

History of the 17th Separate Company (Santa Ana), Infantry, California National Guard 1918-1921

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SEVENTEENTH SEPARATE COMPANY

(SANTA ANA)

Seventeenth Separate Company, Infantry, California National Guard

References: Adjutant General Files

Location: Santa Ana, Orange County

Mustered in August 19, 1918*

Redesignated July 22, 1919**

Detached August 16, 1919***

Redesignated February 1, 1921****

Redesignated August 23, 1921*****

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Arthur E. Koepsel, Capt.	Aug. 19, 1918	Sept. 20, 1918
Jesse L. Elliott, First Lieut.	Aug. 19, 1918	Sept. 20, 1918

Activities:

From the first monthly return August 1918, of the Seventeenth Separate Company the following bit of history was taken:

"On August 19, 1918, the Seventeenth Separate Company, Infantry, California National Guard, was mustered into state service by Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Fay, Assistant Adjutant General of the State of California. One hundred and six men were sworn into service. The muster took place in the City Park at Santa Ana, California in the presence of about three thousand people. Fullerton, Orange and Placentia Home Guard Companies were also present."

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*Seventeenth Separate Company, California Infantry organized, August 19, 1918. General and Special Orders and Bulletins 1918, General Order No. 7, par. 4, page 16.

**Seventeenth Separate Company redesignated Company F, First Separate Battalion Infantry, California National Guard, July 22, 1919. General and Special Orders 1919, General Order No. 7, par. 2, page 12.

***Company F, First Separate Battalion Infantry, California National Guard, detached and designated Company F, California Infantry, August 16, 1919. General and Special Orders 1919, page 17.

****Company F, unattached, redesignated Company F, Third Separate Battalion Infantry, California National Guard, February 1, 1921. General and Special Orders 1921, General Order No. 1, par. 2, page 5.

*****Company F, Third Separate Battalion Infantry, redesignated Company F, 160th Infantry, California National Guard, August 23, 1921. General and Special Orders 1921, page 32.

1248 ✓

SEVENTEENTH SEPARATE COMPANY (Continued)

(SANTA ANA)

Activities: (continued)

Arhtur E. Koepsel was chosen the first Captain of the new Company and Jesse L. Elliott as First Lieutenant.

On July 22, 1919, the first battalion of infantry to be formed in the new National Guard since the World War, was organized. The battalion consisted of the six units then in the State service that had successfully passed Federal inspection. The Seventeenth Separate Company was designated as Company F in the new First Separate Battalion, California Infantry on the above date. A little less than a month later, on August 16, 1919, Companies E and F were detached from the Battalion, on account of the Federal requirement that each Battalion of Infantry consist of not more than four companies.

Company F remained unattached until February 1, 1921, when it was assigned to the Third Battalion Infantry and designated Company F of that organization. About seven months later the Third Battalion was redesignated the Second Battalion 160th Infantry Regiment, Company F still retaining its original letter in the new Regiment.

Although the Seventeenth Separate Company was strong numerically and was commanded by splendid and efficient officers, the unit had quite a struggle in maintaining its efficiency during the first year of its existence. The signing of the armistice a few month after its organization, caused a feeling of indifference toward military affairs, which had its effect on the unit. The influenza epidemic also interfered by preventing company drills and meetings, which proved a great hindrance to the newly organized Company. In March 1919 the Company's monthly return contained the following notations:

"We organized a File and Drum Corps of thirteen pieces, secured a good instructor, and everything going fine. Men show an interest in the work, but are anxious for Federal Inspection and equipment."

Three months elapsed before the unit was inspected and passed muster by the Federal Government, on June 9, 1919.

Company F participated in the usual holiday parades as required by law, and also in several parades on special occasions. The Company took part in the elaborate Armistice Day parade and exercises held on November 11, 1919, in Los Angeles. One year of peace had created a spirit of rejoicing in the hearts of the American people, but withal there was serious thought, and in many a home there was sorrow over members who had made the supreme sacrifice or had returned home wounded or shell shocked. Company F was in the line of march in the Armistice Day parade and attended the mammoth exercises held in Exposition Park.* Again in 1920 Company F took part in Armistice Day exercises in Los Angeles.

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*Los Angeles Times November 12, 1919, page 17, column 1.

1752

(SEVENTEENTH)

SEVENTEENTH SEPARATE COMPANY (Continued)

(Santa Ana)

1249

Activities: (continued)

On May 30, 1921, Company F attended Memorial exercises at Rosedale cemetery in the morning, and fired the usual salute. In the Afternoon the Company attended exercises at Huntington Beach, where they fired the customary salute also. The Unit marched four miles during the day.

Company F attended two annual encampments before becoming a unit of the 160th Infantry Regiment. The first was held at Laveaga Park, near Santa Cruz on September 12 to 26, 1920. Lieutenant-Colonel Harold D. Coburn, United States Army, was appointed commander of the encampment. All the instructors at the camp were Regular Army men. For fifteen days Company F and the other units in the National Guard were drilled and instructed in every detail as to what constitutes a good soldier and a good company. Several reviews and inspections were held during the encampment, one of which was for Colonel Robert Noble, United States Army, Chief Militia officer.* The second encampment was held the following year 1921, from July eleventh to twenty-sixth. The camp site was on the old Camp Ahwanee grounds below the village of Yosemite. Like the year previous, the camp was under the leadership of Colonel H. D. Coburn, with United States Army officers as instructors. Approximately 2500 men attended the encampment.**

About one month after the close of the encampment at Yosemite, Company F, Third Battalion Infantry was transferred and on August 23, 1921, became part of the 160th Infantry Regiment, California National Guard.

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*San Francisco Chronicle September 25, 1920, page 17, column 5

**Los Angeles Times July 13, 1921, page 6, column 5.