

"The record of the 117th Sanitary Train is marked by its steady efficiency. This, together with its devotion to duty, its loyalty, the courage of its personnel, its perseverance, has led to its being universally respected and praised. Though their duty has been to take care of the fighters and not to fight, their faithfulness to this duty has led them into dangers as great as those experienced by any arm of the service. Running ambulances under the very noses of the enemy, setting up dressing and first aid stations on the fighting line itself, they have by their excellent work done much toward preserving that esprit de corps for which this Division is famous.

"The 117th Sanitary Train is composed of units from the District of Columbia, Nebraska, Oregon, Colorado, New Jersey, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Michigan. Combined at Camp Mills, Long Island, N. Y., they underwent training in the American areas in *France*, then in the Luneville Sector. In the Bacarat Sector they began to develop. Step by step, ways and means were worked out of taking care of wounded and sick. The Plan of Evacuation in effect in this sector was a model of its kind.

"The Sanitary Train went to the Champagne, along with the rest of the Division. Here for the first time they experienced that shell fire and exposure that was to be their lot until the close of hostilities. During the intense bombardment preceding the German attack of July 15, it seemed as if the enemy had especially chosen as targets the dressing stations, ambulance heads and hospitals situated near Chalons. The routes of the ambulances were covered by fire. Though the difficulties of proper functioning were great, they were overcome.

"At Chateau Thierry, even greater difficulties were experienced. Due to the many casualties the problem of evacuation became a very serious one. This was partly solved by the establishment of a Triage at Epieds, and later at Beuvarde, at all times within five kilometers of the actual fighting line. During this battle, ambulances were often driven within a thousand yards of the front

<sup>5</sup> Medical Department in the World War, Vol. VIII, Field Operations, p. 922.



line, across shell-scarred fields, to collect and evacuate wounded. The steady service rendered at this point did much to maintain the morale of the troops.

"At St. Mihiel, the problem was of a different character. All roads were clogged by the rush of transport north. Here great versatility was shown. Motors were useless. So pack mules and mule ambulances were rendered available in this way.

"In the Argonne-Meuse offensive, the list of men to be evacuated was swelled by the many sick, as well as the wounded. The weeks and weeks of mud, water and improper nourishment, with the nervous strain were beginning to tell on the division. Nightly, enemy aeroplanes flew up and down the valley of the Aire on bombing expeditions, the hospitals at Baulny seeming to be their special target. During this period, ambulance heads were established forward of Sommerance, less than 2 kilometers from the front lines. Evacuations were carried on without interruptions and a marvelous state of efficiency was shown in spite of the almost insurmountable difficulties.

"The Sanitary Train was seriously handicapped in its move toward Sedan. Even so, it succeeded in reaching its station and taking care of the ever increasing number of sick.

"During the march of the Division to the Rhine, the Sanitary Train performed successfully the difficult task of evacuating the sick over the ever lengthening line of communications. It finally reached Neuenahr, in the Kreis of Ahrweiler, which it occupied as part of the Army of Occupation. Not the least among the Services of this organization has been its fighting the threatened epidemic of influenza in this Division during the first months of 1919.

"The 117th Sanitary Train has earned through work done the praise and thanks of the entire division. Its personnel has undergone the hardest lot that falls to a soldier—that of being fired upon and being unable to return the fire. It is with a keen sense of satisfaction that the division commander briefly re-



HOMEWARD BOUND



views the magnificent record of this organization, and as well as expressing his own thanks to them, he is sure he can express the gratitude of the entire Division for the efficiency, perseverance and fidelity shown by all its personnel."

The 42d Division was relieved from duty with the Army of Occupation in Germany early in April, 1919, and at once commenced its movement towards the ports of embarkation for return to the United States. The 168th Field Hospital left Neuenahr, Germany, on April 6, 1919, and arrived at Brest, France, by rail, on April 10. Eight days later the company sailed from Brest on the transport *Leviathan* and arrived in New York on April 25. Disembarking, the 117th Sanitary Train moved to Camp Merritt, N. J., where it was later split into detachments for the final move to demobilization camps throughout the country. Final muster out of the company was accomplished at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming, on May 16, 1919, and on its arrival in Denver, the home town, the men of the 168th Field Hospital received a royal and enthusiastic welcome from their fellow townsmen.

The strength of the company on muster out at Fort Russell was one officer (Major E. R. Earwood) and sixty-five enlisted men. Two enlisted men of the company died in the service—Privates Neil Sharp and Harvey Setchel, both of Denver—and three enlisted men were discharged for physical disability; other officers and enlisted men were transferred or mustered out before the unit reached Fort Russell. Among these latter were Captain Robert C. Cook and a few of the non-commissioned officers who were ordered to Camp Custer, Michigan, for final disposition of records.

The commanding officers of the 168th Field Hospital during its period of service with the 42d Division were as follows:

Major Edward W. Lazell—September 8, 1917, to February 19, 1918.

Captain Alpha J. Campbell—February 20, 1918, to October 27, 1918.

