

SOLDIER BOYS OF TEXAS: THE SEVENTH TEXAS INFANTRY IN WORLD WAR I

Gregory Wayne Ball, B.A., M.A.

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APPROVED:

Randolph B. Campbell, Major Professor
Alfred F. Hurley, Committee Member
Christopher J. Fuhrmann, Committee Member
Theresa Flowers, Committee Member
Richard B. McCaslin, Committee Member and
Chair of the Department of History
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the Robert
B. Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

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This study first offers a political, social, and economic overview of Texas during the first two decades of the twentieth century, including reaction in the Lone Star state to the declaration of war against Germany in April, 1917; the fear of saboteurs and foreign-born citizens; and the debate on raising a wartime army through a draft or by volunteerism. Then, focusing in-depth on northwest Texas, the study examines the Texas National Guard unit recruited there, the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment. Using primarily the selective service registration cards of a sample of 1,096 members of the regiment, this study presents a portrait of the officers and enlisted soldiers of the Seventh Texas based on age, occupation, marital status, dependents and other criteria, something that has not been done in studies of World War I soldiers. Next, the regiment's training at Camp Bowie, near Fort Worth, Texas, is described, including the combining of the Seventh Texas with the First Oklahoma Infantry to form the 142nd Infantry Regiment of the Thirty-Sixth Division. After traveling to France and undergoing nearly two months of training, the regiment was assigned to the French Fourth Army in the Champagne region and went into combat for the first time. The study examines the combat experiences of these soldiers from northwest Texas and how they described and expressed their experiences to their families and friends after the armistice of November 11, 1918. The study concludes with an examination of how the local communities of northwest Texas celebrated the armistice, and how they welcomed home their "soldier

boys” in the summer of 1919. This study also charts the changing nature of the Armistice Day celebrations and veteran reunions in Texas as time passed, as well as the later lives of some of the officers and men who served with the regiment.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
Chapter	
1. HISTORIOGRAPHY.....	1
2. TEXAS: 1900-1917.....	25
3. WAR IN TEXAS.....	68
4. THE CONSCRIPTION DEBATE.....	101
5. RECRUITING THE SEVENTH TEXAS.....	132
6. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SEVENTH TEXAS.....	190
7. CAMP BOWIE AND FRANCE.....	210
8. PREPARING FOR THE FRONT.....	271
9. THE WESTERN FRONT.....	307
10. HOMECOMING AND CONCLUSION.....	367
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	453

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Ages	192
Table 2: Place of Birth.....	196
Table 3: Residences.....	197
Table 4: Occupations.....	198
Table 5: Occupations as a Percentage.....	200
Table 6: Dependents.....	203
Table 7: Exemptions.....	206

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Map 1: Area of Operations around Somme-Py.....	302
Map 2: The Advance to the Aisne River.....	345
Map 3: Assault on Forest Farm, October, 1918.....	359

CHAPTER 1
HISTORIOGRAPHY

How short a span it is from our firesides to the bloody trenches in France. Only a few weeks ago a stalwart young son of Donley County stood in the [Clarendon] News office and conversed with this editor about his expected trip to France and in this week's issue will be found a letter to his parents after having landed in the old world. Let us not assume that the war is so far away that it cannot effect [*sic*] us here. Such is not the case and the sooner we realize it and use our every effort to conserve food and finances for the successful prosecution of the war the sooner will the horrible affair end, and the sooner will American boys be home again.¹

The highway connecting Fort Worth with Amarillo rambles for over three hundred miles across northwest Texas. Beginning in the Cross Timbers region near Fort Worth, the vegetation becomes sparser west of Wichita Falls. This area, known as the rolling plains, gradually gives way to the generally dry and open southern plains, the wide flat Panhandle region of Texas, and the sprawling cities of Amarillo and Lubbock. It is an area that little more than a century ago still witnessed conflict between Native Americans and encroaching white settlers. It later became a land of ranchers and cattle, and then a land of oil. The sense of history in the area is strong. As the road winds northwest to Amarillo, the railroad parallels the highway. The route is lined with small towns such as Clarendon, Childress, Vernon, and Quanah, the latter named for Quanah Parker, the last Comanche chief to lead a raid into Texas. Unfortunately, many of these towns are not as vibrant as they once were, and their courthouse squares are relatively quiet places now. For example, south of Quanah is Foard County. In 1990, the county

¹ *Clarendon News*, November 1, 1917.

reported a population of 1,794 people. By 2008, it had dropped to just 1,361. The county seat is Crowell, and in the courthouse square there is a World War I German artillery piece flanked on each side by copies of E. M. Viquesney's "Spirit of the American Doughboy" and "Spirit of the American Navy." Both statues are on tall pedestals, and both strike similar poses. The doughboy holds a grenade in his raised right arm, although the left arm is missing below the elbow. The sailor's arm is aloft as well, although the hand is missing. The gun is spotted with rust. Although the damage to the statues was caused by a 1942 tornado, the monument is indicative of the memory that many Americans and Texans have of World War I. But in this small Texas town, thousands of miles and nearly a century removed from the battlefields of France, the influence of World War I can still be observed. The story of the soldiers who came from Crowell and who brought back to Texas a German artillery piece deserves to be told, as do the stories of other Texas soldiers who came from this region.²

From the struggles to secure independence to the twenty-first century, soldiers have played a central role in United States history. The United States has a long tradition of military service that encompasses both citizen-soldiers and professionals. This tradition has been explored in great detail by scholars and students of every war in which American soldiers have participated. However, although there have been hundreds of studies on World War I battles, units, and soldiers, there is room for further study. For

² D.W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 66; Census Data from United States Census Bureau website, State and County Quick Facts, Foard County 1990, 2000, 2008 population estimate, available at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/48155.html>, accessed 25 Oct 2009; Jo Hitt, Cynthia Myers, Jim Rich, and Faye Statser, *Foard County and World War I* (No publisher: 2007), 4-5..

example, little effort has been made to analyze World War I soldiers. Determining ages, occupations, and marital status of soldiers has been a common practice of scholars of other wars, in particular the Civil War. One need only look to Richard Lowe's *Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A.: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi* or Fred Anderson's *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years War* to understand the effectiveness of systematic analysis combined with traditional sources to provide insight into soldiers and their society.³

In general, the experiences of Texas soldiers in World War I have not been studied in great detail. Thus, a fundamental purpose of this study is to examine a group of Texas soldiers from the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment, Texas National Guard, from a socio-economic perspective. By examining such a group of soldiers at this level, can a typical World War I soldier from Texas be defined? What socio-economic characteristics were displayed by the officers and men of the Seventh Texas? Such a study will contribute to defining and shaping a representative image, based on common characteristics, of a Texas soldier of the Great War. What was their military service like and how did it shape their later lives? A second purpose of this study is to describe the combat experiences of these soldiers, whose Texas National Guard unit merged with the First Oklahoma Infantry to become part of the 142nd Infantry Regiment, when the regiment was "drafted" into the United States Army in August of 1917. Finally, a third

³ Richard Lowe, *Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A.: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004); Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996 reprint).

purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between soldiers and the communities they left behind. In other words, how did the counties from which these soldiers hailed understand and perceive the war and the services of their soldiers? How was their service remembered?

Organized chronologically, the first chapter discusses the historiography of the subject. The second chapter provides an overview of Texas from 1900 to 1917, leading up to the declaration of war against Germany by the United States Congress. The chapter provides a summary of the political climate of the state, and places in context the roles of the governor of Texas and the state's Congressional delegation. Furthermore, Texas' economic and agricultural condition is explored as is the social climate and the role of the military in the state, particularly the Texas National Guard. Finally, the chapter examines the fourteen counties that provided a significant number of soldiers to the companies of the newly organized Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment. Chapter 3 examines the way Texans, both those in Congress and those at home, reacted to the declaration of war. Following that, the next chapter explores in detail the debate on conscription and how it affected the communities in which the Seventh Texas would be raised. This includes what effect the proposed federal draft had on Texas as a whole, and how the draft spurred the recruitment of men into the National Guard. The next chapter provides a detailed examination of the recruitment of the Seventh Texas from the arrival of the company commanders through their departure for Camp Bowie. Chapter 6 provides a detailed socio-economic analysis of the officers and men of the Seventh Texas upon their consolidation as a regiment, and includes an examination of such things as age, marital

status, dependents, occupation, place of birth, and prior military service and then presents a composite image of a World War I Texas soldier based on the members of the Seventh Texas.

The seventh chapter explores the training of the Seventh Texas after it became part of the 142nd Infantry Regiment of the Thirty-Sixth Division, which was consolidated at Camp Bowie in Fort Worth. The chapter focuses on the soldiers' training, their daily activities, the relationship between the soldiers and the local population, as well as their journey to France and arrival in the summer of 1918. The next chapter, chapter 8, examines the actions of the 142nd Infantry in France during the late summer and fall of 1918. The chapter describes the way some of these Texas soldiers perceived France, and their final training before moving to the front. Chapter 9 provides a detailed look at the combat operations of the regiment seen through the actions and perceptions of several members of the old Seventh Texas Infantry, as it participated in the Meuse-Argonne campaign in the fall of 1918. The final chapter then explores the actions of these Texans after the armistice of November 11 went into effect, including the five months they remained in France, as well as their trip home. Also, the chapter describes the way the communities of northwest Texas reacted to news of the armistice, how they perceived the service of the soldiers from their local communities, and how they welcomed them home. Finally, the chapter explores the how these soldiers and their communities remembered their service and what some members of the regiment accomplished later in life.

In order to broaden historical understanding of World War I Texas soldiers and to help define them through common characteristics and shared experiences, a brief look at

the state of scholarly work on the United States' involvement in World War I and what studies about American soldiers in the Great War have been completed is necessary.

There is no doubt that the study of World War I has been a major focus of scholars around the world and that the volume of academic writing on the subject is vast. It has been and remains an important topic for scholars interested not only in the military aspects but the social, political, and economic consequences of the war. From a purely military perspective, there have been hundreds, if not thousands of books written by participants and scholars. Although the United States was officially involved in the war for only two years, the number of works on American participation is immense.

However, these can be narrowed to several categories. First are general works on American participation. Next, there are the studies focusing on specific topics or aspects of the war as they related to American involvement in the war. There are also studies that focus strictly on the military aspects of American participation, whether they are general overviews of the American military experience or works offering insight on particular military subjects such as individual battles, units, and participants. After this consideration of American involvement at the broadest scale, the focus should be narrowed to the work done on World War I in relation to Texas. Within this category, trends can be explored by examining the military tradition of Texas and how it related to the involvement of Texans in World War I, followed by an exploration of the key secondary works on the subject. Finally, brief mention of the widely available primary sources points to the opportunities for broader studies of this subject.

Of the works that encompass the totality of the United States' involvement in World War I, David M. Kennedy's *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* is typical. Along similar lines are Ronald Schaffer's *America in the Great War*, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* by Robert Zieger, and David Traxel's *Crusader Nation*. These works examine all aspects of American involvement but also focus on the political and social perspectives of the war on American society, or how the war changed the nature of the interaction between society and various political, racial, or ethnic groups. These works also provide insight on the transformational nature of the war on American society, and often describe the rise of the managerial, welfare, or coercive state. Because of their scope, these works also tend to pay less attention to soldiers and their experience of war.⁴

Then there are the studies that focus on particular aspects of World War I. Works in this category include John Whiteclay Chambers' *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America*. Written with great detail, this study of the development of the draft in twentieth-century America remains the standard work on the selective service system in World War I. Another important work in this regard is Christopher Cappozzola's *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. Cappozzola's work focuses on the ways in which state power developed and how American citizens emerged from the war with a different conception of citizenship and

⁴ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford, 1980); Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the Welfare State* (New York: Oxford, 1991); Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); David Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

government power from views held four years previously. Nancy Gentile Ford's recent *The Great War and America: Civil-Military Relations during World War I* focused on an important facet of American military history. One could also point to Friedrich Katz's *Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution*, and *Unknown Soldiers: The American Expeditionary Forces in Memory and Remembrance*, edited by Mark Snell, as works that fall within this category. So too could Jeannette Keith's *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War*, which focused on draft resistance in the rural South. Thus, these more specialized studies reveal the ongoing interest among American scholars in World War I and how it influenced American society. However, the studies discussed so far depict the military experience as one aspect of the larger experience and minimize it or, because of the nature of the study, do not touch on it all. As a counterpoint, there are a vast number of works that treat the military aspects of the war from the American perspective.⁵

Although the book has its critics, the most successful study of American military participation remains Edward Coffman's *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I*. Coffman's work covers all military aspects of the

⁵ John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York: Free Press, 1987); Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford, 2008); Nancy Gentile Ford, *The Great War and America: Civil-Military Relations during World War I* (Westport: Praeger, 2008); Friedrich Katz, *Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Mark Snell, editor, *Unknown Soldiers: The American Expeditionary Forces in Memory and Remembrance* (Kent, OH: the Kent State University Press, 2008); Jeannette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Great War from the American perspective, and his study remains the standard overview of American military involvement. Other works that study the functioning of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) and its generals include David F. Trask's appraisal of General John J. Pershing's generalship in *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918*, Mark E. Grotelueschen's *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I*, and James J. Cooke's *Pershing and His Generals: Command and Staff in the AEF*.⁶

Beyond these broad perspectives on the strategy, organization, and effectiveness of the American military in World War I are an extensive number of works that discuss American participation in various battles and campaigns. These works include Robert Ferrell's *America's Deadliest Battle: Meuse-Argonne, 1918*, Douglas Johnson's and Rolfe L Hillman's *Soissons, 1918*, Edward G. Lengel's recent *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918*. Also to be included are works such as Lee Kennett's *The First Air War, 1914-1918*, which is representative of the operational and tactical levels of military operations. However, while these works are centered on the military perspective, they are often more focused on the larger perspective and interpretation of a particular battle or campaign rather than how soldiers experienced that particular battle and how it affected them. These works also point to the conclusion that there will never

⁶ Edward Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998, originally published by Oxford in 1968); David F. Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993); Mark E. Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); James J. Cooke, *Pershing and His Generals: Command and Staff in the AEF* (Westport: Praeger, 1997).

be a shortage of popular or scholarly works on American combat operations in World War I.⁷

To augment these combat studies are works that focus on specific units and soldiers. The range of scholarship in this category is also quite large, but again leaves room for more work. Within this group are such works as John S.D. Eisenhower's *Yanks*, Gary Mead's *The Doughboys: America and the First World War*, and Laurence Stallings's *The Doughboys*. These works attempt to tell the story of the American army in World War I through the eyes of its soldiers, although with varying degrees of success. Works with more substance include Mitch Yockelson's *Borrowed Soldiers: Americans under British Command, 1918*, which focused on the Twenty-Seventh and Thirtieth Divisions which served under British command in 1918. Stephen Harris studied the New York National Guard's contribution to the AEF with two excellent regimental studies, *Duty, Honor, Privilege: The Silk Stocking Regiment and the Breaking of the Hindenburg Line*, and *Harlem's Hellfighters: The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I*. Other important unit studies include Michael Shay's *The Yankee Division in the First World War*, James J. Cooke's *The Rainbow Division in the Great War*, and *To the Limit of Endurance: A Battalion of Marines in the Great War*, by Peter F. Owen. Shay's work portrays the combat actions of that division in France, but spends little time examining the formation, composition, and training of the division. On the other hand, Owen's

⁷ Robert H. Ferrell, *America's Deadliest Battle: Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007); Douglas V. Johnson II and Rolfe L. Hillman, Jr., *Soissons, 1918* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999); Edward G. Lengel, *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008); Lee Kennett, *The First Air War, 1914-1918* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

work is the more adept study and perhaps the best recent work on a group of World War I American combatants. While he provided no statistical analysis of the marines of the Second battalion, Sixth marine regiment, his work described their training, doctrine, and experiences with intense detail. Because of this detail, the work is perhaps the grimmest portrayal of combat on the Western Front. However, despite the well-crafted and thorough scholarship apparent in many of these works, they all fail to provide a coherent analysis of the soldiers from a socio-economic standpoint. While the background of individuals is frequently mentioned, particularly those of officers, it is done haphazardly and not in a systematic manner that might reveal common characteristics of soldiers, and thus expand our knowledge of the war.⁸

In addition to studies on the military experiences of soldiers and their units, there have been efforts to emphasize the military service of particular groups. Works of this nature include Jennifer D. Keene's *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America*. In this engaging study, Keene argued that the soldiers of the AEF developed a relationship, or social contract, with the army, and in return for their service to the country received some form of benefit. Keene argued that this "give and take" between

⁸ John S.D. Eisenhower, *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I* (New York: Free Press, 2001); Gary Mead, *The Doughboys: America and the First World War* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2000); Mitchell A. Yockelson, *Borrowed Soldiers: Americans under British Command, 1918* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Stephen Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters: The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2003); Stephen Harris, *Duty, Honor, Privilege: New York's Silk Stocking Regiment and the Breaking of the Hindenburg Line* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2004); Michael Shay, *The Yankee Division in the First World War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008); James J. Cooke, *The Rainbow Division in the Great War, 1917-1919* (Westport: Praeger, 1994); Peter F. Owen, *To the Limit of Endurance: A Battalion of Marines in the Great War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

World War I veterans and their government eventually resulted in the creation of the GI Bill. As Keene pointed out, while the GI Bill is mostly remembered for the generation of World War II veterans who benefited from it, the legislators who guided the bill through congress were veterans of World War One. This idea of a social contract is evident in other works focusing on soldiers of ethnic or racial groups. For example, Nancy Gentile Ford's *Americans All! Foreign Born Soldiers in World War I* remains the standard work on the relationship between the United States military and "hyphenated" Americans, while Paul Austin Britten explored a similar topic in *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home*. This work also tracked the legacy of World War I on Native American veterans. More recently, Jose Ramirez's study of Hispanic soldiers, *To the Line of Fire! Mexican Texans and World War I* has filled a gap not only in Mexican-American history but in Texas history as well. Besides the work of Stephen Harris, African-American experiences in World War I have also been studied in detail. The first major study of African-Americans in the war, *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I* still remains the standard work, while the *American Foreign Legion: Black Soldiers of the 93rd in World War I* is a valuable unit history. Richard Slotkin combined the stories of both African-Americans and foreign born soldiers through a dual unit history in *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality*, another work in which the theme of a social contract between soldiers and their government is developed, in that case those soldiers expected by serving their country they would in turn receive a greater measure of equality and respect.⁹

⁹ Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, The Great War, and the Remaking of America*

Finally, there is a vast selection of memoirs, diaries, and letters penned by American participants. These works are important for their portrayal of events as they occurred and can provide insight into how soldiers perceived and understood their own experiences. As primary source documents, these works also serve the vital purpose of enhancing broader studies on the nature of combat and the American experience in World War I. While John J. Pershing's *My Experiences in the First World War* is the most well known memoir of the war, works more relevant to describing the daily lives of soldiers include William S. Triplet's memoir, *A Youth in the Meuse-Argonne*, Hervey Allen's *Toward the Flame*, a sobering account of the combat of the Twenty-Eighth Division in the summer of 1918, and James Hallas's *Doughboy War*, which is a superb collection of excerpts from memoirs, diaries, and letters of World War I soldiers. However, while there is much useful information in Hallas's compilation, it suffers from a lack of narrative and analytical context.¹⁰

(Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008 paperback edition); Paul Austin Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* (Albuquerque: University Of New Mexico Press, 1997); Jose A. Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire! Mexican Texans and World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009); Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African American Troops in World War I* (New York: DaCapo, 1996 reprint of 1974 edition); Richard Slotkin, *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); Frank E. Roberts, *The American Foreign Legion: Black Soldiers of the 93d in World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004).

¹⁰ John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War* (New York: DaCapo, 1995 reprint of 1931 edition); Robert S. Ferrell, editor, *A Youth in the Meuse-Argonne* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000); Hervey Allen, *Toward the Flame: A Memoir of World War I* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003 reprint of 1926

This scholarship clearly indicates continuing interest by the academic community in the American experience in World War I, and the approaching centennial of the war should bring even more attention. State level studies of the war, however, have been neglected, thus missing an opportunity for an additional viewpoint. This is particularly so when applied to Texas, a state with several special links to the war. First, because Texas has a long coastline along the Gulf of Mexico and border with Mexico, there were serious fears of German infiltration or outright attack from these avenues. Second, Texas, like some other areas, had a large German-American population, and the issue of anti-German propaganda and treatment of citizens of German descent generated controversy. Third, the population of Texas ensured that if the United States entered the war, large numbers of Texas citizens would likely be called to the service of the nation. While these are practical reasons for a closer study of Texas and World War I, the sacrifices that many thousands of Texans, both military and civilian, made have been largely left unexplored and undocumented. The long military tradition of Texans should be expanded to include World War I soldiers. Indeed, at the time, many Texans believed that these soldiers were fulfilling the expectations of such a Texas military tradition. Thus, if for no other reason than this, World War I and its influence on Texas deserves greater study.

Texas has a long military tradition, dating from the Texas Revolution and carried on through the War with Mexico, the Civil War, to World War II and the present day. This strong military tradition in Texas has been amply documented for most periods of

edition); James H. Hallas, editor, *Doughboy War: The American Experience in World War I* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 2009 reprint of 2000 edition).

Texas history. For instance, the collection of essays edited by Joseph G. Dawson, *The Texas Military Experience: From the Texas Revolution through World War II* certainly conveys this tradition. However, this work devotes scant attention to the Texas military experience during World War I, the only treatment being three paragraphs in Martin Blumenson's essay on the Thirty-Sixth Division in World War II. Furthermore, although not specifically military history, a recent collection of essays by James Storey and Mary E. Kelley, *Twentieth-Century Texas: A Social and Cultural History*, contains a brief overview of Texas during World War I in Ralph Wooster's essay, "Over Here: Texans on the Home Front." The major political study of the war years, Lewis L. Gould's *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era*, explored the influence of the war on Texas between 1914-1916, but spent only several paragraphs describing the contributions of the nearly 200,000 Texas soldiers and summarized their service by stating that "five thousand did not return, though an influenza epidemic accounted for more casualties than battle." While Gould's work is essential for providing context of Democratic politics and Texas politics in general during the war years, the service of Texas soldiers should be more portrayed in greater detail. Other works that study the era through social or economic perspectives include Walter Buenger's "World War I and Northeast Texas," which is more of an economic history of Northeastern Texas, Benjamin Paul Hegi's examination of German-American immigrants in North Texas, "Old Time Good Germans': German-Americans in Cooke County, Texas, during

World War I,” and Richard W. Bricker’s *Wooden Ships From Texas: A World War I Saga*.¹¹

While it may appear that the experiences of many thousands of Texans have been totally overlooked, such is not the case. Historian Lonnie J. White wrote extensively on Texas and Oklahoma military units and examined in detail the organization, training, and combat of the two Texas-Oklahoma divisions that the War Department organized in 1917 in Fort Worth and San Antonio, each of which later saw combat in France. White’s *The 90th Division in World War I: The Texas-Oklahoma Draft Division in the Great War* focused on the division comprised predominantly of Texas and Oklahoma draftees. The Division, known later as the “Tough „Ombres,” was organized in San Antonio’s Camp Travis and saw extensive service in France. White also published *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War I*. Published in 1984, this work remains the only study of the Thirty-Sixth Division in the Great War. The division consisted mainly of Texas and Oklahoma National Guardsmen. Also, in *The Texas 36th Division*, writer Bruce Brager told the story of the Division from its documented beginnings as the Houston Light Guards in 1873 through its service in

¹¹ Joseph G. Dawson, editor, *The Texas Military Experience: From the Texas Revolution through World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995); James Storey and Mary E. Kelley, *Twentieth-Century Texas: A Social and Cultural History* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2008); Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992), 224; Walter E. Buenger, “World War I and Northeast Texas.” *Locus*, 8:2 (Spring, 1996); Benjamin Paul Hegi, “Old Time Good Germans: German-Americans in Cooke County, Texas, during World War I.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 109 (Oct, 2005); Richard W. Bricker, *Wooden Ships from Texas: A World War I Saga* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998).

World War II. Although his chapters on the division in World War I are adequate, they were based extensively on White's work, and the bulk of the book studied the division during World War II. While the World War II service of the 36th Division¹² has received well-deserved attention in recent years White's work on World War I has not been expanded upon, although in the preface to *Panthers to Arrowheads* he issued a call to historians cautioning that "however full the reader may find the narrative herein, this study is not envisioned as the final word on the subject. Rather, it is hoped that it will open the way for more in-depth investigations of units, events, activities, battles, and individuals." In essence, White was the first historian to perceive "a notable gap in the military history of Texas and Oklahoma." The only other study of World War I Texas soldiers was Charles Spurlin's 1969 article, "The Victoria Sammies," which focused on the recruitment of Company A, Fifth Texas Infantry, which eventually became Company I, 143rd Infantry Regiment of the Thirty-Sixth Division.¹³

Unfortunately, White's expectation that other scholars would study in greater detail the units and personalities of the Thirty-Sixth division has been met with silence for the past twenty-five years. Thus, in a sense, this study could be considered an answer

¹² For works on units of the 36th Division in World War II, see Robert L. Wagner, *The Texas Army: A History of the 36th Division in the Italian Campaign* (Austin: State House Press, 1991); Bruce Brager, *The Texas 36th Division: A History* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002); and Kelly Crager, *Hell Under the Rising Sun: Texas POWs and the Building of the Burma-Thailand Death Railway* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

¹³ Lonnie J. White, *The 90th Division in World War I: The Texas-Oklahoma Draft Division in the Great War* (Manhattan, KS: The Sunflower Press, 1996); Lonnie J. White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War I* (Austin: Presidential Press, 1984), v; Bruce Brager, *The Texas 36th Division: A History* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002), 18; Charles Spurlin, "The Victoria Sammies," *Texana* 7 (1969): 56-76.

to White's call. However, if historians have neglected delving further into the story of the Thirty-Sixth and Ninetieth Divisions, they have not abandoned all efforts to understand this period of Texas history, illustrated most recently by the publication of Ralph Wooster's *Texas and Texans in the Great War* and Jose Ramirez's *To the Line of Fire! Mexican Texans in World War I*. Also of importance is *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917*. While not solely concerned with World War I, this work illustrates the struggle that African-American soldiers had to contend with in Texas during the two decades leading up to American involvement in the war. In addition, Bernice Blanche Miller Maxfield and William E. Jary studied life at a Texas training camp in *Camp Bowie, Forth Worth, 1917-1918, An Illustrated History of the 36th Division in the First World War*. There have also been several biographies of some of the central World War I Texas military figures, including biographical sketches of Texas National Guard Brigadier General John A. Hulen, who commanded the division's 72nd Infantry Brigade during the war, as well as Lonnie White's sketches of the lives of World War I division commanders Brigadier General Edwin St. John Greble and Major General William R. Smith. Finally, the commander of the Ninetieth Division, Major General Henry Allen, received full length treatment in Heath Twitchell's *Allen: The Biography of an Army Officer*. However, there is a gap in examining the lives and careers of lower ranking Texas officers who later contributed to their communities, such as regimental commander Colonel Alfred W. Bloor, and company-grade officers like Abilene attorney Captain Robert Wagstaff, whose father served on the State Council of Defense and who himself later played a significant role in the development of Abilene after the war.

Studies of the class of men who became Texas National Guard officers can provide insight of the social and economic characteristics of Texans across the state.¹⁴

Beyond these efforts, however, the military experience of Texans and World War I generally remains unexplored, with opportunities for further study apparent in many directions. Following White's lead, more studies on the units and individuals who served from Texas are needed, as are studies focused on the home front, on Texas politics as related to the war, and on suppression of dissent. A thorough treatment of Texas' large German-American population during the war could clarify national treatment of foreign born citizens. Another important topic is the State Council of Defense and its interactions with federal and county governments. The opportunities to explore the influence of World War I on Texas soldiers and civilians are readily available.

While it is clear that secondary sources for the Texas experience in World War I are thin, the available primary sources provide ample opportunities for more detailed studies about soldiers from Texas and what conditions were like for those at home. Both the Thirty-Sixth and Ninetieth Divisions published histories upon their return to the

¹⁴ Ralph A. Wooster, *Texas and Texans in the Great War* (Buffalo Gap: State House Press, 2009); Jose A. Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire! Mexican Texans in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009); Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995); Bernice Blanche Miller Maxfield and William E. Jary Jr., *Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, 1917-1918, An Illustrated History of the 36th Division in the First World War* (Fort Worth: B.B. Maxfield Foundation, 1975); Jimmy M. Skaggs, "Lieutenant General Hulen." *Texas Military History*, 18 (1970); Lonnie J. White, "Chief of the Arrowheads: Major General William R Smith and the 36th Division in France, 1918-1919," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest* 16 (1982); Lonnie J. White, "Major General Edwin St. John Greble," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest* 14 (1976); Heath Twitchell, *Allen: The Biography of an Army Officer* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974).

United States, while the chaplain of the 142nd Infantry Regiment published the only Texas unit history below the division level in 1920. While these histories were not official, General William R. Smith charged Captain Alexander White Spence with writing the official history of the division while still in France. Although never published, copies of this work, *Services of the 36th Division with the American Expeditionary Forces, 1918-1919*, are available at the National Archives and at Texas Tech University's Southwest Collection. Of great use are contemporary newspapers, many of which published hundreds of stories about the organization and training of local soldiers. These papers also published hundreds of soldiers' letters home. At least two memoirs of Texas marines have been published: Carl Andrew Brannen's *Over There: A Marine in the Great War*, and Warren R. Jackson's *His Time in Hell: A Texas Marine in France*, while one member of the Seventh Texas Infantry and 142nd Infantry, Archibald S. Hart, published a memoir: *Company K of Yesterday*. Another veteran of the Seventh Texas and 142nd, Edwin Sayles, wrote a memoir which was never published.¹⁵

At the National Archives, Record Group 120 contains the divisional, brigade, and regimental level records of each American division. This collection also includes a file from each division titled "Personnel Experiences," which officers of that particular

¹⁵ Ben H. Chastaine, *Story of the 36th: The Experiences of the Thirty-Sixth Division in the World War* (Oklahoma City: Harlow, 1920); Major George Wythe, *A History of the 90th Division* (New York: 90th Division Association, 1920); C.H. Barnes, *History of the 142nd Infantry of the Thirty-Sixth Division, October 15, 1917 to June 17, 1919* (Blackwell, 1920); Alexander White Spence, *Services of the 36th Division with the American Expeditionary Forces, 1918-1919* (typescript); Carl Andrew Brannen, *Over There: A Marine in the Great War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997); Warren R. Jackson and George B. Clark, editor, *His Time in Hell: A Texas Marine in France* (Novato: Presidio Press, 2001); Archibald S. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vintage, 1969).

division were ordered to write down their memories of events shortly after they occurred. These are of great help not only in illustrating the personal nature of combat, but the fog of war that prevailed as well. Record Group 391 provides great detail on company level records of each regiment. The records in this group are more administrative in nature but provide a keen glimpse into the day to day tasks common to military units, and are a useful treasure trove of memoranda, reports, and charts. Besides these sources at the national level, there are also a number of archival sources in Texas, including the William Deming Hornaday Collection at the Texas State Library and Archives. William Hornaday was a professor of journalism at the University of Texas who, along with his students, collected and transcribed as many letters as could be found printed in Texas newspapers during the war. The result was a compilation of more than 4,000 pages of World War I letters from Texas soldiers gathered from newspapers across the state. Of further interest are the Thirty-Sixth Division records of historian Robert Wagner as well as the records of the Adjutant General of Texas, also available at the Texas State Library and Archives. The Texas War Records Collection at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas contains much material on Texas during both world wars, including the records of the State Council of Defense during World War I. Other repositories of primary sources include the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University, which holds the papers of former Seventh Texas and 142nd Infantry officers Robert Wagstaff, Robert Wright Armstrong, Homer T. Merrill, and Edwin Sayles. Additionally, the Texas Military Forces museum in Austin maintains the Texas Military Card File, which provides pertinent but limited information on the nearly 200,000 Texans

who served in the Great War, including those who were killed. Perhaps of greatest importance to this study, and an underutilized source in its own right, are the World War I draft registration cards nearly every eligible male filled out on June 5, 1917 and later registration periods in June and September of 1918. For the United States as a whole, there are nearly twenty-four million cards, and each provided elements that could be used to compile a socio-economic analysis of many thousands of men who became soldiers, either because they were drafted or because they volunteered. Each card contained information such as age, occupation, marital status, number of dependents, place of birth, race, prior military experience, home address, and if the registrant claimed exemption from the draft and for what reason. Simply put, the data provided by these cards can be used to find averages and generate common characteristics of Texas soldiers. This analysis combined with the more traditional sources provides a more complete image of a Texas soldier who served in World War I. Finally, this study of the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment, by utilizing an analysis of the data available from draft registration cards, is the first to undertake this type of systematic analysis of Texas soldiers.

One of the key questions often considered when profiling soldiers is: how typical were they of the army as a whole? In other words, without profiling every soldier who fought for Texas in World War, at what point will a composite image reflect the general nature of all World War I Texas soldiers? The roster of men who formed the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment contained the names of more than 1,800 soldiers and yet it was only one National Guard regiment out of more than a dozen infantry, cavalry, and artillery units organized by the Texas National Guard. Thus, the Seventh Texas Infantry

does not quite represent one percent of the nearly 200,000 Texans who eventually served in the United States military during the Great War. With that being said, a profile of 1,800 Texas soldiers will reveal common characteristics that can be applied to other groups of soldiers to expose differences and similarities between soldiers from other parts of Texas, soldiers from other states, as well as African-American and foreign born soldiers. Thus, if the soldiers of this regiment cannot be considered typical based on their common characteristics, they can still provide a point of comparison.

Before concluding, a word should be mentioned about this study's limits. This work focuses on the soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry, which as a military organization ceased to exist after the regiment arrived at Camp Bowie in September of 1917. However, many of the soldiers who made up that Texas National Guard regiment remained with their new unit, the 142nd Infantry Regiment, including the commander, Colonel Alfred W. Bloor. Thus, while there were many acts of heroism and valor among soldiers of the 142nd Infantry, and the regiment included many hundreds of Oklahoma soldiers as well as draftees and soldiers from other parts of the country, the focus on those members of the old Seventh Texas Infantry is not meant to slight the deeds of the other members of the regiment, nor the other regiments in the brigade and division. Such a focus on certain soldiers of the regiment might unavoidably give the impression that the combat service of the regiment was centered on a few members of the old Seventh Texas. This is not intentional, but rather is due to the strict focus on following a specific group of soldiers through the war. Indeed, the service and contributions of all members of the 142nd Infantry Regiment and the Thirty-Sixth division should not be discounted.

In sum, the study of soldiers and their experiences forms a long scholarly tradition. While the stories of World War I soldiers have been told, an effort to determine their socio-economic backgrounds has not. This study of the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment of the Texas National Guard in 1917 not only follows in a long tradition, it also breaks new ground by evaluating and analyzing common characteristics of World War I Texas soldiers. This not only sheds light on a neglected period of the rich military tradition of Texas, but also provides a better understanding of Texas in the early twentieth-century and how what was then called “the Great War” affected the lives of many thousands of Texans. In essence, this study could be boiled down to two questions: who were these young Texans who volunteered to leave their families and homes, become a soldier, and go to France to fight and perhaps die in the service of his country? More importantly, why did he do it?

CHAPTER 2

TEXAS 1900-1917

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, many Texans remained tied to their state's nineteenth century southern past while they struggled to come to terms with the new century. The legacies of the Texas Revolution and the Civil War remained strong in the minds of many Texans, tempered only by the experiences of post-Civil War Reconstruction. On one hand, the Texas Revolution and the Civil War represented the creation and the height of a Texas military tradition. On the other hand, Reconstruction was a reminder of Texas's position as a former Confederate state with strong southern ties. These traditions, southern and military, doubtless influenced the attitudes and actions of many of the state's citizens and political leaders. While many Texans remained firmly committed to a southern way of life that placed agriculture at the top, modernization also occurred in the first two decades of the century. The state's population increased, technology improved the lives of many of its citizens, and the oil industry and manufacturing developed and expanded. All of these things influenced the slow process of change from an agricultural and rural existence to a more urbanized and industrial society.¹

Texans also participated in national political movements in the first two decades of the century, such as Progressivism, which brought to many Texas communities issues

¹ Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 325.

such as woman's suffrage and prohibition. Thus, these competing influences affected many Texans and shaped the way they perceived themselves, their state, and their nation. It was within this atmosphere that the United States and Texas hung on the cusp of World War I, and in order to understand fully the lives of the soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry, this context must be understood. This social, political, and economic climate of the first two decades of the twentieth-century caused Texans to perceive political events a certain way, and shaped the reactions of White Texans to African-Americans, Hispanics, and foreign-born Americans, particularly those of German ancestry. Also, within this context, many Texans perceived and understood loyalty, disloyalty, courage, and cowardice, using these concepts to connect with their historic past and military tradition.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, Texas experienced a population explosion. In fact, the population of the Lone Star state increased 109 percent during the 30 year period from 1890 to 1920. In 1910 the Texas population numbered slightly more than 3.8 million. And by 1920, the state's population had grown to 4.6 million. The majority of these new Texans were white. However, the African-American population also increased slightly from 690,000 to 741,000 between 1910 and 1920, but as a percentage of the total population it decreased during those same ten years. These population characteristics, particularly concerning Whites and African-Americans, supported the general southern orientation of the state.²

² Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 325; University of Virginia Library Historical Census Browser, general population, Texas, 1910 and 1920, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/> (accessed 30 November 2009).

Other demographic changes were also evident. For example, a sizable German-American population lived in Texas. In 1910, there were approximately 45,000 native Germans in the state, the largest concentration of Germans in the southern states at the time, and nearly 103,000 native born white residents whose parents were born either in Germany or Austria. In addition to the German population, Texas also had a large number of Hispanics, most of who lived along the southern border with Mexico. The Hispanic population of Texas also grew rapidly during these first two decades, from an estimated 71,000 in 1900 to an estimated 251,000 in 1920. Thousands of these Hispanics migrated north to Texas to escape the violence in Mexico associated with the Mexican Revolution. Additionally, many of these Hispanic immigrants would enter the “cotton economy,” working as sharecroppers or day laborers, which left fewer opportunities for some white farmers. In fact, this influx of Mexican immigrants happened at the same time as a major immigration of white settlers into the South Texas region occurred, which served to increase tension between the groups and led to outbreaks of violence that contributed to the unstable conditions along the border between 1910 and 1920. Although there were other races and ethnicities in Texas, whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics were the largest groups in Texas at that time.³

³ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 108-109; Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 328; University of Virginia Historical Census Browser, “native white persons with both parents born in Germany,” and “native white persons with both parents born in Austria,” 1910 Census <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/state.php> (accessed 30 November 2009).

While the population increased over these first two decades, the economic situation of the state did not change quite as much. During this period, the vast majority of Texans lived in a rural environment. Many considered cotton the “money crop” of Texas, although ranching was a strong economic pursuit. Indeed, Texas led the nation in cattle production during this period. Indicative of the agricultural nature of the state, Texas outpaced nearly all other states in the total value of its crops for 1910. Only Iowa and Illinois reported greater crop value totals. By 1920, however, Texas surpassed both states and exceeded all others in the total value of agricultural production. Indeed, in 1920, two years after the war ended, Texas farmers worked more than 114,000,000 acres of farmland spread across 436,000 farms.⁴

Thus, like other southern states Texas remained committed to agriculture while industry and manufacturing lagged. This is no more clearly evident than in the lack of urbanization in Texas during the first two decades of the twentieth century, when two-thirds of Texans lived in cities with populations under 2,500. However, things were beginning to change. Although there were few large cities in Texas during the last decade of the nineteenth century, by 1920 there were four cities in Texas with populations each surpassing 100,000, and the state was on its way to being urbanized. Although Texas lagged behind such manufacturing states as New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois by a large margin, there were signs of change in that category as well. As a comparison, Texas reported just over 5,000 manufacturing establishments in the

⁴ Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 325; University of Virginia Historical Census Browser, “total value of all crops,” 1910, 1920, “Total Acres of Land in Farms,” 1920, and “Total Farms,” <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/state.php>.

