

History of the 115th Medical Regiment, Company D, California National Guard 1937-1939

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COMPANY D, 115th MEDICAL REGIMENT

Company D, 115th Medical Regiment, (Formerly 143rd Ambulance Company)
California National Guard

Reference: Adjutant General's Files
Location: Long Beach, Los Angeles County
Organized April 27, 1936*
Redesignated January 1, 1937**

Captains

Commanding Officers

<u>Names</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Lewis S. Unkrich, Capt. (Resigned March 25, 1938)	Apr. 10, 1936	Apr. 27, 1936
Melvyn R. Miranda, Capt. (Assigned to command March 2, 1938) (Relieved from command April 28, 1938)	Apr. 10, 1936	Apr. 27, 1936
James B. Pettit, Capt. (Assigned to command April 28, 1938) (Relieved from duty to attend Chem. Warfare School, October 18, 1938)	July 20, 1934	Apr. 27, 1938
Melvyn R. Miranda, Capt. (Detached to com. Co., D, vice Pettit at Service School, October 7, 1938)	Apr. 10, 1936	Apr. 27, 1936

Activities:

Company D, 115th Medical Regiment, Long Beach, was the first and only unit of the regiment yet organized in the State of California, and was formerly known as the 143rd Ambulance Company, 115th Medical Regiment.*** The Company was formally recognized as a unit of the California National Guard, April 27, 1936, having been mustered into service by the late Major George McFarland, with an authorized strength of fifty enlisted men and two officers. The unit was mustered in under the original designation of the 143rd Ambulance Company.****

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*A new Company organized in Long Beach, April 27, 1936, and designated 143rd Ambulance Company, 115th Medical Regiment. General Order No. 13, dated April 28, 1938. Adjutant General's Office.

**Redesignated Company D, 115th Medical Regiment, January 1, 1937, and located in Long Beach. General Order No. 32, dated December 14, 1936.

***California Guardsman October 1938, page 29.

****California Guardsman October 1938, page 29.

Activities:

Lewis S. Unkrich, Captain of Company D, was mustered in April 27, 1936, and when the company was designated January 1, 1937, Captain Unkrich was still in command. He remained in charge of the company until he resigned March 25, 1938, when Captain Melvyn Miranda was assigned to the command of the unit.

The Officers and Men were somewhat disturbed by the change in the name of their organization. The National Guardsmen throughout the land, though appreciative of public attention are not pleased by the many terms applied to them by radio announcers, newspaper writers, and other civilians who on occasions serve as toastmasters at functions attended by National Guard representatives. "Why, oh, why," they queried "is it necessary to label us as Company D, 115th Medical Department Detachment?*"

Soon after the resignation of Captain Lewis S. Unkrich, on March 25, 1938, Captain James B. Pettit was assigned to the unit to fill the vacancy.

Captain Pettit was a graduate of the University of California, and had also graduated from the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Captain Pettit was well fitted for the position, and the men of Company D, congratulated themselves on evidences that they were in the process of making history.** Plans for the future activities originated by the new officer impressed the men with the belief that Company D was going places.

Another capable officer of the unit was Melvyn R. Miranda, the medical officer. Although the demands of his profession made it impossible for him to retain command of the unit, Captain Miranda made an enviable record during the short period he commanded the company following the resignation of Captain Unkrich.***

Prior to annual training encampments at San Luis Obispo, close attention is given to prearranged studies and problems to be solved during the training period.

Company D, practiced many forms of drills at their weekly gatherings. Infantry drills, first aid, hygiene, infantry pack and ambulance problems. First aid, individual equipment, and the duties of the medical personnel are all part of the weekly training.

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- *California Guardsman October 1938, page 29.
- **California Guardsman July 1938, page 25.
- ***California Guardsman July 1938, page 25.

COMPANY D, 115TH MEDICAL REGIMENT (Continued)

Activities:

Officers and men of the company enjoyed the time spent at the annual training camp in July, 1938, and they will not soon forget the pleasant experiences there. One of the most strenuous of their activities was a command post exercise in which the company operated a shuttle system of ambulances for the evacuation of casualties, for a division from the field of operations to base hospitals. The more amusing events, one of which involved the kidnaping of police escorts on the way home were enjoyed to the utmost by all members of the company even to the poison ivy suffered by two or three of the men and a flour sack bombing by the 40th Division Aviation, which proved very effective on the new station wagon of Company D, the two weeks experiences for the Company proved interesting. When a flour sack bomb hit a front fender of the Station wagon, Captains Pettit and Miranda, the First Sergeants and several other non-commissioned officers including the driver, exemplified very speedily what men in a vehicle should do when subjected to attack. They scattered in all directions. To the cook and mess sergeant, paeans of praise were sung by Captain Pettit for the ample and pleasing mess provided on the government allowance. None of the special funds of the company were needed for the mess; instead, some of the money was expended for badminton and ping-pong sets with which the men amused themselves in leisure hours.

Following the brigade parade on "Governor's Day" July 30, in which the unit participated, the departure for Long Beach was made at 2:35 P. M. Company D was the first of several units, going south, to depart. Police motorcycle escorts arranged for some other unit were "borrowed" by Company D when passing through several communities enroute home, until the commander of the unit for which the escort had been arranged, caught up with Company D and advised that the escort be directed to stand by for its own unit.*

Headed by Captains Pettit and Miranda, Company D assisted in first aid work during the American Legion's national convention in Los Angeles, September 20, 1938. Four ambulances, a station wagon, with eighteen officers and men made up the military contingent. The scorching weather and the densely packed throngs created conditions under which many persons required attention. One hundred twenty-seven cases were handled by the men and ambulances of the company during the day. The contingent traveled a total of five hundred thirty-eight miles, as indicated by the speedometers. The unit was on the job at eight o'clock in the morning, ready for action, but the calls were few until ten o'clock. From that hour until four o'clock in the afternoon the five vehicles were extremely busy moving heat prostration cases from the curbs along the line of march to the various aid stations operated by the Red Cross.

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*California Guardsman September 1938, page 10.

COMPANY D, 115TH MEDICAL REGIMENT (Continued)

Activities:

After the day's strenuous work was over the men were agreed that more practical experience in loading and unloading litters and ambulances and in ambulance driving was had during that day than during the entire time previously spent in the organization.

Company D, operating as an independent unit is still rendering its services, not only to the National Guard, but to the citizens of the State of California.

HEADQUARTERS

80TH BRIGADE

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

Mastered in May 6, 1949

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