Captain Robert C. Cook—October 27, 1918, to December 7, 1918, and April 1, 1919, to May 12, 1919.

Major John W. Watts—December 7, 1918, to February 17, 1919.

Major Edgar R. Earwood—February 17, 1919, to March 31, 1919, and May 13, 1919, to date of demobilization.

The following named officers also served, at various times, with the 168th Field Hospital:

Captains Herlwyn R. Green, Howard A. Gilmartin, Clarence F. Murbach, Joseph F. Snedec, William W. Long and Cecil G. Moorehouse; First Lieutenants Fred J. Pierce, Paul A. Opp, George W. Bancroft, William H. Baker, and William W. Van Dolsen.

The 168th (1st Colorado) Field Hospital on muster out passed into history, but the record of its faithful and valorous service in the Baccarat sector, the Champagne-Marne Defensive, and the three major offensives of the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne will never be forgotten by the people of Colorado. To the 168th Field Hospital belongs the unique distinction of being the Colorado unit with the longest service overseas during the World War.<sup>6</sup>

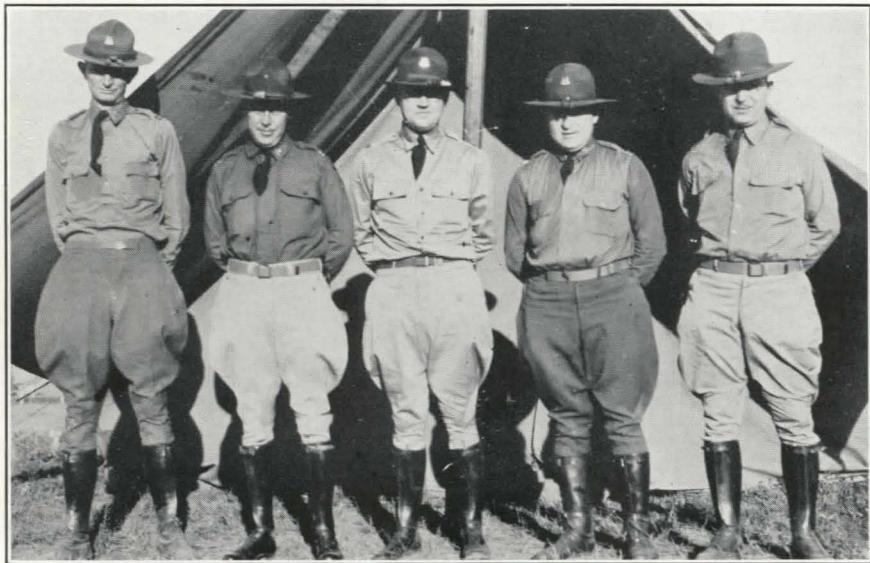
<sup>6</sup> Writing to the author under date of March 22, 1934, former Captain R. C. Cook (now manager of the Veterans Administration Facility at Excelsior Springs, Mo.) relates the following interesting item with reference to the red cross flag of the 168th Field Hospital:

"While we were at Camp Baldwin, Denver, in July and August 1917, we had no suitable Red Cross flag for our field hospital. My wife and Miss Marie Paulson (now Mrs. Bostwick of College Point, N. Y.), both of whom had been nurses in the city hospital at Denver, volunteered to make an official Red Cross flag. The flag was made and presented and was flown from the staff



in the hospital section at Camp Baldwin. The flag was also flown at Camp Mills, Long Island. It was used on every possible occasion during our service overseas and used as a marker for our hospital position on many occasions during action, being draped over the tops of the tents or some conspicuous place on buildings. At the signing of the Armistice this flag was in use at Briquenay, France, south of Sedan, where we handled a large number of casualties and sick as the final act of the war period for Colorado Field Hospital No. 168.

"Following the Armistice when I was ordered to report to the Hdq. of the Third Army at Coblenz as Attending Surgeon I took this flag with me. I sprinkled it with water from the Rhine River and had it in my office at Coblenz. In March 1919 I was given an opportunity to go to Berlin as courier carrying dispatches from the American Hdq. at Coblenz and British Hdq. at Cologne to the Hdq. in Berlin. My associate on this trip was James P. Howe, now of the Associated Press, and a son of Ed Howe, "The Sage of Potato Hill", at Atchison, Kansas. I carried this flag with me to Berlin and performed a sort of kid trick with it, I will admit. I attained access to the roof of the Hotel Adlon, the American Hdq. and flew the flag from a staff on the roof of that hotel long enough to take pictures, then pulled the flag down, secured the signatures of witnesses and felt that it had finally really achieved its purpose. I now have this flag in my possession. A report of this incident appeared in an early issue of the Stars and Stripes without any names being used."



MEDICAL DETACHMENT 157TH INFANTRY, 1932

Reading left to right: Captain Colo C. Combs, D.C., Captain Merrill C. Jobe, M.C.,  
Major Philip Whiteley, M.C., Captain Samuel Towbin, M.C.,  
Captain Thomas R. Stander, M.C.