1920 census, while Pennsylvania reported more than 27,000, more than five times as many as were reported in Texas. However, between 1910 and 1920, the oil industry in Texas would continue to develop and Texas would rapidly advance beyond its 1910 ranking as the sixth largest oil-producing state. Thus, the population and economic characteristics of Texas reinforced the strong southern outlook of the state.⁵

This southern outlook, in turn, fostered a culture of segregation as the African-American and Hispanic populations were marginalized as second-class citizens. Texas, in common with the South had enacted a wide range of “Jim Crow” segregation laws aimed at keeping the African-American population marginalized with little chance of participating in local or state government or having the chance to improve themselves socially and economically. Lynching remained fairly common during this period, as Texans lynched 309 men between 1890 and 1920, 81 percent of whom were African-Americans. Furthermore, Jim Crow laws were also strictly applied to African-American soldiers serving in Texas, as well as in other southern states in the years leading up to World War I. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, a number of incidents occurred in Texas in which African-American soldiers struck back against Jim Crow laws, as they believed their status as United States soldiers entitled them to respect and equality. Prior to the war, incidents between African-American soldiers and Texas

⁵ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 325, 327; Census Browser, “Manufacturing Establishments,” 1920, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/state.php>. It should be noted, however, that some communities in Texas had begun to shift their emphasis from Texas as a strong southern state with deep ties to the Confederacy, and instead focused on Texas as a western state with a frontier image, see Walter Buenger, *The Path to a Modern South: Northeast Texas between Reconstruction and the Great Depression* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

residents flared up in Brownsville, Del Rio, Laredo, and El Paso, among others. After the war started, incidents occurred at Waco and Houston that received national attention. An army officer who marched his command through Brownsville in 1906 recalled the typical reception afforded African-American soldiers in Texas during this period: “People were standing along the streets...but there were no smiling faces or anything of that kind as you might imagine when you are coming to a new post...There was nothing of that.”⁶

A good many Texans during this period were politically supportive of ways to limit the political participation not only of African-Americans, but of Hispanics and some poor whites. The poll tax, which became effective in 1902, is the best example, but state representative Alexander Watkins Terrell shepherded through the legislature a collection of laws known as the “Terrell Election Laws,” which established direct primaries for all state, district, and county offices, and which allowed political parties to restrict their membership. Political organizations then used these laws to blunt the participation of minorities and the poor in politics. Finally, the Texas Rangers, as the state’s police force, were heavily influenced by the social climate of the period, particularly in regard to Hispanics in the southern part of the state. There, Rangers often resorted to violence as a means to solving problems.⁷

⁶ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 325; for excellent studies of how African-American soldiers were treated in Texas, see John D. Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970) 22, and Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995).

⁷ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 338; On the Texas Rangers in general, see Robert Utley, *Lone Star Lawmen: The Second Century of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Berkeley, 2007).

Thus, the social characteristics of Texas mirrored other southern states. This southern perception also influenced Texas politics well beyond minimizing the participation of African-Americans and Hispanics. This can be seen by briefly examining the political leadership of the state, the governors and the Congressional delegation, as well as the major political and international events that between 1915 and 1917. These events helped shape the way Texans viewed American involvement in World War I and shaped the context in which the soldiers of the Seventh Texas viewed their world.

In Texas, single party politics were the norm, and the Democratic Party dominated the political culture of the state. The Republican Party, while it existed in Texas at the time, was small and fractured into the “Lily-Whites,” who wanted to exclude African-Americans, and the “Black and Tan” faction, which recruited African-Americans to their ranks but had not played a significant role in the state’s politics for decades. However, this single party system of the Democrats did not mean that there was no political conflict. Rather, political conflict within this system generally centered on conservatives versus those who sought some type of reform, whether it was business, agricultural, political, or social. In general, Texas Democrats sought to limit taxes, control spending, and paid little interest to social programs to help poor whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics. However, prohibition and woman’s suffrage emerged as

central issues during this period. How politicians reacted to these issues often defined them to their constituents.⁸

The Progressive reform spirit that swept through the nation in the first two decades of the twentieth century found an early outlet in Texas through reform minded governors of the early twentieth century such as Thomas M. Campbell. However, the national impulse of reform found its greatest success in prohibition and woman's suffrage. In one respect, the debates on these issues, not only for the nation but for Texas as well, would be framed by their perceived relationship to American involvement in World War I.

Prohibition had long been an issue in Texas, with efforts to bring it about dating to the end of the Civil War. Opponents of prohibition defeated a state wide measure to enact prohibition in 1887. After that it became a county issue, or "local option," until it was revived with the election of Campbell as governor in 1908. A proposed 1911 amendment to the state constitution favoring prohibition failed by a narrow margin, but the issue continued to simmer throughout the war years, and Texas politicians continued to debate the issue until the Eighteenth Amendment became law in January of 1920. In relation to the war, prohibition gained renewed impetus with efforts to ban alcohol from areas around the military training camps in Texas. Indeed, the Texas legislature passed four laws "designed to protect the soldier in our midst from the evil influence of intoxicating liquors." One of these created ten-mile dry zones around military training

⁸ Gregg Cantrell, *Feeding the Wolf: John B. Rayner and the Politics of Race, 1850-1918* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan-Davidson, 2001), 119. For the story of the rise of the Republican Party in Texas, see Roger M. Olien, *From Token to Triumph: The Texas Republicans since 1920* (Dallas: SMU Press, 1982).

camps, while another was aimed at protecting soldiers “against the diseases which follow in the wake of vice” by stopping “immoral practices and removing immoral persons from around the army camps of Texas.” Thus, supporters of prohibition linked their efforts to improving the health and moral condition of American soldiers. These efforts would ensure the “drys,” as prohibitionists were known, would play a significant role in Texas politics during the war years.⁹

Progressives who sought to secure voting rights for women also cast their efforts in light of the war. Led by activists such as Minnie Fisher Cunningham, the Texas Equal Suffrage Association attempted to highlight the patriotic service of Texas women who were involved in wartime activities, such as serving with the Red Cross and promoting Liberty Bonds. More importantly, these activists argued that their country was fighting “to save democracy” while limiting the rights of some of its citizens at home. These attempts to relate woman’s suffrage to the war gave a powerful push to woman’s suffrage in Texas. Although Governor William P. Hobby supported legislation to allow women to vote in Texas primaries, efforts at unrestricted suffrage for women met with failure in Texas until the summer of 1919, when the United States Congress submitted a constitutional amendment for woman’s suffrage. Texas became the ninth state to ratify the amendment after Governor Hobby called the legislature into special session.¹⁰

⁹ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 343, 346; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature, convened January 14, 1919, and adjourned March 19, 1919* (Austin: Von Boeckman-Jones, 1919), 77.

¹⁰ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 356-357.

Thus, the political nature of Texas was generally conservative. Attempts at reform were given added strength because of the way supporters of these issues related them to American participation in World War I. However, in each case, they could not gain a majority of support in Texas until events at the national level forced Texas politicians to take action. The influence of national politics also illustrated in other ways the context of Texas politics during this period. The election of Woodrow Wilson serves as a prime example. At the national level, members of the Democratic Party, which had not won an election since 1892, believed that they had a possibility to win the presidency in 1912 because the Republicans were not unified. Furthermore, the Democrats had not won a presidential election since 1892. The Democratic candidate, governor of New Jersey Woodrow Wilson, also had the strong support of Texan Edward M. House, who had been successful in managing Texas gubernatorial candidates. With House's support, Texas Democrats generally lined up behind their candidate and Texas went easily to Wilson in 1912.¹¹

In 1916, Texans sought to bring the Democratic National Convention to their state, but were beaten out by Missouri Democrats, who hosted the convention in St. Louis. Although Wilson carried Texas in 1916, his policies toward Mexico were criticized. This criticism revealed itself in the senatorial race between Oscar B. Colquitt and Charles A. Culberson, both former Texas governors. Colquitt drew Wilson's ire for his criticism of Wilson's policies toward Mexico and Colquitt's attempts to gain the support of German Texans. Wilson then chose to support the incumbent Culberson. At a

¹¹ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 346; John Milton Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 149.

rally in Dallas of Culberson supporters, for example, the cry was, “are the people of Texas going to stand by President Woodrow Wilson or the German Kaiser?” With Wilson’s support, Culberson carried the election. However, Culberson suffered from a number of physical ailments and was an alcoholic. As historian Lewis L. Gould has commented, “The willingness of Texas voters to elect a hopeless invalid to the senate illustrated the strength and peculiar character of the one party system in the state.”¹²

While Wilson generally had the support of Texas in both elections, the two governors who led the state during the war were also important. Both governors were, of course, Democrats. James E. Ferguson, a native of Bell County born in 1871, was elected governor in the fall of 1914 and entered office in January, 1915. Ferguson had tried odd jobs after college as a youth and eventually returned to Texas, where he developed into a successful banker and real estate investor. In the 1914 election Ferguson campaigned as “Farmer Jim” in an effort to connect with the rural majority of Texans, although in truth he was a much more sophisticated individual. Thomas H. Ball entered the race against Ferguson, and the contest quickly focused on prohibition, which Ball supported. During the campaign, however, some Texans entertained the perception that President Wilson had attempted to sway the election toward Ball. Wilson’s Postmaster General, Texan Albert S. Burlison, released a statement hinting that the governor of Texas should be in “sympathy” with the President’s administration. The implication was, of course, that Ferguson might not be as strong a supporter of Wilson’s administration as Ball would. In response, Ferguson lashed out publicly against Wilson

¹² Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 181-182.

and in the end managed to defeat Ball. After the election, however, he claimed that what occurred during the campaign should in no way “be the cause of dissension between Democrats and their allegiance to Democratic policies and platforms.”¹³

Ferguson turned out to be a popular governor as well as a supporter of the President. He won reelection in 1916, defeating his opponent, Charles H. Morris, by more than 60,000 votes. However, little of significance was accomplished during Ferguson’s second term because of an ongoing and increasingly fractious fight against the University of Texas that had begun during Ferguson’s first term. Simply put, the issue revolved around the University’s budget as well as certain faculty and board members that Ferguson wanted removed. However, the University did not give in to the governor’s pressure and the struggle intensified, growing bitter. Eventually, the Texas Legislature investigated Ferguson for possible financial missteps. On the other hand, Ferguson vetoed the university’s entire 1917 budget appropriation. In retaliation, impeachment proceedings were initiated against Ferguson, who eventually resigned. This, “bear fight,” as Ferguson called it, between the governor and the University drew the attention of Texans throughout the summer of 1917 while the United States was preparing for war. This suggests that at the beginning of the war the governor of Texas and his administration were not able to focus their complete attention on preparing the state for war, and Ferguson’s leadership ability was certainly damaged during this critical period in the summer of 1917 by an unnecessary struggle. While it may not have had a

¹³ Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists*, 130, 136, 141.

direct impact on how Texans viewed or fought the war, it still drew their attention away from more important concerns.¹⁴

The removal of Ferguson opened the way for Lieutenant Governor William P. Hobby to assume leadership of the state and frame Texans' perception of the war in a different way than had Ferguson. Hobby, born in 1878, had worked his way through the newspaper business, and eventually become managing editor of the *Houston Post*. Aligned with conservative Democrats, Texans elected Hobby as Lieutenant Governor in 1914. He served as acting governor during Ferguson's impeachment trial and became governor in his own right when Ferguson resigned in September of 1917. Hobby then served as governor throughout the remainder of the war.¹⁵

Hobby's administration assumed leadership of the war effort, and he worked in conjunction with the legislature to pass a number of war related laws to support Texas soldiers. For example, during his administration the legislature passed laws that freed soldiers from harassment by creditors and stipulated that they did not have to "answer to the merits of a demand sued upon them while actively engaged as a soldier or sailor in the war." Furthermore, soldiers did not have to deal with creditors until ninety days after the United States and Germany signed a peace treaty. As Hobby wrote in his 1919 "State of the State" address, the purpose of such legislation was to "protect the interest of the

¹⁴ Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., *The Chief Executives of Texas: From Stephen F. Austin to John B. Connally, Jr.* (College Station: Texas A&M, 1995), 160; Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists*, 187, 217; Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 351.

¹⁵ Hendrickson, *Chief Executives of Texas*, 162-163; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature, convened January 14, 1919, and adjourned March 19, 1919* (Austin: Von Boeckman-Jones, 1919), 76.

soldier who is fighting for us, and to relieve his mind of the worry and uneasiness which might greatly interfere with his work.”¹⁶

Also in 1918, the Texas legislature was called into its fourth session for the “purpose of enacting certain laws for the purpose of protecting soldiers in training in Texas and *to render the state of Texas more efficient as an agency for winning the war.*” These laws were all related to banning liquor from the areas around camps and attempting to limit prostitution. Thus, Texas governors and the Texas Legislature, while initially handicapped by the events of Ferguson’s impeachment, would rapidly turn its attention toward the war effort. Along with the state government, the Congressional delegation from Texas also played a significant role in defining Texas politics during this period.¹⁷

The 1917 Texas Congressional delegation was Democratic to a man. Both Texas senators in 1917 were also highly experienced. As mentioned, former governor Charles A. Culberson won reelection in 1916, continuing a public service career that had started in 1899. Born in Alabama in 1855, Culberson moved to Texas when he was one year old. After graduating from the Virginia Military Institute and the University of Virginia Law School, Culberson returned to Texas in 1887. In 1890 he won election as state attorney general, and in 1894, with the help of Edward M. House, Culberson won the

¹⁶ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature, convened January 14, 1919, and adjourned March 19, 1919* (Austin: Von Boeckman-Jones, 1919), 76.

¹⁷ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature, convened January 14, 1919, and adjourned March 19, 1919* (Austin: Von Boeckman-Jones, 1919), 77.

governorship. By 1899, he had moved to the United States Senate, where he would serve for twenty-four years. Although his career in the senate started strong, health problems and alcohol addiction later began to limit his abilities severely. Culberson was sixty-two years old at the outbreak of World War I, and he would introduce a number of bills supporting the war.¹⁸

The other senator from Texas was forty-two-year old Morris Sheppard, twenty years Culberson's junior. Sheppard was a native Texan, born in Morris County in 1875. He attended law school at the University of Texas and Yale University, graduating in 1898. In 1902, Texans elected Sheppard to the House of Representatives, into the seat held formerly by his father. He held the seat for ten years, and in 1913 he won election to the Senate, where he proved to be a strong supporter of President Wilson's actions toward Mexico as well as a supporter of American preparedness. Sheppard also was in favor of prohibition, and it was he who introduced the legislation that became the Eighteenth Amendment. Also, Sheppard was generally more active than Culberson in the Senate during the war years. Sheppard remained in the Senate until his death in 1941. In 1917, then, both Texas senators were Democrats and both supported the war effort. If these men represented the political elite of Texas, their colleagues in the House of Representatives mirrored them closely. However, the Texas delegation to the House had

¹⁸ *The Handbook of Texas Online*, "Charles Allen Culberson," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/CC/fcu2_print.html (accessed 30 November 2009.)

a much wider range of personalities, but they were no less fiery in their beliefs about the war and Texas's role in it.¹⁹

In 1917, lawmakers divided Texas into sixteen geographical congressional districts and two "at-large" seats in the House of Representatives. The eighteen men who served Texas in the House of Representatives were distinct as individuals, but they also clearly shared certain characteristics that represented the southern Democratic approach to politics prevalent in Texas at the time. Thus, these representatives will be profiled as a group to illustrate their common characteristics, such as party affiliation and occupation, and age and experience level, in order to illustrate the political elite that these men represented.

Not surprisingly, the Texas congressmen mirrored the influx of population into the state, as only eight of eighteen were born in Texas, with the remaining ten born outside the state. Of these ten, all were from the South. Three men were from the Deep South states of Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana. The other seven, however, came from Upper South states, four from Tennessee, two from Kentucky, and one from West Virginia. As far as occupations went, sixteen of the eighteen congressmen were lawyers. Of the two who were not, James L. Slayden was a cotton merchant and rancher,

¹⁹ *The Handbook of Texas Online*, "John Morris Sheppard," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/SS/fsh24_print.html (accessed 30 November 2009.)

while Atkins Jefferson McLemore worked in the newspaper business. As might be expected, all eighteen representatives were members of the Democratic Party.²⁰

The average age of the Texas House delegation was forty-nine years in 1917. Four men were sixty or older, and James Slayden was the oldest at sixty-four. On the other hand, four of these men were forty or younger, with Sam Rayburn and Marvin Jones sharing the honor of being the youngest at thirty-five. As for experience in Congress, James Slayden had served the longest, having been first elected to Congress in 1892, while five members of the Texas delegation were elected in either 1916 or 1917, including Joseph Mansfield, Tom Connally, James C. Wilson, Marvin Jones, and Thomas L. Blanton. Blanton also held the distinction of being the brother of Annie Webb Blanton, the first woman to hold elected office in Texas. Overall, the Texas representatives averaged five years of congressional experience, although four members had served ten years or longer. Finally, of the eighteen representatives, at least three had some form of military experience. Martin Dies and Tom Connally were veterans of the Spanish-American War, while Joseph Mansfield organized two companies of the Texas Volunteer Guard. Most of these representatives would play an important role in supporting the war effort, but not all. For example, Sam Rayburn would sponsor the War Risk Insurance Act; Joseph Eagle, James Slayden, and Daniel Garrett worked to secure

²⁰ The Texas Delegation to the House of Representatives in 1917-1918 was Eugene Black, Martin Dies, James Young, Sam Rayburn, Hatton Sumner, Rufus Hardy, Alexander W. Gregg, Joe Eagle, Joseph Mansfield, James P. Buchanan, Tom Connally, James C. Wilson, Marvin Jones, James L. Slayden, John Nance Garner, Thomas L. Blanton, Atkins Jefferson McLemore, and Daniel E. Garrett. Biographical information on these men was taken from *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/index.html> (accessed 24 November, 2009.)

military bases for Texas; Tom Connally would serve on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and John Nance Garner would become the liaison between President Wilson and the House of Representatives. Several Congressmen, including Tom Connally and Marvin Jones, travelled to France in 1918 as part of a Congressional delegation, and Connally joined the military toward the end of the war. On the other hand, at least one member of the delegation, Atkins Jefferson McLemore, would take a more isolationist stand and send mixed messages to Texans at home.²¹

Freshman representative Tom Connally recalled the group of Texas Congressmen in 1917 as “clannish” and that they “spent a great deal of time together.” Smaller than both the Pennsylvania and New York delegations, among several others, Connally believed that their unity and because they frequently voted the same way on various issues gave them an “influence far out of proportion to our numbers.” Connally also claimed that the Texans did not hold a committee chairmanship and “none of us was important except John Nance Garner.” According to Connally, Panhandle Congressman Thomas L. Blanton was the most controversial member of the delegation because he “thought everyone was wrong but himself.”²²

Connally considered Daniel Garret his best friend in Congress, but characterized Martin Dies as a man “who would have gone far if he had bothered to extend himself;”

²¹ Information on the Congressional Delegation taken from the Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/index.html> (accessed 24 November 2009.); Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists*, 223; Tom Connally, *My Name is Tom Connally* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1954), 94-95; Joseph M. Ray, editor, *Marvin Jones Memoirs* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1973), 40.

²² Connally, *My Name is Tom Connally*, 89-90.

James Buchanan was “noted chiefly for his foolhardiness in playing poker with John Garner,” while James Young “had the subject of cotton on his mind almost all the time.” Eugene Black was a “serious man given to no frivolity, who was wrapped up in the subject of banking and currency.” On the other hand, he praised Thomas Blanton as a man whom “you can no more keep him from doing things than you can keep powder from exploding when fire is applied. He just naturally loves work.” In essence, these eighteen men presented a cohesive and similar set of characteristics and, like the two senators, represented the Texas politician of 1917. Furthermore, these characteristics again suggest that the political leadership of Texas hewed closely to a generally conservative outlook. Thus, what these men represented is important to understanding the political context in which the Seventh Texas was recruited and organized.

However, there were also a number of international events that shaped the attitudes and actions of Texas politicians and many Texans in the years leading up to World War I. These events included the Mexican Revolution, the associated radical Plan of San Diego of 1915, the conflict engendered by Francisco “Pancho” Villa’s 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico, and finally, the public release by the Wilson Administration of the infamous Zimmerman Telegram in March of 1917. Each of these events, in their own way, contributed to the political and social climate of Texas in 1917 and shaped the way many Texans supported Woodrow Wilson and responded to the declaration of war in April, 1917. In sum, the relationship between the United States and Mexico and the problems along the border translated into increased hatred of Germany and generated

support for the Wilson administration in 1917, spurring many Texans to action in the wake of the declaration of war.

In the years leading up to American involvement in World War I, the trends in South Texas favored an increasing Hispanic population. Along with this, however, was a corresponding increase in violence toward them as well. The unstable situation in South Texas began to deteriorate as early as 1910, with the beginning of the Mexican Revolution and the descent of much of that nation into chaos. This violence, in turn, spurred Mexican migration northward to Texas where these immigrants joined the “cotton economy” and generated competition for jobs with white residents. The situation only became more volatile, and violence on both sides increased. The strained relationship between Texans and Hispanics in South Texas arguably reached its most bitter level with the discovery in 1915 of the alleged plot known as the Plan of San Diego. Radical participants in the Mexican Revolution had been pushed north during the revolution, and these elements were responsible for the plan. It was supposedly written and signed in San Diego, Texas, in January, 1915. Essentially, the plan called for Mexican-Americans, African-Americans, and Japanese-Americans to join together and kill all white males over the age of sixteen. Although the plan was uncovered and never carried out, it served to exacerbate tensions on both sides of the border and resulted in increasing violence by both sides. The Texas Rangers became heavily involved in the region, and at times committed extreme acts of violence. Indeed, at one point even the Adjutant General of Texas, Brigadier General Henry Hutchings, joined a posse of Texas Rangers. Historian Walter Prescott Webb characterized the attitude along the border

during this period with the comment, “On one side of the river the slogan was „Kill the Gringos’; on the other it was „Kill the Greasers.””²³

In 1916, General Vicente Carranza secured power in Mexico and gained the diplomatic support of President Wilson and the United States. This infuriated one of Carranza’s rivals, Francisco “Pancho” Villa, who also had hoped to gain American support. When President Wilson opted to support Carranza, Villa sought revenge on the United States by killing a group of American mining engineers who were travelling on a train in Mexico, and followed that with a bold raid on the town of Columbus, New Mexico. The United States responded to Villa’s actions by sending Brigadier General John J. Pershing and approximately ten thousand soldiers into Mexico in what was called the United States Punitive Expedition, to seek out and destroy Villa’s troops. As a corollary to Pershing’s expedition, President Wilson mobilized the National Guard of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, and posted them at various points along the Mexican border. Eventually, President Wilson mobilized the entire National Guard and thousands of Guardsmen arrived in South Texas in 1916. Although the National Guard never engaged in any major fighting with Villa’s or Carranza’s forces and spent most of its time training, the situation fostered an air of tension in Texas that was felt throughout 1916

²³ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 117-122; Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 210-213, 263; Clarence Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1969), 181-183; Walter Prescott Webb quoted in Matt M. Matthews, *The US Army on the Mexican Border: A Historical Perspective* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007), 59; Benjamin H. Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Texans* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2003).

and after. Indeed, in 1917, the *Abilene Reporter* stated that “we all realize—and have for sometime—that Mexico is a menace to the U.S. and the extent to which the menace MAY go none of us can tell.” At the same time, Governor Ferguson claimed that if an invasion of the United States ever occurred, Texas would be the first to suffer. “I don’t want to alarm you,” he said in a speech to the Dallas Advertising League, but the “probability exists” that Texas might suffer as had Belgium in the opening days of the war.²⁴

The United States-Mexico relationship highlighted the role that the United States Army played in Texas during the first two decades of the twentieth-century. In terms of the regular Army, the Southern Department, headquartered at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio since 1913, was the organizational element in charge of soldiers stationed in Texas. Major General Frederick Funston commanded the department from 1915 until his death from a heart attack in 1916. However, the Army had a much longer presence in Texas dating from the end of the Mexican War until the outbreak of the Civil War and then again after the war, when it continued its traditional duties of guarding the Mexican border and protecting settlers as they moved westward. The first decade of the century, however, had seen the military presence decline. However, as the United States-Mexico relationship deteriorated, the army again played a larger role in Texas. On the one hand, the Army assisted in putting down the so-called “Bandit War” along the border in 1915, and, along with the National Guard, maintained a strong presence in South Texas while General Pershing was in Mexico. The Army remained active on the border during the

²⁴ Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, 186, 189, 198, 201-209, 287, 289; Ferguson’s speech quoted in the *Abilene Reporter*, April 10, 11, 1917.

first years of the World War, when General Pershing sought to end the illicit arms trade across the border by appealing to the Chambers of Commerce of thirteen border towns, or when the Eighth Cavalry Regiment under the command of Colonel George T. Langhorne moved into the Big Bend region. Thus, the presence of the Army in Texas contributed to the context in which Texans viewed the ever increasing tension brought about by the international situation.²⁵

Revolutionary unrest in Mexico combined with the war in Europe fueled a growing feeling among many Texans that German agents were swarming south of the border, inciting violence and passing out propaganda supporting the German war effort. The fears of many Texans, not to mention other United States citizens, of German spies appeared very real at the time and rumors were often believed to be fact, especially when placed within the violent context of the border region. Rumors or suggestions of German agents, spies, and propaganda were rife throughout Texas and reported widely in Texas newspapers. For example, in North Texas, the *Dallas Morning News* ran a story titled, “German Influences at work in Mexico.” The article claimed that American military intelligence officers and “secret service” agents operating along the border had “disclosed many German activities there.” The article also laid blame for Villa’s activities on German influences. Finally, the article claimed that Carranza had a close German advisor and that all Mexican ammunition factories were under the management of a German, Maximilian Klaus. Along similar lines, the *Austin American Statesman* described possible German submarine bases in Mexico. Indeed, the *Statesman* listed five

²⁵ Utley, *Lone Star Lawmen*, 39, 57; Matthews, *US Army on the Mexican Border*, 28, 46, 61-63; *Wichita Daily Times*, April 20, 1917.

perceived German intrigues throughout Latin America and stated that “all these things, in the opinion of officials here, take on a decidedly definite form with the disclosures made in Germany’s instructions to her minister in Mexico.” Thus, in this climate of possible German intrigue an event of consequence occurred to highlight on an international scale the troubled situation between the United States and Mexico. This event also served as one of the final acts that helped push the United States into war.²⁶

The issue that helped spur the United States into war was the emergence of the Zimmerman Telegram in March of 1917. The British intercepted the telegram, which had been sent in code to the German ambassador to the United States. The British then forwarded it to the United States government. The telegram revealed that the German government urged their ambassador to Mexico to push Mexico and Japan into openly supporting the Triple Alliance. The message implied that if Mexico allied with the Triple Alliance, Germany would help Mexico regain the territory it had lost to the United States in the war of 1846-1848. The citizens of Texas, and of the United States, were outraged when they learned of the telegram’s substance. However, even in Texas, the anger was not necessarily directed at Mexico, but rather at Germany. Indeed, the *Dallas Morning News* ran a front page illustration characterizing the German plot. In the illustration, a large dark figure with horns, a spiked German helmet, and a thick mustache offered a sack of gold to a much smaller Mexican man wrapped in a blanket and wearing a sombrero. With his other hand, the German pointed to Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The cartoon was titled, “The Temptation.” Again, the point being that Germany sought

²⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, March 2, 1917; *Austin American Statesman*, March 1, 1917.

to take advantage of Mexico, which the editor of the *Denton Record-Chronicle* called “poor, feeble, strife-broken Mexico whose only chance for salvation lies in the friendship and support of the United States.” On the other hand, the *Abilene Reporter* noted that if war did break out between the United States and Mexico, “If it ever starts instead of Mexico getting Texas, New Mexico and Arizona it will wind up with Mexico annexed to the United States if there is any annexing.” As things turned out, the Wilson administration released the telegram to the public just one day prior to the anniversary of Texas independence. The connection was not lost on the *Austin American Statesman*, whose editor crafted a florid and overstated comparison of Texas Independence with the struggles of Ancient Greece. However, drawing the connection between the Texas military tradition and the present, the editor made clear that Texans had a responsibility to live up to the state’s past and, “for the perpetuation of those things to which so many of them [Texas revolutionaries] gave their lives, we, too, must be willing to live and if need be, to die.” The editor ended the piece with a warning: “Today, as the flag under which died Texas’ martyrs woos the breezes sweeping over rolling plain and winding stream, bringing to mighty cities the breath of peaceful pastures, let us be mindful of our sacred trust.” Although many Texans reacted strongly to the Zimmerman Telegram, it also generated support for the President in Congress. Thus, the contents of the telegram, along with Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, pushed Woodrow Wilson into asking Congress for a declaration of war.²⁷

²⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, March 2, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, March 3, 1917; *The Abilene Reporter*, April 6, 1917; The best summary of the events surrounding the Zimmerman Telegram is found in Barbara Tuchman *The Zimmerman Telegram* (New

This overview of Texas in the first two decades of the twentieth century serves as a way to frame the events and trends occurring in Texas and which influenced the men who joined the Texas National Guard and the Seventh Texas Infantry. To clarify further the context in which the Texas National Guard recruited and organized the Seventh Texas Infantry, it is important to focus also on the region from which the majority of the members of the regiment came from. The Seventh Texas Infantry consisted of fifteen companies recruited across fourteen Texas counties. However, although these fourteen counties were the recruiting headquarters for each company, and each company maintained its headquarters in the county seat, the soldiers who joined the regiment were not required to come from that particular county. In fact, many came from surrounding counties, although most were from the northwest Texas region. These fourteen counties can be studied in terms of population and economics that will further clarify the environment that influenced these particular soldiers. While it would be hard to say if 14 of the more than 250 counties in Texas are representative of the whole, an examination of them can verify the state level trends discussed earlier, particularly in terms of agriculture and population. Although many observers described the region in which the Seventh Texas Infantry was recruited as northwest Texas, this area actually falls within three of the well defined regions of the state and included industrial areas, ranching empires, and

York: Viking, 1956); The summary above is from Harris and Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, 321; *Austin American Statesman*, March 2, 1917; Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, *Decisions for War, 1914-1917* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 223; Note also that the *Wichita Daily Times* said that the Zimmerman Plan ought to “stir the patriotism even of some Texas representatives in Congress, whose attitude has been more likely to make them solid with those of alien sympathies,” *Wichita Daily Times*, March 1, 1917.

agricultural regions. The three regions that made up the recruiting area for the Seventh Texas Infantry in 1917 have been described as three of nine distinct “cultural” regions of the state: North Texas, West Texas, and the Panhandle Region. While many of these distinctions might be blurred and indistinct in modern Texas, they were still accurate characterizations of the region during the first two decades of the twentieth century, before urbanization and modernization changed Texas. These three regions were all frontiers at one point, and many of the counties still reflected that not too distant past.²⁸

Two groups of counties fell within the North Texas region. The first group consisted of the companies recruited from Denton, Wise, Tarrant, Johnson, and Cooke Counties. The second group consisted of the Wichita, Wilbarger, Hardeman, Foard, and Childress Counties, which were northwest of the first group, along the fringe of the North Texas region. North Texas itself was different from older areas of the state such as East, Central, or South Texas. The North Texas region was generally considered distinct because of its agricultural system, its population characteristics, and the migratory patterns of the people who settled there.

In the nineteenth century, North Texas had been a land of little cotton and few slaves, especially when compared to East Texas. This lack of a cotton economy resulted in North Texas having a more diversified agriculture. By 1900, the distinction between North Texas and East Texas was even sharper, as much of the North Texas population migrated from Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee, as opposed to immigrants from the Deep South, who moved mainly to the cotton country of East Texas. These differences

²⁸ D.W. Meinig. *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 91-92.

were also apparent prior to the Civil War, when several North Texas counties voted to oppose secession in 1861. Nevertheless, by the early twentieth-century, most North Texans shared a common opinion of the social inferiority of African-Americans and supported segregation and marginalizing minorities.²⁹

Cooke County, the northern boundary of which rested along the Red River, was the northernmost county of the first group. Founded in 1848 and comprising 1,000 square miles of rolling prairie, the county's population in 1910 consisted of 24,911 white residents and 1,688 African-Americans, a three percent decrease from 1900. The county's largest city and county seat, Gainesville, reported 7,624 residents in 1910. Other towns in the county included the predominantly German communities of Muenster and Lindsay, and well as Valley View, the birthplace of Congressman Marvin Jones.³⁰

Just to the south of Cooke County was Denton County. Slightly smaller in size at 865 square miles, the county's population in 1910 numbered 29,041 white residents and 2,217 African-Americans, while Denton, the county seat, was a bustling 4,732. Unlike Cooke, Denton County's population increased by ten percent when compared with the 1900 census. Denton County was founded in 1846 and consisted generally of rolling prairie well suited to farming. The 1914 *Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide* considered Denton as "one of the progressive small cities of North Texas," in part because of its two colleges, the North Texas Normal School and the College of Industrial Arts. Bordering

²⁹ D.W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas*, 50, 64-65.

³⁰ *Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1914* (Dallas: A.H. Belo & Company, 1914), 261, 33, 99, 103; Hereafter referred to as *Texas Almanac, 1914*; Joseph M. Ray, editor. *Marvin Jones Memoirs* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1973), 1.

Denton County on the west was Wise County, the smallest county of this North Texas group.³¹

Wise County was organized in 1858 and named for Henry A. Wise, the nineteenth century Virginia governor. The county stretched across 843 square miles of “undulating” and “broken, hilly country,” with a population of 26,381 whites but just 67 African-Americans in 1910, about a two percent decrease from the previous census. Decatur, the county seat, had a population of only 1,651, which was a slight increase from 1900. Other towns in the county included Chico, Alvord, and Boyd. To the south of Denton and Wise Counties was the largest county in the region from a population perspective, Tarrant County, and its rapidly growing principal city of Fort Worth.³²

Created in 1849, Tarrant County encompassed 900 square miles of rolling prairie. In 1910, the county’s population was just over 93,000 white residents and 15,418 African-Americans, a total increase of 107 percent from 1900. The population of Fort Worth exploded in the first decade of the century, increasing from 26,688 in 1900 to 73,312 in 1910, a 170 percent increase. This made Fort Worth the fourth largest city in Texas at the time. Fort Worth also served as a gateway to and transportation hub for West Texas. Thus, although Tarrant County was in North Texas, this westward reach made Fort Worth distinct from its nearby neighbor Dallas, which served as the focal point

³¹ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 33, 99, 103, 266.

³² *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 348, 102, 103.

for North Texas. To the south of Tarrant County lay the southernmost county in the first North Texas group, Johnson County.³³

Organized in 1854 from land taken from neighboring Navarro and McLennan Counties, Johnson County's population in 1910 consisted of 32,823 white residents and 1,637 African-Americans, who lived on 940 miles of "high and rolling black prairie land," the "Cross Timbers belt," and "level black land" that dominated the eastern portion of the county. The county seat, Cleburne, had a population in 1910 of 10,364, an increase of 3,000 people from the previous census. These five counties were all formed prior to the Civil War, represented good farming land, and were predominantly white. However, although the African-American population was small in these counties, it still represented the largest concentration of African-Americans in all of the fourteen counties under study. Besides the population characteristics of these counties, there are other important facets of these counties to be analyzed in order to complete the social and economic picture of this cluster of North Texas counties.³⁴

For instance, railroads and roads might be an indicator of both the agricultural and industrial capacity of a region. In the five counties of this North Texas group, railroad mileage averaged 137 miles per county, with Tarrant County having the largest network consisting of 287 miles. Cooke County to the north, on the other hand, had just 59 miles of track. In a similar fashion, these counties averaged 143 miles of "good road mileage" per county, with Tarrant well ahead of the other counties with more than 500 miles, while

³³ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 34, 102, 105, 335; Meinig, *Imperial Texas*, 76.

³⁴ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 296, 100, 33, 296.

Denton County reported only 48 miles and Johnson County failed to report any “good roads.” As an indication of manufacturing and industrial capacity, it should be mentioned that only Fort Worth and Cleburne reported industries in their counties. As of 1909, Fort Worth reported 147 manufacturing establishments that produced goods valued in excess of \$8.5 million. These industries also provided jobs for 2,059 wage earners in the county. Cleburne, on the other hand, reported twenty-four industrial firms which employed 825 people and produced goods valued at slightly more than \$1.5 million. The industrial capacity of these two cities could be compared with nearby Dallas, which during the same period employed 4,882 workers in 305 manufacturing establishments and produced goods valued in excess of \$26 million.³⁵

On the other hand, the overwhelming dominance of agriculture in these five counties is clear. This cluster of counties produced an average of nearly 52,000 cotton bales in 1912, with Johnson County producing the most at 73,000 and Cooke County the least at almost 38,000 bales. Although Cooke County produced the least cotton of this group, its total was still significant as compared to counties outside of this cluster. This cotton was produced on a total of 18,645 farms that were spread out among the five counties. Denton County reported the most farms, with slightly more than 4,300, while Cooke again had the least with 3,400. A second important aspect of agriculture during this period revolves around growing numbers of Texas tenant farmers. Thus, in these

³⁵ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 139-140, 143, 128.

five counties, on average approximately 1,749 farms were farmed by their owners, while slightly more than half (52 percent) of the total farms were worked by tenants.³⁶

Although Tarrant and Johnson County manufactured goods worth a combined \$10 million, this was just a fraction of the value of the farms in those two counties, as farm land and buildings dotting the countryside of those two counties exceeded \$47 million. Indeed, the value of farm land and buildings in the five counties averaged just over \$20 million per county. Wise County reported the lowest value, although its farms were valued at \$13 million. Finally, another indicator of the Texas economy is the amount of cattle per county. While farming certainly dominated, each county averaged nearly 20,000 head of cattle, and Wise County had the most with 22,591.³⁷

Thus, these five counties made up the first North Texas cluster from which companies of the Seventh Texas Infantry would be raised. These counties provided a good cross section between the smaller and more rural Wise County, to the growing counties of Denton and Johnson, which mixed agriculture and industry, to the thriving “metropolis” of Forth Worth and rapidly growing Tarrant County, a burgeoning commercial center that had drawn outside industries such as the Swift and Armour packing plant. However, agriculture dominated, the population was overwhelmingly white, and these residents lived in a region crisscrossed with roads and railroads. Perhaps this North Texas group of counties could be considered the heart of North Texas,

³⁶ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 192-193, 201-204.

³⁷ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 205-206, 221-222.

representing its own distinct culture between the populous East Texas and the still developing West Texas and the Panhandle.³⁸

Approximately one hundred miles to the northwest of this group of North Texas counties was the second cluster of counties where companies of the Seventh Texas Infantry were raised. This cluster of five counties extended from Wichita County west northwest through Wilbarger, Hardeman, Foard, and Childress. All of these counties except Foard rested along the Red River and bordered Oklahoma. This group of counties, as will be seen, generally mirrored the characteristics of the more populous counties to the southeast on a smaller scale.

In 1910, Wichita County had a population of 15,476 white residents and 612 African-Americans who were spread across 606 square miles of “undulating prairie.” The county was established in 1858, and the county seat, Wichita Falls, numbered 8,200 people in 1910. The influx of migrants into this region was readily apparent, as the population between 1900 and 1910 increased by 177 percent. When recruiting for the Seventh Texas began in earnest in the summer of 1917, Wichita County would have enough volunteers to fill two companies of soldiers.³⁹

Wilbarger County sat just to the west of Wichita County and covered more than 900 square miles of slightly rolling prairie broken by “wide level stretches.” Wilbarger County had also been established in 1858, and it counted nearly 12,000 residents, 3,195 of whom lived in Vernon, the county seat. Like other counties in the area, the African-

³⁸ Meinig, *Imperial Texas*, 81.

³⁹ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 102, 104, 34, 346; Archibald S. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vantage, 1969), 10.

American population was close to non-existent, with only 70 African-Americans reported as living there in 1910. Wilbarger County also felt the influx of new settlers as the population had increased a little more than 100 percent from the 1900 census.⁴⁰

To the west of Wilbarger County were two smaller counties, both of which abutted their eastern neighbor. On the north sat Hardeman County, made up of 532 square miles of level plain, except in the southern portion of the county where the Pease River flowed through the Copper Breaks area. Hardeman County was created in 1858, and slightly more than 11,000 white residents called it home in 1910, although fewer than 50 African-Americans did. The county seat, Quanah, named after the well known Comanche Chief Quanah Parker was home to 3,127 people in 1910. Continuing the immigration trend, residents of Hardeman County had witnessed a population increase of more than 200 percent, and Quanah itself was developing into a railroad hub.⁴¹

South of the Pease River was Foard County. The county covered more than 600 square miles of level plain with rolling, broken areas along the northern edge of the county near the Pease River. Nearby, the Pease River battle of 1860 occurred, where a group of Texas Rangers under the command of Lawrence “Sul” Ross attacked the winter camp of Comanche Peta Nocona and recovered Cynthia Ann Parker, a white woman who had been captured by Comanches years earlier. Cynthia was also Quanah Parker’s mother. In 1910, Foard County had a population of 5,720 whites, and only 6 African-Americans. The county had been established just twenty years earlier in 1891, and the

⁴⁰ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 34, 346, 102, 104.

⁴¹ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 33, 284, 100, 104.

county seat, Crowell, reported a population of 1,341. Like other counties in this group, Foard County's population increased by an impressive 265 percent between 1900 and 1910.⁴²

The final county in this group lay to the northwest of Hardeman County. Established in 1876, Childress County was home to 9,500 people in 1910 although there were no African-Americans living in the county. Childress, the county seat, boasted a population of 3,800 people in a country described as rolling plains and broad valleys. Of all the counties in this cluster along the Red River and Oklahoma border, Childress had the largest growth from the previous census. Its population increased by an incredible 345 percent between 1900 and 1910.⁴³

Thus, this cluster of counties was very representative of the influx of people into Texas. In fact, the population in these five counties had nearly tripled, from 18,905 in 1900 to 54,571 by 1910, a total increase of 288 percent. This can be compared with the first cluster of counties, whose 1900 population totaled 169,123 and whose 1910 total was 227,343, an increase of 134 percent. However, this increase was not all inclusive, as the overwhelming majority of immigrants remained native born whites. There were few foreign-born citizens in this part of Texas, with only 424 such men and women scattered

⁴² *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 33, 99, 103, 274; Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 205-206.

⁴³ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 256-257, 99, 103.

over these five counties according to the 1900 census. By 1910 the foreign born had increased to 1014 men and women.⁴⁴

The population of these counties, almost all white and native-born, was consistent with the state's population, but how did this group compare with the first group of counties and with the state as a whole in terms of transportation, industrial capacity, and agricultural production? First, these five counties averaged only forty-nine miles of railroad track. Hardeman and Wichita counties had the most at seventy-one while Foard County had just twenty-one miles. As for "good road mileage," none of the five counties reported a single mile in this category in the 1914 *Texas Almanac*. Thus, what little manufacturing capacity that existed was centered in Wichita and Hardeman Counties. However, agricultural production remained strong, particularly in cotton, although it was not produced to the same level as the first cluster of counties. These five counties closer to the Panhandle averaged 19,030 cotton bales in 1912, with Wilbarger County producing the most at 35,000 and Foard the least with just over 10,000. Thus, the largest cotton producing county in this cluster still produced less than the lowest producer in the first group of North Texas counties. These counties also had fewer farms than the first group, averaging just over 1,000 farms per county. Wilbarger County, as might be expected with its cotton production, had the most at 1,435, while Foard County, with a smaller population, had only 718 farms. Of the average number of farms in each county, just

⁴⁴ *Texas Almanac 1914*, 99-102; University of Virginia Census Browser, "Foreign Born Males," and "Foreign Born Females," 1900, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>, and "Foreign Born White Persons," 1920, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>.

under half were operated by their owners, while nearly 54 percent were operated by tenants. Additionally, the total value of farm land and equipment decreased the farther west one travelled. Wichita and Wilbarger farm land and equipment were valued at \$11.7 and \$12.6 million respectively in 1910, while Hardeman, Foard, and Childress counties reported values of 8.3 million, 6.5 million, and 6.8 million dollars. Cattle and ranching was also strong in the region as each county supported on average 15,000 head of cattle. Childress claimed title to the largest livestock raising county, farthest to the west and closest to the Panhandle, while the easternmost county in this group, Wichita, had the fewest, slightly more than 12,000.⁴⁵

Thus, this cluster of counties was similar to the first group centered on Fort Worth, although on a slightly smaller scale, primarily because of population differences. Farming remained dominant in these counties, and cotton production was strong. There was less industry and manufacturing, although Quanah and Wichita Falls were making small strides in that direction. The residents were mostly white, with small populations of African-American or foreign-born residents. The final two cultural regions that raised companies for the Seventh Texas were the Panhandle and West Texas. However, of the remaining four counties, only Potter and Lubbock counties displayed characteristics typical of the Panhandle, while Donley County, although on the cusp of the region, exhibited characteristics more along the lines of North Texas counties. The last county, Taylor County, which was generally considered part of West Texas, also appeared to have more in common with North Texas counties.

⁴⁵ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 139-140, 143, 192-193, 201-203, 205-206, 221-222.

Thus, continuing northwest of Childress County and passing through the edges of Hall and Collingsworth Counties was Donley County, near the area that has become known as the Panhandle, which has been considered a distinct cultural region. Part of this had to do with the predominance of ranching in the area, the reduced reliance on agriculture, and the slower pattern of settlement in the region. Although many ranchers and their herds came from the south, the predominant migration pattern was a slow progression westward out of North Texas. Furthermore, the area was subject to influences outside of Texas, primarily from Kansas and Missouri. As geographer D.W. Meinig argued, agents from as far afield as Kansas City and Chicago competed with Fort Worth for the Amarillo cattle business. This outside influence and Amarillo's focus to the north, he argued, also provided an explanation why Amarillo and Lubbock were two distinctly different cities even though their characteristics were similar from a population, agricultural, and ranching perspective. Finally, the influx of farmers came much later to the panhandle region, which in turn allowed ranchers to dominate the area for a longer period.⁴⁶

Donley County represented a transition from North Texas to the Panhandle region, and did not provide a true measure of the region's characteristics, which were more accurately exemplified by Potter and Lubbock counties. Nevertheless, Donley County sprawled across 878 miles of "elevated" plain dotted with small hills. The county, although established in 1876, had the second smallest population in 1910 of the fourteen counties that raised companies for the Seventh Texas Infantry, with 5,245 white

⁴⁶ Meinig, *Imperial Texas*, 76.

residents and just 38 African-Americans. The county seat of Clarendon numbered just under 2,000 residents. In spite of its small size, Donley County followed the population trends, with an impressive population increase, up 91 percent from the census of 1900.⁴⁷

Donley County kept up with the more eastern counties in terms of railroad mileage, with 49 miles of track crisscrossing the county, but in terms of cotton production, the difference was dramatic and illustrated the county's transitional nature between North Texas and the Panhandle. Donley County produced only 5,540 bales of cotton in 1912, 45,000 bales fewer on average than the counties around Fort Worth, and 15,000 bales fewer than the counties around Wichita Falls. Correspondingly, the number of farms decreased dramatically as well, with only 601 reported in 1910, 332 of which were operated by their owners, and where slightly more than 40 percent were farmed by tenants. While Donley County farms were valued at a little more than \$6.8 million, cattle played a more prominent role in the county, as more than 32,000 head of cattle were raised there, 10,000 more than any of the other counties. Thus, Donley County had a small population, fewer farmers who relied less on cotton as their primary crop, and was ranching country. However, northwest of Donley County and Clarendon was the true representative of the Texas Panhandle, Potter County and Amarillo.⁴⁸

The population of Amarillo grew during the first two decades of the century, as did that of Potter County as a whole. In fact, outside of Lubbock County to the south, Potter County enjoyed the second greatest population increase of all fourteen counties

⁴⁷ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 33, 268, 99, 103.

⁴⁸ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 192-193, 203-204, 221-222.

under study, increasing a staggering 582 percent between 1900 and 1910. Amarillo itself had nearly 10,000 people. The county had originally been formed in 1876, and its 874 miles sprawled across the Llano Estacado, and was described as “half level, [with] the remainder breaks.” The breaks represented the northern portions of the county, which was rough country with mesas carrying names such as “Indian Fort” and “Lost Mesa.” The county was also home to a tiny population of 150 African-American residents in 1910.⁴⁹

Potter County amply illustrated the different agricultural characteristics of the Panhandle region as compared to the counties to the southeast in North Texas. While Potter County and Amarillo had an extensive network for 88 miles of railroad track because of the cattle industry, Potter County was not particularly suited to farming at the time. Indeed, Potter County reported no “good road mileage,” such as local farm to market roads, and reported only 162 farms in the county, the smallest in any of the counties. As if to drive the point home, Potter County farmers did not produce a single bale of cotton in 1912. Most of the farms in the area, however, were owned by the people who operated them, with only 27 percent worked by tenants. The farm land and equipment in the county amounted to just \$5.2 million, also the lowest amount of any of the fourteen counties. Although Potter County was known as a cattle and ranching area, the county only enumerated slightly more than 15,700 head of cattle in 1913. Of course,

⁴⁹ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 101, 103, 322, 33; Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 295.

most of the cattle in the area were shipped through Amarillo rather than being raised there.⁵⁰

South of Potter County by 120 miles was Lubbock County. Lubbock County, like many of the counties in this region, was created in 1876, when the Panhandle was taken away as a refuge for Native Americans and the area opened to Anglo settlement. However, in 1910, Lubbock County had the smallest population of any of the counties, with only 3,618 white and 5 black residents living in the area, more than half of whom lived in the county seat of Lubbock. Although the number is deceiving because of the small population, Lubbock County witnessed a population increase between 1900 and 1910 that was the highest of any of the counties at an impressive 1,137 percent. The 982 square miles of the county certainly left much to be desired, as it was described in 1914 as a “level plain, no timber.” Lubbock County reported fifty nine miles of railroad track, and ten miles of good roads. Similar to Potter County in the north, Lubbock County’s 208 farms did not produce any cotton in 1912, and just 30 percent of the farms were run by tenants. There were nearly 21,000 head of cattle in the area in 1913, giving credence to Lubbock’s influence in the cattle and ranching markets. Thus, both Potter and Lubbock County represented a slightly different way of life, at least agriculturally and economically, than the majority of the counties in this study. Farming was clearly second to ranching, and cotton was not produced, or at the most in very small quantities. However, similar to the other counties, the population was nearly all white, native born Americans. Although the two Panhandle cities of Lubbock and Amarillo might be

⁵⁰ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 139-140, 143, 201-203, 192-193, 203-204, 205-206, 221-222.

distinct, they also shared many of the same characteristics. Regardless of their similarities and differences, these two counties would recruit companies for the Seventh Texas Infantry of the Texas National Guard, as would the last county in this study, Taylor County, approximately 160 miles to the southeast of Lubbock.⁵¹

Although Taylor County was located in the distinct region of West Texas, it appeared to share many of the same characteristics with North Texas counties. The county was also about the same distance west of Tarrant County as it was southeast of Lubbock. Thus, like Donley County between the Panhandle and North Texas, Taylor might more accurately be described as a transition between North and West Texas. Also, Taylor County might be considered the most remote in relation to the other counties that recruited soldiers for the Seventh Texas. However, the reason why a company of soldiers was raised in Taylor County and the surrounding area was clear: Many considered the county seat of Abilene as an up and coming city that served as the link between North Texas and far West Texas. Taylor County's 900 square miles covered generally level terrain, although a small mountain range bisected the southern portion of the county. Created in 1858, the county reported a population of more than 25,000 white residents and 639 African-Americans in 1910. Abilene itself was home to 9,200 people. Unlike the two Panhandle counties of Potter and Lubbock, Taylor County's population had increased at a slower rate, but still an impressive 150 percent between 1900 and 1910.⁵²

⁵¹ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 306, 33, 101-104, 139-140, 143, 201-203, 192-193, 203-204, 205-206, 221-222.

⁵² *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 34, 335-336, 102-103.

Taylor County had the third most railroad miles of the fourteen counties, with 105 miles of track. Similar to the North Texas counties, Taylor County had more farms than might be expected, with just over 2,400 in 1910, of which 1,039 were owned by those who farmed them, although the remaining 56 percent were farmed by tenants. Like the North Texas counties near Fort Worth, Taylor County was a strong cotton-producing area, with more than 26,000 bales produced in 1912. The value of Taylor County farmland and equipment topped \$14.5 million. The county also supported ranches that owned nearly 11,000 head of cattle in the county.⁵³

The fourteen counties that contributed soldiers to the Seventh Texas had an overwhelmingly white population with few African-Americans and even fewer foreign born residents. All of the counties of what might be termed northwest Texas, with the exception perhaps of Tarrant and Johnson Counties, were predominantly rural, and agriculture based on cotton dominated in the North Texas and West Texas counties, while ranching dominated in Lubbock and Potter Counties. In essence, these counties illustrated the nature of life in Texas during the first two decades of the twentieth-century: a southern and conservative way of life in which Progressive ideals fostered little interest and yet the presence of German spies did. Perhaps most important, this is what the soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry knew, this was the land and the culture that affected their perception of war, how they perceived loyalty, and how they perceived their duty.

⁵³ *Texas Almanac, 1914*, 140, 201-203, 203-204, 205-206, 221-222.

CHAPTER 3

WAR IN TEXAS

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson addressed a joint session of the United States Congress. He responded to a number of events, including the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany and the disclosure of the Zimmerman Telegram. In his address, he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. Congress debated several days and approved a declaration of war in the Senate on April 4, 1917, and two days later in the House. This declaration set in motion a range of events that reverberated across the nation, including northwestern Texas, and throughout the home counties where the men of the Seventh Texas would be recruited. Thus, the declaration of war changed the lives of thousands of men from northwest Texas, the majority of whom had probably never expected to fight in the war in Europe.¹

Freshman Texas Congressman Tom Connally attended the joint session of Congress the night Woodrow Wilson spoke. In fact, Connally had not yet been sworn to office when news arrived that President Wilson planned to address Congress that evening. Before Connally could be sworn in, the members of the House elected a new speaker, Champ Clark. Then, each state's representatives came to the front of the House to be sworn in by Clark. Before Wilson's speech, Connally recalled the seemingly endless cold and wet day, and that his "head was spinning from a lack of food." During a

¹ Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, *Decisions for War, 1914-1917* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 221-222.

break, waiting for the President to arrive, he “wandered about the smoky cloakroom puffing on a cigar until it was time to return to the chamber.” Recalling it years later, Connally claimed not to recall any of the specific points made by Wilson, but that the President said “exactly what the Congress wanted to hear.” After Wilson’s speech, Connally remembered the Texas delegation huddling and discussing the President’s words, everyone “deadly serious.” Connally’s evening, however, was not yet over. Rather, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee called a meeting for ten p.m. that evening. After two days of deliberations, Connally recalled a “cold chill” running through his body as he voted for the declaration of war in the committee meeting.²

While the other Texas congressmen doubtless experienced similar turmoil in the days leading up to the declaration of war against Germany, a number of them participated in the debates and in the aftermath of the declaration of war introduced legislation that reaffirmed their support of the military, Texas, and the national war effort. Texas had a congressional delegation that included senators Charles A. Culberson and Morris Sheppard, and eighteen members of the House of Representatives. Their role in the ensuing months after Wilson’s speech is important to understanding the way Texans viewed the war declaration and to what extent they would support it. What these men in Washington DC said and did contributed to the political environment in northwest Texas.

However, Senators Culberson and Sheppard were quiet during the debate. The senior senator, Culberson, chose not to speak, and Sheppard, prior to and after the vote, made his position clear by entering a number of letters and telegrams “from sundry

² Tom Connally, *My Name is Tom Connally* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1954), 78-81.

citizens of Texas, expressing practically unanimous support of the President,” into the *Congressional Record*. Indeed, these telegrams revealed the prevailing sentiment from across the state. For example, in Cooke County, the cry was “True American citizens and Texans look to our able senators to stand in our behalf for absolute loyalty to our great President and the administration.” Businessman E.W. McGlasson of Gainesville urged Sheppard “to stand by the President, which I feel sure you will do.” Along similar lines, the mayor of Terrell, in Dallas County, stated that he wished to assure Sheppard that “the people of this section of Texas are squarely behind the President in his stand to protect American rights, and I am sure that all true and loyal Texans desire that you support the President...”³

Other groups wired their unconditional support for Wilson, such as the Elks clubs of Beaumont and Fort Worth. The Fort Worth chapter expressed unqualified support of the President’s “patriotic decision,” and asserted that “loyalty to the flag is a fundamental test of Elkdom.” Even groups of employees wired their support, such as a group from an El Paso business, who wired to Sheppard that they “25 in number, stand squarely behind our President in demanding respect for our flag, both on land and sea, and we believe in universal compulsory military training, and we urge you to use all the power of your high office in passing a bill embodying this principle.” Along similar lines, the Cleburne Rotary Club of Johnson County “to a man” stood behind Sheppard in his “efforts to maintain the honor and dignity of the United States.” Of course, these statements were

³ *Congressional Record, Containing the Proceedings and Debates of the First Session of the Sixty-Fifth Congress of the United States of America, Volume 55, part 1* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), 150, hereafter cited as *Congressional Record*.

not unique to Texas, as letters poured in to congressmen from across the nation. However, they did illustrate the generally positive support the President enjoyed in Texas, and many of these telegrams to Sheppard expressed the view that they were “voicing the unanimous sentiment of the people...of the state.”⁴

Thus, although there were no speeches by Culberson or Sheppard in the Senate, their views were clear when the vote was taken on April 4, 1917, and both men voted for the declaration of war. In contrast to Sheppard and Culberson, some members of the Texas House delegation expressed themselves quite vocally. The senior Texas Representative, James L. Slayden, spoke on April 5, as the House debated the declaration. Speaking of war, Slayden stated that “I have hoped against hope that this cup might pass. But it must be drained, bitter as it is.” Calling the vote on the declaration the most important vote in American history since the Civil War, he also believed that war in Europe would not “immediately and seriously imperil our independence,” although he believed that the results of the war would have a “tremendous influence on the future of our Republic.”⁵

Slayden also expressed concern with making an “entangling alliance with certain European governments” and that American involvement in the war would bring “an end of the Monroe doctrine.” Slayden then focused on his own efforts at preventing war, claiming that “I have spent anxious days and sleepless nights trying in vain to devise some means by which my country might be spared this trial.” Despite these efforts and

⁴ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 256, 450, 562.

⁵ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 261, 385.

those of others, Slayden concluded that “my efforts and the efforts of millions of others who stood for peace have been in vain.” He thus realized it was “no longer a question of whether we shall have war. That is settled, and the vote to be taken here is the merest formality.” To Slayden then, the only remaining question was to determine “one’s duty under the circumstances.” He concluded his remarks by expressing the opinion that “I am an American, and, greatly as I deplore the situation, I shall, much as it distresses me, stand by my country.” Thus, at age sixty-four, James L. Slayden cast his vote in support of the declaration of war.⁶

While Slayden may have felt that things were beyond his control, Representative Joe Eagle of Houston took a different approach and opened with a clear statement of his view: “Mr. Chairman, without any mental reservation whatsoever, I give my voice and my vote to this resolution. It states the truth in plain, simple words.” Eagle then launched into a review of the circumstances that led to the declaration of war. Eagle referred to Kaiser Wilhelm as a “cave man” and thundered that Germany had “uniformly perverted the truth, broken the faith of their treaties, persistently violated the law of nations, trampled underfoot the highest rights of humanity, [and] filled the world with consciousnessless spies...” Eagle then turned his attention to President Wilson, calling him a “patient and peace-loving President, answering the united prayers of our peace-loving Nation.” Continuing his soaring rhetoric, Eagle claimed that “it is a war unto death between autocracy and democracy, and autocracy has brought the challenge to our door.” Eagle concluded by arguing that “the United States should do a man’s part in this crisis,”

⁶ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 385-386, 413.

by providing money, food, ships, and men for the war effort. Throughout his speech, Eagle was greeted with applause and thus cast his vote in favor of war.⁷

If Slayden cast his vote for war out of duty and Joe Eagle thundered his support of the declaration, the actions of Atkins “Jeff” McLemore deserve closer scrutiny as he was the only Texas Congressman to cast his vote in opposition to the declaration, stating on April 5 that “as much as I may wish to stand by the President in all things, yet I cannot, by any force of reasoning, bring myself to believe that a vote for this resolution will be right and just or that in casting such vote I will be voicing the sentiment of a majority of the people I have the honor to represent.” McLemore had several reasons why he did not support a declaration of war. First, he held fast to George Washington’s call in his farewell address to steer away from foreign alliances. Second, he also expressed fear that the declaration of war might make the president’s power “absolute,” which would “place upon the people of the United States a burden of taxation that in ages to come will still be a millstone around the necks of the American people...”⁸

McLemore also pointed out that he was not a pacifist, and noted he was “the first Texas Congressman to come out unreservedly for [military] preparedness,” although he stated that in supporting preparedness he was not pledging himself “to the policy of having my country enter into foreign entanglements or fight the wars of foreign nations.” McLemore also realized the ramifications of taking such a stand opposing the war, and acknowledged that he would draw upon himself a “storm of abuse and censure.” He did,

⁷ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 357-358.

⁸ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 8, Appendix, 29.

however, believe that he could stand “the abuse, the censure, and the criticism as long as I have the inner consciousness of doing that which I believe to be right.” Typical of the oratorical flourishes of the time, McLemore claimed that he would receive thanks in “silent prayers and tears of gratitude” from women whose husbands and sons who would be saved from dying on the battlefield, which were worth to him more than any criticism he might receive.⁹

McLemore also tried to quell rumors that his vote on the declaration was swayed by German constituents. As he pointed out, only a few of the letters he received asking him to vote against the declaration “bore German names.” Furthermore, McLemore said, the strongest criticism he received was from a prominent German resident of Texas. However, although McLemore was so vocal in his opposition to the declaration, he came to same conclusion that Slayden had, stating that the passage of the declaration was a foregone conclusion and he had little choice, for, he said, “it is not for me as an American citizen to do otherwise than stand by my country.” For those who continued to criticize him, McLemore declared that “I am above everything an American...and I could not, Mr. Speaker, conscientiously give my vote to this most un-American measure.” And with that, Atkins “Jeff” McLemore cast the only Texas vote opposing the declaration of war. Several weeks later, he also entered into the *Congressional Record* a petition from some Denton County citizens opposed to conscription. In 1918, McLemore lost his reelection bid in part because of his opposition to the war declaration, and because his “at large” seat was eliminated in a 1917 redistricting, forcing him to run for a seat in an unfamiliar

⁹ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 8, Appendix, 29.

district. In spite of McLemore's opposition to the declaration of war, fellow Congressman Tom Connally considered McLemore only "mildly controversial."¹⁰

Of course, at the national level, politics did not solely revolve around thunderous oratory in the House or Senate. Once the declaration of war was passed, the Texas congressional delegation immediately introduced a number of war-related legislation. Indeed, even before the declaration of war, Culberson introduced a bill to "punish acts of interference with the foreign relations, the neutrality, and the foreign commerce of the United States" as well as to punish "espionage." The bill was passed by the Senate in May by a vote of seventy-seven to six, although it was amended in the summer of 1917. Culberson was also responsible for a bill to "punish the destruction or injuring of war material and war transportation facilities by fire, explosives, or other violent means." Finally, Culberson championed a joint resolution authorizing the President to seize any vessel belonging to a country at war with the United States. Culberson thus appeared to focus on legislation that affected the international relations of the United States, while the other Texas senator, Morris Sheppard, generally focused his efforts closer to home and on the people who had to fight.¹¹

Sheppard also used the war effort to promote prohibition. According to Sheppard, the war in Europe was a struggle in which "every energy is strained to the utmost." In

¹⁰ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, Appendix, 29; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 666; Connally, *My Name is Tom Connally*, 90; Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992), 163-165, 243-244.

¹¹ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 155, 193, 930; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 6, 5785; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 3, 2270.

spite of this, Sheppard argued, the warring powers realized that “the liquor habit is their deadliest enemy.” Lacing his argument with examples of how each nation restricted the use of alcohol by its troops, Sheppard acknowledged that even the “the German Emperor has said that the dominant nation of the future would be the nation consuming the least amount of alcohol.” Sheppard also argued for prohibition at military camps in the United States, saying it was “equally desirable to stop the sale of liquor to the civic soldiers, to the economic soldiers, at home.” Again demonstrating his opposition to alcohol in general, Sheppard concluded by looking forward to the day when “we shall see a saloon-less nation and a spotless flag.”¹²

Of course, members of the House showed their support for the war effort by joining in the flurry of activity which occurred in the weeks after the war declaration. Representative Daniel Garrett submitted a bill to provide \$10,000,000 for the wives, children, and dependent mothers of soldiers, while James L. Slayden perhaps introduced a way to pay for Garrett’s bill by submitting his own bill that required a tax on “high explosives.” Leaning toward increasing the power of the federal government, Representative Marvin Jones submitted legislation that would suspend the statute of limitations “as to all crimes and offenses against the United States during the war with Germany.” On the other hand, Alexander W. Gregg felt it prudent to read into the *Congressional Record* a poem, titled “Origin of the Banner,” originally written in 1883

¹² *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 7, 7323; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 6, 5572; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 5, 4396; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 3, 2428; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 4, 3994; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1451.

when the “ladies” of Palestine, Texas, presented the First Military Company with a banner.¹³

The Texas Legislature matched the state’s congressional delegation in showing support for the war, although they were not as quick. In August of 1917, the Texas House issued a resolution calling for the state to endorse the actions of the federal government in the war against Germany. The resolution read, in part, that the President “is reassured of the sympathy, loyalty and fidelity of the people of the state of Texas to the cause for which we fight...” Furthermore, the resolution ended with an endorsement of a future “union or league of nations” to bring peace to the world. The House had the resolution read a second time and then it was adopted by the Texas Legislature, “both houses concurring.”¹⁴

When news of the war declaration broke across the United States, residents of northwest Texas generally supported the declaration, holding rallies, picnics, and parades. In Denton County, for example, the mayor posted a “Call to All Americans” in the *Denton Record Chronicle* in which he called for a meeting of all the town’s citizens on April 5, 1917, “for the purpose of reaffirming our allegiance to the principles of freedom and liberty as handed down to us by our fathers.” The mayor urged every citizen to attend and to “lend your aid and endorse by your presence the course of our nation in this time of grave impact.” The patriotic meeting in Denton appeared to exceed the

¹³ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 663; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 4, 3903; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 8, Appendix, 348.

¹⁴ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Second Called Session of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1917), 36-37.

expectations of the mayor, as the local newspaper reported that an estimated seven to eight thousand people filled the courthouse square, including a number of students from the nearby college. The students walked four abreast through downtown, led by a band and a student waving a large American flag. The students marched “onto the east lawn and mixed with the crowd that was already gathering.” Additionally, a throng of school children sang patriotic songs, while older students waved their flags with the music.”¹⁵

In nearby Wise County, the *Wise County Messenger* proclaimed that the “United States Declares a State of War Exists at this time,” and that 500,000 men would be “called to the colors for duty.” In response, the citizens of Decatur likewise held a patriotic rally, which the paper described as “very enthusiastic.” The paper also noted that a band provided “splendid music” along with “inspiring and patriotic speeches by local and state politicians, who were “repeatedly cheered.” Furthermore, after the rally, the “men and boys went to the ball ground” where they participated in a “military drill,” led by Captain H.E. Brady. More than 200 people showed up and watched as a “squad of soldiers was put through some formations for the instruction of the others.”¹⁶

In Amarillo, thousands of residents took part in a parade, which passed by “banks of patriotic people who waved aloft the flags of their country and who cheered them to the echo.” Stores along the parade route were closed because the owners had “responded heartily to the appeals of citizens to close....” Furthermore, the parade in Amarillo also had a military purpose as the National Guardsmen of Troop B, First Separate Texas

¹⁵ *Denton Record Chronicle*, March 29 1917, April 6, 1917.

¹⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, April 6, 20, 1917.

Cavalry, marched along with the residents. The cavalry troop had been called back into federal service “to report for duty wherever their country calls” after only recently being released from service on the Mexican border.¹⁷

The *Gainesville Daily Register* in Cooke County reported on planning efforts for a patriotic meeting scheduled for April 9, 1917, at the Chamber of Commerce. This “patriotic demonstration” was to honor “loyalty day, Old Glory, and the National Welfare.” The next day, the paper ran an article titled, “Loyalty Day is to be History Maker in Cooke County.” The demonstration, according to planners, was to be an event “of rare instance, one of nation-wide notoriety, as well as of local celebrity.”¹⁸

In Tarrant County, citizens combined a patriotic rally with a send-off of three companies of the Texas National Guard, who had been recalled to service like the Amarillo Guardsmen. According to the *Fort Worth Record*, the city held the parade as a way formally to say “farewell” to the companies. The Fort Worth Chief of Police led the parade, followed by the high school Cadet Corps. After them came Confederate veterans, a band, and local citizens in automobiles. Although a number of speeches had been planned, they were called off because many of the recalled guardsmen failed to show up to hear the speakers. Most likely these men had chosen to spend their last hours at home with their families prior to their departure, which had been announced for the next day. However, this did not appear to dampen the patriotic enthusiasm, as many believed the “great patriotic heart of Fort Worth men will demonstrate itself in a cogent way,” at the

¹⁷ *Amarillo Daily News*, April 7, 1917.

¹⁸ *Gainesville Daily Record*, April 9, 10, 1917.

first military drill practice. However, not all citizens of Fort Worth supported the declaration of war. On the same day as the Fort Worth parade, two men were arrested for “cursing” the American flag and “abusing” President Wilson. Perhaps these two men were fortunate to be arrested by the police, because when the officers arrived at the scene, a local paper noted they found the men “surrounded by several members of the Texas National Guard and the timely arrival of the officers averted a possible ‘clean-up’.” As a testament to concern about sabotage, the article in the *Record* also reported that the police took into custody a Mexican who was “loitering” around the area. Also, Texas National Guardsmen claimed to have prevented three attempts to blow up or burn railroad bridges west of the city over the previous twenty-four hours.¹⁹

To the northwest, in Wichita Falls, the Chamber of Commerce held a patriotic mass meeting in the Wichita Theater, where organizers expected an “outpouring of loyalty.” The meeting, originally limited to Chamber of Commerce members, “turned into a big patriotic rally for the entire citizenship of Wichita Falls.” The “Honor Guard” girls and “local militiamen” occupied the theater’s box seats while veterans had “places of honor” on the stage. Among the speeches given that evening included Chamber of Commerce President Judge R.E. Huff’s presentation on how Wichita Falls could best serve the nation, while the mayor of the city, A.H. Britain, addressed the crowd on the “German-American in Wichita County.” At the same time, in the western edge of the county, the town of Electra held a patriotic rally in conjunction with San Jacinto Day, a

¹⁹ *Fort Worth Record*, April 5, 1917.

prime example of the way in which Texans appeared to draw on their past as a spur to their support of the war effort.²⁰

Far to the west, Abilene also joined in the patriotic celebrations. On the day war was declared, the *Abilene Reporter* editorialized that “Loyalty demands that all criticism of the President and the Congress shall cease,” and that no citizen had the right to “speak against his country no matter how much he detests war.” Abilene also followed suit with a parade, noting that the upcoming “Patriotic Day” was “big in promise,” and claimed it would be the best in the state “so far.” Indeed, the preparations had drawn attention “not only in the city, but the surrounding country,” and the organizers were faced with numerous “demands for positions in the parade.” Like many other loyalty and patriotic celebrations, the organizers highlighted their connection with the past. In this case, the *Abilene Reporter* listed the types of people who were “especially invited” to participate in the parade. Not surprisingly, Confederate veterans were first, followed by Union veterans, and then veterans of the Spanish American War. Behind the war veterans marched male college and high school students, followed by male members of all “fraternal lodges.” The invitee list was rounded out by including members of trade unions, ex-servicemen, and Boy Scouts. Observers later described the parade as having as many as 1,000 people marching through the city. It was led by a statue titled “the

²⁰ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 8, 1917; While Mayor Britain’s complete comments are not available, the *Wichita Daily Times* summarized part of his speech, in which he stated that he was of English descent on his father’s side, and German descent on his mother’s side, and until the declaration of war, he remained neutral, although he expected Americans to defeat the Germans fighting side by side with the English. As for German citizens in the county, Britain “expressed the opinion that they would be found among the most staunch and loyal of American citizens,” *Wichita Daily Times*, April 11, 1917; Electra Story, *Wichita Daily Times*, April 19, 1917.

spirit of „76” and a large American flag was raised on a seventy-six foot flagpole. As the paper expected, “thousands of people from the rural districts and towns of the surrounding territory saw the parade.” In fact, the *Abilene Reporter* claimed that between 10,000 and 15,000 people “gathered...to register loyalty to [the] National Government in [the] Present War.”²¹

In addition to parades, the citizens of these communities also seized upon flags as an important way to demonstrate patriotism. Displaying the American flag was seen as a means to express one’s loyalty, while those who failed to participate or who showed the German flag were immediately targeted. The *Abilene Reporter* admonished its reader to “Fly the National Flag; Old Glory should be waving.” Indeed, most of the larger cities were adorned with flags that covered “automobiles, delivery wagons, business houses, show windows, coat lapels, hat bands, and dwelling houses.” As the *Abilene Reporter* urged, “...a few more flags wouldn’t hurt a thing...Flag up!” In Amarillo, a department store raised a large American flag which the owner hoped would remain flying “until the dogs of war come home.” On the other hand, in Gainesville, the police watched for “flag thieves,” who often stole flags from automobiles that were decked out in them. The chief of police considered flag stealing an “unspeakable” crime.²²

²¹ *Abilene Reporter*, April 6, 9, 11, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1917; Although this parade drew a large crowd, just two months later, the crowd at a liberty bond rally in Abilene was so small that J.M. Wagstaff commented that “its size on an occasion like this is an everlasting disgrace to Abilene,” *Abilene Reporter*, June 15, 1917.

²² *Abilene Reporter*, April 6, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, April 17, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, April 9, 1917.

In Wichita Falls, however, the situation was different. The *Wichita Daily Times* claimed the city was behind in displaying flags. Apparently, a reporter stood on a street corner and counted the number of flags on automobiles that passed him by. The man reported that of 149 cars, only about one third had a flag, while the rest “bore no evidence of loyalty whatever.” The reporter believed it was “safe to say” that less than half the cars in the city were bedecked with flags. Even more damaging to the prestige of the city, the paper noted that only one in ten houses displayed a flag. However, the report acknowledged that large flags were in short supply although small ones were widely available. Finally, the damning verdict came from Wichita Falls residents who had recently travelled to other Texas cities of comparable size and noted that Wichita Falls was “behind the others in patriotic display.”²³

Along similar lines, the African-American population, which was generally marginalized throughout these fourteen counties made efforts to express their support of the war effort. In Vernon, for example, the county seat of Wilbarger County, headlines read “Vernon Negroes pledge support.” The article also pointed out that “several negroes, former residents of Vernon, are now serving in the United States Army.” In Gainesville, a “well known and loyal colored citizen” received a letter from his son announcing that the young man had enlisted in the army. The *Gainesville Daily Register* reported that the father “is proud of his patriotic son and heartily approves of the decision...to go forth and fight for Old Glory.” The elder man also announced that even

²³ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 11, 1917.

he was willing to answer the nation's call "when the test comes to save the nation from every depredation."²⁴

The portrayal of African-American loyalty efforts further illustrated the relationship between whites and African-Americans in these Texas counties, as the *Cleburne Daily Enterprise* reported that the "Colored People will raise [the] flag Saturday Night," at a special celebration at the African-American school. According to the paper, the school promised "a splendid program" that included 300 children singing "many of the old southern 'Folk Lore' songs." Finally, the paper noted that a "special invitation is extended to the white people of the city for whom special seats will be arranged." The *Enterprise* also urged "the white people to attend this affair." Furthermore, the local paper reported that President Wilson planned to "use the Negroes of this nation in the war." While admitting that African-Americans were good soldiers who never showed cowardice but rather "exhibited a bravery that amounted to heroism," the editorial concluded with comments typical of the era: "It would be a glowing tribute to the power of education if the descendants of slaves could be used to abolish slavery among the despotic nations dominated by Prussian plutocracy."²⁵

In Wichita Falls, the *Daily Times* reported that the African-American population held a "creditable and inspiring patriotic rally" in front of the city hall on April 20, 1917. African-American community leaders decided to hold the rally because of persistent rumors of "German propagandists working among the Negroes." Thus, the community

²⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, April 24, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, April 18, 1917.

²⁵ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, May 4, 1917, and June 1, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, May 6, 1917.

leaders deemed it a “peculiarly appropriate time to demonstrate their patriotism.” The rally, which included both white and black speakers, resulted in the adoption of several resolutions “declaring the loyalty of the Negroes of Wichita Falls, both for the country and their president and his administration, and declaring their readiness to serve either under arms or in any other capacity...” According to the report, almost the entire African-American population in the city turned out to either watch or participate in the parade that the paper noted “compared favorably both in numbers and in the number of flags displayed by the marchers” in the white parade the previous week. One prominent speaker, C.C. Trimble, president of the Negro Patriotic League, traced the history of African-Americans in the United States and stated that African-Americans’ place in the United States was “a blessing for the American Negro, as had it not happened, they would still be running wild in the jungles of Africa.” Furthermore, Trimble and other speakers, in an ironic twist to the connection drawn between the Civil War and the World War by white citizens, declared that “the Negroes of 1917 were just as true and loyal to their country as was the case in the sixties.”²⁶

Prominent Denton County resident Alvin C. Owsley, who served on the State Council of Defense, spoke in Wichita Falls, however, in August about the “danger of Negro soldiers.” In his speech, Owsley focused on an incident in Houston where African-American soldiers marched on the city of Houston and a number of people were killed. Owsley stated that when “the nation makes soldiers out of a Negro and puts a gun in his hand, it ruins the Negro, and he becomes a dangerous element in any community in

²⁶ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 13, 20, 1917.

which he may be stationed.” Owsley expected that African-American soldiers would be used for menial tasks, such as “cooking, washing, handling baggage, and digging trenches,” so that the energy of white soldiers might be preserved. Owsley promised the residents of Wichita Falls, who were hundreds of miles away from the events that occurred in Houston, that “all Negro troops would be removed from the state in the near future.”²⁷

While African-Americans sought ways to express their loyalty, the white residents of these counties found other ways besides parades and flag waving to express their patriotism by attending military drills and forming companies of “home guards.” For example, Captain Brady in Wise County held drills “at regular intervals,” usually on a Monday evening at 6:30pm. Although the amount of military service Brady had was not known, the *Wise County Messenger* called him “an experienced officer” who “will give his best efforts to the drills.” The citizens of Decatur, where the drills took place, were also warned by the newspaper that “Decatur should not be found lacking in patriotic spirit. Most every town in the nation is now holding regular drills, and this city should show a big turn-out next Monday.” Along similar lines in Cooke County, in mid-April about fifty men “began drilling” in hopes of forming a National Guard company in the near future. The men were drilled by “officers formerly connected with a local military company.”²⁸

²⁷ *Wichita Daily Times*, August 26, 1917. For a detailed study of the Houston Riots at Camp Logan, see Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), pp. 145-172.

²⁸ *Wise County Messenger*, April 18, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, April 19, 1917.

Out west in Abilene, the talk centered on “military training for the business men” of the town. Interestingly, the thinking behind having the businessmen of the town participate in drill was different from that of other communities. The purpose in having the “merchants” participate in drill “once or twice a week after business hours” was in fact to “encourage young men to enlist whose duty it is to enlist.” The idea had come from an Abilene businessman who visited Chicago and Toledo. He reported that every town of three thousand inhabitants of greater was engaging in these activities and he believed Abilene should follow suit. The man noted that the businessmen were meeting to acquaint “themselves with fundamental military tactics and economic methods in solving the problems which are sure to arise in this crisis.”²⁹

Also in the city, residents formed the “Abilene Veterans,” a home guard company for Taylor County. Men over the age of forty-five and those who could not qualify for service with the military were eligible to join. The *Abilene Reporter* commented that even though “some of the members are well over sixty and a few possibly better than seventy, their enthusiasm is the enthusiasm of younger men.” The paper also noted that veterans of the Civil War and the Spanish American War could be counted among its members. Some of these companies took their duty seriously, as the commander of the company, Captain J.W. Moffett, sent a letter to Congressman Thomas L. Blanton asking for weapons to be issued to the company. Blanton replied that weapons were not available but that he had taken “the matter up with the proper authorities.”³⁰

²⁹ *Abilene Reporter*, April 8, 1917.

³⁰ *Abilene Reporter*, April 24, 1917.

In Fort Worth, men drilled in anticipation of joining one of three artillery batteries that many expected the Texas National Guard to organize. Military drill was also an activity endorsed by local Fort Worth doctors, who claimed that “no man can serve his country as he should unless he is a good man physically.” The doctors urged participation, believing that “these drills will do more to put them in that condition than any other one thing.” Indeed, even District Judge Bruce Young announced that he would attend the drills, while the *Fort Worth Record* reported they had received a call from a sixteen-year old who “anxiously inquired if he and other boys of his age would be permitted to drill.” Finally, the *Record* urged every citizen to be on hand for the opening drill session and to “get in the picture which is going to be made and circulated throughout the country...telling the people of this nation that Fort Worth citizens are loyal to their flag and their country.” Indeed, at the first drill, 100 men participated while about 800 to 1,000 watched as Navy recruiter J.E. Wyrick put the men through their paces. The mayor predicted that five hundred men would be participating in the drill by the end of the week.³¹

In the Panhandle, similar efforts were underway as a group of Confederate veterans of Amarillo discussed creating a “home guard” of men who were too old for the army but “who will drill like their younger brothers and take care of any demonstration or disorder which might arise” in the area. The veterans apparently discussed “several

³¹ *Fort Worth Record*, April 5, 6, 25, 1917; In nearby Dallas, an African-American army officer gathered a group of nearly 150 men to drill. The officer in charge, who was of African-American descent, claimed that if it was possible to find uniforms for the men, many more hundreds would participate. As the officer stated, “They all like to wear uniforms and parade.” *Wichita Daily Times*, April 15, 1917.

possible menaces” that might develop should Mexico join the war on the side of Germany. According to the report, the bottom line was that organizing the home guards would give prestige to old soldiers and impart a sense of security to the community.³²

On the other hand, Wichita Falls reported only forty men participating in a drill practice sponsored by the Rotary Club in the first week after war was declared. Perhaps in an effort to spur participation, city leaders decided to turn these drills into contests. On April 22, a competition was held among six teams, including a team of boy scouts and a team from the Workers of the World. Although one team misunderstood the rules and filed a protest, the members of the winning squad each received a pair of socks and a “patriotic” tie and tie tack. The nine members of the team then got to share a box of cigars. The drill contest was so popular that the organizers decided to make it a weekly event.³³

While the men of these communities drilled and contemplated forming their own home defense companies as a way to demonstrate their patriotism, the women of these communities also sought ways to illustrate their commitment to the war effort as well as to participate in it. For example, the *Fort Worth Record* sponsored a cooking school in April of 1917 that was designed to teach women whose husbands made less than \$150 per month how to support their families. The school opened in late April with a patriotic rally in which the ladies cheered a “patriotic air” played on a “talking machine.” In Abilene, nearly 300 women met and passed “resolutions looking toward the conservation

³² *Amarillo Daily News*, April 24, 1917.

³³ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 10, 22, 23, 1917.

of the food supply,” and voted to economize in every possible way. Amarillo residents, on the other hand, received encouragement to plant gardens in vacant lots across the city. The county agricultural demonstration agent, Harmon Benton, believed that there were eighty acres of vacant lots in Amarillo which could be turned into gardens producing as much as 40,000 pounds of beans and peas. In Cleburne, a young woman described by many as charming, talented, and “interested in charitable and philanthropic purposes,” took it upon herself to get the names and addresses of sailors and write letters to them.³⁴

Girls displayed their patriotism through the formation of honor guards. For example, the Wichita Falls “girls honor guard” became a major function, even holding summer encampments. This honor guard, which was made up of over one hundred girls, also recruited from other parts of the state, such as Dallas. Indeed, other areas patterned their own groups after this, such as Clarendon in Donley County, which formed its own “girls’ legion of honor.”³⁵

While many of these examples illustrated the spontaneous nature of Texans’ support of the war effort, residents in northwest Texas also planned, established, or expanded a number of organizations at the state and county level, such as the Red Cross and local Councils of Defense. Through the first months of the American war effort, Red Cross chapters sprang up across the region. For example, the predominantly German

³⁴ *Fort Worth Record*, April 25, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, April 22, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, April 15, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, May 20, 1917.

³⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, June 8, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, April 15, 1917; The camp in Wichita Falls was commanded by an army officer, Captain Robert D. Gordon, and discipline was strict. One girl, Captain Lucy Morris, earned her rank because of her superior ability to perform guard duty, was reduced in rank to private for an undisclosed infraction. *Wichita Daily Times*, June 21, 1917.

town of Muenster in Cooke County organized a Red Cross chapter, while in Wichita Falls, residents did not form a chapter until the second week of May when “several women of the city interested in the movement” came together. This group included Willie May Kell, the daughter of prominent resident Frank Kell. Many of the chapters’ first tasks were to make “medical supplies.” The Red Cross also advertised itself as a way for women to participate in the war: “men must wait to be drafted, but any woman can volunteer in the war. Every woman should.” But if people did not want to volunteer, they could still donate. The president of the Johnson County Chapter, S.B. Norwood, urged citizens of the county to donate just one dollar to the Red Cross: “A dollar is not much, but if each will give a dollar it will soon amount to a great deal.” Furthermore, with the money, the Johnson County branch of the Red Cross could “show the world what it could do.” Red Cross chapters were also not above generating guilt among their communities, as the same Johnson County chapter sought donations in the following manner: “You may have often wished that you could help the suffering soldiers in their trenches, the helpless wounded on the gory battlefields of France, or the moaning, battered men on hospital cots in the war zone. This is your chance.”³⁶

In Quanah, the Red Cross chapter copied the numerous membership and fund raising campaigns undertaken by each chapter, and even turned one particular Red Cross campaign into a contest between two committees, “in order to arouse interest in the work.” The spirit of competition also existed between regions of the state. For example, in Amarillo, an editorial claimed that “this city and section has given more of its young

³⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, June 8, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, May 13, 16, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 21, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, May 3, 16, 1917.

men for the defense of the country than has any other town of like size. It is therefore fitting that we keep the pace with our contributions to the American Red Cross....” and that “every thriving city in the panhandle of Texas should begin the organization of a Red Cross Society...This is a progressive and patriotic section. The Panhandle isn’t going to say ‚Let George do it.’ The Panhandle will act!”³⁷

In addition to the Red Cross, the State Council of Defense was another major organization created in the immediate aftermath of the war declaration. Governor Ferguson signed the bill authorizing the state council in May of 1917, and it received an appropriation of \$35,000 to begin its work. In an effort to secure its legitimacy and authority, the state council also asked Governor James Ferguson to introduce legislation into the Texas Legislature which would delegate to the State Council of Defense the same powers Congress had given to the National Council of Defense. In general, the State Council of Defense had two purposes. The first was to coordinate agriculture and industry with the war effort. However, the purpose for which State Councils of Defense became more widely known was through their efforts at propaganda, supporting Liberty Loans, helping with the draft registration, and assisting authorities in hunting for men who had evaded the draft. Supporting the state council were local Councils of Defense, which were established in each Texas County.³⁸

By the end of July, most of the Councils of Defense for each of the fourteen counties had appointed members and began meeting, although Tarrant County did not

³⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, June 18, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, June 12, 1917.

³⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, May 11, 15, 1917; Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

organize a council until September of 1917. According to a report in the *Wise County Messenger*, the duties of these councils mirrored those of the state council. They were to “promote the patriotic spirit of the people, aid in recruiting the state and national guard and the regular army, to aid in getting idle boys and men to work on the farm,” as well as supporting liberty bond drives, promoting farming, and aiding in the formation of home guard units. Furthermore, the councils created a number of standing committees, such as publicity, finance, sanitation and medicine, food supply and conservation, labor, and military. These committees also mirrored some of the thirteen committees on the state council of defense. The State Council of Defense included several prominent residents of northwest Texas, such as Frank Kell of Wichita Falls, who chaired the food supply and conservation committee of the state council, Alvin C. Owsley of Denton, and J.M. Wagstaff of Abilene, whose sons were both members of the Texas National Guard and who would both serve overseas in the Thirty-Sixth Division. Interestingly, not all members of the local councils were men. In Wichita Falls, Cleburne, and Gainesville, for example, the councils each had a female member on the executive council. In sum, these local councils were to serve as a focal point for all things related to the war within each county.³⁹

While patriotic displays were commonplace and numerous efforts were made to support the war effort, there was a parallel current of fear that spread throughout northwest Texas, which was illustrated by constant rumors of possible German intrigues,

³⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, September 12, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, July 20, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, June 8, 1917, and May 11, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 26, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 25, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 17, 1917.

espionage, sabotage, and of those who simply spoke out against the war. For example, the *Amarillo Daily News* reported that the weapons of “enemy aliens” were to be confiscated. The Chief of Police, John Speed, received orders to “confiscate all guns, parts of guns and ammunitions which may now be in the hands of alien residents of Amarillo.” The paper reported that the procedure to confiscate these arms was simple: “Officers will search homes of foreigners suspected of having arms.” Any weapons or ammunition taken would be held until the end of the war. Chief Speed claimed the order was “not an affront to aliens who have been making good inhabitants of Amarillo, but as a precautionary measure” to prevent “unscrupulous” foreigners from instigating a “small revolt or riot.”⁴⁰

Two days earlier, reports circulated of two “German spies” moving through Amarillo, while an Oklahoma newspaper reported that two other “German plotters” were operating around Amarillo. However, the *Daily News* commented that there were no individuals around Amarillo who were currently “under suspicion of underhand work toward the government.” However, in Wellington, east of Amarillo, authorities charged a man with using “improper language against the American flag,” and in August an “alleged seditious talker” was arrested and brought to Amarillo for “examination.” Interestingly, it was noted by the presiding judge that “seditious utterances have been on the increase.” Also, fights sometimes broke out over people cursing the flag or the President, such as was reported in Fort Worth or at Wichita Falls where a man heard a “slurring” remark about the President. According to a report of the incident, Wichita

⁴⁰ *Amarillo Daily News*, April 17, 1917.

Falls' first "international complication" ended when the young man demanded that the remark be retracted, and it promptly was. While that case did not end in violence, apparently many of these confrontations resulted in the "authors of the un-American remarks being more or less roughly handled."⁴¹

Rumors in Amarillo appeared to be stronger than in the other counties. For example, one day after war was declared, rumors of spies circulated widely and were reported in the *Amarillo Daily News*. In one case, a rumor circulated that police captured a German spy with "maps and sketches of Amarillo and the Panhandle in his possession," while rumors swirled that other spies had been arrested to the west in Clovis, New Mexico, and to the east in Waynoka, Oklahoma, where that alleged spy carried charts and sketches showing "particular railways, railroad bridges and the like." However, the paper admitted that officers in the three areas had no knowledge of any of this. Thus, the newspapers were as guilty as individual citizens of spreading these rumors and contributing to the tense atmosphere that seemed to prevail in certain areas in the wake of the war declaration.⁴²

⁴¹ *Amarillo Daily News*, April 15, 24, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, April 6, 1917; Although instructions were received in Amarillo, the Chief of Police of Wichita Falls, A.J. Humphries claimed that he had not received any instructions regarding confiscating firearms of foreign-born citizens, even though the paper had reported that all Chiefs of Police in Texas had received written instructions from the United States Attorney General, *Wichita Daily Times*, April 15, 19, 1917.

⁴² *Amarillo Daily News*, April 7, 1917; The *Amarillo Daily News* continued this trend by running a story on April 8, 1917 titled, "German Subjects Held at El Paso." According to the story, at least twelve German were sent to the Fort Bliss jail, while at least three Germans had crossed into Mexico "during the past 24 hours." One of these people was apparently a German photographer who was taking pictures of military fortifications.

There was a tense atmosphere in Abilene as well, and the *Abilene Reporter* claimed that two attempts to blow up the Texas and Pacific Railroad Bridge were made prior to the declaration of war. Guards fired on the perpetrators but there were no casualties and no trace of the men was found. Two days later, another attempt was made on the bridge as well as the Texas and Pacific pumping plant on the eastern edge of Abilene. In Cisco, east of Abilene, local officials were “keeping a sharp lookout for all foreigners stopping” in the city after police questioned a foreigner who could not explain his presence in the city. He was placed, under guard, on a train to Fort Worth and then turned over to the authorities. Officials in Cisco were apparently deeply worried about sabotage as they urged fifty young men to guard the city’s water supply. The effort required the men to patrol both night and day.⁴³

While Cleburne did not report any arrests of suspected spies, the fear of possible espionage prompted the *Daily Enterprise* to warn the residents of Johnson County through the summer and into the fall of 1917 about the menace of spies because Cleburne was “a very important railroad center and there is no doubt about there being spies here at this time who are keeping posted on every move and every item that would be of value,” if the United States were to be invaded. In September, the paper pointed out that “there are German spies right here in Cleburne. It is the duty of every liberty-loving American to keep close watch on all suspicious characters, and if possible give any suspicious characters close scrutiny,” and report them to the authorities for “investigation.”

⁴³ *Dallas Morning News*, April 4, 7, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, April 8, 10, 1917.

However, while local residents could “be of great help” to the authorities, they “must be cautious, they must not seem to be watching.”⁴⁴

Whenever someone attempted sabotage, or lawmakers were in doubt, there was often little hesitation in shooting at the would-be saboteurs, or people who were thought to be perpetrators. In the two previous instances in Abilene, guards opened fire, while in Decatur in Wise County, a night watchman shot at a “vagrant,” who was described as a “suspicious person in the rear of a store.” The man ran and the watchman opened fire, which caused the vagrant to stop and return fire with a weapon of his own. According to a report in the *Wise County Messenger*, a “pistol duel took place but no bloodshed resulted.” After the exchange of shots, the vagrant “took up his flight and disappeared.” Needless to say, this edginess and a lack of a clear determination as to who and what they were firing at could have resulted in disastrous consequences.⁴⁵

In Wichita Falls, two days after war was declared, the sheriff received special instructions from United States Marshall William M. McDonald of the Northern District of Texas. These instructions authorized the sheriff to arrest foreign-born citizens who, “either by word or deed,” gave indications they were “alien enemies.” When the instructions from McDonald spread through the town, rumors were rampant and focused on McDonald’s reason for being in Wichita Falls as well as his destination when he departed the city, which was variously given as Quanah or Fort Worth. McDonald’s presence also fueled “persistent” rumors that German residents of the county were being

⁴⁴ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 27, 1917, and September 16, 1917.

⁴⁵ *Wise County Messenger*, May 4, 1917.

arrested. The newspaper noted that it was “established last night that while no arrests had yet been made, there was the very present possibility of such action.” However, no action was taken, and residents of the town were left to speculate and to argue if there was any truth to the rumors of spies and German agents that “persisted” in the county in the weeks following the war declaration.⁴⁶

Also on the same day as McDonald’s visit to Wichita Falls, the *Wichita Daily Times* reported that some “Wichitans” were, in effect, “alien enemies,” based on President Wilson’s war proclamation. While it was believed that most foreign citizens were loyal and had already taken out naturalization papers, those who had not were expected to complete the naturalization process. However, those who could not or would not do this would not be able to own firearms, ammunition, or “cipher-codes,” and were “subject to severe restrictions.” It was also noted that there were several German communities in nearby counties such as Hardeman, and the “status” of German residents of those counties should be “ascertained as promptly as possible.” To drive the point home about any foreigner in the Wichita area that harbored German sympathies, the *Wichita Daily Times* stated that it was an inopportune time to “cuss” the American government. The paper finished by stating that “if reports are true, several Wichita County citizens of German descent have already found this out to their sorrow.” As if that was not enough, police in the city arrested “Klondyke Bill,” an “itinerant exhorter and travelling man,” who rode in a wagon drawn by goats and followed by “lean looking hounds.” Police arrested “Klondyke Bill” because he had allegedly “tried to incite

⁴⁶ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 8, 1917.

Germans in Archer County to revolt against the government and also to have uttered scurrilous remarks against the president, and to have used violent language in denouncing the conscription law.” A similar situation arose in Clarendon in Donley County, in which the town “enjoyed a little excitement” over a “spy” who was seen around the hospital and fair grounds, where National Guardsmen were drilling. Police arrested the man, and after examining him, determined he was a “hobo Irishman” and released.⁴⁷

While many foreign born residents were under suspicion, some took it upon themselves to show their loyalty. On the other hand, Wichita Falls resident Daniel Panantos, of Greek descent, wrote to the *Wichita Daily Times* to pledge not only his own support to the United States, but the support of “the Greeks of Wichita Falls and of every other American city.” Along similar lines, in tiny Crowell in Foard County, a German man, Dr. H. Schindler, was the first to purchase a Liberty Bond. According to the news report, his automobile had a sign that read: “America First.” In Fort Worth, the Teutonic Singing Society purchased \$100 worth of liberty bonds. The secretary of the society, speaking in a voice “quivering with patriotism,” proclaimed “I am an American. We are all Americans and we want to subscribe to the Liberty Loan.”⁴⁸

However, not all of the opposition to the war came from foreign-born residents. There were some unusual instances of opposition to the war, such as the case of a man in Tarrant County who killed himself because of the war, apparently stating that “I don’t want to live any longer. In a few days people will be killing each other, and all laws will

⁴⁷ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 8, 1917, June 3, 1917; *Clarendon News*, August 2, 1917.

⁴⁸ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 8, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, June 3, 1917; *Fort Worth Record*, June 7, 1917.

be violated. This country will be a horrible place with all this going on.” According to an eyewitness, the man shot himself with a shotgun. As one eyewitness recalled, it took two shots, the first almost taking the man’s shoulder off, while the second one “took effect in the heart, causing instant death.” The *Fort Worth Record* attributed the man’s poor health and his constant worry over the war as reasons for the suicide. Also in Fort Worth, a minister was “watched” by the authorities “because of certain remarks he has made recently from the pulpit, and the attitude he has taken in the matter of the present war.”⁴⁹

However, while Texans across the state expressed their patriotism or opposition to the war effort in various ways, noted the activities of minorities, and sought ways to strengthen controls over “alien enemies,” once war was declared the discussion quickly shifted to a topic that was much more contentious and controversial: how was the United States was going to field an army large enough to make a difference on the battlefields of Europe? The answer would affect thousands of young men across northwest Texas in ways that many of them probably could not imagine.

⁴⁹ *Fort Worth Record*, April 5, 1917, June 9, 1917.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONSCRIPTION DEBATE

The second major issue that occupied the minds of thousands of people across the United States and Texas was whether or not the United States should raise an army to fight in Europe through the volunteer system or implement a draft, known as Selective Service. Although the issue was not new, as the point had been argued during the debate on preparedness, much of the discussion after the declaration of war focused on that issue. Although preparedness had been an ongoing debate, it had taken on a stronger impetus after the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915. In November of that year, President Wilson proposed a “reorganization and expansion” of the military, although he was very careful to avoid implications that the United States might intervene in the war. From that point, the issue of preparedness began to hinge on the value of using volunteers to strengthen the army as opposed to the implementation of a selective service draft.¹

The issue of volunteering as opposed to conscription remained a central issue throughout 1916 and into 1917. As late as two months after the United States broke diplomatic relations with Germany in February of 1917, the government still expected to rely solely on volunteer enlistments to increase the army. By March of 1917, however, the picture had changed when Secretary of War Newton D. Baker admitted that a draft might be required at some future date but only after the volunteer system could no longer

¹ John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 79, 103, 105, 128.

provide the required number of soldiers. Once war was declared in April, the fight as to how the United States was going to raise its army centered on volunteers or draftees.²

In Congress, Texas congressmen entered the debate in various ways. In the Senate, like most Texans in Congress, Senator Morris Sheppard spoke in favor of the selective draft. Believing the selective draft would steer American citizens away from unbounded patriotism, Sheppard declared that the draft would create an army through “quiet, orderly, and intelligent selection.” By raising an army this way, Sheppard asserted, the United States would deal “militarism the severest blow it had yet received” and lay the “foundations for an ideal army of democracy,” instead of creating an army out of sheer patriotism based on bands playing, bugles blowing, and orators thundering.³

In his remarks, Sheppard also described the contributions of German Texans, including his former roommate at the University of Texas, John C. Romburg, and politician Jacob Wolters. According to Sheppard, German Texans would “be just as loyal and as true, as ready to give their life and treasure for American ideals, as other elements of our citizenship.” Despite such assertions from the floor of the Senate, it was clear that not all Texans looked favorably on German-Americans in their communities.⁴

Congressional leaders selected Thomas L. Blanton to debate the draft issue. He rose in Congress on April 26 and presented his view on selective service. Arguing that he had been elected on the promise that he would support President Wilson, he stated that

² Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 130, 133.

³ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1484-85.

⁴ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1485.

he had no idea that he would so quickly be “tested with a trial by steel and fire,” which characterized his view of the conscription debate. Blanton’s speech, to great applause, swept across the wide West Texas district that he represented. He focused on the supportive efforts of communities in his district, including his hometown, Abilene, which he claimed “harbors none but patriots.” Blanton then turned his attention to his colleagues in the House, stating that if they did not believe the people of their own districts were behind the president and the draft legislation, then “either your people are fundamentally different from mine or you have not had your ear as close to the ground as I have had mine.”⁵

Daniel E. Garrett, serving as an “at large” member, was one of the Congressmen who had not come out openly for the selective service bill. Indeed, his colleague Tom Connally recalled that they were on “opposite sides of the draft bill when the question first popped up.” However, Garrett entered into the *Congressional Record* dozens of telegrams and letters he received from his constituents, both for and against conscription. A telegram from Port Arthur, Texas, illustrated the influence of the Texas military tradition: “No state or nation has ever done more than Texas to withstand tyranny and maintain her rights by the sword, and the history of her volunteer army is the brightest in the world...If Texans are to do their best fighting, they prefer to go voluntarily...” From Wichita Falls came a petition that simply stated, “You are not reflecting the sentiment of the people of Texas in opposing President Wilson’s selective conscription plan,” and “the people of this community favor the selective-conscription bill as proposed by President

⁵ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1283-1284.

Wilson.” From Amarillo, however, the cry was, “righteously you fight conscription,” while from Mansfield in Tarrant County, it was “Mansfield 15 to 1 for President’s plan. Stay with President.” Finally, from Vernon and Wilbarger came the missive, “The best informed and patriotic citizens of Wilbarger County implore you and the entire Texas delegation to support the president, not because we are bloodthirsty and love war, but because we believe we are sane and realize the importance of immediate and decisive action.”⁶

In response to these and the dozens of other telegrams, Garrett spoke to the “people of Texas” from the chamber of the House. Garrett claimed the telegrams were in response to his own call to his constituents, and in his view the majority suggested that the selective service bill was more appropriate. Thus, Garrett claimed he would support the selective draft bill regardless of his own opinion because “I will not at the beginning of a great war to democratize the world deny my own people the right to instruct their representative in Congress concerning their will, but shall do my best to obey them.” However, Connally recalled that Garrett rose in the House to speak in favor of the volunteer system and praised its merits. As Connally remembered, “then in the middle of his speech he paused suddenly and in a loud voice shouted „But...’ From then on, the rest of his talk favored the draft.”⁷

⁶ Connally, *My Name is Tom Connally*, 91; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, Appendix, 120-122, 125.

⁷ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, Appendix, 127; Connally, *My Name is Tom Connally*, 91.

Other congressmen followed suit, making every effort to ensure that their representatives voted how they wished. Representative James C. Wilson was reported as being “hesitant” to support a draft until the volunteer effort had failed, although he intimated that if the President, the Secretary of War, and army officers “insisted” on a draft, he would “probably give it his support however reluctant he may be to do so in the final analysis.” At the time, some Texans perceived Representative Wilson’s view as the majority view of the Texas Congressional delegation. Several weeks later, after Representative Wilson voted to support the draft bill, he tried to explain his stance, this time drawing a connection with the Civil War. In a letter to H.D. McCoy of Cleburne, he stated that “as the son of a volunteer who went out at the first call of the south and staid [sic] four years at the front, I approached this subject with a natural prejudice against conscription.” However, Wilson claimed that the debate, as well as his respect for the president, had swayed his opinion. In spite of his connection to the volunteers of the past, he had come to believe that “the system of allowing the volunteers alone to fight for the nation is unfair, unjust, wrong in principle and indefensible.” Wilson also believed that there was not another vote he was more proud of than his vote supporting the selective draft.⁸

Eugene Black of the First District pointed out that there must be no “uncertainty” in raising the army, and for that reason, as well as equity in military service, he concluded that “present day experience are all on the side of the selective draft.” Although he voted to support it, he also made it clear that his support was contingent upon the draft being a

⁸ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 11, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, May 8, 1917.

temporary war measure and that it would not “commit this country to a policy of compulsory military service in time of peace.” Rufus Hardy gave perhaps the longest speech of the Texas delegation, and exhaustively laid out the reasons for and against volunteering and conscription. He voted for the selective service bill because he wanted to “end the odium attached” to the word conscript, as well as to “place every American soldier on an equal plane of honor to start with and let him win his glory by his actions.” On the other hand, Joe Eagle refused to obey the wishes of constituents who had written to him supporting the volunteer system, claiming that to do so would “cripple the efficiency of the President.” Freshman Congressman Marvin Jones of the Thirteenth District also spoke, stating that he would support the bill “in this emergency as the best and fairest means of raising and training an army.” Jones, however, pushed for the age limit to include men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five rather than nineteen to twenty-five as the bill was originally written.⁹

However, Representative Atkins “Jeff” McLemore again took the most controversial position, much like he had done with the war declaration. In fact, his stance was completely opposite that of Morris Sheppard. McLemore declared that conscription would lead to the type of “militarism” the United States had professed to destroy. Furthermore, in his view, war had been pushed by New York City “propagandists” such as the American Defense Society and the National Security League, which, he believed, sought to place the “brand of conscription” on Americans. McLemore also believed that

⁹ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1380, 1396-1398; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 3, 2211; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 1, 972; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1200; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 8, Appendix, 248.

telegrams and letters he received from his constituents were generated by this same New York propaganda. In his view, this propaganda was sent to “practically every town in Texas that maintains a commercial organization.” As McLemore stated, “can you imagine anything more impudent than this New York propaganda...dictating to the people of Texas what to do?” Even worse, however, was his assertion that nothing could be more humiliating than for Texans to submit to such propaganda. As proof, McLemore argued that Texas businessmen were generally for conscription while farmers supported the volunteer system. To McLemore, this was all the proof he needed that Texas commercial organizations had been compromised by the “New York propaganda.” Concluding his efforts against the selective service bill, McLemore claimed that the “establishment and perpetuation of a military system in this country will soon see the end of our republican form of government.” For that, he received the applause of the House.¹⁰

While the Texas Congressional declaration strove to understand what their constituents wanted and worked out the issue within their own consciences, the communities of northwest Texas that recruited the Seventh Texas made sure to express their views. In Wichita Falls, the citizenry held a mass meeting to explore the issue. As the *Wichita Daily Times* reported, the “object of the meeting is to ascertain the true sentiment of Wichita Falls on this matter.” The results of the meeting were to be wired to Congressmen Marvin Jones and representatives-at-large Jeff McLemore and Daniel Garrett. The meeting included a number of speakers who spoke out in favor of

¹⁰ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1233-1235.

conscription as “not only the only business like way of meeting the situation, but it is the most democratic that it calls on all alike.” One man pointed out that Texas was the “strongest democratic state” and “largely responsible for the Wilson administration,” thus “he deemed it up to Texas to uphold the President’s hand in this matter.” However, the crowd was smaller than expected and organizers gave a “socialist” the opportunity to speak. In the end, the *Wichita Daily Times* announced that “Wichita Falls stands with President Wilson in his plan for a selective draft,” and printed resolutions from the meeting that instructed the three congressmen to support the draft.¹¹

The next day, Congressman Marvin Jones wired the city that he would support the selective service legislation, “in compliance with the expressed wish of those I have the honor to represent.” In his message, he stated that after studying the reports on the bill, he was convinced that the draft recognized “the principle of universal liability to a call to the colors, and is therefore fair.” In printing Jones’s telegram, the *Wichita Daily Times* pointed out that it appeared Jones had already decided to support conscription before the city’s conscription resolutions had reached him. However, the paper reported that “it is hoped that the message from this city will have some effect upon other Texas congressmen who are either wavering or who are opposed to the president’s recommendation.” In another effort to make sure the Texas delegation voted in

¹¹ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 23, 24, 1917.

accordance with the wishes of the state, the Texas Senate, voting nineteen to two, passed a resolution endorsing the selective service bill.¹²

Of course, there were plenty of speeches and editorials throughout the counties of northwest Texas that expressed support for one side of the issue or the other. In Abilene, for example, residents generally supported conscription. In putting forth their argument, the *Abilene Reporter* noted that the British had tried to rely on volunteers and failed. Furthermore, it was noted that in a ten day period, just 4,355 men had volunteered for service across the United States. At such a rate, the paper quipped, “Germany will be in possession of the earth and the fullness thereof before we raise as much as a division.” The *Abilene Reporter* also printed a selection of statements from local residents, all of whom favored the conscription plan, including J.M. Wagstaff, father of Robert Wagstaff, who would serve as captain of the Abilene company raised for the Seventh Texas. The elder Wagstaff appeared to express the general sentiment of the community when he said that “all classes of citizens from the poorest to the richest will be compelled to perform their share of military duty, and in this way we will have no slackers.” Finally, the citizens sent a resolution to Congressman Thomas Blanton, stating they “heartily indorse the plans of President Wilson for recruiting the army by selective conscription.”¹³

¹² *Wichita Daily Times*, April 23, 25, 1917; The *Amarillo Daily News* also reported that Marvin Jones gave his “maiden” speech in the House supporting the selective service legislation, *Amarillo Daily News*, April 29, 1917; In the Texas Senate, on the same day as the resolution supporting the draft was passed, the senators passed another resolution that patriotic songs were to be sung in all of the state’s public schools, *Wichita Daily Times*, April 23, 1917.

¹³ *Abilene Reporter*, April 13, 20, 1917; *Congressional Record*, Vol. 55, part 2, 1284.

In Gainesville, while not directly stated, the attitude toward the draft appeared to be slightly more cautious. The *Daily Register* printed a joke from the *El Paso Times* that suggested lobbyists in Washington should be the first ones drafted and sent “so far toward the battle front that it will cost them eight dollars and fifty cents to send back a postcard.” Furthermore, in Gainesville the perception existed that farmers would be exempt from the draft, as the paper printed statements such as: “It is great to be a farmer boy when the conscription man comes along,” and “The boys engaged in actual farm work...will not be conscripted into the army...so get busy boys, and push old Beck to the limit.” The paper also admonished any men of draft age who had not gone to work on a farm that if they were to “fall into the hands of the conscription goblins, don’t blame us, but remember we gave you fair warning.” In a final shot at conscription, the paper printed the following: “It is sad enough for many of us to see our young men volunteering and going to the war, but when we see numbers of them conscripted and taken against their will, a much sadder feature will present itself.” In Amarillo, one editorial thundered that the selective service system would keep militarism in the American way of life. The writer pointed out that compulsory military service “creates a feeling for war,” and the “fewer guns, soldiers, and battleships, the more stable will the governments of the world become.”¹⁴

In nearby Wise County, the message was different, and focused on making sure if a man was eligible for the draft, he should do his duty. For example, the *Wise County*

¹⁴ *Gainesville Daily Register*, May 13, 17, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, March 7, 1918; In Amarillo, the *Daily News* pointed out that the new selective service system would finally do away with “every vestige of bad odor that has lurked about the word ‘conscript’ since the Civil War, *Amarillo Daily News*, April 12, 29, 1917.

Messenger wrote, “Pity the young fellow who is laboring under the impression that he has perfected plans by which he can evade his country’s call to the colors. Look out young fellow, if you are caught, kiss your liberty goodbye.” Furthermore, the paper warned that that any young men who believed they could evade the draft through political means were simply deluded. Indeed, “the son of the politician must take the same medicine prescribed for the son of the day laborer.” Similar to Gainesville, the Wise County paper printed short epistles of opinion its editorial section, such as “conscript the fellow who is clamoring for peace at any price,” and “wonder how many pampered sons of the rich are rushing to the colors?”¹⁵

Even the governor, James “Pa” Ferguson, became involved and sent a letter to Sam Rayburn and Daniel E. Garrett, who sat on the House Military Affairs committee. Ferguson, who was opposed to conscription, wrote that it was unnecessary to raise an army by conscription as “far as Texas is concerned.” Ferguson believed that if a call for volunteers was placed, the 500,000 men requested by President Wilson would be forthcoming immediately, “provided it was issued under the national guard system.” But for Ferguson the real point centered on Texas soldiers fighting under Texas officers: “I doubt if any large amount of volunteers could be obtained if it was known that our boys were to enlist under officers unknown to them. All of our boys in Texas want to enlist under officers appointed in Texas.” Rayburn suggested to Ferguson that he telegraph Secretary of War Newton Baker and discuss the issue with him. Obviously, Ferguson had an unrealistic outlook to believe that 500,000 men would be raised instantly under

¹⁵ *Wise County Messenger*, April 6, 1917 and May 26, 1917.

the National Guard system. However, his attitude might have been typical in light of the way many Texans celebrated their military history and the Texas tradition of military service.¹⁶

Thus, while the arguments for or against the volunteer or draft systems had proponents on both sides in Texas, the area of northwestern Texas from which the Seventh Texas was recruited appeared more often than not to support the passage of the legislation. With the help of the Texas delegation in the Senate and the House of Representatives, Congress passed the Selective Service bill on April 28, 1917, and President Wilson signed it into law three weeks later. The men to be drafted were to be brought into the new “National Army.” Along with the Regular Army and a federalized National Guard, these three sources of manpower would represent the United States on the Western Front. Once the act was signed, the administration of the draft had to proceed rapidly, in part because the President called for a nationwide registration of all men between the ages of twenty-one to thirty to take place on June 5, 1917. Thus, once the draft became law, the focus began to shift from the national to the local level, where the process of registering, selecting, examining, and sending men off to training camps would take place.¹⁷

While the men of the Seventh Texas Infantry were not drafted, the creation of the draft administration and the implementation of the draft at the county level did affect the

¹⁶ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 11, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, April 10, 1917; Ferguson’s administration later stepped up efforts to oppose conscription, as when T.C. Jennings of the state department of labor released a statement claiming that conscription would be a “serious handicap” to Texas Farmers, *Wichita Daily Times*, July 16, 1917.

¹⁷ Chambers, *To Raise An Army*, 166, 170.

decisions of the men who joined this particular National Guard regiment. As the weeks passed after the declaration of war and the issue of raising an army remained foremost on the minds of many residents, the bill's passage spurred an increase in recruiting for the regular Army, Navy, and National Guard. Thus, it is important to understand how recruiting efforts affected the atmosphere in northwest Texas in the months leading up to the formation of the Seventh Texas Infantry. One can imagine the pressure on these young men as they were surrounded by patriotic displays, recruiting officers, as well as rumors and uncertainty about the draft and how it would work.

At the state level, the selective service system relied heavily on county level government for administrative support. The draft was specifically organized to be decentralized, with a simple structure designed to make implementation easy. At the top was the Provost Marshall General, Major General Enoch Crowder. Below the national level, state governors were charged with authority for the draft within their states. Below the governors were district boards, of which Texas had four, located in Fort Worth, Houston, Tyler, and Austin. Generally, the district boards had two primary functions. First, they were to review decisions made by the county exemption boards "upon appeal," and second, they were to make all decisions regarding exemptions for the draft based on agricultural or industrial claims. The district boards, according to the Provost Marshall General, could also provide "a check on irregularities by local boards...and assured to

every registrant the opportunity of a rehearing before a court removed from local prejudice and influence.”¹⁸

Finally, below the district boards was the central component of the World War I draft system: the county exemption board. In the United States, there were 4,648 local boards with slightly more than 14,000 members. In Texas, this amounted to 280 boards, one for every county and city with a population of 30,000. During the war, there were approximately 841 members assigned to Texas boards, each of which consisted of three men from the county or city. These boards were, in essence, the “front line” between the citizens and the government. As General Crowder wrote in a report to the Secretary of War:

Long after the selective service machinery will have been dismantled, and the processes of the draft will have faded from memory, the term ‘local board’ will hold its place in our speech as the typical mark of the system that lifted America from the most peaceful of Nations to a place of first magnitude among military powers.¹⁹

A central feature of these local boards was that the board members were not military officers, nor specially trained civilians. Rather, they were members of the local community who were expected to know the particular situation of their county, understand the local nuances and the character of the residents, and thus be in a position to *impartially* select the men to be drafted. According to the Provost Marshall General, local board members were chosen for “their unquestioned patriotism, fair-mindedness,

¹⁸ Enoch H. Crowder, *Second Report of the Provost Marshall General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 364-365, 268, 479.

¹⁹ Crowder, *Second Report*, 276.

and integrity, and [were] impelled solely by the motive of patriotic self-sacrifice.” Of course, this did not always reflect the reality of each board’s operations.²⁰

Thus, local boards played an essential role as the “buffer” between the federal government and the citizen and “attracted and diverted, like local grounding wires in an electric coil, such resentment or discontent as might have proved a serious obstacle to war measures, had it been focused on the central authorities.” The local boards became the face of the government, appearing as friendly local citizens who would bear the brunt of criticism of the draft. In an effort to appoint men who would remain above the influence of petty criticism, their composition was determined by the President, upon the recommendation of state governors. Such a system, of course, brought complaints of political interference, and there was doubtless some political maneuvering for these positions. Indeed, the *Gainesville Daily Register* reported that General Crowder himself took exception to the composition of the Texas boards, stating that Governor Ferguson’s recommendations had “caused the Provost Marshall General’s Department more trouble than all the other states combined.” In other words, the men selected by Ferguson were challenged by opponents, which delayed putting the boards into operation. Eventually, the suspect candidates for the boards were replaced.²¹

While the boards for each of the counties were not announced until July, 1917, the critical registration period took place on June 5, 1917, in which all eligible men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty were required to register for selective service. The men

²⁰ Crowder, *Second Report*, 479.

²¹ Crowder, *Second Report*, 277; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 29, 1917.

filled out registration cards that contained information such as their age, place of birth, residence, type and location of employment, prior military service, marital status, dependents, and whether or not they wished to claim exemption from the draft. For the most part, officials in northwest Texas registered their eligible citizens with few problems, although some did occur. In general, however, these communities saw draft registration as another way to demonstrate their patriotism and loyalty.

For example, in an effort to stir up patriotism, Denton mayor Paul J. Beyette proclaimed that registration day would be a city holiday. Beyette's announcement was awash with patriotic sentiment, claiming that "everyone should realize fully the importance of this action [draft registration]. I believe that every true and loyal American is anxious to „do his bit.”” Three days after this announcement, however, O.M. Curtis of the Denton Chamber of Commerce announced that a celebration would not be held. Curtis wrote that "offering oneself for the defense of one's country, while it is a privilege, it is a very serious matter and should be gone about and done in a very serious way," and should not be accompanied by music and parades. Curtis's speech also drew connections between patriotism and service to the country and illustrates the view some held about serving during wartime:

Giving one's self for the defense of one's country is of course a very serious thing for it means loss of life, not all the lives that are offered but some of them sure. Giving one's self for this purpose looked at from one angle is a glorious privilege for I do not believe death could come in a nobler or more glorious way than in fighting for one's country.²²

²² *Denton Record-Chronicle*, June 1, 4, 1917, September 13, 18, 1917, April 30, 1918.

Statements such as this were certainly designed to put pressure on young men to register or even volunteer. Thus, instead of a band and parades to mark June 5, 1917, Denton County chose to mark registration day by pinning a red, white, blue, and khaki “badge of honor” on those who registered.

Other counties followed similar approaches, although unlike Denton some communities did turn registration day into a holiday, such as Amarillo and Wichita Falls. In general, registration day went as planned. In Abilene, the local paper reported that by 3 p.m. on registration day, not even a “hint of any untoward happening” had occurred. The *Abilene Reporter* claimed that the “young men marched right in and did their duty as they were expected to do,” and there “was not a morose countenance among them.” In Cleburne, registration day “passed very quietly,” except for three men who failed to register, two white and one African-American. The men were to be given a chance to register on June 6, with the comment that if they did not do so, “other measures will be followed.”²³

In Amarillo, the registration day parade was noted as one of the “most stupendous which was ever carried through here.” The parade included a number of newly recruited men for the regular army and the local papers reported that “free from the element that in some sections opposed registration, Amarillo people with thousands of flags flying, showed their fealty to the government and bespoke their desire to be of any assistance.” As might be expected, the parade included Civil War veterans as well as a large group of men who had enlisted in the regular army. After them came the men who had registered

²³ *Wichita Daily Times*, June 4, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, June 5, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, June 6, 1917.

for the draft. Each carried an American flag and the registrants were “loudly cheered by the hundreds.” The registered men were followed by a “formation of Negroes who were loudly cheered through the end of the parade.” However, the next day, an editorial in the local newspaper asked: “Did we make the most of the day?” Perhaps echoing the sentiments of Senator Sheppard, the writer wondered if the citizens of the town could see “beyond the fuss and feathers and catch a glimpse of the underlying seriousness of the situation.”²⁴

In Wichita Falls, a mass patriotic meeting including a number of speakers. Perhaps most interesting, however, was that Willie May Kell, daughter of prominent Wichita Falls resident Frank Kell, was asked to speak in place of her father, who could not attend. Although she had nothing prepared, Kell spoke “with great earnestness” about the Red Cross. She also castigated the women of Wichita Falls for failing to show significant interest in the work of the organization and said it would “be an appalling thing...if we sit here comfortably at home and let our boys die for something we could give them.” The *Wichita Daily Times* noted that the young woman’s speech was listened to with the “closest attention and was enthusiastically applauded.”²⁵

While not all places held parades and patriotic meetings, the patriotic spirit was still evident. In Decatur, a former resident wrote that “everyone seemed to be delighted with the showing the young manhood of this grand old county had made in laying their lives upon the altar of their country for the democracy and liberty of their nation.” The

²⁴ *Amarillo Daily News*, June 6, 1917.

²⁵ *Wichita Daily Times*, June 6, 1917.

writer then went on to urge the citizens of the county to “cut out luxuries” and show the men who had registered that they were willing to “share the hardships and privations of life” with them. In Cooke County the feeling was similar, as the *Daily Register* quipped that “the young patriots” of the county came to the “lick log today without a tremor of fear and registered their names and are ready for the fray though the task may be long and arduous.” Finally, in Tarrant County, a local paper noted that “those in charge of the registration are well pleased with the results attained and with the apparent willingness of eligibles to come forward and enroll their names.” Many of the counties also expressed surprise at the number of men who registered; in many cases the number far exceeded estimates, which were based on voting and tax records, causing several of the counties to run out of registration forms.²⁶

Once registration was complete and the local exemption boards established, the boards began their work, bringing men to be examined for service whose numbers had been called in the national draft on July 20, 1917. The process initially consisted of compiling lists based on the chosen draft numbers and then calling groups of registrants in for physical examination. Those who passed the physical examinations would then either be certified for military service, or, if they had requested an exemption, the request would be reviewed by the board. However, the selective draft process would undergo continuous refinement throughout the period of the war. In short, the local exemption board was charged with every aspect of the draft, including registration, determination of

²⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, June 8, 15, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 5, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, June 6, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, June 5, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 6, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, June 6, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, June 6, 1917.

order numbers, classifications of registrants, calling those to be inducted, and shipping them to their training bases. Indeed, the local board members had to understand 433 pages of selective service regulations as well as master “for daily and instant use” more than 100 different forms. Assisting the local boards were medical and legal personnel and boards of instruction to teach registrants rudimentary military skills before they were sent off to training camp.²⁷

The influence that the local draft boards had on the communities they served is clear. Not only did they spur some men to join the military, they also brought thousands into the ranks of the army during the course of the war. For example, the fourteen counties that hosted company headquarters for the Seventh Texas Infantry registered a total of 88,644 men across eighteen exemption boards: fourteen county boards and four city boards for Fort Worth. Tarrant County and the city of Fort Worth registered the most men, with almost 32,000 registrations, while Foard County registered the smallest number, just 1,239. Of the total registrations, 10,386 (12 percent) were actually inducted into the army, with Tarrant County and Fort Worth again inducting the most at slightly more than 3,500 and Foard the least at 139. In fact, from these fourteen counties, the draftees outnumbered the men who joined the Seventh Texas by a margin of five to one.²⁸

The board also granted exemptions, which were given for three major reasons: dependents, agricultural employment, and industrial jobs. The eighteen local boards granted 13,762 (15 percent of all registrants) exemptions for men with dependents.

²⁷ *Denton Record-Chronicle*, November 27, 1917; Crowder, *Second Report*, 279, 280, ix-x.

²⁸ Crowder, *Second Report*, 586-588.

Although it might seem that these boards would grant exemptions for agricultural workers more so than for industrial exemptions, it was fairly even with 349 agricultural exemptions handed out, while 359 industrial exemptions were granted across these counties, although exemption information for Childress and Cooke counties was not available. Thus, while the soldiers of the Seventh Texas were not drafted, it is clear that the local boards exerted an influence over their communities, making determinations as to who would serve and who would not, and in some instances causing men to join the army or the National Guard before they were drafted.²⁹

While officials in northwest Texas had expected trouble from foreign-born citizens and German sympathizers, those officials also found occasional trouble from citizens in their communities who remained, adamantly in some cases, opposed to the draft. By far, the largest group that spread fear and anger throughout northwest Texas was the Farmers and Laborers Protective Association of America (FLPA). In late May 1917, reports came that seven men had been arrested on conspiracy charges at Snyder, Texas, a town between Abilene and Lubbock, and brought to Dallas. Other arrests quickly followed across northwest Texas, all with ties to the FLPA. The FLPA had been organized in 1915 with the ostensible purpose of increasing cooperation between farmers and laborers, and many members across Texas believed that was its only purpose. However, it appears that the group might have had a small number of men who sought to use the FLPA to generate draft resistance. These men attempted to coerce other members into swearing an oath to secrecy on pain of death, as well as to “oppose military service

²⁹ Crowder, *Second Report*, 586-588.

and the laws of the Government, to kill officers who might have his fellow-members arrested, and to kill on sight any conscription officer or officer of the army who should give him a gun with which to fight.”³⁰

As summer progressed, the number of men arrested increased until at least fifty-four men were indicted on conspiracy charges, including the state organizer of the FLPA, G.T. Bryant. Arrests were made in Taylor, Hardeman, Wilbarger, and Wichita counties, among others. Indeed, as news spread about the alleged anti-draft conspiracy, several counties set up special guards, some using local “home guard” companies in an effort to head off any possible trouble. Indeed, in early June, a member of the FLPA was shot twenty-three times by a group of sheriffs who appeared at the man’s house to arrest him for beating his wife. He apparently believed they were there for reasons related to the FLPA and opened fire on them, thus causing them to return fire and kill him.³¹

Officials indicted and brought a total of fifty-six men to trial in Abilene in September of 1917. However, after a sensational trial which lasted more than a month, the jury returned guilty verdicts on just three men, state FLPA organizer G.T. Bryant, state FLPA president Z.L. Risley, and state FLPA secretary S.J. Powell. All were found guilty of conspiring to “overthrow, put down and destroy by force the Government of the United States, and to levy war against them.” The three men were each given six years in prison. Asked if they had anything to say about their sentences, Risley declared the trial a “miscarriage of justice,” while Bryant and Powell maintained their innocence. The rest

³⁰ *Dallas Morning News*, May 20, 1917.

³¹ *Dallas Morning News*, May 30, June 9, July 10, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 3, 1917; *Fort Worth Record*, June 6, 1917.

of the men who did not have their cases thrown out, thirty-seven total, were acquitted, although they were admonished by the judge to “live and act” in such a way as to prove their loyalty. The judge also “strongly advised them to buy liberty bonds, even if they had to sell old Beck to do so.”³²

While this was the most celebrated case of anti-draft activity in this region of Texas, each of the counties also had other, more localized incidents, as individuals resisted the draft for varying reasons. In Wichita Falls, the *Wichita Daily Times* reported “trouble” was expected on registration day, and in Denton, the *Record-Chronicle* made reference to an unnamed section of the county where there was “some evidence of disaffection and opposition to the selective draft registration.” Although the report was not specific, it did say that opposition was not organized, “but rather sporadic and only one or two localities are affected.” The paper noted that county authorities were keeping a close watch on the situation “with a view to taking prompt and effective steps if necessary.” In nearby Dallas, locals found anti-draft registration circulars that proclaimed “Down with conscription—refuse to register.” Apparently, the circulars were not printed in the local area, but they succeeded in arousing the “vigilance of government agents.” And in Fort Worth, after the draft had started, hundreds of falsified registration cards were discovered. In addition, all registrants were cautioned to carry a copy of their registration card with them at all times, especially if they left the local area

³² *Dallas Morning News*, September 10, 1917, and October 19, 1917; Bryant, Risley, and Powell were all granted \$10,000 bond in March of 1918, although they were unable to pay it at the time, *Dallas Morning News*, March 10, 1918; For more on the FLPA, see Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004), pp. 87-101.

as “peace officers everywhere will be on the lookout for slackers and if one has not the certificate of registration, they will probably cause some embarrassment.” Indeed, in Amarillo, a man was arrested for just that reason, although it was thought to be “the first case of its kind” in Potter County.³³

Men who failed to register were given the epithet of “slackers.” Officers in Cleburne arrested two men for failing to register, while in Amarillo a man was held as a slacker because while purchasing liquor he “swore” to be twenty-one years old and yet failed to register on June 5, which the liquor store owner brought to the attention of Potter County authorities. Additionally, the Adjutant General of Texas, Brigadier General Henry Hutchings, sent out a telegram in the middle of June ordering police to arrest and prosecute all “slackers.” In Fort Worth, this meant a “systematic search...to bring out all non-registered males.” Furthermore, the *Fort Worth Record* noted that federal officials in the region planned to “throw out the drag net to every corner of the Northern Texas district.” The first “slacker” in Fort Worth was arrested just four days later, when an African-American man swore that he was twenty-one in order to get a marriage license but then failed to register for the draft.³⁴

Unfortunately, concern and worry over the draft proved to be too much for one man, who killed himself when he was given notice to appear before the Wise County

³³ *Wichita Daily Times*, May 31, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, September 1, 1917; A major “slacker” roundup was held in Fort Worth, in which more than 1,200 men were “herded into the city hall for investigation as to whether or not they were slackers,” *Denton Record-Chronicle*, August 16, 1918. *Denton Record-Chronicle*, June 1, 2, 4 1917, and September 5, 1917.

³⁴ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 23, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, June 16, 1917; *Fort Worth Record*, June 13, 17, 1917.

exemption board. Raymond Rasberry, a farmer south of Decatur, called a city doctor to his farm to check on his sick wife. While the doctor examined the wife, Rasberry went to his barn with his shotgun. Rasberry's sister, upon seeing this, called for help but before the doctor could intervene, Rasberry had shot himself and the doctor found him with the "top of his head blown in by the load from his gun." Rasberry lived for eight hours in that condition. The *Wise County Messenger* noted that he was an honorable man, but that he had been "brooding" over the selective draft and his friends "noticed that he was worried over the fact that he might leave his wife and children."³⁵

During the first two months of this frenzied activity of patriotic celebrations, drilling, worries over sabotage and German spies, and debate over the draft bill and the effect of conscription, the Army and Navy were rushing to sign up as many men as possible. In a sense, recruiting efforts represented a step beyond the patriotic rallies and practice drill meets. Recruiters represented an end to supporting the war effort through talk and patriotic displays. In essence, the recruiter represented a much deeper, and in some cases final, commitment to the war effort. The rhetoric of the speeches and newspapers was one thing; it was something else for the young men of these northwest Texas communities to offer themselves to their country. And for those who thus offered themselves, they had to choose between being drafted or volunteering. Thus, for the men who would eventually join the Seventh Texas Infantry, there were a wide range of options for them to serve their country, each with its own benefits and challenges and

³⁵ *Wise County Messenger*, August 24, 1917; "Slackers" were also arrested in Cooke County, with the first arrest occurring on 9 August 1917, in which a Fritz Steiner failed to register, *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 10, 1917.

choices that had to be made. A young man in Texas could join the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, or the Texas National Guard. If he enlisted, he might be able to get into the Air Service or another branch of the Army besides the infantry. On the other hand, a young man could apply for the officer's training camps which were held at various times. On the other hand, he could join a National Guard unit and generally serve with people from the same state. However, if he waited to be drafted, control over where and what he did passed into the hands of the Army. A man looking to enlist could always walk away if the right job was not available.

While recruiting men for the Army and Navy was nothing new, efforts increased as soon as war was declared. For example, in Alvord, Wise County, on April 6, army recruiters were already urging potential volunteers who wished to enlist to "communicate" with them at once. Also, the Navy opened recruiting offices across northwest Texas, including in the following counties: Tarrant, Taylor, Potter, Johnson, and Wichita, all counties which would recruit the Seventh Texas. The Navy also used a "traveling party" to make trips to smaller towns in the region. Additionally, some Army and Navy recruiters could pull men into the service by telling tales from their own careers, such as Sergeant Thomas Watkins, who during his twenty-three years in the Army and Marine Corps had served in Alaska, China, and the Philippines. Other recruiters used props, such as a Navy recruiter in Fort Worth who gave a demonstration of a "naval defense mine" in a local theater to prospective recruits.³⁶

³⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, April 6, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, June 17, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 3, 1917; *Fort Worth Record*, June 21, 1917.

In Amarillo, less than a week after war was declared, the newspaper reported that “army applicants are flocking to [the] station,” including at least fifteen men from the surrounding towns of Clarendon, Claude, and Goodnight. Toward the end of April, Amarillo residents were impressed when Captain Fitzhugh Lee of the United States Cavalry, a son of Confederate General Fitzhugh Lee and a grandson of Robert E. Lee, arrived in Amarillo seeking volunteers for an officers training camp to be held in San Antonio. A week after Lee’s arrival, the *Amarillo Daily News* reported that fourteen men had joined the Navy, twenty-one the Army, but that Captain Lee had secured ninety-three “certified applicants” to the officers’ training school. Captain Lee, however, was called away as a witness in a trial, causing him to postpone accepting any more applicants until another officer could arrive to take his place.³⁷

Amarillo recruiters also urged men to join quickly, as good jobs would not last long, such as in the Quartermaster Corps, where only a few jobs remained. Anybody who missed out would find themselves in the infantry or artillery. However, Sergeant J.W. Stauffer did not wait for recruits to come to his office in Amarillo, but instead attached a side car to a motorcycle and went on a 100-mile recruiting trip through the Panhandle, following the route of the Denver Railroad, and stopping at places such as Hedley and Clarendon. Stauffer even went to the “sandy wastes” of the Canadian River in the northern Panhandle and recruited a man from the LX Ranch. Stauffer’s recruiting trip was apparently successful, as he got four recruits in Clarendon and two in Hedley,

³⁷ *Amarillo Daily News*, April 12, 29, 1917, and May 2, 1917.

although one man who enlisted was delayed in joining because he had to sell his “saddle, bridle and other accoutrements.”³⁸

In all of the fourteen counties the recruiting results were generally the same in the first few months after war was declared. Gainesville reported that “young patriots answer the call” by enlisting in the Army and Navy, while Corporal H.R. Flick went from Dallas to Abilene in Taylor County to take charge of recruiting men for the regular army, as did Lieutenant Cleyburne McCauley of the Marine Corps. The *Abilene Reporter* also told the tale of five-year-old Mack Coker, who asked his father take him to the Navy recruiting station, where he “signed up” to be a gunner, solemnly telling the recruiter to call on him whenever he was needed. In Vernon, seat of Wilbarger County, eighteen men joined the Army and thirty signed up with the Navy through June. In Wichita Falls, there were reports that Army recruiters could enlist volunteers into the British and Canadian armies and the British Navy, which some men joined. Despite these generally successful recruiting efforts, there were always those who opposed the presence of recruiters, such as in Wichita Falls, where an army recruiter had trouble with people tearing down and “mutilating” recruiting posters.³⁹

In Fort Worth, there were a steady number of enlistments, although officials hoped that the upcoming draft registration period would be a spur to increased enlistments. The *Forth Worth Record* reported that although “there has been a tendency

³⁸ *Amarillo Daily News*, June 16, 1917, and May 25, 31, 1917.

³⁹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, April 18, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, April 8, 29, 1917 and May 7, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, July 17, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 21, 1917, and August 20, 1917.

to drop off, the local men are confident that Fort Worth will establish a splendid record for patriotism.” However, it was later estimated that a total of 1,630 men had joined the military in Fort Worth from the war declaration to the end of July, 1917. The Army recruited the most with 427 men, while the Navy recruited 424, and the Cavalry 213, Field Artillery 190, and the Marine Corps with 74, among others.⁴⁰

While individual recruiting numbers are not available on a consistent basis, during the first week of June, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps enlisted 256 men across North Texas. However, military officials considered that the slowest recruiting week since war was declared, and the *Dallas Morning News* headline proclaimed that “recruiting for week shows sharp decline,” and quoted a recruiting officer as saying, “the people are asleep, apparently unaware of the enormity and seriousness of the great struggle in which the United States is engaged.” Previously, in May, the military services across the North Texas region recruited a total of 1,867 men, which would average almost twice as many men per week as they recruited the first week of June. While the situation was not quite so dire, across northwest Texas the reporting suggests that enlistments in the regular Army and Navy were never quite as high as officials might have expected. However, not everybody was eligible and qualified to serve in the Army or Navy. For example, in Wichita Falls, the local paper noted that the Navy had fifty-four applicants but only thirteen were accepted, while Abilene reported thirty-eight applicants, but the Navy accepted only nine. Regardless of whether or not the military was able to recruit all of soldiers and sailors they needed, they had to compete against each other and convince

⁴⁰ *Fort Worth Record*, May 30, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, August 6, 1917.

young men that they should volunteer instead of waiting for the draft. Furthermore, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps had to compete for recruits with a powerful force in Texas: the Texas National Guard. The National Guard made a strong effort to fill up its own ranks and had its own methods of recruiting, which will be examined in greater detail.⁴¹

Thus, in the first weeks after the declaration of war, these predominantly agricultural counties across northwest Texas were swept up in the tide of war. On the one hand, they attempted to show their patriotism through a variety of means including parades, speeches, and rallies. The men of these counties joined together to participate in military drill, while the women of these communities joined the Red Cross and made their own show at patriotism, as did African-American and foreign-born citizens. These patriotic efforts were expected of the citizens of these counties. Furthermore, patriotism was tested by arguments for or against the selective service bill, and the citizens of these communities discussed it amongst themselves and attempted to sway their representatives in Congress on how to vote. At the same time, rumors of German spies committing sabotage swept across these northwest Texas communities, while foreign-born citizens were watched closely and faced the threat of violence. Finally, across northwest Texas, young men's patriotism was put to the test with an increased recruiting tempo after the declaration of war. More than participating in military drill or talking about joining, when the recruiting sergeants came through many had to make a choice and were

⁴¹ *Dallas Morning News*, June 3, 10, 1917; The Dallas Recruiting District, which included many of the counties under study, reported total enlistments in the army, navy, and Marine Corps for 1917 as 10,672 men, *Dallas Morning News*, January 1, 1918.

pressured to do so, although the pace of enlistment never appeared to match the patriotic fervor of the communities.

Within this brittle atmosphere of patriotism and uncertainty, the Texas National Guard also struggled to recruit its ranks to full strength. Nearly two thousand men would make their choice to serve in the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment of the Texas National Guard, and they made their choice under strenuous circumstances, unsure if they should join a branch of the armed services or perhaps wait to be drafted, but then who knew where he might end up? This was the atmosphere in which recruiters for the Texas National Guard appeared across northwest Texas in June of 1917 and spent the summer recruiting and organizing fifteen new companies of soldiers.

CHAPTER 5

RECRUITING THE SEVENTH TEXAS INFANTRY

On June 28, 1917, barely three weeks after the national draft registration, the *Wichita Daily Times* printed an announcement sponsored by the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce. The announcement read: “Attention! You who have registered for [the] Army draft, the Texas National Guard will take 300 men from Wichita, Clay, Archer, and Knox Counties. This opportunity to enlist with National Guard expires Sat. June 30, 1917.” The notice enumerated the many advantages in joining the National Guard instead of waiting to be drafted into federal service. For example, a recruit could “select your own associates” and “know your own officers.” The prospective Guardsman would also receive “efficient training, beginning at once,” and was told that opportunities existed to become an officer in other Texas National Guard units. Furthermore, the recruiting advertisement noted it was easier for a Guardsman to prove his identity “in case of injury or on application for pension.” The final two reasons, however, might have been the strongest selling points: a Texas National Guardsman would “receive the attention, love and respect of the people at home, who are able to give your companies special attention; boxes from home, etc.” and he would receive the same pay as a soldier in the regular Army. The announcement concluded by pointing out that a mass meeting for recruiting draft-registered men for the Texas National Guard would soon be held in the city. Local business leaders who attended were asked to “state that they will hold open all positions now held by men who desire to enlist, and will give back these

positions, or better ones, to them when they return.” The announcement finished with a phrase popular at the time: “Be a ‚went’ instead of a ‚sent’—if you must go sooner or later, why not go with the boys from home?”¹

The National Guard was a powerful recruiting force in the United States during World War I, and this was certainly true in Texas. Because the National Guard competed for recruits against the regular Army and Navy, it was clear that in Texas senior National Guard officers planned to use every advantage available to them to bring men into the National Guard, as the announcement above illustrated. Furthermore, by the summer of 1917, the nation had been at war for two months, the decision had been made that a selective draft would be held, and nearly ten million men had already filled out the Selective Service registration paperwork, including nearly one million in Texas alone. Thus, the business of creating the army that would go to Europe and fight alongside Great Britain, France, and other nations became the focus of thousands of military officers and civilians nationwide, and the National Guard figured to play a major role as it expanded its forces. However, in April and even May of 1917, it had not been clear that the size of the Texas National Guard would be increased at all, and when official word came there was little time to waste. Across North and West Texas, the Army and Navy had been recruiting men since before American entry into the war. However, by the end of the summer, nearly two thousand men had made the choice to serve their nation by joining a new regiment of the Texas National Guard, the Seventh Texas Infantry.

¹ *Wichita Daily Times*, June 28, 1917.

While the militia tradition of the United States has a long and storied history, efforts to professionalize the National Guard did not take hold until the early twentieth century. The Dick Act of 1903 re-organized the militia and formally titled it the National Guard. Although the National Guard was authorized a total strength of 180,000 in early 1917, it was nowhere that mark. While 112,000 National Guardsmen served on the Mexican border in 1916 after being mobilized by President Wilson, by early 1917 most of these National Guard units were being demobilized and returning home. A number of Texas National Guard units served on the border, including the Second, Third, and Fourth Infantry Regiments, the First Cavalry Squadron, and assorted engineer, artillery, and hospital units. At the end of 1916, the state's military officials designated the Texas contingent serving on the border as the Sixth Separate Brigade, which was commanded by the Adjutant General of Texas, Brigadier General Henry Hutchings. Hutchings's command numbered 4,755 men, who were anxious to go home. In fact, the brigade was in the process of demobilizing when the Wilson administration released the Zimmerman Telegram. That, as well as deteriorating relations with Germany, prompted the suspension of demobilization in March of 1917. New orders arrived to certain National Guard units on March 21, 1917, and the Second, Third, and Fourth Infantry regiments of the Texas National Guard were brought back onto active duty.²

² Lonnie J. White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War I* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1984), 1-2, 5; *Report of the Chief of the Militia Bureau, 1917* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), 71; For an overview of National Guard reform, see Jerry Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 108-127.

After war was declared, the federal government authorized a number of states, including Texas, to raise additional National Guard units, which were to be brought into federal service by August of that year. In essence, this left the states with approximately three months in which to organize and recruit these new National Guard units. In Texas, Governor James Ferguson and General Hutchings determined that the Texas National Guard could be expanded by about 12,000 men and reorganized to include two infantry brigades of three regiments each, one separate infantry regiment, one cavalry regiment and two regiments of artillery, one battalion of field engineers and one field signal battalion. The units with border service-the Second, Third, and Fourth Infantry Regiments were organized as the first brigade under the command of Brigadier John A. Hulen, a Texas National Guard officer, while the second brigade consisted of the newly recruited First, Fifth, and Sixth Texas Infantry Regiments under the command of General Hutchings. To continue recruiting the Texas National Guard to full strength, 417 officers applied for and received commissions in the expanded Texas National Guard. These officers then fanned out across the state with the authority to raise companies and regiments of National Guardsmen. Thus, men for the First and Second regiments were recruited in the southwestern region of the state; the Third and Fifth regiments in the southeastern portion; and the Fourth and Sixth were to be recruited in the northern and northeastern section of Texas. The other new infantry regiment, the Seventh Texas, was designated as the "separate" regiment in the Texas Guard's organization, and its officers were sent to recruit for it in northwest Texas. The colonel of this new regiment was an

Austin attorney named Alfred Wainwright Bloor, in whose hands, Chaplain Barnes of the 142nd Infantry would glowingly write, “were the noble sons of Texas and Oklahoma.”³

Interestingly, Bloor was not a native Texan. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1876, although by 1880 Bloor’s father moved the family to Austin. Bloor graduated from Texas A&M University in 1895, and shortly thereafter he served in the First Texas Militia Regiment and then as a sergeant with the Texas volunteers in the Spanish-American War. While he was away, his father died in 1899 and his mother returned to Pennsylvania, where Bloor was listed as a resident of that state on the 1900 Federal Census. However, after his service in the Spanish-American war ended, Bloor returned to Texas, married, and worked as a general practice attorney. In 1910, Bloor was thirty-two years old and had served continuously in the Texas National Guard. By 1914 he was a major and the third ranking officer of the Second Texas Infantry, a position he had held since 1903. From 1914 to 1917, he served as lieutenant colonel of the Second Texas and saw service on the Mexican border. After the declaration of war, Bloor received an appointment as colonel of the Seventh Texas and set about building the regiment he no doubt hoped to lead overseas. Other members of his staff included his second-in-command, Lt. Colonel John Jennings, and his battalion commanders Major Davis E. Decker, Major Alvin M. Owsley, and Major William Culberson, a relative of Senator Charles Culberson. These men oversaw the regimental recruiting effort and set up

³ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 6-8; However, the Fort Worth Record indicated that the Fourth Texas Infantry was also recruiting out of Fort Worth, and a recruiting station was opened for it by late May, 1917, *Fort Worth Record*, May 26, 1917; Chaplain C.H. Barnes, *History of the 142nd Infantry of the Thirty-Sixth Division, October 15, 1917, to June 17, 1919* (Blackwell Job Printing Company, 1922),

headquarters in Wichita Falls, centrally located in northwest Texas. However, Culberson, a former high school administrator from Hillsboro, and Owsley, eldest son of a prominent Denton County resident, would broaden their experience by serving as commandant and executive officer of an officers training camp at Leon Springs, outside of San Antonio.⁴

While General Hutchings continued as the state's adjutant general, General Hulen took charge of recruiting for the Texas National Guard with the "authority to call into the state service such officers and enlisted men as he may deem necessary." Shortly thereafter, he issued a statewide announcement that the National Guard would recruit seventy-three units to fill up the four new regiments authorized by the governor. This equated to 12,000 men from across the state. Out of this 12,000, the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment would account for about one sixth of the total. The men who were charged with getting the recruiting process moving forward in northwest Texas were the "prospective commanders" of the companies.⁵

⁴ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 59; *Texas Almanac*, 1914; Henry C. Dethloff and John A. Adams Jr., *Texas Aggies Go to War: In Service of Their Country* (College Station, Texas: A&M University Press, 2004), 27; *Fort Worth Record*, July 3, 1917; Some dates come from Alfred S. Bloor's and Alfred W. Bloor's memorial marker in the Oakwood Cemetery Annex in Austin, Texas; *Tenth Census of United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), population, Travis County, Texas, precinct 2, Alfred S. Bloor; *Twelfth Census of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), schedule 1, population, Alleghany County, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Martha W. Bloor; *Thirteenth Census of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910), schedule 1, population, Travis County, Texas, precinct 3, Alfred W. Bloor; *Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1914* (Dallas: A.H. Belo and Company, 1914), 22; *Fort Worth Record*, July 3, 1917; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 39.

⁵ *Wichita Daily Times*, June 4, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, June 26, 1917.

The majority of these “prospective commanders” received their authority to recruit their companies in June of 1917, and immediately set about the business of organization. Each officer faced time pressure and competition from regular army and navy recruiters. However, most of these National Guard officers were from the regions they were recruiting in, and all received extra support from local communities. These officers also had full instructions on how to recruit their companies. Before they could begin their recruiting, however, those prospective commanders who were not already National Guard officers had to follow a complicated process in which they enlisted in a federally recognized Texas National Guard unit, then were released from the enlisted ranks and given their commission through the Adjutant General of Texas. Only then could they proceed to their home stations to begin recruiting.⁶

Thus, recruiting for the Seventh Texas began in mid-June of 1917, when the officers arrived at their communities to begin the process of building their companies from the ground up, often with little but their own skill at convincing men to join their organization. As their instructions noted, the officers were to take “immediate steps to provide, at your own expense, an office or place in which to carry on organization work.”⁷

The men charged with raising the companies of the Seventh Texas were varied in their backgrounds and experience. In Gainesville, for example, Captain William Tyler

⁶ 36th Division Association Papers, Hulen Correspondence, 1916-1917, “Instructions for the use of those designated as officers of proposed organizations of the National Guard of Texas,” no date, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, Texas.

⁷ Hulen Correspondence, 1916-1917, “Instructions.”

returned from Houston to begin recruiting his company. Tyler was originally from Gainesville and came from a line of soldiers that included his father and grandfather. He served for a number of years in the Texas National Guard as a lieutenant and captain, although his unit had been mustered out of service two years previously.⁸

In Amarillo, Captain Thomas D. Barton returned to the town where he had earned a living in the newspaper and drugstore business to begin recruiting in the Panhandle. He was in his early forties and the oldest of the company captains. His military career had started in 1892 as a private in the Sixth Texas Infantry. He also served in the Philippines. In Taylor County's Abilene, Lieutenant Alan J. McDavid was the first officer to begin recruiting for the Texas National Guard. McDavid opened a recruiting office in the Abilene Gas and Electric Company in the Sayles Building. The company commander, Captain Robert M. Wagstaff, was in Brownsville but was expected to return to Abilene by early July, although he did not arrive until July 20, after his company had already been mustered into state service. He was a well-known resident of the town, son of Judge J.M. Wagstaff, a prominent local citizen. Captain Steve Lillard, a resident of Decatur for twenty-three years and a graduate of Texas A&M, where he played football, was not yet thirty and arrived in Decatur to recruit the Wise County company. In Vernon, Captain H.A. Baker, a former Wichita Falls science teacher, received an appointment to raise the National Guard Company for Wilbarger County.⁹

⁸ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 26, 1917.

⁹ United States Federal Census, 1910, Population, Potter County, 1910; *Abilene Reporter*, June 18, 1917, and July 20, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 17, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, October 12, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, July 25, 1923.

In Denton, Major Davis E. Decker visited the city to gauge the feel for recruiting a company there and was not favorably impressed. One reason for this was that commissions were offered to several local men, all of whom turned him down except for James B. Stiff, who accepted one as second lieutenant. Decker reported unfavorably to General Hulen, who shortly thereafter dispatched another Guard officer, Captain Noah Roark, an attorney who had previously lived in Denton but at the time was living in Dallas, to take another look at the situation and to determine “what grounds, if any, there are for giving up the plan of raising a National Guard unit in Denton and Denton County.” Once in Denton, Roark came to the conclusion that a company could be raised there. General Hulen then appointed him as the local commander.¹⁰

In Wichita Falls, two weeks after war was declared, the local paper reported that if any resident wanted to join the Texas National Guard, they needed to look elsewhere as there was “apparently no opportunity for a Guard organization here at present.” Shortly thereafter, General Hulen, in a telegram sent to Sneed Brewster Staniforth, told him that a National Guard company would be raised in Wichita Falls. In the telegram, Hulen also pointed out that in all probability Wichita County would be required to raise two companies, although why the county was singled out for this was not clear. Staniforth, a short and stocky man, had previously served with the Texas National Guard in Gainesville, rising from private to captain and serving as company commander. In

¹⁰ *Denton Record Chronicle*, June 18, 22, 1917. Unfortunately, little is known of Lt. James B. Stiff. However, he did not remain with the company all the way through the war. In fact, a James B. Stiff from Denton County, aged twenty-one, filled out a draft registration card on June 5, 1918. Thus, Lt. Stiff, for whatever reason, must have been discharged from the National Guard.

Wichita Falls, he worked as an assistant general manager of a brick and tile company and was described as a “young man of soldierly qualities.” However, throughout April and May, Staniforth’s “company” remained an informal organization, with men showing up for drill practice but held to no legal commitment until receipt of official word of the expansion of the Texas National Guard arrived, which did not happen until June. This message also formally stated that Wichita County would raise two companies. The second company to be raised in Wichita Falls was given to Captain Duncan M. Perkins. Perkins was well known in the Wichita Falls area and had military experience, having served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. He also served as an officer in a state militia company for eight years. Perkins apparently took over the recruiting for both companies while Staniforth attended the officers’ course at Leon Springs, Texas. Staniforth, however, was released early from the course by General Hulen’s intervention. In his short time at the camp, Staniforth earned a reputation as “one of the brightest young officers in the camp.” He arrived back in Wichita Falls at the end of June to assist Perkins, who had been slow in getting started, spending much of his time “getting his affairs into order for his military service.” The two officers were friends, however, and worked together to recruit the three hundred men needed for the two companies rather than competing against each other for recruits.¹¹

Clyde Graham arrived in Crowell to begin his recruiting efforts and pointed out that Foard County was given the chance to raise a company because of its soldiers’ reputation of being “champion” marksmen, while Captain Eugene T. Underwood arrived

¹¹ *Wichita Daily Times*, April 15, and June 13, 15, 17, 21, 29, 1917; Archibald S. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vantage, 1969), 36.

in Johnson County to raise a company. Underwood, however, was from Cherokee County in East Texas, and not from Johnson County, although it was reported that he “comes highly recommended” and was described as a “high-toned gentleman.” James E. Wiley attended the officers training camp at Leon Springs and wired the city of Quanah that he would be arriving with the authority to raise a company in Hardeman County. In Clarendon, Captain Ethan Simpson, a local lawyer, lost fifty pounds by running and dieting on “buttermilk and tomatoes” so he could attend an officers training camp. Upon graduation, he returned to Donley County and with a local ranch foreman, Star Johnson, recruited Company H of the Seventh Texas. Likewise, Harry T. McGrath began his recruiting efforts in Fort Worth, while Homer T. Merrill began the work of raising a company in Lubbock. Merrill had an interesting background, having attended the New Mexico Military Institute and served as a member of the Philippine Constabulary from 1912 until 1916, when he apparently sought a commission in the Marine Corps but was turned down. However, in the Philippines he was recognized for his “good moral character” and his “energy and willingness to do his duty,” and was commended for “excellent work in the capture of some outlaws.”¹²

¹² *Foard County News*, June 15, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, June 17, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, June 14, 1917; Memorandum, War Department Bureau of Insular Affairs, February 28, 1912, Memorandum from Brigadier General Herman Hall, Headquarters Philippine Constabulary, March 28, 1916, Memorandum from New Mexico Military Institute, to General John A. Lejeune, April 18, 1917, Homer T. Merrill Papers, 1899-1964, Folder: Correspondence, 1912-1927, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; *The History of Donley County, Texas, 1879-1990, Presented by the Families of Donley County, Texas, Both Past and Present* (Dallas: Curtis Media Corp, 1990), 385.

By mid-June, as these officers were getting settled and starting on their recruiting campaigns, many of them expected that recruiting for the National Guard would only be allowed until the draft occurred, which was expected in the first week of July, although it turned out to be nearly three weeks later. The Texas National Guard also recruited with the understanding that each recruit who signed up would count against that particular county's draft quota until the end of June. For example, prior to the draft, if a county received a quota to provide 200 men for the draft but 50 men joined the National Guard or the regular Army or Navy, then the county was only liable to provide 150 men. The Texas National Guard, at General Hulen's insistence, also discouraged the use of the word "conscript" as a demeaning term for "persons who shall be selected for service under the selective draft system." According to General Orders No. 2, no Texas Guardsman was to "make use of such terms, or similar expressions" to demean the draft system. The order, however, also pointed out that it was "proper to direct attention to any special advantage that may be claimed for any particular unit or arm of the service." Finally, Hulen's order urged that "all public utterances should be directed to stimulating recruiting...and the heartiest cooperation should be practiced" between the Army, Navy, and National Guard.¹³

In general, the Texas National Guard recruited men for six year enlistments, three years "in the service with the organization," and three years "on furlough attached to the National Guard." Each company also needed a certain number of recruits of different

¹³ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 24, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, June 21, 1917; General Orders No. 2, June 15, 1917, 36th Division Association Papers: Hulen Correspondence, 1916-1917, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, Texas.

ranks. Thus, each company needed 150 men, and the standard pay scale ranged from \$53 per month for the company first sergeant, to \$40 for cooks, and \$30 per month for the 87 privates in each company. While 150 men equated to full strength, because the guardsmen were subject to disqualification through medical exams or for other reasons, most officers tried to over-recruit their companies. Officers could recruit men between the ages of eighteen and forty five, and married men could join but were required to fill out a "Dependents Affidavit."¹⁴

Not only did the officers of the Seventh Texas have to provide, at their own expense, office space, they had to secure the cooperation of local residents. Indeed, the recruiting instructions stressed local cooperation, pointing out that officers should contact local newspapers and "procure the cooperation of the leading businessmen." In many cases, this extended to local government officials as well. Finally, the officers were instructed to "take all other steps which may occur to you which are proper towards securing recruits." Because most of the officers were from the communities they were recruiting in, the communities were generally eager to assist and found a number of ways to help. For some, this assistance came early in the form of office space, which benefited a number of officers and saved expenses. In Gainesville, Captain Tyler received office space in the Chamber of Commerce and Clyde Graham opened an office in Crowell on the ground floor of the Bell building. Likewise, Captain Wiley in Quanah opened a recruiting office in Jones' Tailor Shop, and Captain Thomas D. Barton in Amarillo opened a recruiting station in the Nunn building, where he expected to raise his company

¹⁴ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 13, 15, 1917; Hulen Correspondence, 1916-1917, "Instructions."

within a week, telling a news reporter that “we will go and return as an Amarillo Company...say to my friends to come at once and let’s all get together.” On the other hand, Captain Eugene Underwood in Cleburne got right down to business by pitching a tent on the courthouse lawn. He also received the “hearty cooperation of the best men in this city and vicinity.” The *Cleburne Daily Enterprise* gave its own recruiting pitch, “let Johnson County do her part, soldier with the boys you know.” All of the officers, upon arriving at their counties, managed to find office space near the courthouse square.¹⁵

Once the officers were settled, the recruiting began. Captain Tyler initially believed that the men he recruited would stay together through their entire term of service, although he believed they stood a good chance of spending it on the Mexican border rather than overseas. Just one day after opening his doors, he secured four recruits and was forced to turn several men away for physical reasons. Perhaps these men were the first to enlist in the Gainesville company because they had read an article in the *Gainesville Daily Register* that sought to convince men to make the National Guard a career. The article stated that “men between the ages of 18 and 45 have an almost unlimited opportunity in the Guard for advancement.” Indeed, in order to drive the point home, the report pointed out that General Hulen, who was in charge of recruiting for the state, had begun his own career in the Texas National Guard at Gainesville. Taking a different tack, but one quite common amongst Texas National Guard recruiters, Lt. Allen

¹⁵ Hulen Correspondence, 1916-1917, “Instructions;” *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 14, 1917; *Foard County News*, June 15, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, June 14, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, June 16, 17, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, June 15, 17, 19, 1917; Barton’s recruiting office was evidently “maintained at personal expense” although residents donated money to keep his expenses from getting out of control. *Amarillo Daily News*, July 3, 1917.

J. McDavid equated military service with the traditions of the past by urging men to come to his recruiting office and “offer himself, as did his forefathers and fathers.” Indeed, within a week after Lt. McDavid’s arrival, the *Abilene Reporter* noted that seventeen men had enlisted and that the “National Guard company being formed here continues to grow each day.”¹⁶

Out in tiny Foard County, Captain Clyde Graham competed with the cavalry, forcing him to post a statement in the *Foard County News* urging men to join the “Crowell Company of National Guards” and to do it before the draft occurred. If they did so, he assured them, they would not only be helping the National Guard, but themselves as well. He reported that thirty-five men had signed up, but he wanted seventy-five as quickly as possible. As soon as he arrived in Quanah, Captain Wiley signed up sixteen men in short order and placed an ad in the *Quanah Tribune Chief* asking for more volunteers.¹⁷

Captain Roark’s recruiting efforts in Denton started slowly, and he had signed up just thirty-three men by the end of June. Within a week, however, he had drawn exactly seventy recruits. But it was not until a recruiting rally was held, and Roark and Lieutenant Stiff travelled throughout the county speaking at places such as Krum, Bolivar, and Sanger, that Roark believed he had recruited enough men. Furthermore, in a spur to recruiting, many northwest Texas towns were plastered with recruiting posters similar to ones in Wichita Falls that read: “Don’t be drafted, VOLUNTEER in the

¹⁶ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 14, 15, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, June 21, 22, 1917.

¹⁷ *Foard County News*, June 22, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, June 14, 1917.

National Guard of Texas...don't be a slacker. Your friends around you are all going. What are you going to do? Get into line and answer the bugle call!" A second poster appealed to the future: "In after years, don't let your children be embarrassed when they are asked „where was your father in 1917?"¹⁸

Perhaps the greatest initial recruiting challenge for the Seventh Texas came in Fort Worth, where the Seventh Texas competed with the Fourth Texas Infantry, a National Guard artillery battery, and National Guard units in nearby Dallas County. In spite of these difficulties, Captain Harry McGrath worked hard to recruit his company, although by June 21, 1917, he only had four men, one of whom was Fancher D. Reagan, the first man to sign up for service with McGrath's company. Reagan would later meet his destiny in France and never return to Texas. McGrath had also been forced to turn one man away who had travelled more than 100 miles to join the Fort Worth unit simply because the man was below the minimum weight standard, and he had trouble with a man he refused to enlist because he was one year over the age limit. McGrath and the other recruiters in the city, however, were all "looking forward to the big rally," which was to be held in early July. However, a headline in the *Fort Worth Record* stated morosely: "although [the] selective draft goes into effect soon, recruiting drags; National Guard still needs many men." Indeed, things were bad enough that Captain McGrath was forced to open a second recruiting station and took advantage of a display window offered by a local store to advertise the Texas National Guard. This may have helped because in a

¹⁸ *Denton Record Chronicle*, June 30, and July 2, 5, 7, 23, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 21, 1917.

burst of recruiting on the final Saturday before the end of the June, Captain McGrath brought in five men, the highest total in the city that day.¹⁹

Not only did many communities assist the officers of the Seventh Texas by providing them areas in which to conduct their recruiting and printing numerous newspaper articles, local communities also contributed by holding recruiting rallies that often featured speeches from prominent citizens supporting the Texas National Guard. Although some of these rallies included Army and Navy recruiters, the evidence suggests that much more community interest was given to the Texas National Guard than the other services, although it is also clear that residents of these communities did not disparage any man who joined another branch.

At these events, reference to the Texas military tradition was common, which often followed the lead of a widely published appeal from General Hulen to the people of Texas: "From a military standpoint the achievements of the Lone Star State stand foremost of the states of the union. The heroic and unselfish deeds of her sons have been written indelibly upon the pages of history." According to Hulen, it was now time for Texans of 1917 to make their mark upon history: "the dark ‚pall‘ of despotism is ‚stalking‘ through Europe. Texas‘ young men are needed. The need is as great as when that hero of the Mexican war said, ‚who will follow old Ben Milam to San Antonio.‘" It

¹⁹ *Fort Worth Record*, May 26, and June 13, 21, 29, 30, 1917; Fancher D. Reagan claimed in October of 1917 that he enlisted because Captain McGrath had promised to make him a sergeant, which never happened. Instead, he and McGrath agreed that he should attend the officers‘ training course at Leon Springs, which would give him better opportunities for advancement. However, Reagan did not make it through the course and was returned to his regiment at Camp Bowie in October of 1917, NARA RG391, HQ Corr. And Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from Noah Roark, to A.W. Bloor, subject: Investigation of Civil Life of Private F.D. Reagan, November 8, 1917.

was imperative, Hulen believed, that the “young men of the state must answer again as did their forefathers” by joining the Texas National Guard. In Quanah, the *Tribune Chief* played upon the same theme by pointing out: “Blood will tell! Most of the boys who are enlisting now of their own free will had fighting ancestors.” On the other hand the editor pointed out, “Men who skulked and sneaked during times that tried men’s souls are recognizing the same characteristics in their sons.” Thus, the Texas National Guard continued to rely heavily on these ideas to pull men into its ranks, although it is unclear to what extent this connection with the past brought men into the Texas National Guard. Of course, just about any technique was used as the recruiting instructions suggested, as the Seventh Texas officers in northwest Texas had little time to recruit men.²⁰

In Gainesville, a patriotic rally was held for the purpose of “arousing a spirit of enlistment in the National Guard service among young men of Gainesville and Cooke County.” In Amarillo, Texas National Guard recruiting week was marked by a large parade. In Cleburne, Democratic National Committeeman William Poindexter made a special call to recruit men from Johnson County for the Texas National Guard and helped organize a patriotic rally, which “secured 24 additional enlistments in the Johnson County Company.” In Vernon, a “mass meeting in the interest of the Texas National Guard” was held with prominent Wichita Falls resident Frank Kell speaking on behalf of Captain Baker.²¹

²⁰ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 19, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, June 21, 1917.

²¹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 24, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, July 11, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 4, 8, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 27, 1917.

Out in Abilene, a Red Cross and recruiting rally was held in Everman Park, which turned out to be a major success, as the *Abilene Reporter* reported that an estimated 3,000 people attended. As the newspaper described it, “three thousand partly latent patriots of Abilene gathered...to have themselves operated on for an inactive nationalism by Judge J.M. Wagstaff...and if any went home without feeling the effects of his talk they were deaf or beyond hope.” According to the report, Wagstaff’s speech gave the residents of the city some “hard truths to digest.” The reporter believed that if the people of the city understood and internalized these “truths,” then “there will be no town in America more alive to the needs of the hour than Abilene.” Wagstaff concluded his speech by asking the men of the county, “If you haven’t enlisted, why? Are you less patriotic than the men of 1861? Why can’t the boys of Abilene and Taylor County serve their country?”²²

Not to be outdone, the citizens of Wise County held recruiting rallies three days in a row in a final effort to complete the recruitment of the local company. Captain Steve Lillard attended each day’s rally and also kept his office in the City National Bank open until midnight in an effort to enlist men before the recruiting deadline arrived. Captain Lillard also reported that recruits were coming in from all parts of the county, but he warned prospective recruits that the physical exam to join the National Guard was just as strenuous as that for the regular army. The residents of Decatur also received an introduction to Major Decker, whose battalion included Captain Lillard’s Wise County company. Decker travelled throughout northwest Texas, supporting recruiting efforts for all of the companies. In his speech to Decatur citizens, Major Decker asked why “the

²² *Abilene Reporter*, June 21, 24, 1917.

hardy young manhood of this town and county was not answering the call for volunteers?” Decker noted that Lillard’s company needed a few more men, and anyone who desired “to escape the draft” was advised to “cast their fortune with Captain Lillard’s company.” Over in Gainesville, in connection with the recruiting rally, Captain Tyler sent letters to the men who had registered for the draft, urging them to enlist in the Texas National Guard and avoid being drafted.²³

In Quanah, the rally fell on the Fourth of July, when a large crowd gathered to “hear patriotic addresses and help out [the] Company.” A number of addresses were made by prominent citizens of the town, including the mayor and a member of the Texas House of Representatives. However, the local newspaper could not pass on the substance of their speeches due to the possible presence of German spies.²⁴

In Fort Worth, a successful recruiting rally was held, although Fort Worth’s recruitment did not improve enough to prevent an officer from Texas National Guard recruiting headquarters in Houston from writing to Fort Worth Mayor W.D. Davis asking him to hold another rally. Davis appeared reluctant to do so, believing there was not enough time: “we have just finished with a big patriotic meeting and recruiting rally, plenty of speakers and lots of music. What more can we do?” Instead of a second rally, the mayor decided to draw on the support of local groups, such as the Young Men’s

²³ *Wise County Messenger*, June 22, 29, and July 13, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 15, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 24, 1917.

²⁴ *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 5, 1917.

Business League, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Lions and Rotary Clubs to push for recruits during the final days of June.²⁵

As the companies began to take shape and fill out with enlisted men at the end of June and early July, the remaining officer positions were also filled. In Gainesville, Captain Tyler gained the assistance of First Lieutenant Horace Clark Jennings and Second Lieutenant Thomas D. Mitchell, both of whom hailed from Gainesville and had recently graduated from the officers training camp at Leon Springs. Jennings was considered one of Gainesville's "leading young businessmen" and had served in the former Gainesville company of the Texas National Guard. Mitchell was attending the University of Texas when President Wilson mobilized the National Guard in 1916. He enlisted and moved up the ranks, becoming one of twenty-five sergeants in his regiment to be selected for the officers training camp in 1917. The local paper also noted that these officers would be permanently assigned to the company if they succeeded in recruiting it to full strength. Several weeks later, Second Lieutenant Bert H. Davis completed the complement of officers for the Gainesville company, also having graduated from the officers' course at Leon Springs.²⁶

In Johnson County, Captain Underwood received the assistance of Lieutenants E.J. Litteer and William R. Lockett. Litteer immediately proved his worth by bringing in twelve men for the company. In Wise County, Tully V. Terrell received an appointment as a lieutenant in Captain Lillard's company. Tully was the son of a prominent Decatur

²⁵ *Fort Worth Record*, June 28, 1917.

²⁶ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 24, 25, 26, and July 11, 1917.

resident and Texas State Senator, Charles Vernon Terrell. Bertram Bloor served as the other lieutenant in Lillard's company. Bertram Bloor was also Colonel Bloor's younger brother. Finally, Lillard also had Lt. Thomas W. Newsome assigned to his company. Both Terrell and Bloor worked hard and conscientiously in their efforts to help organize and drill the company. As late as July 15, however, the lieutenants of the two Wichita Falls companies had not been named. There had been much speculation about who would be appointed, although it was not yet official. Daniel S. Blue and Gordon R. Porter were finally appointed lieutenants for Captain Staniforth's Company F on August 2, 1917. Shortly thereafter, Captain Perkin's Company G received First Lieutenant Joe A. Kell, son of prominent resident Frank Kell, and Second Lieutenant Alfred H. Carrigan Jr., also from a well-known Wichita Falls family.²⁷

Other junior officers appointed to the regiment included Lt. Robert W. Armstrong of Lubbock, and Lieutenants Wilson, Tyson, and Ogden of the medical detachment, commanded by Major Everett Jones. Captain Barton in Amarillo was assisted by Lieutenants W.H. Brownell and George O. Thompson, while in Clarendon, Lieutenants Nat S. Perrine and John K. Bonnan reported to Captain Simpson. In Childress, Lieutenants Vivian Brady and George H. Klutts assisted Captain Alonzo Drake, while in Quanah, lieutenants William M. Murphy and Stayton M. Hankins worked with Captain Wiley. In nearby Vernon, Captain Baker had help from lieutenants Jim Bomar and Lester T. Burns. Lt. Bomar managed the Herring-Johnson Ranch and also worked with Captain Graham in nearby Foard County. In Taylor County, while Captain Wagstaff was

²⁷ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, June 29, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, July 27, and August 10, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 15, August 2, 12, 1917.

gone, Lt. Alan J. McDavid organized the company. He was assisted by Lt. Edwin B. Sayles, who also had prior military experience. Finally, Captain McGrath's other officers were lieutenants Thompson Henry and Young B. Yates, while up in Denton, Captain Roark's junior officers were Lieutenants James B. Stiff and Clark Owsley, younger brother of Major Alvin Owsley. With that, the complement of Seventh Texas officers was complete and ready to take the regiment to Camp Bowie.²⁸

The officers of the Texas National Guard recruited soldiers under the perception that recruiting would cease when the draft was held, but they received a reprieve when it was announced that the draft had been delayed until July 20, 1917. With the extra time, the Texas National Guard engaged in a final burst of recruiting. Governor Ferguson designated the week of July 4-11, 1917, as National Guard recruiting week, in which every citizen of the state was urged to "devote his time to urging recruits to join the ranks." Furthermore, the "spirit" of the recruiting week was to be carried out by "men interested in Texas maintaining the traditions of the past." However, recruiting week had a specific purpose because an alarming trend had developed: the Texas National Guard, with less than a month before it was scheduled to be federalized, had not recruited all of its units to full strength. Thus, despite all the flag waving and patriotic speeches, the young men of Texas were not rushing to the colors as expected. In part, this might have been a reflection of waiting to see how the draft would turn out. While it is clear that some individuals in Texas opposed the war, the evidence does not suggest that Texans, in general, were opposed to it. Regardless of the reason, however, Texas was not meeting

²⁸ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 214-217; *Foard County News*, June 15, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, July 6, 1917.

its goal, and National Guard officers needed to do something about it. As the *Gainesville Daily Register* reported, “Unless Texas gets busy’ immediately Texas will disappoint the government and fail in the task assigned her.” In Wichita Falls, only twenty men had signed up by mid-June, and locals realized that “filling two infantry companies is a large order for a town like Wichita Falls.”²⁹

In a second telegram widely published across the state, General Hulen pleaded with Texans to do their part: “Texas needs 12,000 men. She must have them...young men of Texas must maintain the honor of the commonwealth for which their forefathers died.” Another Texas National Guard officer assisting Hulen, Colonel Oscar Guessaz, stated that it was an “affront to the state and nation” for a man not to fight when called. In his view, “men of Texas should hide their faces in shame, if they permit the call of the National Guard of Texas to go unanswered.” As if shame was not enough of an inducement, Guessaz appealed to their masculinity: “Let every young man in Texas think for just a moment of those near and dear to them. Let them read the history of the grand women who gave birth to their fathers...Do you not think we ought to take good care that these good women may not meet the fate of the thousands of women in Belgium and France? Men of Texas awaken, before it is TOO LATE!”³⁰

²⁹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 5, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 21, 1917; Although recruiting week was scheduled to end on July 11, General Hulen requested on July 9, that July 12 be designated as “banner recruiting day,” and called on the press to get the word out that “each volunteer enlist another volunteer,” *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 9, 1917.

³⁰ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 19, 22, and July 2, 1917.

National Guard recruiting week appeared to work well for Captain McGrath and his Fort Worth company. He also received the help of Lt. Col. Jennings and benefited from another massive recruiting rally, sponsored this time by the Chamber of Commerce. As the *Fort Worth Record* reported, the Chamber of Commerce “grimly decided to bring to life the dormant young panthers who have been allowing a glorious opportunity to go to seed. In short, the local companies of the National Guard are going to be recruited to war strength in less than a week.” Their efforts were successful because just over two weeks later, the muster roll of Captain McGrath’s company boasted 137 men.³¹

In Gainesville, Captain Tyler was “anxious” to raise his company to its full complement. According to Tyler, while the full strength of the company was 150, the company could be organized with 74 men, approximately half the total and what he termed “war strength.” Tyler, however, urged a strong effort to secure more recruits as he moved into the final recruiting days. In Amarillo, Captain Barton urged the men of Texas to join a unit that had “state insignia.” He claimed that by joining the National Guard, they would stay together “in their passage across the waters” and “when the Germans pour their shells into their trenches, and if necessary die together, or to return home together.” By July 14, Barton had secured eighty-six men for his company, and the next day had pushed it to ninety-five and successfully secured its organization. In

³¹ *Fort Worth Record*, July 3, 6, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, July 22, 1917.

Denton, Captain Roark recruited more than ninety men before announcing the organization of his company was a “foregone conclusion.”³²

The situation was similar in Cleburne, where by the end of the first week of July, Captain Underwood recruited 88 men for his company, but just a few days later his company exceeded the 150 men required to bring the company to full strength. However, both Gainesville and Amarillo had far fewer men at the same point. Part of this was probably because Underwood, like other officers, tried to over-recruit because of the inevitable failure of some men to pass their physical exams. He was also told in a telegram by Colonel Bloor to continue his efforts, but to make sure that it was publicly announced that once an individual had been drafted, they were no longer eligible for service in the National Guard. Wilbarger County was successful as well, with Captain Baker’s company enlisting 122 men by the middle of July. Additionally, Wilbarger County as a whole could boast that 325 of its residents had joined the Army, Navy, or National Guard, which was more than three times the county’s draft quota.³³

In Abilene, by the end of June, Lt. McDavid proved his recruiting skills, as the Taylor County company increased to 92 men, and it was expected that in a twenty-four hour period the company would grow beyond the 150 mark. McDavid also received a telegram from Captain Wagstaff, who wrote from Brownsville that “We have good prospect of having one of the best companies in the Guard and I shall be greatly disappointed if the Abilene country doesn’t furnish the entire amount by enlistment.”

³² *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 11, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, July 5, 14, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, July 16, 23, 1917.

³³ *Dallas Morning News*, July 7, 9, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 11, 12, 1917.

Wagstaff had nothing to worry about however, as McDavid reported just two days later that the company stood at 141 men. Several men from more remote locations in the county had even telephoned asking the lieutenant to “reserve them places in the company.” According to McDavid, however, it was “first come, first served, so if any show up at the office this morning for enlistment they will likely be given first consideration.”³⁴

In Wichita Falls, recruiting efforts finally turned out to be very successful, with 310 recruits enrolled by July 1, 1917, which was enough to fill the two companies of the National Guard. A number of the men who joined in Wichita County came from the oilfields of nearby Burkburnett, where it was reported that fifty-four men joined as a group. These men reportedly made eight dollars per day in the oilfields, which in one month could be about \$160. Compared to the \$30 per month of a private, these men were taking quite a pay cut to serve in the Texas National Guard. In fact, recruiting went so well in Wichita County and the surrounding area that General Hulen sent a congratulatory telegram. Other telegrams came from across the state asking for the National Guard recruiters in Wichita Falls to come help other communities recruit. Lt. Col. Jennings called Wichita Falls an “inspiration to the rest of the state.”³⁵

When recruiting started in these counties, the companies were usually referred to by the name of the county seat. Once each company recruited enough men that its activation was assured, the process of mustering each company into state service was

³⁴ *Abilene Reporter*, June 29, and July 1, 1917.

³⁵ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 1, 5, 8, 1917.

started. Part of this included giving each company its official state designation. In Gainesville, word was received by General Hulen that Captain Tyler's company had been designated as Seventh Texas' "Machine Gun Company." Upon receiving this news, Tyler and his lieutenants were "enthusiastic," commenting that "machine gun work is one of the best branches of the service." In Amarillo, the Texas National Guard originally designated Captain Barton's company as the Supply Company but then changed it to an infantry company, designating it Company A, while Captain Merrill's Lubbock company became the Supply Company. Captain Clyde Graham's Foard County company became Headquarters Company. Captain Ethan Simpson's company from Donley County was designated Company B, and Captain Alonzo Drake's Childress soldiers were named Company C. In Quanah Captain James Wiley's men were designated Company D. Out west in Abilene, the company raised by Lt. McDavid and commanded by Captain Wagstaff was designated Company I, while Steve Lillard's company in Wise County was designated as Company H. Captain McGrath's Fort Worth company earned the designation Company K, and Captain Underwood's company in Cleburne became Company L, while Captain Roark's company in Denton was designated Company M. Out in Wichita Falls, Captain Duncan Perkins company was designated Company F, and Captain Staniforth's that of Company G. Finally, Captain Harry Baker's Wilbarger County soldiers received the designation of Company E.³⁶

³⁶ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 29, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, July 5, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, July 3, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, July 27, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 19, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 15, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 5, 1917; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 214-217.

By late July, after the draft had begun and each National Guard Company had been recruited nearly to full strength, the companies had to wait until they were brought into state and then federal service, which was not scheduled to happen until mid-July and early August, respectively. Until they were mustered into federal service, the companies generally existed only on paper, and the men were not required to report to a camp, instead remained at home ready to report when called. However, some companies, such as Abilene's Company I, held military drills twice a week. These were not mandatory but Lt. McDavid made it clear that "the member who attends will be that much ahead when the company finally goes into training."³⁷

The period of waiting to be mustered in was a rough period for many of the soldiers. Until they were mustered in, they were not paid. Thus, many of them struggled as they had already left their jobs. In response, many northwest Texas communities shifted from helping recruit soldiers to raising funds for their local National Guard companies. For example, in Johnson County, Captain Underwood's men asked city leaders to give them work to keep them going until they were mustered in. In Wilbarger County, Vernon businessmen decided to defray the expenses of Captain Baker's recruits, covering the cost of room, board, and "necessary expenses" of each man. Baker's men were eventually put up in an "armory," and even had their laundry paid for. In Wichita

³⁷ *Abilene Reporter*, July 8, 1917.

Falls, community leaders decided to fund the living expenses of recruits because they believed that the lack of pay until the mustering in caused many men to refuse to join.³⁸

Furthermore, the National Guard authorized soldiers only thirty cents per day for subsistence in state service until they were mustered into federal service. Thus, the local citizens were almost obligated to assist in some way, although in some cases the soldiers took the initiative in asking for help, such as in Gainesville, where Captain Tyler personally solicited local businessmen in an effort to raise \$1,000 as a mess fund for his company. In Abilene, members of Company I took it upon themselves to raise funds for purchasing books and musical instruments “in order that the men may pass their leisure hours more pleasantly.” Company I was also in “urgent need” of a typewriter. The *Abilene Reporter* commented that the soldiers’ fund should be “heartily supported” as the city was not, at least in early July, planning to fund their mobilization camp. Much like the men who wanted jobs in Johnson County until they were mustered in, many people believed that a fund to support company soldiers would not be needed once the company exchange, or store, was established, but again that would not occur until after the men were mustered in. The Abilene company did well, however, raising more than \$400 by the first week of August. Conditions were similar in Donley County, where Captain Ethan Simpson appealed to the local townspeople “to raise money necessary to keep the local militia company until they are officially mustered into Federal Service.” Luckily for Simpson’s company, the Clarendon girls’ honor guard collected knives, forks, spoons, towels, and soap for the soldiers. A similar situation existed in Quanah, where residents

³⁸ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 9, 1917; *Fort Worth Record*, June 29, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, June 29, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, June 25, 1917.

held a meeting to raise money for Captain Wiley's company. The local paper noted that it was "up to the Quanah Folks to see that they do not lack for grub." Indeed, organizers raised more than \$200 for the local Guardsmen.³⁹

In Cleburne, citizens of Johnson County stepped forward and took care of the men in their local company after rumors spread that the men were hungry and did not have places to sleep. To dispel such rumors, the *Cleburne Daily Enterprise* explained that a committee of four prominent Cleburne residents, including the county attorney, managed a fund to which citizens could contribute and described how the men were cared for. Beds had been placed in the upper story of the courthouse, and an "arrangement" had been made with a local café to feed the men "as good meals as they received at home." The men also received permission from the county judge to sleep on the courthouse lawn if they found the courthouse too warm at night. Members of the community were also urged to contribute a dollar to a fund to buy the men "such delicacies as they cannot secure in the army." In Amarillo, however, it took until mid-August before Captain Barton's Company A had enough cots for all the men to sleep comfortably.⁴⁰

Prior to the companies being mustered in for federal service, they had to undergo physical examinations to make sure they were still qualified. Most of these physical examinations occurred in mid to late July before the units were brought into federal service. The exams were accomplished by military doctors who travelled through

³⁹ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 17, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 19, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 12, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, July 10, and August 9, 1917; *Clarendon News*, July 26, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 5, 1917.

⁴⁰ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 11, 19, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, August 15, 1917.

northwest Texas, such as Lieutenant Arthur Stuart Brown, who examined several companies of the Seventh Texas, including Abilene's Company I, in which 141 out of 161 men passed their physicals, and Captain Merrill's Lubbock Supply Company. In Cleburne, Captain Underwood's Company L of 185 men lost almost 30 men due to the stringent physicals. While the *Wichita Daily Times* crowed that 310 men signed up, only a few days prior to the federal mustering in Company F reported just 92 men, while Company G reported 93 on its roll. In nearby Electra, 75 percent of the men examined were rejected. Because of these physical disqualifications, the Texas National Guard in Wichita Falls needed to recruit about 100 more men in order to meet federal requirements. Luckily for Captains Perkins and Staniforth, by the time their units were inspected by a regular army officer, Company F had 136 men on its muster sheet, while Company G had 132 men, and they were mustered into state service by Lt. Col. Jennings and several days later inspected by a regular officer and recommended for federal service. The same occurred at Vernon in Wilbarger County where Captain Baker, who was short one dozen men, worked to recruit up until the deadline. Captain Baker, however, believed that "the company will be at the required notch," by the time the inspection officer arrived, which it was.⁴¹

Once the physical exams were complete, the companies mustered into service in mid-July. In Foard County, Captain Graham published General Order No. 1, requiring

⁴¹ *Abilene Reporter*, July 12, 16, 20, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, 17 July 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 11, 17, 22, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, July 17, 1917; *Clarendon News*, July 19, 1917; Although Lt. Brown was not part of the Seventh Texas, he would meet his fate in France, being killed in action during the war. *Abilene Reporter*, November 24, 1918.

all men to report to Crowell in preparation for the mustering in of the company. Graham's notice also pointedly stated that the men had to pay their own transportation to get to Crowell. In Gainesville, Captain Tyler worked hard to be ready for the July 18 ceremony, while in Abilene, the July 15, 1917, mustering in kept Lieutenants McDavid and Sayles "busy...making out the muster rolls, getting everything in shape..." while they waited for the battalion commander, Major Alvin C. Owsley, to arrive and conduct the ceremony, which he also did for Company L in Cleburne.⁴²

For Captain Wagstaff's Company I of Taylor County, the inspection by the state officer was typical. The men were lined up by their officers and then marched to the courthouse square, where the "company was inspected as a whole." After that, the "detail work of the inspection" took place on the third floor of the armory. Additionally, all of the soldiers of the company took an oath of "allegiance and loyalty." According to the *Abilene Reporter*, the "men made a splendid showing," and were neat and alert. Finally, they were pronounced to be a "husky bunch" that could "stack up" better than other units. At the time however, the company still had not received its uniforms, which was also common for all of the companies. Similar to Abilene's soldiers, the Cleburne company was told that they "they were the most uniform in size of the men of any company." The men were also told that they would be in France by October, a rumor far off the mark.⁴³

⁴² *Foard County News*, July 13, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 15, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, July 16, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 18, 1917.

⁴³ *Abilene Reporter*, July 20, 23, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 17, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 24, 1917.

It seems that each community that raised a company of National Guardsmen took it for granted that their company was the best in the state. For example, after Captain Simpson's Donley County company was inspected, their "fitness was so apparent there was no hesitation on the part of the regular army officers in accepting them." As the local paper attested, Captain Simpson and his officers, Lieutenants Perrine and Donnan, "have a fine bunch of men in the home company and we are sure they will develop into first rate fighting men," which would reflect greatly on "Old Donley, who mothered them." According to the *Gainesville Daily Register*, however, Captain Tyler's machine gun company was "composed of as fine a looking bunch of young men as ever enlisted under the flag. They are our boys and we are proud of them." Out in Wichita Falls, the word was that the soldiers of the Companies F and G were a "particularly husky bunch," with "as good raw material in these companies as can be found anywhere." In Crowell, Major Culberson and Captain Baker of Vernon paid Captain Graham's company a visit, and the local paper reported that the two officers "had some very flattering remarks" to make about the company, including "their uniformity." The two officers also reported that the Crowell Company was "a fine bunch of boys in every particular."⁴⁴

At the state level, this local pride was reflected about the Texas National Guard in general. The chief medical officer of the Texas National Guard, Major John O'Reilly, stated that the Texas National Guard "will provide Uncle Sam with as fine body of men as ever donned uniform." This assessment was based on his travels throughout the state,

⁴⁴ *Clarendon News*, July 26, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 8, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 14, 1917; *Foard County News*, August 3, 1917.

participating in the physical examinations of thousands of Guardsmen. Perhaps getting carried away, O'Reilly claimed that Texas was known "for her big men, strong and sturdy and of wonderful vitality and endurance." To O'Reilly, the Texas Guardsmen represented the "best men of Texas, both physically and mentally," and they would stand the test of war better than men from any other state. Later, after the war, the regimental chaplain, an Oklahoman, described the Seventh Texas as "the kind of men who would help make any organization famous, when it came to the test." Indeed, according to the chaplain, the Seventh Texas' soldiers were "big hearted because they had a big state with a big history back of them; ready to lay down life, for their forefathers had sacrificed when Texas was a Republic within itself." Thus, even those outside the regiment and the state perceived these Texas soldiers in a way that illustrated how many understood the relationship of the past to the present, as well as conceptions of courage and bravery.⁴⁵

All of the companies of the Seventh Texas, and all Texas National Guard units, were "drafted" into Federal service on August 5, 1917.⁴⁶ As the President's order of July 3, 1917, made perfectly clear: "I do hereby draft into the military service of the United States as of and from the fifth day of August, 1917, all members of the National Guard." Thus, from August 5, 1917, the soldiers of the Seventh Texas were no longer truly National Guardsmen. However, from this point, the men began to be paid, and they were also required to move into temporary camps until they were called to the major training

⁴⁵ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 16, 1917; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 18.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that this was not quite the same thing as being drafted under the selective service system. The National Guard could be brought onto active duty for the duration of the conflict.

facility of Camp Bowie, which was being constructed at Fort Worth, and which they expected to see soon. Camp Bowie was one of thirty-two training camps built in the summer of 1917, sixteen each for draftees and National Guardsmen. However, work on Camp Bowie progressed slowly and it was not ready for use by the target date of August 15, 1917. There was also a shortage of tents that contributed to the delay in moving to Camp Bowie. Thus, each unit had to secure temporary encampments until Camp Bowie was ready and each company received orders to proceed to Fort Worth. Abilene offered free use of its Fair Park for the entire third battalion of the Seventh Texas Infantry, which included the Abilene, Cleburne, Denton, and Fort Worth companies. While the battalion did not consolidate there, Captain Wagstaff's Company I did occupy Fair Park.⁴⁷

In Cleburne, after Captain Underwood's Company L was mustered into Federal Service on August 5, the men were not allowed to return to their homes, as they had done prior to being "drafted" into federal service. Local residents provided quilts and blankets for the soldiers, and a number of residents offered up their own homes so that seventy-eight soldiers would have a comfortable place to sleep. The same was true in Gainesville, where the local paper printed the cry: "Accommodate the Soldier Boys, Ye Good People of City," and "Be Patriotic and Make a Soldier Your Guest," in which the paper asked residents to provide free rooms for the soldiers.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau*, 1918, 6; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 29, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 7, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, July 16, 26, 1917.

⁴⁸ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 6, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 8, 1917.

Other communities found places for the companies where they had plenty of room to camp and drill. In Clarendon, Quanah, and Decatur, the men created temporary camps at the local fair grounds, although in Quanah, the soldiers took over “a large shed in the center of the stable grounds.” In Crowell, Captain Graham’s soldiers made a home out of a “new garage building.” Captain Barton’s soldiers in Amarillo named their camp after Colonel Bloor. In Denton County, Captain Roark’s men camped in a temporary campsite named after Denton mayor Paul Beyette. Roark’s men were also short of supplies and the captain asked the local residents of the town to provide “comforts and blankets.” The men who could not get anything were forced to sleep “on the ground or as best they can.” Later, however, the soldiers enjoyed their campsite, which was on a hill, because it was “well-drained and gets the advantages of all breezes.” If that was not enough, the soldiers of Company M evidently had “shower baths and electric lights” to make their stay at Camp Beyette more pleasant.⁴⁹

In Wichita Falls the soldiers moved into Camp Marlow, named in honor of J.B. Marlow, a local real estate man who contributed a vacant house for the soldiers’ use and who had been heavily involved in recruiting. After federal mobilization, however, the two companies eventually moved out to Lake Wichita. The Wichita Falls soldiers were also short of uniforms and other supplies, and problems with sleeping arrangements continued as some men slept in “canvas cottages” at the lake, others in “idle streetcars,” while still others were reduced to sleeping on the ground. However, a “consignment of

⁴⁹ *Foard County News*, July 13, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 5, 13, 1917; *Clarendon News*, August 9, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, August 24, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, August 15, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, July 23, 24, 25, and August 6, 10, 1917.

tents, cots, and blankets” was organized, although uniforms did not arrive until August 23. The men appeared to take it all in good humor and were learning one of the first rules of being a good soldier: “to make out with whatever comes along.” When the uniforms did arrive, each soldier received one coat, two pairs of pants, two shirts, one service hat, and one pair each of leggings and shoes. The Wichita Falls companies received their uniforms earlier than other companies, although it was for a special reason.⁵⁰

In late August, the citizens of Wichita Falls reimbursed the officers of the two local companies between \$500 and \$600 for purchasing supplies and equipment out of their personal funds. Leading citizens, however, increased the amount to \$1000 not only to pay back the officers but to create a “nucleus” for a company fund. Also, because so many men had joined from that region and because of its central location, Wichita Falls became the headquarters of the Seventh Texas Infantry. There were even rumors that it would become the training center for all National Guard soldiers in northwest Texas, although it did not achieve this distinction.⁵¹

Once the soldiers moved into their temporary camps, they quickly developed a routine of training with a set schedule to help them prepare for life at Camp Bowie. For example, the soldiers of Cleburne’s Company L were required to be off the streets by 9:30 pm each night, and the company appointed a number of soldiers to work with the city police to make sure soldiers observed the curfew. In Denton, reveille was at 6:00 am

⁵⁰ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 5, and August 5, 6, 12, 23, 26, 1917; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 10.

⁵¹ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 2, and August 22, 23, 26, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, July 8, 1917; In Quanah, Captain Wiley spent \$175 of his own money on his company, and Lt. Murphy spent \$80. *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 5, 1917.

and retreat was held at 7:30 pm. Out in Quanah, Captain Wiley's soldiers could not eat breakfast until each had first "finished his run around the race track and had the hose turned on his perspiring body." Most of the waking time of the soldiers, however, was spent in drill, which became an almost daily ritual after the men were mustered into service. Indeed, as the *Wichita Daily Times* claimed: "time and Uncle Sam's drill masters will work wonders." Other training hours were spent listening to lectures on "sanitation, personal hygiene, and military courtesy."⁵²

The relationship between the communities and the local encampments really began to develop during this period, and both citizens and soldiers contributed to this relationship. One way this relationship developed was by allowing the local residents to watch the soldiers drill and train. Thus, while Cleburne soldiers helped police the town, citizens watched the men drill, including a number of the men's mothers, one of whom commented on how proud she was of the way her son was "taking up the duties of soldier-life." In Denton, the *Record-Chronicle* predicted that drill practice would draw the greatest interest, which it did. Indeed, sixty-nine years later, a longtime Denton resident recalled watching Captain Roark's men: "I seen them drilling right up on the square, you know, marching," and recalled that there was a "great big bunch of them, because I seen them there training on the square." Besides drill, many units also held skirmishes, such as Company L in Cleburne on the grounds of Clebarro College, which the public was invited to witness. Locals watched as eight squads of soldiers concealed

⁵² *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 6, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, August 6, 16, 1917; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 13, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 23, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 12, 14, 1917.

themselves in a “battle line,” which the remainder of the company then rushed. Those who witnessed it described the battle as “fierce and interesting,” ending with a “hand to hand tussle.” The defensive side apparently took the most prisoners and was declared the winner, although the “offensive side” was “not the least discouraged.” Out in Abilene, a crowd “which filled and overflowed the grandstand at Fair Park” and was estimated at 3,000 watched Captain Wagstaff’s Company I conduct a retreat ceremony followed by a guard mount. The company later marched through town to the music of “To Hell with the Kaiser,” which turned out to be a big crowd-pleaser.⁵³

In Amarillo, Captain Barton’s men had the chance to prove their military abilities by marching eight abreast in a parade through town. This allowed residents to get a good look at the soldiers who were “largely representative of Amarillo and particularly of the Panhandle.” The men demonstrated their military skill as “trench jumpers” by leaping several drainage ditches that were four feet across and filled with water. Evidently a few men did not make it across, which caused some laughter. Nevertheless, the parade ended in front of a local theater where Captain Barton inspected the men and then the company went into the theater, where they “enjoyed two hours of unalloyed pleasure complimentary of the management.” The soldiers also became familiar with a training tactic that would become all too common at Camp Bowie: hikes. For example, Captain Tyler’s Gainesville Machine Gun Company hiked sixteen miles to the Red River and was rewarded with cold well-water and sandwiches when it was completed. In Denton,

⁵³ Oral History #1214, Hazen Armstrong, March 29, 1986, University of North Texas Oral History Collection, Denton Texas, 17-18; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 6, 30, 31, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, August 2, 4, 6, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, August 20, 21, 1917.

Captain Roark's men hiked to the business section of town to "toughen" their feet and show off their uniforms they had finally received.⁵⁴

On the other hand, sometimes the training of the Seventh Texas was seen as a publicity move. For example, a local and "prominent publicity man" suggested that the Wichita Falls National Guard soldiers should march to Fort Worth once they received orders to report to Camp Bowie, a distance of nearly 100 miles. The officers of Company G, however, did not take the idea seriously and facetiously stated that it sounded like the perfect thing for Company F. Company F's officers, however, also declined to embrace the idea, pointing out that their "natural modesty made them shrink from assuming the importance of publicity agents for the National Guard." Also in Wichita Falls, Company G's captain, Sneed Staniforth, tried to quell a rumor that guests were not wanted at the National Guard camp at Lake Wichita by saying they were more than welcome and "will be shown every courtesy if they come." Of course, there was some time for leisure. In Wichita Falls, when the soldiers had free time, they could be seen "deeply involved in the mysterious niceties of a poker game," while others read, and a few indulged "at rare intervals in the luxury of correspondence."⁵⁵

Besides watching the soldiers drill and engage in mock battles, the relationship between the locals and the soldiers was also enhanced through gifts. Some of these gifts were clothing, as many of the companies, even after being mustered into federal service,

⁵⁴ *Amarillo Daily News*, August 17, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 2, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, August 16, 1917.

⁵⁵ *Wichita Daily Times*, August 3, 12, 14, 1917.

failed to receive their uniforms. For example, in Gainesville, the members of Captain Tyler's company had to wear overalls because of the delay in the delivery of the uniforms and "general supplies." In Cleburne, Johnson County residents were asked to donate shoes to Company L, particularly "outing or tennis shoes...since the boys do so much drilling and their feet must be kept in shape. Good socks will also be welcome." Company L also received a nine foot by five foot American flag from county residents. On a rainy day, the soldiers marched four miles to the home of S.M. Hill, where they were presented the flag and given punch. After the presentation, they brought the flag back to Cleburne and planned to take it to France.⁵⁶

At least three of the companies--Wichita, Johnson, and Donley County, and perhaps more--received khaki-bound Testaments from local residents. A local resident was expected to purchase the Bible and then present it to a soldier as a gift. As the *Clarendon News* reported, purchasing a Bible for the soldiers was a "worthwhile move" to keep the "feet of our soldier boys in the straight and narrow path when they are far from home."⁵⁷

Occasionally, the gifts were more personal, and were intended for just a few soldiers or one individual. For example, in Gainesville, Frank Duston was given a watch by his co-workers at the *Gainesville Daily Register* in appreciation of his efforts. Also in

⁵⁶ *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 6, and September 2, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 12, 28, 1917.

⁵⁷ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 5, 1917; *Clarendon News*, July 19, 1917; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 11.

Gainesville, a man gave five of his friends in Captain Tyler's company each a mechanical pencil so that could "record some noble deeds."⁵⁸

Many communities also made "comfort bags," which included a number of items useful to soldiers and varied widely in their composition. The Bryan and Son drugstore in Clarendon placed an ad in the local newspaper offering their own suggestion for a "comfort bag," which included razors, soap, toothpaste and brushes, combs, tweezers, stationery, and the "indispensable" flashlight, among other things. In Gainesville, the men were given laundry bags and a "housewife," while in Wichita Falls, the call was for each family to contribute "some article of bedding, comforts, blankets, etc." Generosity always had its limits, however, as the *Amarillo Daily News* reported that there had not been a "generous response" to an appeal for newspapers, magazines, and books which in the soldiers' free time would "elevate them and afford amusement and instruction."⁵⁹

While gifts solidified the relationship between the counties and their soldiers, local communities also held celebrations in honor of the soldiers, and frequently invited them to church services and brought them into their homes for dinner. In Cleburne, for example, Company L was treated to a "picture show party, then music by the Peacock Band, speechmaking by Senator Odell and songs by the Red Cross girls." After that, the soldiers went to different "ice cream parlors and drug stores for a treat of ices, melons and cold drinks, whatever they wish." The Red Cross girls waited on the soldiers, although they were chaperoned by the "matrons, all in the colors, red, white, and blue."

⁵⁸ *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 21, and September 4, 1917.

⁵⁹ *Clarendon News*, August 30, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 31, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, July 5, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, August 14, 1917.

The keynote speaker of the evening announced that when he looked into the “determined faces of these boys of Johnson County,” he knew “they will never halt in the great fight for world peace,” and that they would march through Berlin and “listen to the strains of Dixie in the palaces of the arrogant and imperious monarch of Germany.” In a final flourish, the speaker, president of the local United Confederate Veterans chapter, told the soldiers: “remember that when you are far away in the service of your country...that you went from Cleburne, and remember the history of that great son of the southland, this beautiful little city’s namesake, Pat Cleburne.”⁶⁰

In Crowell, Captain Graham’s soldiers were given a watermelon feast that apparently lasted all day long. Besides forty watermelons, the feast also included “fifteen chicken pies and seventy pan pies.” That evening, residents held a talent show for the soldiers at the home of a local resident. The first song of the evening was an instrumental piece, titled “preparedness,” which was followed by violin, piano, and vocal solos. One man then blew a number of bugle calls and explained their meaning to the audience. After that, the “soldier boys” of Crowell returned the favor as soldiers Buck Robinette played his whistle and guitar and Stanley Walker played his fiddle. As the *Foard County News* reported, “Everybody declares Mr. Robinette is some whistler.” The paper also stated that the “occasion will be long remembered by the soldier boys as well as the others who were present.”⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 14, 15, 1917.

⁶¹ *Foard County News*, August 24, 1917.

In Clarendon, Captain Simpson's Company B attended church services "given especially for Company B," and the next week attended an "ice cream social" given by the Girls' National Honor Guard on the courthouse square, which was decorated with "electric lights strung from tree to tree above the tables."⁶² It was also noted that some of the soldiers had uniforms, although enough were not available for the entire company. Before the evening ended, the soldiers and the girls lined up and were introduced to each other. In Gainesville, Captain Tyler's men were entertained by the local chapter of the Workers of the World and were invited to visit the public library where they could "look over daily papers, current magazines and maps of all foreign countries." The men also had the pleasure of enjoying dozens of melons provided by local citizens, for which they were grateful. Common to just about all the counties, the Machine Gun Company benefited from a massive picnic, where the local paper called for: "bread, cake, pies, roasted meats, salads, pickles, fried chickens by the score, melons, fruits, and anything you have that is good and refreshing for the hungry eatists." While Captain Lillard's Company H in Decatur did not quite have such a bounty, they were fed a meal of "fifty chickens and forty cakes," by residents of nearby Alvord, who prepared the meal and then drove in "ten or twelve" automobiles to Decatur to feed the soldiers.⁶³

⁶² After Captain Simpson's company departed for France in 1918, his wife Marybelle received a visit from their local Southern Baptist minister who "admonished" her for dancing. Eventually, she was forced to move from the Clarendon Southern Baptist Church to the Episcopal Church. *The History of Donley County, Texas, 1879-1990, presented by the Families of Donley County, Texas Both Past and Present* (Dallas: Curtis Media Corp, 1990), 385.

⁶³ *Clarendon News*, August 9, 16, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 23, and August 6, 12, 19, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, August 24, 1917; The Gainesville Machine Gun

In Wichita Falls, a box lunch and dance was held for all military men in the city, not just the two companies of the Texas National Guard, which was estimated at about 400 soldiers and sailors. For this celebration, a street in the city was roped off, and an orchestra was brought in to provide music for the open air festivities. The party also included a full program of speakers, including Major Alvin Owsley, one of the battalion commanders of the Seventh Texas, and Mrs. Alfred Carrigan, the mother of Company F's Lieutenant Alfred Carrigan. The party was apparently a huge success with local residents, and the *Wichita Daily Times* reported that the open air dance area was "brilliantly lighted" and "filled with the soldiers and their friends, several hundred being present to hear the program and to either participate in or watch the dancing." It was also noted that the Wichita Falls National Guardsmen were wearing their new uniforms, which had just arrived.⁶⁴

A number of companies also interacted with their communities through sports, particularly baseball. In Gainesville, two teams were created and the public was invited to attend all of their games. The games, however, cost twenty-five cents for admission. Gainesville's first game, against Myra-Saint Jo, ended in victory for the "Sammies," and the local paper claimed that the "grandstand" was "taxed to its capacity" with spectators. Out west in Abilene, Captain Wagstaff's Company I was "anxious to cross bats...with any aspiring organization here that can deliver the goods." The Company I baseball team

Company attended services at a local African-American Church, where they cheered the pastor when he told them there were "twelve million Negroes who would stand loyally by Old Glory..." and who were "anxiously watching every move that the American soldiers make." *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 22, 1917.

⁶⁴ *Wichita Daily Times*, August 23, 26, 1917.

was led by “generalissimo” Frank Ferrer, a sergeant in the company. Evidently, the soldiers had played each other but were interested in playing against some “outside talent.”⁶⁵

While for the most part, the relationship between the local communities and the soldiers in their temporary camps was excellent, but there were the occasional hurt feelings. For example, in Amarillo Captain Barton’s men frequently attended local church services, followed by dinner at the houses of local residents. One Sunday, however, the men were given permission by Captain Barton to go home for the day, which many took advantage of, as they expected to be on their way to Camp Bowie soon. Many residents did not realize the soldiers were travelling to their homes throughout the county, and local families who had prepared “sumptuous meals” found they had no soldiers for guests and so wasted the food. Once Captain Barton explained the situation, everything was forgiven and the relationship between the soldiers and the local residents continued. In fact, the *Amarillo Daily News* reported that visitors had been to the company’s camp in great numbers and commented “frequently and favorably” on their ability to drill. The city also arranged for a final picnic before Company A departed for Camp Bowie.⁶⁶

In their temporary camps, the companies also found ways to build their own camaraderie and to entertain themselves away from the local communities. Before his

⁶⁵ *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 14, 19, 23, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, August 15, 1917.

⁶⁶ *Amarillo Daily News*, August 14, 18, 21, 1917.

company left for Camp Bowie, Captain Simpson of Clarendon wrote that “the strongest feeling of good will has developed among the members of this company; good comradeship abounds.” While most of the companies had an inherent camaraderie because of geography, many of the companies strengthened their camaraderie by recognizing members of their company on the one hand, and worked to become more than just a collection of recruits on the other. For example, in Cleburne, the men of Company L presented one of their sergeants, R.A. Glasgow, an engraved watch after he was selected to attend the officers’ training school in Leon Springs. Company L also held drill competitions among themselves in which the winning squad “had the honor of treating the entire company with ice cream and ice cream cones with the money collected among the members.” Apparently, the company disposed of “800 ice cream cones and 15 gallons of ice cream.” In Amarillo, Barton’s men worked at their drills very seriously, and when a man failed to execute the proper move or failed to understand something, the “officers go to great limits to impress them upon his mind.” Whether this was positive or negative reinforcement by the officers, however, is not known.⁶⁷

Like soldiers throughout history, the men of the Seventh Texas gained company mascots as a way to further their cohesion and morale. In Denton County, Captain Roark’s men were given a monkey, while the Gainesville machine gunners received an Airedale pup, which they promptly named “Texas.” Out in Abilene, Company I’s mascot was a registered Lewellen Setter, which they named “Judge Wagstaff” after the company

⁶⁷ *Clarendon News*, September 6, 1917; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 22, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, August 21, 1917.

commander's father. It was noted that the name was "applied in all seriousness, for the boys consider Judge Wagstaff one of their very best friends." Indeed, by the time the regiment got to Camp Bowie in Fort Worth, it was reported that there were "goats, wolves, eagles, badgers, monkeys, coyotes, pups, and bull dogs" among the mascots, and the Gainesville soldiers evidently witnessed a bulldog fight every day at Camp Bowie.⁶⁸

Of course, in any large collection of young men, discipline could be an occasional problem. Disagreements were commonplace but usually not serious, and sometimes problems arose when one soldier simply sought to convince his buddies to not take the rules of "soldier-life" too seriously. Any breach in the rules was for the most part punished rapidly. For example, in Cleburne, a group of soldiers once "broke ranks before breakfast" but later found themselves sweeping the sidewalks around the courthouse and picking up cigar and cigarette butts. Citizens of the county caught on that a fistfight had usually occurred in camp when they noticed soldiers sweeping in front of the courthouse. While no occurrences of fights were reported in Gainesville, the company officers encouraged the soldiers "to be gentlemen instead of ordinary rowdy soldiers." The most common problem seemed to be men who had enlisted in the company failing to show up to camp, most likely preferring to take advantage of having families and friends nearby with whom they could stay. While officers appeared fairly lenient about this at first, absences after being "drafted" into federal service were treated more seriously. In Wichita Falls, Captain Staniforth told the *Wichita Daily Times* that his "absentee"

⁶⁸ *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 31, and September 16, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, August 16, 1917.

soldiers had three days to show up before they were classified as deserters. As the paper reported, being a deserter in wartime was a “precarious” position for someone to be in.⁶⁹

While discipline was not a major problem for the company commanders, at least one serious breach occurred in Decatur, when Private Harlen W. Bassett attacked the company’s chief cook with a butcher knife, cutting him badly on the face and hands. According to the cook, Private Bassett entered the cooking tent and when he was ordered to leave, Bassett grabbed the knife and attacked. The *Wise County Messenger* speculated that Cook Moses T. Carrell would have been killed by Bassett if he had not been stopped by guards. The guards locked Bassett in the guard house and he was scheduled to be tried at Camp Bowie once the company arrived there. Unfortunately, what became of Bassett is not clear, although he was no longer on the roster of the regiment in Camp Bowie.⁷⁰

The relationships between the local communities and the soldiers of the Seventh Texas appeared to be genuine, and the communities often expressed pride in their local companies. In Decatur, the *Messenger* gushed: “Wise County is proud of Company H and its officers, and we know that no company will make a better showing than ours when the test of service comes.” In nearby Gainesville, an editorial claimed that “Cooke County people everywhere cannot be too lavish with their praises, encouragement and manifested good cheer for these soldier boys who are certain to make good in their

⁶⁹ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, August 6, 9, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 2, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 12, 1917.

⁷⁰ *Wise County Messenger*, August 24, 1917.

arduous undertaking...they are our boys, therefore we should have a special fondness for them.” When the Gainesville soldiers left, a letter was published by the company in the *Gainesville Daily Register*. It stated that the phrase “all good things must come to an end’ still holds good,” and expressed appreciation for everything the citizens of the county had done for them. Instead of being signed by the company commander, Captain Tyler, it was simply signed, “Sammie.” When the men departed, the editor of the *Daily Register* lamented, “Oh Cruel War, what a heartless monster thou art.”⁷¹

While it might be argued that the month of August 1917 was the most enjoyable time for the soldiers of the Seventh Texas, in part because they were new to the business of soldiering and because they were still relatively close to home and benefited from the relationship with their local communities, progress continued to be made on Camp Bowie and the soldiers knew their time at home was coming to an end. In some cases, the feelings of departure were mixed, such as in Amarillo, where members of Company A expressed regret about leaving their families but were “eager to get to Fort Worth and over to France.” In spite of all the food and friendship that Gainesville bestowed on its local Guardsmen, the men nevertheless cheered when Captain Tyler informed them they would be off to Camp Bowie in less than a week, although that did not occur. This attitude about wanting to get on with their training, and leave their homes, however, was explained in a letter written to his mother by a soldier of the regiment, Joe Casey, after he arrived in France. He wrote that “I had rather soldier here than in America. I would like

⁷¹ *Wise County Messenger*, August 10, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 10, and September 7, 1917.

to see all the folks and friends but don't get as homesick here as [at] the camp, as I do not have time."⁷²

Nearly all Texas National Guard units were alerted for their move to Camp Bowie in early September, where their training would continue and they would lose much of the local connection they had enjoyed in their communities. Indeed, for the Seventh Texas, the brief period in August 1917 while they waited to move was really the only time the regiment was what it had been recruited to be: a Texas National Guard unit filled with Texas soldiers and commanded by Texas officers, all of whom were from the same or nearby communities. As the Texas summer extended into September, most of the units of the Seventh Texas prepared themselves and then discovered the age-old military maxim of "hurry up and wait," as the Army bureaucracy quickly made any schedule meaningless.

In Amarillo, the soldiers were prepared to leave as early as August 25. In preparation, they turned Camp Bloor into a "spotless model." When the word to move failed to come when expected, however, the men speculated as to when they would actually depart, and were anxious to know. When the Amarillo soldiers had still not departed by August 30, Captain Barton, perhaps in an effort to get their minds off of it, paraded his soldiers through the town and took them out to nearby Canyon, where the men enjoyed a picnic lunch provided by the local citizens. In Gainesville, there was time

⁷² *Amarillo Daily News*, August 21, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, August 19, 1917; William D. Hornaday, Volume 5, p. 70, William Deming Hornaday Transcripts of World War I Letters and Personal Accounts, Archives and Information Services, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

for one final “farewell dance” as well as a final plea for “canned goods of any sort” for the departing soldiers.⁷³

The soldiers of Company L announced “big plans” for their arrival in Camp Bowie. The soldiers carried their flag they had been given as well as a twelve-foot banner identifying themselves as “200 strong from Cleburne.” As the local newspaper observed, “Cleburne people have been delighted to have this splendid body of men here, and will have a feeling of great regret upon their departure.” Captain Underwood expressed the appreciation of the company for the city’s “many and repeated kindnesses,” and the soldiers “broke into wild cheers of patriotic demonstration” until their train arrived, which carried a contingent of troops from San Angelo. The *Cleburne Daily Enterprise* announced that Company L was “as fine a bunch of men as any county can offer to help establish the security of freedom.” In Denton, the 3:00 a.m. arrival of the train carrying soldiers from other North Texas areas such as Sherman, Bonham, and Paris, did not deter the soldiers from giving local residents “an initiation to the battle cries of the different companies.”⁷⁴

In Crowell, Captain Graham’s soldiers enjoyed a dinner on the courthouse lawn the evening they were scheduled to depart. After the dinner, the “boys marched to the depot to take the east bound train” and were trailed by crowd of several hundred county residents who “spoke goodbyes to their departing friends and loved ones.” The writer of

⁷³ *Amarillo Daily News*, August 25, 30, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 4, 1917.

⁷⁴ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, September 9, 10, 1917; *Denton Record Chronicle*, September 3, 7, 1917.

the article, however, added a somber note to the story, writing that “it was not a pleasant thought that perhaps some of the boys were not going to return.” On the other hand, the writer concluded, those who failed to return home “will be remembered by posterity as real patriots who willingly sacrificed their lives for the good of their country.”⁷⁵

In Quanah, Captain Wiley alerted his company to move to the train station at 10:30 in the evening. The soldiers formed up, “counted fours, and wheeled up Main Street,” and marched past the courthouse to the “acclaim” of the citizens who stayed up to watch the soldiers depart. The soldiers boarded their train and cheered as they steamed away. It was also reported that there were several railroad policemen riding the train in case there were any “German sympathizers who might have been inclined to tamper with the track.” The *Quanah Tribune Chief* reporter took the departure of the soldiers seriously, and pensively noted that taking 150 soldiers who were born and raised in the area created a “big vacancy, and the town today does not look like it usually does. There are heartaches in many places, which it will take time to heal.” While those left behind may have harbored such somber thoughts, the last words heard when Captain Wiley’s soldiers departed were “Good bye, girls, good bye!”⁷⁶

Although there had been talk of having the Wichita Falls Guardsmen march to Fort Worth, that plan was dropped in favor of another one. The new plan involved driving Companies F and G to Camp Bowie in privately owned automobiles. Driving the men to Fort Worth, the local paper declared, would arouse “greater enthusiasm for future

⁷⁵ *Foard County News*, September 7, 1917.

⁷⁶ *Quanah Tribune Chief*, September 6, 1917.

enlistments” because the cars would stop in towns along the way and the soldiers could form up and perform several minutes of drill. The commanding general of the Southern Department, Brigadier General James Parker, initially approved the request and suggested that uniforms could be provided for the men to wear on the trip. The evidence suggests that the organizers of this trip seemed more interested in publicity for Wichita Falls rather than the soldiers’ welfare, as repeatedly stopping and performing drill could easily become tiresome. However, by August 13, 88 citizens had pledged the use of their cars for the project, which rapidly climbed to almost 150 cars as well as a number of mechanics to make sure no cars broke down during the trip. But just over two weeks later, on August 31, word came from “higher officials” that the automobile trip had been abandoned and the men would take a train to Camp Bowie. The *Wichita Daily Times* noted that the people who had promised their cars would learn of the trip’s cancellation “with relief.”⁷⁷

Some companies still had serious things to accomplish as their time at home came to an end, such as in Clarendon, where Captain Simpson’s Company B had their fingerprints taken and were given a final inspection by regular army officers. The soldiers of Captain Barton’s Company A were given a pep talk by Congressman Marvin Jones, in which he gave the men “instructions and advice” which were apparently well received. In Wichita Falls, a plan for a large farewell for the departing soldiers in Companies F and G was abandoned when Colonel Bloor and other officers told city officials that the men were too busy with their departure preparations. Despite this,

⁷⁷ *Wichita Daily Times*, August 8, 9, 13, 19, 26, 31, 1917.

several thousand residents of Wichita Falls watched the train depart about 10:00 p.m., and “Wichitans gave their soldiers farewell in good spirits.” Most of the companies of the Seventh Texas each met with a similar send off as they boarded their trains. In Decatur, Captain Lillard’s Company H broke camp and waited all night for the train to arrive, which it did not do until 5 am. After the soldiers were gone, the *Wise County Messenger* perhaps summed up best the relationship between these companies and the communities they were leaving behind: the paper joined “the thousands of friends and relatives of our volunteers” in congratulating the soldiers for their “rapid advancement,” and “hoping for them a safe return to their homes after the alarms of war have ceased.”⁷⁸

While it is clear that all of the companies left home with some sort of celebration and well wishing from local residents, not all was positive. In Clarendon, after Captain Simpson’s men had departed for Camp Bowie, the *Clarendon News* published a somber editorial by “a parent” that began by praising the local company: “Our soldier boys are gone—gone to Camp Bowie at Fort Worth—perhaps their only stop till they go to the bloody trenches of France...” However, the editorial then became more serious, stating that had been an “overflow of unkind, unjust criticism” which angered and wounded some of the soldiers and their families. This criticism apparently insinuated that the company and its officers were “riff-raff” and that very few had any “social standing” in the community. In spite of this, the *Clarendon News* insisted that Captain Simpson’s company was “the very best of this country,” and not one of them came from the “idle rich” or “pink-tea society.” In spite of this alleged ill feeling in the county, Captain

⁷⁸ *Clarendon News*, August 30, 1917; *Amarillo Daily News*, August 21, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, September 4, 6, 7, 1917.

Simpson thanked the citizens of Clarendon, offering “the gratitude of the men and officers on account of the kind treatment given us by the citizens of this country impels me as the commanding officer to give expression to these few words of public thanks.” After parading through the town to the train station, the men boarded a train at about 7 pm which was already carrying Captain Barton’s Company A from Amarillo. The train left Clarendon “to the accompaniment of cheers and hurried words of farewell,” and arrived in Forth Worth at 9 am the next morning, having stopped only long enough to load Captain Alonzo Drake’s Company C in Childress.⁷⁹

As the officers and men of the Seventh Texas boarded trains across northwest Texas and converged on Camp Bowie, Colonel Bloor could look back on the rapid organization of the regiment as a busy but satisfying and successful time. While it is not clear that the regiment was “recruited in a record short period of time,” as regimental chaplain C.H. Barnes believed, it should still be considered an impressive feat from an organizational standpoint. Of course, the men were barely trained and had much to learn before they were real soldiers. Thus, as the summer of 1917 came to an end, the Texas National Guard had recruited thousands of soldiers, although it did not meet its mark of raising enough men to form a strictly Texas division. Nevertheless, during this short period, the Texas National Guard successfully recruited the Seventh Texas Infantry across a number of counties in northwest Texas. It was mustered into state and federal service, and each company spent August in temporary camps, where they were feted and praised by their local communities. It is not too much to say that during this period, the

⁷⁹ *Clarendon News*, September 6, 1917.

soldiers of the Seventh Texas became the center of attention in these counties, and when people thought of the war and how it influenced their lives, their thoughts were drawn to the dusty fairgrounds and parks where young men in overalls or bits of uniform marched and drilled as if they were great warriors. Little did any of them know that their time together as a regiment of Texas soldiers would not survive their first month at Camp Bowie, much less the war and the return home. Perhaps for most of them then, the summer of 1917 was the highlight of their military lives. They were treated as heroes but had not yet known the horrors of war.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 18.

CHAPTER 6

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SEVENTH TEXAS INFANTRY

An examination of the make-up of the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment from a socio-economic standpoint offers a detailed portrait of its soldiers. This will serve not only to broaden historical knowledge of the Seventh Texas Infantry, but it might also serve as a starting point for comparing these soldiers from northwest Texas with those in other parts of the state and in other sections of the country. The soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry were asked to uphold the Texas military tradition. Thus, it is imperative to know who these men were. What were their lives like prior to the war? What kinds of occupations did they follow? Were they married, and did they have families? Answers to such questions bring these National Guard soldiers into sharper focus and point to representative characteristics of a World War I Texas soldier.

The fourteen counties mentioned in this study were the headquarters for fifteen companies of the Texas National Guard, which formed the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment. There were approximately 1,809 enlisted men assigned to the regiment when it arrived at Camp Bowie in September of 1917. However, research into the draft registration cards and other sources revealed information on 1,096 of them, or 61 percent. Across the fifteen counties, this amounted to 59 percent of each company, again slightly more than half. Because of a muster roll from July, 1917, information was found on 99 percent of Taylor County's soldiers. Company G of Wichita Falls had the fewest, with information gathered on only 42 percent of that company.

Because this study was based primarily on draft registration cards, several factors explain why data were not found for more than 700 soldiers of the regiment. First, some soldiers registered in other counties in Texas or even in another state. For example, there was generally no way to tell if a man who registered in Harrison County was the same man who joined the Decatur company. A second reason for failing to find information on a particular individual was because of a misspelled name, either on the regiment's roster or on the draft registration card. In some cases, the men who joined these fifteen companies registered in a neighboring county. In most of these cases, the assumption can be made that the individual joined the company forming in the neighboring county. Finally, in cases in which a man had a common last name, it was often not possible to tell beyond a doubt which was the soldier who joined a particular company. With that being said, the sample size of 61 percent still provided ample data to illustrate various characteristics of the soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry as well as to provide a composite, or representative image, of these northwest Texas soldiers. To do this, it is crucial to examine several broad trends within the regiment, followed by a closer look at the more personal characteristics of the regiment's soldiers. Finally, it should also be noted that the percentages used in this study reflect the number of soldiers for which data were collected, rather than the regiment in its entirety.¹

¹ All of the information gathered on the regiment's soldiers came from the Selective Service Registration Cards for World War I, M1509, Texas microfilm, available at the National Archives and Records Administration Southwest Branch, Fort Worth, Texas. The complete, original collection of all twenty-four million draft registration cards is maintained by the National Archives regional branch in Atlanta. The draft registration cards are also available through the military records collection of www.ancestry.com, which provides a searchable database of the entire set of the draft registration cards.

There are five important points to be made about the regiment as a whole. The first concerned age. Wars, of course, are fought by young men, and World War I was no different. As a whole, the average age of the soldiers in the regiment was twenty-three and a half years. Company B from Clarendon had the highest average age, at twenty-four, while Companies I and M had the lowest at twenty-two years of age. However, a closer look at the age composition of the regiment confirms the youthful composition of the regiment. For purposes of analysis, the ages of the soldiers in the regiment were broken down into three categories: 23 and under, 24-26, and 27 and older. While the average was twenty-three, all fifteen of the companies of the Seventh Texas consisted predominantly of men twenty-three or younger. In fact, fully 667 of the 1096 soldiers fell into this category (61 percent). Along similar lines, 266 soldiers (24 percent) were slightly older, ranging in age from 24-26. Finally, the assumption might be made that there were not nearly as many soldiers who were in their upper twenties or older. In this case, such an assumption would be correct, as only 163 of the soldiers fell into this category (15 percent).²

Table 1. Ages.³

Ages	Number	Percent
23 and under	614	60%
24-26	254	25%
27+	156	15%
Total	1024	100%

² Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

³ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

Although men could join the Texas National Guard between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, there were relatively few men close to those ages appeared in the regiment. Part of this is due to an anomaly in the sources in that the first draft registration in 1917 did not report the men who were under twenty-one or over thirty. However, even though the draft registration cards which the men filled out for the June 5, 1917, registration only called for men between the ages of 21 and 30, evidence of men outside these ages who joined the regiment can be still be found. This evidence suggests that some of the men who joined the regiment at the youngest and oldest ends of the age spectrum did not remain with the regiment and dropped out either in the temporary local camps or after they arrived at Camp Bowie. Many of these men, however, were then required to register during the two later registration periods, in June of 1918 and September of 1918. Thus, it is possible to find some of the soldiers did not register for the draft but who appeared on the initial roster of the Seventh Texas, and who registered for the draft in September, 1918, indicating they had been discharged from the Seventh Texas. In most of these cases, the men were either very young or very old, suggesting they were discharged for being underage when they joined, or were simply too old to handle the stresses of military life.⁴

On the other hand, the ages of the regiment's officers were just about the opposite those of the men. The research disclosed the ages of the thirty-seven of the regiment's fifty-six officers, and their average age was twenty-seven. Out of this thirty-seven, nineteen (50 percent) were twenty-seven or older. Seven of the officers were in the 24-26

⁴ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

age group (19 percent), while eleven (31 percent) were 23 or younger. However, when combined, the two youngest age categories equaled 50 percent of the officers. Thus, although officers in the regiment tended to be older, there were many young officers serving as well.⁵

Because this was a Texas regiment, another important point of interest revolves around the actual relationship between the soldiers and their communities. In other words, if this was truly a Texas regiment, and Texans even claimed it as their own after it changed dramatically by being combined with an Oklahoma regiment as well as absorbing an influx of draftees, just how many of the soldiers who joined the Seventh Texas were actually born in Texas, and if they were not born in the state, where did they come from? This analysis might also consider how many of the regiment's soldiers lived in the central communities where each company kept its recruiting headquarters, or if they lived in more rural areas of the region.

In all of the companies, the overwhelming majority of the men were born in Texas. Of 1,081 of the regiment's soldiers, 817 (76 percent) were born in the Lone Star State. On the other hand, 264 (24 percent), were born in other states and later moved to Texas. Of the soldiers who were not born in Texas, 89 (8 percent) were born in the Upper South states of Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Arkansas, and 81 soldiers (7 percent) came from states in the Lower South such as Georgia, the Carolinas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. This amounted to 170 soldiers who joined the regiment but who were born in the southern states, almost twice as many as the 90 men (8 percent)

⁵ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

who came from Northern and Midwestern states, including Oklahoma. Additionally, there were at least three foreign-born soldiers in the Seventh Texas' initial cadre of soldiers, and probably more. Although this was a tiny number, representing less than one percent, the three all came from Europe: England, "Russian" Poland, and Austria. The Austrian, Anton Strouhal of Childress' Company C, was a twenty-eight-year-old surveyor. As this small number of foreign-born citizens attests, along with those born in the state and the southern immigrants, the Seventh Texas reflected to a high degree the general southern background of the state. Likewise, the immigration patterns disclosed by the soldiers' places of birth supports the idea that many residents of northwest Texas came from the upper south or the Midwest.⁶

The regiment's officers also displayed these same characteristics, as an overwhelming majority of the officers were born in Texas. In fact, of the thirty-seven officers whose information was available, thirty-three (89 percent) were born in the state, while only four were not (11 percent). Of those four, two were born in Maine and Illinois, while the regiment's commanding officer, Alfred W. Bloor, hailed from Pennsylvania. Finally, one officer of the regiment, William H. Brownell, claimed Canadian birth, although he moved to Amarillo, worked as a railway clerk, and joined Captain Barton's Company A.⁷

⁶ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

⁷ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

Table 2. Place of birth.⁸

Place of Birth	Number	Percent
Texas	758	75%
Upper South	85	8%
Lower South	73	7%
North/Midwest	89	9%
Foreign	4	0.30%
Totals	1009	100%

Although most of the soldiers were born in Texas, they tended to live in the rural areas of the region, and not in the county seats of the fourteen counties that raised the Seventh Texas. A sizable minority, 445 of the soldiers (43 percent) lived in the county towns, while 579 soldiers (56 percent) came from smaller communities in each county or from a different region of Texas altogether. Also, a handful of the men who joined the Seventh Texas lived outside Texas, and of those who did, almost all came from Oklahoma. In fact, Company D of Quanah in Hardeman County listed five men from Oklahoma, including Samuel M. Sampler, who would later receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in France. Wilbarger County's Company E had at least one man from Oklahoma, while Robert Farrington, a book keeper in Hollister, Oklahoma, joined the Wise County company because he was born in Decatur. Thus, as might be expected, almost all of the men lived in Texas, although fewer than might be expected lived in the larger cities of northwest Texas. Finally, the officers of the regiment again displayed characteristics opposite the men. In this case, the majority of the officers (72

⁸ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

percent) lived in the county seat of each company's location, while only nine officers (27 percent) lived in other areas of the county or the state.⁹

Table 3. Residences.¹⁰

Residences	
County Seat	Other
445	579
43%	56%

Thus, the evidence supports the image of a young man, born in Texas, and living in a rural location as representative of Seventh Texas soldiers. Another way to bolster this image is to examine the types of work these men did prior to enlisting in the Texas National Guard. Research revealed occupational information on 1,047 of the regiment's soldiers, including the officers. In order to analyze the information, occupations were divided into several categories. The professional/business category included lawyers, accountants, clerical workers, businessmen, and anyone who might have undergone specific training for their occupation, such as a pharmacist. The second category consisted of skilled workers, which included carpenters, blacksmiths, railroad engineers, and any other job that appeared to require some skill or take some effort to master. The third category was unskilled workers, which consisted of occupations such as laborer, cook, barber, and automobile driver. In other words, these were occupations that required no formal training and could be learned with some practice. The fourth category

⁹ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

¹⁰ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

consisted of farmers and farm laborers. Three other smaller categories were used as well: oil field workers, ranch workers, and the unemployed.¹¹

Table 4. Occupations.¹²

Occupations	Total	Percent
Farming	435	44%
Unskilled work	174	18%
Prof/Business	170	17%
Skilled work	132	13%
Oil	25	3%
Ranch	10	1%
Unemployed	32	3%
Totals	978	100%

The largest occupational category for members of the Seventh Texas Infantry turned out to be farming, as 468 (45 percent) members of the regiment pursued this line of work prior to enlisting, either by farming for themselves or working on a farm for someone else. Numerically speaking, the majority of the farmers came from Wise, Hardeman, and Wilbarger counties, while Fort Worth and Tarrant County, as might be expected, had just twelve men who claimed farming as an occupation. However, as a percentage of the company, the largest group of farmers came from Hardeman and Wilbarger counties. As for the three clusters of counties, the average of the North Texas grouping of Wise, Cooke, Denton, Tarrant, and Johnson averaged 43 percent farmers. The second group, Wichita, Wilbarger, Hardeman, Foard, and Childress averaged 50

¹¹ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

¹² Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

percent farmers, while Amarillo and Lubbock averaged just 23 percent. On the other hand, Taylor and Donley counties averaged 51 and 54 percent, respectively.¹³

The second largest grouping of men fell into the unskilled labor category, which accounted for 190 (18 percent) of the regiment's soldiers. This evidence suggests that the majority of the men in the regiment tended to fill jobs that were more physical and in many cases perhaps earned them less money. For example, farmers and unskilled laborers combined accounted for 63 percent of the regiment. Most of the unskilled laborers came from the counties in North Texas, and in the larger cities such as Lubbock and Amarillo. The next largest grouping of occupations was the professional, or business, category. This category accounted for 183 men (17 percent) of the regiment. It should be noted, however, that many of the jobs in this category were bookkeeping and clerical positions, although there were private soldiers such as the Supply Company's Allen Schultz of Post, Texas, who worked as an accountant; Company G's Thomas McCluer, who worked as an engineer for the city of Henrietta, Texas; and Company E's John Storey, who was a lawyer in Vernon. Of all the counties, Potter County reported, by far, the most men in professional and business occupations, with thirty-five, while Wise and Tarrant counties had the next highest totals at seventeen and sixteen respectively. On the other hand, approximately 138 men (13 percent) filled jobs that could be considered as "skilled" labor. Also, at least twenty-five men (2 percent) who worked in the oil fields of Burkburnett and Electra joined the two companies from Wichita Falls, while Potter, Donley, and Taylor counties had eleven (1 percent) ranch hands and stock farmers among

¹³ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

their enlistees. Finally, what about unemployed men? As noted, there was some grumbling in Donley County when the soldiers departed from Camp Bowie that they consisted of the “riff-raff” of the county. How many unemployed men joined the Seventh Texas Infantry and the Texas National Guard? Based on the available data, only thirty-two men (3 percent) enlisted in the regiment who were unemployed at the time they registered for the draft. These thirty-two men were also generally evenly spread out among the fifteen companies. Wise County had the most with five, but most of the counties counted at least two or three unemployed men on their rosters.¹⁴

Table 5. Occupations as a percentage of each county.¹⁵

Company	% Farm	% Prof/B
Co. A, Amarillo	21	42
Co. B, Clarendon	54	13
Co. C, Childress	68	16
Co. D, Quanah	62	11
Co. E, Vernon	63	13
Co. F, Wichita Falls	14	12
Co. G, Wichita Falls	27	10
Co. H, Decatur	56	19
Co. I, Abilene	55	20
Co. K, Fort Worth	20	27
Co. L, Cleburne	48	8
Headquarters Co, Foard Co.	65	7
Machine Gun Co, Cooke Co.	48	23
Supply Co., Lubbock	25	21
Co. M, Denton	43	15

¹⁴ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

¹⁵ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

This additional data on the occupations of the men of the Seventh Texas supports the assertion that a representative soldier of the regiment was more often than not a farmer or an unskilled worker as opposed to a professional or skilled worker. But did the same hold true of the regiment's officers? As was the case with age, the regiment's officers displayed occupational characteristics very different from those of the majority of the men. In this instance, professional and business occupations were the majority in the officer ranks. Twenty-three of the officers (68 percent) followed this type of work, while four men each held occupations as skilled workers (12 percent) and farmers (12 percent). Of those in the professional category, the largest single occupational grouping was lawyers. At least nine men in the regiment followed this occupation. Finally, three officers of the regiment (9 percent) described themselves as students, either at the Officers Training Camp or the University of Texas. While the majority of the regiment's soldiers worked with their hands either by farming or as an unskilled worker, the opposite was generally true of the Seventh Texas' officers.¹⁶

By breaking down these general characteristics of age, residence, place of birth, and occupation, a clearer picture of these soldiers emerges. More often than not, a soldier of the Seventh Texas was a native-born Texan who grew up on a farm, was in his early twenties, and worked with his hands. In general, these soldiers reflected the rural and agricultural land that they came from. On the other hand, an officer of the regiment tended to be slightly older, also from Texas, and worked in a professional or business

¹⁶ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

capacity that tended to reflect the cities of northwest Texas that most of them called home.

Although these general characteristics illuminate the soldiers of the regiment, there are several other more personal points that can be made about the regiment's soldiers. These include marriage, dependents, prior military service, and reasons for exemption from the selective service draft. Thus, an important question to ask is if a majority of the soldiers of the Seventh Texas were young farmers, what was their marital status? Based on the available data, only 52 (5 percent) soldiers of the Seventh Texas were married. Out of the fifteen companies, Fort Worth's Company K had the most with nine men being married, while several companies had as few as two married men per company. From this perspective then, the evidence supports the previous characterization of the regiment's soldiers. On the other hand, the evidence was again different for the officers. For the officers, at least thirteen were married (38 percent), although the marital status of all fifty-six of the regiment's officers was not found. Nevertheless, this was a significant number when compared to the regiment as a whole.¹⁷

Although few of the soldiers in the regiment were married, more than twice as many reported dependents that relied on them for support. The draft registration cards revealed that 134 members of the regiment (13 percent) listed at least one dependent on their draft registration cards. Decatur's Company H included seventeen men with dependents, while the soldiers of Clarendon's Company B reported just three men with dependents. Supporting the point that most of these soldiers were not married, ninety-

¹⁷ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

five of them (70 percent) who reported a dependent listed their parents or a sibling as their responsibility, as opposed to forty-one members (30 percent) of the regiment who listed their wife and children as dependents. Not all of the married men then, claimed their wives as a dependent. Thus, although an overwhelming majority of the regiment consisted of unmarried men, a fairly sizable portion had relatives they were responsible for and many more probably had close family ties and familial responsibilities than might have been expected. In the case of the officers, the dependent breakdown was again different. Fourteen of the regiment's officers claimed dependents (42 percent), although eight of the fourteen sets of dependents were wives and children as opposed to just two officer's whose dependents were aged parents.¹⁸

Table 6. Dependents.¹⁹

Dependents	Number	Percent
Parents/Siblings	95	70%
Wife/Child	40	30%
Totals	135	100%

Another important point for soldiers was the amount of experience they had. Obviously, men with prior military experience could be valuable to the regiment's leadership. These men could join the regiment and rely on their experience in training, organizing, and managing the local companies. In many cases, but not all, men with prior military service filled positions of responsibility. The Seventh Texas Infantry however, was generally not an experienced regiment. Including the regiment's officers,

¹⁸ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

¹⁹ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

only 75 men (7 percent) reported prior military experience on their draft registration cards. Thus, experienced former soldiers were few in number and a rarity in the regiment, which is another reason why they generally filled leadership positions. There simply were not enough men with military backgrounds to go around. In fact, although the officers of Abilene's Company I had some military experience, none of the men who registered for the draft and later joined the company listed any military service. On the other hand, Company M in Denton had ten men with prior military service, most of who served as non-commissioned officers. While the regiment itself had few men with prior military service, the officers as a group had more. Of the data available, well over half of the regiment's officers had some type of prior military service (68 percent), again furthering the point that men with such experience filled positions of leadership in the regiment.²⁰

Finally, an important point to note about the regiment concerned the motivations of these soldiers. In other words, how many of these men, when they registered for the draft on June 5, 1917, listed a reason why they should be exempt from the selective service draft. Out of 1,096 soldiers, just 135 of them (12 percent) reported that they had a reason to be exempt from the draft on the day they registered, although they later enlisted in the Seventh Texas. Denton and Wise Counties had the most soldiers claiming reasons for exemption with seventeen men each, while Taylor County had only three soldiers who gave reason for exemption. However, the point to be made about exemptions was that 12 percent of the regiment's soldiers initially highlighted a reason why they could

²⁰ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

not serve in the military, and then less than two months later volunteered to enlist in the Texas National Guard rather than be drafted. Although it will never be known what motivated these men to change their minds and enlist in the Texas National Guard, there were several possible explanations. First, they may have believed the rhetoric of the National Guard that they would serve with soldiers from their area and be commanded by local officers. Serving in such an organization might have appealed to many of these men. In other words, they may have believed that their reason for exemption would not be validated by the local exemption board, and thus saw the National Guard as their best option. Others may have initially felt a responsibility to their dependents, but then later decided to enlist once arrangements had been made for their care. Some may have felt pressure from their friends and colleagues. However, just because a soldier requested an exemption from the draft did not mean they were opposed to the war. For example, Clyde Beavers, a twenty-three year old farmer living in Cleburne, enlisted in Company L, although on draft registration day, he had written that he sought an exemption because he was “not in favor” of the draft. Whatever the reason, these soldiers probably believed that they would be better off by enlisting in the Texas National Guard rather than waiting to be called up, inducted, and sent off to a training camp amongst strangers. Even a number of officers requested an exemption when they initially registered for the draft. Of the twenty-six officers who filled out draft cards, six men (23 percent) noted a reason why they should be exempt. Of these six men, four were for dependents--two for wives and children and two for dependent mothers. Only one man, Sam Houston Owens, later First Battalion Adjutant, believed he was exempt because he was a farmer and because he

was in attendance at Camp Funston's officers training camp. The sixth was not readable.²¹

Table 7. Exemptions.²²

Exemptions		
Medical	33	29%
Dependents	64	56%
Occupational	11	10%
Other	6	5%
Total	114	100%

For the enlisted members of the regiment, there were also a number of different reasons why a man might have had reason to seek exemption from the draft. Thus, 114 men noted a reason why they should be exempted from the selective service draft.²³ The main reason these men initially requested exemptions was because of dependents, whether it was a wife, parent, or sibling. Sixty-Four men (56 percent) who later enlisted in the Seventh Texas fell into this category. On the other hand, the second largest reasons for exemptions when these men registered for the draft were medical ones. Interestingly, thirty-three men (29 percent) initially believed they had a medical condition which would preclude them from being drafted, or at least they hoped it would. In many cases, the registrant listed a generic condition, such as "weak eyes," "stiff joints," "stomach trouble," or simply "physical disability." However, in most of those cases, such conditions proved not to be serious enough to keep the men from later enlisting in the

²¹ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

²² Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

²³ Although 136 men noted reasons for exemption from the draft, some men simply wrote "yes," in answer to the question without giving a reason, while others were not readable because of the handwriting.

Seventh Texas. Although a registrant could claim exemption because of his occupation, few men did who later joined the Seventh Texas. In fact, only eleven men (10 percent) claimed an occupational exemption. Finally, six men listed other reasons for possibly being exempt from the draft. These reasons included one man who sought an exemption because his church opposed the war; at least two sought exemptions because they were attending the Officers' Training Course at Camp Funston in Leon Springs, Texas, and two other men believed they were entitled to exempted status because they had prior military experience in the army. These two men, however, might have realized their prior experience might lead to positions of responsibility in the Texas National Guard. Furthermore, prior military service was not a valid reason for claiming exemption from the draft. And as noted, a Cleburne man claimed exemption because he was not in favor of the draft. Interestingly, the reasons why these men initially sought exemption from the draft matched the country on a national scale, in which dependents were the most common reason for a draft exemption, and even fewer received agricultural or industrial deferments. In sum, however, the main point being that a sizable number of men who enlisted in the Seventh Texas initially sought a way to stay out of the armed forces.²⁴

Thus, it is possible to look at quite a number of characteristics of the regiment as a whole, and draw several important conclusions. Without a doubt, the majority of the soldiers of the Seventh Texas were in their early twenties, and an overwhelming number of them were not married. However, a larger portion of them did support dependents, including quite a few who took care of their parents and siblings. Most of the regiment's

²⁴ Draft Registration Cards, M1509, Texas Microfilm, NARA Southwest Branch.

soldiers also worked as farmers or as unskilled laborers, although there was a sizable portion that held skilled and professional jobs, especially regarding the regiment's officers. Just a few members of the regiment had prior military experience, and they generally filled positions of authority, although not always. Also, although not a large percentage, some men initially sought a reason why they should be exempt from the draft but then later chose to enlist in the Texas National Guard. In sum, the evidence suggests that a representative picture of a Texas soldier who fought in the Seventh Texas infantry in World War I had the following characteristics: He was in his early twenties, unmarried, and most likely had no dependents. He worked on a farm, either his own or for someone else. He generally had no prior experience in the military and had no legitimate reason to seek an exemption from the selective service draft. In essence, the representative Texas soldier of the Seventh Texas Infantry was young, with few ties, and was in a position to volunteer to fight. Along similar lines, an officer of the Seventh Texas was generally older, and was more likely to be married and have dependents. They were more likely to engage in a professional or business career and have some type of prior military service. Officers, while in many cases having more reason to stay out of the fighting, also felt drawn to serve. An important question to consider when looking at these soldiers as a whole is: how essential were they to the economic well-being of their communities? Comments such as those from Donley County residents who called Captain Simpson's Company "riff-raff" were probably unfair and not altogether accurate. However, a sizable portion of these men were farmers or unskilled laborers whose contributions to the local economy were not indispensable. The answer will,

unfortunately, probably never be known. Regardless of the individual economic value of these soldiers to their communities, they were the men that Texas recruited to send to France to fight for the county and to uphold the “military tradition” of the state. But first, they had to be trained, and they had to change from farmers, laborers, carpenters, clerks, and lawyers, into soldiers.

CHAPTER 7

CAMP BOWIE AND THE JOURNEY TO FRANCE

While the companies of the Seventh Texas Infantry were treated as heroes by their local communities before they had even left northwest Texas, by the first week of September all of them were on their way to Camp Bowie. The companies from Amarillo, Clarendon, and Childress arrived first, followed the next day by the units from Quanah, Crowell, and Vernon. Shortly thereafter, the Lubbock, Taylor, Denton, Cooke, Johnson and Wise County soldiers arrived. All of the Seventh Texas Infantry companies arrived in the giant, bustling Camp Bowie by September 11, 1917. This was the first time the regiment was together as a whole.¹

Of course, the Seventh Texas Infantry was just one small part of the Texas National Guard, which in itself made up just a fraction of the entire National Guard of the United States that had been called to service in its entirety for the second time in two years. The Seventh Texas, when it was “drafted” into federal service on August 5, 1917, consisted of 56 officers and 1,952 soldiers. At the time, the “combat arms” of the Texas National Guard, which included the infantry, cavalry, field artillery, coast artillery, and signal corps, reflected a strength of 315 officers and 11,074 men, while the total Texas National Guard of Texas, as reported by the state Adjutant General on August 5, 1917,

¹ *Wichita Daily Times*, September 6, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, September 4, 1917; *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 151.

included 581 officers and 16, 949 men. Thus, the Seventh Texas amounted to about 11 percent of the Texas National Guard prior to its arrival at Camp Bowie.²

Fort Worth's Camp Bowie was the training camp of the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard. Camp Bowie was one of thirty-two "cantonments" designated by the federal government to train National Guardsmen and draftees in the expanded army. Sixteen of the camps were established for drafted soldiers, those in the "National Army," while the others were established for mobilizing and training the National Guard. Furthermore, because the War Department thought the camps for the drafted soldiers would be used for a longer period, they were constructed more durably. On the other hand, the National Guard encampments were all located in the south, where, because of its generally milder climate, the guardsmen were expected to sleep in tents. Secretary of War Newton D. Baker passed the decision on where to locate the camps to his departmental commanders. For Texas, this was Brigadier General James Parker, commander of the United States Southern Department.³

Several leading Fort Worth citizens, including Ben E. Keith, L.J. Wortham, and Mayor W.D. Davis, organized a group seeking a training camp for Fort Worth as early as May 1917. They wrote a strong proposal, pointing out that Fort Worth had superb "rail facilities," contained the two largest meat packing plants south of St. Louis, and had the "best horse and mule market" in the state. General Parker was evidently impressed and sent a team of officers to look at the city more closely. The officers were "guided"

² By August 31, 1917, the Seventh Texas had increased slightly to 56 officers and 2,009 men; *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau*, 1918, 120, 122-123, 152.

³ Lonnie J. White, *Panthers to Arrowheads* (Austin: Presidial, 1984), 15-16.

toward an area two miles from downtown Fort Worth known as Arlington Heights.

Arlington Heights Boulevard also provided easy access to and from the city.

Furthermore, the committee members were able to offer the government additional acres of land west of Arlington Heights which could be used for a firing range and for building a trench system.⁴

However, delays occurred in the selection process and Fort Worth was not selected until June 11, 1917, about the same time as the Texas National Guard began to recruit heavily. While the camps for the draftees were expected to be ready by September 1, 1917, most thought the National Guard camps would be ready much earlier because less construction was involved. However, the problems associated with building thirty-two “cities” were not fully appreciated. Furthermore, in Fort Worth, officers of the cantonment division of the Quartermaster Corps did not arrive until mid-July to begin preparations. Soon the United States government signed a contract with the Thompson Construction Company of Dallas, quartermaster headquarters was established on July 23, and construction officially began on July 25, 1917.⁵

By the end of the first week of August, the camp was “half completed.” At the time, 40 miles of road had been laid and 150 buildings erected. Two weeks later, there were 900 buildings, including “mess halls, warehouses, bathhouses, and latrines.” Although the camp was deemed capable of supporting troops by the end of August, construction was not complete until the end of October, 1917. When the Thirty-Sixth

⁴ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 16-17.

⁵ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 17-18.

Division finally departed for France in the summer of 1918, Camp Bowie consisted of nearly 3,000 buildings. The camp itself also encompassed 1,410 acres, while the trench system near Benbrook occupied 125 acres and the firing range 756. The government leased additional land near Weatherford in Parker County for an artillery range. The total cost for Camp Bowie was put at \$3,400,000.⁶

Thus, when the “soldier boys” of the Seventh Texas arrived, Camp Bowie was a thriving, bustling, busy place, with construction going on and thousands of other soldiers arriving from across the state as well as from Oklahoma, which had raised the First Oklahoma Infantry Regiment. Senior officers, such as Brigadier General Henry Hutchings and Brigadier General John A. Hulen, arrived with their staffs in late August. Camp Bowie must therefore have been quite a change for the soldiers from northwest Texas. Furthermore, they could now see and understand that they were just one small part of a much larger organization, and many doubtless believed that they had taken their first step on the way to France.⁷

The arrival of Captain Tyler’s machine gun company might have been typical of the arrival of most of the Seventh Texas’ companies. According to Frank Duston, it rained most of the day they arrived and they had to sleep in the “mess hall” their first night. They received their tents the next day, and “have been working ever since trying to get things straightened out.” Other companies experienced this same confusion. Private Camilla Hanks of Abilene reported that his company marched for three hours

⁶ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 18-19.

⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, August 26, 1917.

before finding the proper camp site on the day they arrived. The next day they were given their mess kits and fed by members of the First Oklahoma Regiment. Shortly thereafter they received some tents to put up, but not enough, and their uniforms were mistakenly given to another company. Regardless of how each unit arrived, it was generally a time of little sleep and much confusion as they settled in and adjusted to their new surroundings.⁸

The soldiers spent their first few days completing the process of becoming United States soldiers, drawing equipment, finally getting uniforms, and being assigned to various billeting areas around the camp. However, most of the regiment's soldiers did not receive their rifles until October. Meanwhile, most of the officers did their best trying to figure out how the supply system of the army worked. For example, one man wrote home that Abilene's Captain Wagstaff was "trying awful hard" to get uniforms for his men. The men appreciated his efforts, as one soldier wrote that "he sure is all right and all the boys like him fine." While this settling in process continued, the citizens of the communities who had helped recruit the soldiers of the Seventh Texas were not far behind their local companies. They were eager to follow the progress of "their" local companies after they had arrived in Fort Worth. For example, fourteen carloads of Gainesville residents made the trip in mid-September to see how Captain Tyler's

⁸ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 12, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, September 9, 1917; The rain was fairly heavy at time, as a member of the Abilene company reported that cars were stuck in the mud all around the camp and that it had rained for the past two days, *Abilene Reporter*, September 9, 1917, and the *Dallas Morning News* reported a rain so heavy that some men of the Camp were sent to Fort Worth to spend the night because their tents were blown down in the storm, *Dallas Morning News*, September 27, 1917.

Machine Gun Company was doing, and the company responded by creating a “register” for all Gainesville residents to sign during their visit.⁹

On the other hand, Mrs. W.W. Coleman, a Wichita Falls resident whose husband was in charge of plumbing at the base, sought to bring a message of “cheer” to “each mother in Wichita Falls” after she returned from Camp Bowie. While Mrs. Coleman was certainly no expert on the operations of the base, she reported that the Wichita Falls soldiers were doing well. In fact, she described the arrangements as “perfect,” which they surely could not have been with the continuing construction and the arrival of thousands of new troops. She evidently sought out Companies F and G, and spoke to a “number of the officers and men,” who all expressed their “complete satisfaction with the arrangements and asked that the folks at home be assured that they were well cared for and happy.” Continuing her efforts to uplift the mothers who were concerned about their sons, Mrs. Coleman described the soldiers as being “in a fine color,” with “splendid appetites,” with enough energy to perform the most difficult tasks and to enjoy performing them. Finally, Mrs. Coleman observed the men in drill during their early days at the Camp, stating that if anyone wished “to gain respect for your country and the young men of the country, just visit one of these training camps.”¹⁰

Another Gainesville resident, Oscar Nislar, visited the machine gun company, and reported that despite the rain that greeted the arrival of the soldiers, reported they had

⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, October 4, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, September 9, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 18, 1917; It should be noted that the *Dallas Morning News* reported that supplies and equipment had begun arriving at Camp Bowie as early as August 15, 1917, *Dallas Morning News*, August 15, 1917.

¹⁰ *Wichita Daily Times*, September 11, 1917.

“nice, clean, comfortable quarters...and an abundance of good eatables.” He also found it “one of the best pleasures of his life” to have a meal with Captain Tyler’s soldiers.¹¹

Indeed, from the very beginning of their stay at Camp Bowie, the soldiers generally did not have to worry about having enough food. For example, a reporter from Donley County visited Camp Bowie in early October and described a typical meal for Captain Simpson’s company. For breakfast the men had bread and cream gravy with sugar and syrup, while for lunch they were fed sixty pounds of steak and fifty pounds of cabbage, as well as sweet potatoes, English peas, gravy, iced tea, sugar, and bread. For the final meal of the day, they were served roast beef and gravy, hominy, string beans, bread, and stewed apricots. The total cost for one day’s meals for the company amounted to \$18.28. A local resident who visited the company earlier stated that “there is no danger of anyone getting hungry if they are always as well fed as they were at this meal.”¹²

Residents from northwest Texas tried to maintain a connection with their local companies in other ways besides visiting. For example, Gainesville residents formed a “chicken club” with the sole purpose of providing Captain Tyler’s Gainesville soldiers with one chicken dinner per week. In Clarendon, barrels were placed at the Palace Confectionaries stores to be filled with tobacco and cigarettes, which were to be shipped to Captain Simpson’s Company B.¹³

¹¹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 10, 1917.

¹² *Clarendon News*, September 20, and October 5, 1917.

¹³ *Dallas Morning News*, September 22, 1917; *Clarendon News*, September 13, 1917.

As part of the process of settling in to life at Camp Bowie, the soldiers had to undergo more rigorous inspections by regular army officers. This was, in essence, the first point at which the integrity of the regiment began to disintegrate. For the soldiers of the Seventh Texas, this inspection occurred around September 17, 1917, in most cases less than two weeks after their arrival at Camp Bowie. The Gainesville company had to cancel a baseball game with Captain Roark's Denton soldiers because the latter were undergoing their physicals. As doctors inspected each company, men who were found unfit were given a "Surgeon's Certificate of Disability," or SCD, and discharged. These physicals were performed in greater detail than previous ones because few, if any, companies escaped without losing somebody. For example, Captain Lillard's Decatur company lost twenty-four men because of the physicals, and the regiment's sanitary detachment had a great many of the men "turned back on account of physical disqualifications." On the other hand, those who made it through the physical exam then had to deal with more vaccinations, which gave many of the soldiers sore arms and even kept some from participating in drill.¹⁴

The regiment also began training almost immediately. Frank Duston reported that his company arrived on a Thursday and that they were drilling the next Monday. The daily routine, he found out, included about seven to eight hours of drill. As if that was not enough, he wrote, "I guess we will get more later on." By the time they had been in camp about one month, the Seventh Texas' soldiers were becoming adept at the military arts of the early twentieth-century, including "grenade throwing, bayonet drill, the

¹⁴ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 16, 18, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, September 28, 1917; *Clarendon News*, September 20, 1917.

setting—and avoiding—of wire entanglements and the...art of digging themselves in.” Other soldiers engaged in similar activities that included “infantry methods, trench digging, trench raiding maneuvers...whole companies marching, semaphores signaling...” As noted, many of the regiment’s soldiers had to start their training without weapons. Prior to October, only six companies out of dozens had received their weapons.¹⁵

Other training included such mundane things as learning the art of properly pitching a tent, which Captain Lillard’s Wise County soldiers learned took a lot of practice. In Company H’s case, the men practiced by tearing down their tents and setting “them up two streets farther east.” They also managed to move all of their cots and belongings in two hours, apparently a Camp Bowie record. Captain Lillard, a former football player, was a big man and wielded easy authority over his soldiers. One day he saw a Mexican civilian “wandering among the tents.” When Lillard asked what the man was doing, he was told the man did the laundry for a member of the company. Lillard immediately grabbed the offending soldier and told him “in no uncertain words to patronize no more Mexicans.” Although Lillard kept a close eye on his company during this period, the evidence suggest that most of the soldiers were content with what they were doing and were making satisfactory progress at Camp Bowie.¹⁶

While Captain Lillard’s men set a record with their tent move, they were not the only company that had to shift quarters. In fact, the entire regiment had to move in order

¹⁵ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 12, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 8, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, October 5, 1917; *Dallas Morning News*, October 4, 1917.

¹⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, October 8, 12, 1917; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 8, 1917.

to make room for the First Oklahoma Infantry. While each company in the Seventh Texas had started out as a collection of local recruits with predominantly local officers, by the time the organization was brought together for the first time in Fort Worth, the local feel of the regiment began to change. Rather than being a collection of individual companies from different counties, the regiment now had to be consolidated and organized to conform to army standards, and the changes began.¹⁷

Once the Seventh Texas began its transition into the Army, it became apparent that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the regiment to maintain its Texas National Guard organization and designation. Furthermore, the regiment had to be assimilated into larger organizations of the Army, which meant assignment to a brigade and a division. The Texas National Guard had been organized according to an older model that included a divisional organization of three brigades of three infantry regiments each. However, after studying the organization of European armies and after studies by the War Department, General John J. Pershing's staff, and one authorized by Secretary of War Baker, the Army's leaders decided to restructure the American forces in August of 1917, just at the time that the government mobilized the National Guard and drafted it into federal service. This change in the structure of the division model primarily resulted in a personnel increase, which was felt down to the company level. Thus, under the new arrangement, the United States Army divisional numbering system consisted of three components. The first encompassed the regular army, with divisional designations between 1 and 25. The second echelon encompassed all National Guard divisions, which

¹⁷ *Wise County Messenger*, October 12, 1917.

received division numbers between 26 and 75. The third group, 76 and higher, was reserved for the “National Army” or the drafted soldiers. Thus, by the organizational arrangements of the War Department, the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard division would be designated the Thirty-Sixth Division. Along similar lines the Army thus designated the Texas and Oklahoma draft division being trained at Camp Travis in San Antonio as the Ninetieth Division.¹⁸

Major General Edwin St. John Greble, a West Point graduate and a regular officer, commanded the Thirty-Sixth Division. By all accounts, Greble was a solid officer, but in 1917 he was fifty-nine years old, which did not bode well for him as General Pershing generally sought younger officers for divisional command. General Greble’s main focus in September of 1917 consisted of organizing and training the division. However, he did spend several months in France with a number of other general officers ostensibly to study conditions at the front, but in actuality so that General Pershing could look them over and decide who could or could not stand the rigors of trench warfare.¹⁹

Finally, each division, rather than having three brigades of three regiments, was reduced to two brigades, which consisted of two infantry regiments and a machine gun

¹⁸ *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau*, 1918, 10-12; Edward Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998 reprint of 1968 edition), 61; John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1998), 47-57.

¹⁹ *Wichita Daily Times*, December 26, 1917; About general officers visiting France so Pershing could get a look at them, see Timothy K. Nenninger, “Unsystematic as a Mode of Command: Commanders and the Process of Command in the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917-1918,” *The Journal of Military History*, 64 (July 2000), pp. 739-768.

battalion, “owing to the peculiar conditions relating to strategy, tactics, and the service of supply” of the war in Europe. In the Thirty-Sixth Division, the two brigades were the 71st and 72nd Brigades. The Seventh Texas was placed in the 71st Brigade, which was commanded by the former Adjutant General of Texas, Brigadier General Henry Hutchings, who had received his commission as a general officer in the National Army on August 20, 1917, as had his colleague and commander of the 72nd Infantry Brigade, Brigadier General John A. Hulen. Each brigade also had a field artillery regiment as well as other support units, such as machine gun battalions, engineers, a supply train, and a “sanitary” or medical detachment.²⁰

General Hutchings’s 71st Brigade consisted of two infantry regiments, the 141st Infantry and the 142nd Infantry, while Hulen’s 72nd Brigade contained the 143rd and 144th Infantry regiments. Thus, instead of having a larger number of smaller infantry regiments as in the old organization, the new organization meant that each division had fewer regiments, and thus regiments had to be combined. This would turn out to cause a serious problem at Camp Bowie. In September of 1917, the War Department created the 141st, 143rd, and 144th Infantry Regiments by consolidating the existing Texas National Guard Infantry regiments. For example, the 141st was established by consolidating the First and Second Texas Infantry Regiments. However, the Seventh Texas was an odd numbered regiment and did not have another Texas unit to be combined with. In response, the War Department simply combined the Seventh Texas with the First Oklahoma to activate the 142nd. Thus, while most of the Texas National Guard infantry

²⁰ *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau*, 1918, 10; *Congressional Record*, Volume 55, part 6, 6199.

regiments were combined with relative ease and retained their character as Texas organizations, this could not occur with the Seventh Texas and First Oklahoma. Unknown to anyone at the time, combining units from different states quickly created a significant problem for the divisional leadership because it ended any chance that units from Texas and Oklahoma, which had been recruited on the basis of serving together, were not going to be combined and hence many believed that their state identity would be destroyed. Furthermore, the numerical designations of the units made state identification anonymous, and this upset members of both the Seventh Texas and the First Oklahoma. While both regiments were not happy about the consolidation, it appeared that the First Oklahoma felt more strongly about it. The highest ranking Oklahoma officer at Camp Bowie and the former commander of the First Oklahoma, Brigadier General Roy V. Hoffmann, allegedly “protested” the arrangement “vigorously to the War Department.” The *Dallas Morning News* reported that the combination brought a “storm of protest” and that members of the Oklahoma National Guard “have flooded the delegation in Congress seeking a reversal of the order.”²¹

Indeed, many in the First Oklahoma Infantry believed they would completely lose their state identity while the Texans would not. However, Captain Alonzo Drake of the Seventh Texas’s Childress Company rebutted that argument by pointing out that the Seventh Texas would not be unique to Texas anymore either. Regardless of how both units felt, the possibility that officers and men who had served together in the same local

²¹ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 31-33; C.H. Barnes, *History of the 142nd Infantry of the Thirty-Sixth Division, October 15, 1917 to June 17, 1919* (No city: Blackwell, 1920), 19; *Dallas Morning News*, September 27, 1917.

organization would be sheared away from the organizations they deeply identified with was not pleasant. However, because they had been “drafted” into federal service, they had truly ceased to be Texas and Oklahoma National Guardsmen any longer, whether they believed it or not.²²

A few local newspapers across northwest Texas commented about the proposed reorganization, although they did not always get the facts correct. For example, the *Wichita Daily Times* described the Seventh Texas as wholly at the whim of the commanding general of the Oklahoma National Guard, and commented that the Seventh Texas “will become virtually an Oklahoma organization with the senior officers Oklahomans.” However, the *Wichita Daily Times* also told its readership what it considered to be the major reason why the Seventh Texas was merged with the Oklahoma National Guard: “The Seventh Texas is the pick of the camp at Fort Worth, and the men are considered the best material available.” Therefore it was only natural since the “Texas companies have proven so desirable, they will be used to fill the gaps in the Oklahoma companies.” The article concluded, however, that the plan had not yet been decided. Two days later, after a “small delegation waited upon the high officials at Camp Bowie,” the delegation’s fears were assuaged when they were told that the Seventh Texas was to remain intact and that the officers would retain their ranks.²³

While a few local papers tried to follow the story and separate fact from fiction, rumors continued to swirl and the situation deteriorated. The order for the reorganization

²² White, *Panthers to Arrowhead*, 34; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 19; *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau*, 1918, 11.

²³ *Wichita Daily Times*, September 21, 23, 1917.

was effective October 1, 1917. However, the protests were strong enough that the War Department put the orders on hold at the end of September, which brought about “rejoicing” by some of the troops in the camp who believed they had won the fight and would maintain their state identity. However, the delay was short lived, and by early October the War Department announced that the reorganization of the division would occur on October 15. There was little that the soldiers could do about it.²⁴

In a final protest, Lt. Colonel Elta Jayne of the First Oklahoma took a ten-day leave of absence. This left Colonel Bloor, who as the new commander of the regiment could have benefited from Jayne’s presence, to work through the problem on his own. Bloor faced a tough challenge as the new commander of the Texas-Oklahoma regiment because the merger of the two units had seriously injured the morale of the new regiment. Bloor was left to figure out a way to ease the tension and make the transition as smooth as possible for his soldiers. Shortly after taking command, both Colonel Bloor and the highest ranking Oklahoma officer in the camp, General Roy Hoffman, held a meeting. In his speech, Hoffman urged the Oklahomans to obey their orders, to be friendly with the soldiers of the Seventh Texas, and to trust their new commander, whom he praised as “one of the best colonels in the American army.” Bloor spoke next, and welcomed the First Oklahoma. He took advantage of their experience by asked them to help make the inexperienced Texans into better soldiers, stating that “we want to make this the best regiment in camp.”²⁵

²⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 30, and October 3, 1917.

²⁵ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 34.

While Hoffman's and Bloor's pleas appeared to work, there were still more than 200 desertions, mainly from the ranks of the old First Oklahoma. Most of these men came back to Camp Bowie once their anger had cooled and resigned themselves to the reorganization. In an effort to be forgiving and yet to illustrate his control over the regiment, Colonel Bloor charged these men with being Absent without Leave (AWOL), and they were "tried and convicted by Summary Court and sentenced to be confined at hard labor for three months and to forfeit two-thirds of their pay per month for like period." Bloor then commuted the confinement portion of their sentences. After the war, the Oklahoma chaplain of the 142nd Infantry Regiment, Captain Charles H. Barnes, wrote that because of the merger, "Morale and discipline was stunned" and "torn to pieces." He noted that "friction existed and it took alert commanders to keep it at a minimum." Barnes, however, did praise Bloor's leadership, specifically for creating a regimental football team as a way to get the soldiers to believe in their unit and to take their minds off the reorganization. According to Barnes, the Texans and Oklahomans soon mingled together in their tents and "talked football." In fact, the 142nd Infantry worked its way to the Divisional Championship against the 111th Engineers, and although they lost, Barnes believed that the regimental football team served its purpose as the regiment was "first and last was engraved on the minds of all...and was a powerful factor in restoring the morale and discipline."²⁶

²⁶ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 35; NARA, RG391, Box2378, Doc File 10-499, 2nd Indorsement, Hq. 142nd Infantry to the Commanding General 71st Infantry Brigade, Oct 29, 1917; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 21-22.

Most of the papers in northwest Texas were quiet about the merger, and the *Wichita Daily Times* reported in early October that the Seventh Regiment had become part of the 142nd Infantry Regiment, stating that the only change to the Wichita Falls companies was that Lieutenant Gordon R. Porter had been shifted to Captain Barton's Amarillo Company, and Captain Duncan Perkins reported that the Wichita Falls men "well pleased with the consolidation." Although the reorganization turned out well in the end, some members of the regiment were not happy with the Army doing away with the National Guard organizations. In fact, many friends of the National Guard believed that the regular Army frequently slighted the Guard and Guard officers, and there was often a certain animosity between regular and Guard officers. However, to put an end to any continued political carping by friends of the National Guard, the War Department later issued General Orders No. 73 in 1918, which bluntly stated: "This country has but one army—the United States Army," and required all members of the United States Army to wear the insignia of the regular Army, and that all commissions regardless of the component for which they were granted would be recognized as commissions in the regular Army. Captain Ethan Simpson of Clarendon expressed pleasure with the order, writing to his wife from France that the order "was the wisest thing that has been done. It will do away with much jealousy and bickering."²⁷

²⁷ *Wichita Daily Times*, October 8, 1917; *Report of the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau*, 1918, 11; *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1917; This prejudice against National Guard officers was evident when Captain H.B. Gilstrap, an Oklahoma Guardsman and Company B commander, requested that Second Lieutenant Charles T. Forrester be reassigned from Company B because he displayed a "prejudice against the National Guard" and originally "declined assignment to the National Guard." Captain Gilstrap stated that Forrester's "permanent value to the company is limited." RG391, WWI-

Combining these two regiments brought about a number of changes to the old Seventh Texas and an entirely new organization from the commander to the individual companies, which were authorized to include 250 men instead of 150. As noted, each organization in the final regimental organization was created through consolidating the Seventh Texas and the First Oklahoma. For example, the regimental Headquarters Company consisted of Captain Wagstaff's Abilene company with the Headquarters Company of the First Oklahoma. Captain Graham's Foard County company also merged into the Headquarters Company. Captain Merrill's Lubbock Supply Company merged with the First Oklahoma Supply Company. As was the case with all the machine gun companies, Captain Tyler's company joined the regimental machine gun battalion. Of the twelve infantry companies, the first six (A, B, C, D, E, and F) were created by combining the twelve companies of the First Oklahoma Infantry, while the remaining six companies (G, H, I, K, L, and M) were formed from the Seventh Texas. Thus Company G consisted of the Amarillo and Childress companies; Company H from the Quanah and Clarendon companies, Company I from the Vernon company and the "surplus of the regiment;" Company K contained both Wichita Falls companies; Company L combined the Decatur and Cleburne companies; and Company M consisted of the Forth Worth and Denton companies. Of course, this consolidation and strengthening of the companies brought about changes in the regiment's officers. For example, in Company G, Captain Barton remained in command, and Company H remained under Captain Ethan A.

Organizational Records, 142nd Infantry, HDQRS Miscellaneous Correspondence, Box 2388, Memorandum From CO, Co. B, 142nd Infantry, to C.O., 142nd Infantry, subject: assignment of new officers, December 14, 1917.

Simpson. Captain William S. Key took over Company I. Key had commanded the Supply Company of the First Oklahoma, while the Company K commander was Wichita Falls Guardsman Captain Sneed Staniforth. Company L was commanded by Captain Steve Lillard, and Company M by Captain Noah Roark.²⁸

The reorganization left a number of officers who had recruited and commanded their local companies without a command, including Harry Baker of Vernon, Harold McGrath of Fort Worth, Homer T. Merrill of Lubbock, James E. Wiley of Quanah, Captain Alonzo Drake from Childress, who became regimental adjutant, and Clyde B. Graham of Crowell. These men were attached to the various companies, as were a number of the lieutenants from the local companies who were now considered “excess.” Unfortunately, it is unclear what determination was made in order to place the men in charge of the various consolidated companies. Besides the company grade officers, the regimental leadership changed as well. Although Colonel Bloor retained command, the two staffs had to be consolidated. Lt. Colonel Elta Jayne of the First Oklahoma became the second in command of the regiment, rather than Lt. Col. John Jennings.²⁹ Two of the battalion commanders from the Seventh Texas held onto their positions, Major William Culberson, who commanded the second battalion, and Major Alvin Owsley, who commanded the third. Command of the first battalion, however, shifted from Major

²⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, September 13, 1917; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 186, 244, 246-247.

²⁹ In one case, prior to the merger of the Seventh Texas and the First Oklahoma, several Oklahoma officers talked to Captain Tyler and Colonel Bloor about transferring the bugler of the Machine Gun Company, “Skeeter Herblin,” to the Oklahoma regiment. Apparently they were turned down, *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 16, 1917.

Davis Decker to Major John Alley, from the First Oklahoma. The Seventh Texas Infantry had fifty-five officers when it arrived at Camp Bowie in September of 1917. Forty-nine officers made the transition to the 142nd Infantry, 89 percent of the original complement. While this was only a small loss, it was a loss nevertheless, and only the first of many before the war ended.³⁰

Those officers of the old Seventh Texas who did not remain with the new 142nd included the former executive officer, Lt. Col. John Jennings, and battalion commander Major Davis Decker. At the company grade level, both Captain Eugene T. Underwood and Lt. Earl Litter, who raised the Cleburne company, left the regiment, as did Lt. Thomas Newsome of the Wise County company, and Lt. Gordon R. Porter of Wichita Falls. Lt. Col. Jennings was assigned as second in command of the 131st Field Artillery, and Major Davis remained in Texas with the Texas National Guard, was promoted to colonel and eventually resigned his commission in 1918. However, two of these officers, Lieutenants Earl Litter and Gordon R. Porter, were later reunited with the regiment in France.³¹

Other changes followed the reorganization of the regiment, including receiving several contingents of draftees. The first group of nearly 5,000 men arrived in November of 1917. These men were generally surplus draftees from Camp Travis and many of these men were from Texas and Oklahoma, although some did come from Iowa and Minnesota. As a case in point to illustrate how these new men could overwhelm the

³⁰ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 245-247.

³¹ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 214-217; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 32; *Dallas Morning News*, April 21, 1918.

existing organization, at one point Company E received 203 draftees. By May of 1918, the division received a second contingent of draftees, which further diluted the original core of the old Seventh Texas. However, this second contingent included 3,400 Oklahomans and 1,124 Texans, who were evidently able to fit in easily.³²

In spite of the influx of these soldiers during their time at Camp Bowie, the regiment continued its training program, and the regiment progressed rapidly. Drill remained the primary training method at Camp Bowie. In fact, General Greble issued a standing order that “every man who wears the khaki must drill a full day on all days that drill work is prescribed.” In truth, however, the regiment’s training was actually much broader than “drill,” as an outline of the first four months of training at Camp Bowie made clear. Indeed, the first month of training showed the wide range of new things the men learned, and included such things as the articles of war, the obligations and rights of the soldier, and guard duties. Bayonet and target drills began in the second week, and by the third week of training the men were exposed to whistle and arm signals, and first aid. At the conclusion of their first month, the soldiers underwent grenade training and gas warfare. This was followed by ever more detailed training until the men were ready for shipment to France. As for bayonet drills, one sergeant noted that the soldiers “are practiced in the art of thrusting and parrying” and had learned “to plunge their bayonet into a human body with ease and to withdraw it quickly by much practice on the straw men set up at the trenches.” Even map drawing was included in the training to help the

³² White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 40, 42-43; RG391, WWI-Organizational Records, 142nd Infantry, HDQRS Miscellaneous Correspondence, Box 2388, Drafted Men assigned to 142nd Infantry, no date.

soldiers scout terrain and find good campsites, which required them to indicate all “hills, hollows, ravines, streams, bridges, houses, trees, etc...” on the maps they drew by hand. The men received plenty of practice on their map skills as hikes twelve miles or longer were also a common feature of their daily life, like drill.³³

The men of the regiment also trained in the Camp Bowie trench system. The system included at least seven different trenches of varying sizes that the soldiers practiced attacking. They also had “endurance tests,” which were described by a Dallas sergeant as spending forty-eight hours in the trenches with no food and just one quart of water. Later, the men would have to crawl out and practice cutting and getting through wire entanglements “on some dark night when it is rainy and cold.” As the sergeant put it, “We’re going to have some sure enough training in these trenches.” Indeed, by the middle of October, the soldiers of the regiment were learning the art of trench digging.³⁴

Of course, not all of the training occurred in the trench system, drill field, or rifle range. The soldiers were given academic training in a wide variety of subjects. For example Colonel Bloor ordered 48 copies of the *Army Paper Work* manual, 750 copies of the *Privates Manual*, 232 copies of *Map Reading and Sketching for Non-Commissioned Officers*, 750 copies of the *Manual of Conversational French*, 106 copies of *Lessons in Visional Signaling*, and 7 copies of *Field Entrenchments*, among other works for the regiment’s non-commissioned officer school. Each company also purchased textbooks.

³³ *Dallas Morning News*, September 3, and October 3, 7, 1917; *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 4, 1917.

³⁴ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 5, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box2378 HQ Corr: Books and Doc File, Memo from: C.O. Sanitary Detachment, To: C.O. 142nd Infantry, Subject: Assignment of medical officer, Oct 17, 1917.

For example, Company D purchased thirty-five copies each of *First Lessons in Spoken French for Men in Military Service*, and *Le Soldat Americaine en France*. The division also opened schools at the camp to teach soldiers the “rudiments of French, mathematics, bookkeeping,” and “other commercial subjects,” with instructors from nearby Texas Christian University and Texas Wesleyan University.³⁵

A number of officers in the regiment also attended various schools away from Camp Bowie. Those selected for this ranged from Colonel Bloor down to the regiment’s most junior lieutenants. Many of the senior officers, including Colonel Bloor, attended the Brigade and Field Officers School at Fort Sam Houston or the School of “Fire” at Fort Sill, in Oklahoma. Some of the regiment’s officers also returned from schools they attended to find they had been appointed division instructors, such as lieutenants Bloor, Perrine, and Blue, who each received division instructor certificates. Bloor taught “automatic arms,” Blue taught “grenades,” but Perrine, who was qualified to teach “field fortifications,” was not used because there was no regimental school for field fortifications.³⁶

³⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, to Commanding General 36th Division, subject: Text Books for Non-commissioned officers school, October 27, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from C.O. Co. D, 142nd Infantry, to Commanding Officer 142nd Infantry, subject: Purchase of Text Books, October 27, 1917.

³⁶ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 66; RG 120, World War I Organizational Records, Records of the 36th Division, Box 12, 71st Brigade, 1st Indorsement, Headquarters, 71st Infantry Brigade, Camp Bowie, Texas, 23 Feb. 1918, to Commanding General, 36th Division, Camp Bowie, TX, “List of officers who have attended Infantry School of Arms.”

Like all military activities there was inherent danger in the Camp Bowie training. One officer of the 144th Infantry, Major Lloyd Hill, was hit in the leg by shrapnel from a shell that exploded prematurely, while another man from the 111th Engineers lost his right hand to a “smoke bomb” which also detonated early. However, the worst training accident at Camp Bowie happened to men of the old Seventh Texas. On May 8, 1918, a Stokes trench mortar shell exploded in Camp Bowie’s trench system during a major divisional exercise, killing eleven men and wounding six others, many of whom were from Abilene, including First Lieutenant Allen J. McDavid, who had played such an integral role in recruiting and organizing the company. Some of the men McDavid recruited into the Abilene company of the Texas National Guard also died with him that day. The explosion wiped out two gun crews, both of which belonged to Captain Wagstaff’s Headquarters Company. Six men, including McDavid, were killed instantly, their bodies “terribly mangled.” Corporal Alexander Hart was standing nearby and ducked when he heard someone shout “accident,” which he said was a good three seconds after the explosion. When he stood up, he turned and looked slightly behind him and saw one of his friends, Euclid Simmons, on his back, “his head in a pool of blood, and a gaping hole under his jaw.” It was at first thought that the explosion occurred after a Canadian instructor witnessed a soldier attempting to “force a three-inch shell into a trench mortar.” The instructor ran toward the gun crew trying to stop them when the shell went off. Other witnesses wondered if somehow two shells were put in the mortar. Whatever the theories, General Greble immediately convened an investigation board, and appointed General Hutchings as the investigation chairman. The board’s early reports

declared that the shell exploded for an “unknown cause,” although the board expressed confidence that the shell was not “defective.” Of course, that meant they believed human error to be the cause.³⁷

Although some of the men who were killed belonged to the 141st Infantry and not the old Seventh Texas, Taylor County suffered the greatest loss, losing four soldiers killed and three wounded. General Greble and some of his staff happened to be standing nearby when the explosion occurred, as were several officers’ wives. The guns had been fired throughout the day as part of a major exercise with no problems. Two days later, the *Abilene Reporter* noted that Lt. McDavid was standing five feet from the mortar when it exploded and that he had been performing a salute, which he apparently did every time the gun was fired. McDavid had been singled out by British instructors at the camp for his skill in handling the mortars and was reported to be in high spirits on the day of the accident, excited at the chance to prove what his soldiers could do with the weapons.³⁸

A few days after the accident, the people of Abilene mourned two of the dead soldiers, Corporal William J. Ellis, and Private Alfred J. Woodle, whose bodies were returned to Taylor County with an escort of the soldiers from the 142nd, most of whom were from Abilene. After the church service, the bodies were buried next to each other in the city cemetery, a 36-gun salute was rendered, and “Taps” drifted over the Abilene cemetery. Soldiers of the 142nd Infantry also escorted the bodies of other men who were

³⁷ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 64; *Abilene Reporter*, May 9, 10, 1918; *Dallas Morning News*, May 10, 1918; Archibald S. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vintage, 1969), 36.

³⁸ *Abilene Reporter*, May 9, 10, 1918.

killed to their homes. Captain Wagstaff and thirty soldiers escorted Lt. McDavid's body to his hometown of Overton, in East Texas, close to Tyler.³⁹

The author of the article in the *Abilene Reporter* covering the funerals of the soldiers concluded his piece by writing that he had chosen to “steal back to his office, and with doors locked, spend this hour in reflection, pondering over the significance of this first funeral service of two of our own Abilene boys.” The writer came to the conclusion that the dead soldiers “were our beacon lights to sacrifice and patriotism,” and that it should inspire “every man, woman, and child of Taylor County” to “do his duty to win this war.” Thus, one of the communities of the old Seventh Texas was introduced to the reality of World War I before their soldiers had even left the state, much less American soil. Perceptive members of the community might have realized that many, many more funerals for Taylor County soldier boys could be held before the war was over.⁴⁰

While it is clear that the men at Camp Bowie underwent rigorous training as the months passed, rumors circulated that Camp Bowie training was easier than other camps. Many of the rumors started at San Antonio's Camp Travis, where the draftees trained. Indeed, the rumors again illustrated the undercurrent of animosity regular officers frequently displayed toward National Guard officers. The rumors developed because West Point graduates trained the soldiers at Camps Travis and MacArthur and they believed that many Camp Bowie the officers had received their positions through “political pulls.” According to the rumors, the training at Camp Bowie was “a huge

³⁹ *Abilene Reporter*, May 10, 1918.

⁴⁰ *Abilene Reporter*, May 10, 1918.

joke,” and stories circulated that Camp Bowie soldiers were “their own instructors and go and come at will.” Also according to the rumors, Camp Bowie discipline would not be “tolerated for a minute” at Camp Travis or Waco’s Camp MacArthur. While such rumors were untrue, it is not difficult to imagine the West Point graduates belittling National Guard officers and questioning their competence.⁴¹

While the regiment continued to train, Colonel Bloor and his staff were absorbed with the complex task of overseeing the organization and showing that they were competent and professional. Most of these tasks were administrative in nature, and involved approving or disapproving transfers of soldiers to other units, discharging soldiers, taking care of various training problems, or handling various personnel issues, and of course, discipline. The regimental staff handled all requests for leave from the officers of the regiment and the officers came and went throughout their stay at Camp Bowie. For example, Captain Wagstaff requested and received two days of leave to return to Abilene “on account of important business,” and Colonel Bloor’s younger brother, Bertram, received leave for five days to “settle up with my tenants for the past year and to make arrangements for the coming year.”⁴²

Requests for discharges were not granted as easily as leave, however, as the case of Private Ellis A. Richardson of Company E illustrates. Ellis requested a discharge on

⁴¹ *Wise County Messenger*, March 1, 1918.

⁴² NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from R.M. Wagstaff to Commanding General 36th Division, subject: Leave of Absence, November 2, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378, HQ Corr and Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from Second Lieutenant Bertram H. Bloor to Commanding General, 36th Division, subject: Leave, November 19, 1917.

the grounds that he was under age at the time of his enlistment. The company commander approved the request; Colonel Bloor forwarded it to the division, where it was summarily disapproved with the statement: "This man is now over 18 years of age."⁴³ On the other hand, Private Henry Montgomery received a discharge because his father had become "wholly dependent" on him.⁴⁴ As for transfers, when each request came in, the company commander had to endorse it and forward it to Colonel Bloor's staff, who then recommended approval or disapproval before forwarding the request to the division. Individuals wanted transfers for a variety of reasons, including a better chance at promotion, the opportunity to serve with a relative, or because they had specialized experience that could be put to use in a different organization. For example, Private Jesse Alexander was allowed to transfer companies because he was "a full-blood Cherokee Indian and cannot speak or understand the English language." He had friends in Company E who spoke both languages, which he believed would allow him to "learn my duties more easily." At least one officer who was part of the original Seventh Texas requested a transfer as well. Captain Homer T. Merrill, who organized the Lubbock company, had lost his position when 142nd Infantry was established. He applied to General Greble for a transfer to the Aviation Corps, writing that he had "considerable experience with gasoline engines" and was "a fair mechanic." He also wrote that he had

⁴³ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from Private Ellis A. Richardson, to Commanding General 36th Division, subject: Application for discharge, November 1, 1917.

⁴⁴ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from Private Henry A. Montgomery, to Commanding General 36th Division, subject: request for discharge, November 1, 1917.

“steady nerves” and was “very anxious to transfer.” Colonel Bloor, in his endorsement of the application, wrote that Merrill was “a very industrious young officer” and thought he could “render valuable service in the Aviation Section.” While waiting for his transfer to be approved, Captain Merrill served as a court martial judge for the regiment. General Greble eventually approved Merrill’s transfer and he spent the rest of the war at San Antonio’s Kelly Field where he served as paymaster, overseeing a payroll valued at \$150,000 per month.⁴⁵

On the other hand, Private Waldo Burch’s transfer request was disapproved because he talked directly to another unit without “permission from his commanding officer or without even apprising me of his wish for a transfer.”⁴⁶ Two other men were turned down in their request for transfer to the Signal Corps because, as their company commander put it, “there is some mistake about these men possessing special

⁴⁵ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, HQ Corr: Books and Doc File, Memorandum from Private Paul K. Fancher to Commanding General, 36th Division, Requesting Transfer, Oct 28, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Hq Corr and Doc File, 10-499, Memorandum from Pvt Jesse Alexander, to Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, subject: Request for Transfer, November 21, 1917; Memorandum from H.T. Merrill, to Commanding General 36th Division, subject: Assignment to Aviation Corps, November 9, 1917, and 4th Indorsement, from Hq. 142nd Infantry to Commanding General 36th Division, November 19, 1917; Captain Merrill’s name appears on a number of charge sheets with a signature line as “Captain, 142nd Infantry, Summary Court,” throughout December 1917-February, 1918, RG391, WWI-Organizational Records, 142nd Infantry, box2387, Charge Sheets; Memorandum, City of San Antonio, From Mayor O.B. Black to Homer T. Merrill, June 30, 1921, Homer T. Merrill Papers, 1899-1964, Folder: Correspondence, 1912-1927, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

⁴⁶ NARA, RG391, HQ Corr: Books and Doc File, Box 2378, Fourth Endorsement, from Company B, 142nd Infantry to C.O. 142nd Infantry, October 29, 1917.

qualifications for signal corps work, as they are both farm hands in civil life.”⁴⁷

Occasionally, men transferred as a group. For example, in October of 1917, Colonel Bloor’s staff transferred a number of men who had “indicated their desire to join” the Ordnance Department. However, tying in with another issue that Bloor had to deal with on a frequent basis, not all of the men showed up to their new unit on time and one of them was classified as being AWOL.⁴⁸

Absences without leave appeared to be a fairly common infraction, and instances occurred from the very beginning of the Seventh Texas’ time at Camp Bowie, when Colonel Bloor secured the aid of Wichita Falls sheriff George Hawkins in tracking down six men from the regiment just one week after the regiment arrived in Fort Worth. Even though soldiers committed these lapses in judgment, some felt guilty about what they had done and wanted to clear not only themselves but also make sure their home communities did not get a bad reputation. Such was the case of Decatur resident Private Floyd G. Fowler, who published a statement in the *Wise County Messenger* refuting an insinuation that he had deserted from the army. As Fowler put it, “I took a little trip to enjoy a little life.” Claiming that he never took off his uniform, he wrote that he “was sorry that this

⁴⁷ NARA, RG391, Doc File, 10-499, 2nd Indorsement, from Company B, 142nd Infantry to Commanding General 36th Division (Through Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry), no date.

⁴⁸ NARA, RG391, Headquarters Correspondence: Books and Doc file, Box 2378, Memorandum From: Camp Ordnance Officer, To: Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, Subject: Failure of enlisted men to report for duty with Ordnance Detachment, Oct 26, 1917.

report has gotten out that I am a deserter. I am going back to camp and make one of the best soldier boys Decatur has ever had.”⁴⁹

Indeed, Colonel Bloor was constantly ordering individual soldiers to various parts of Texas and Oklahoma to bring back men who were listed as AWOL, such as Sergeant Corley Smart of Company K, who was dispatched to Clinton, Oklahoma to retrieve six men from Company A. Smart was apparently tough enough that he could handle these six soldiers on his own and bring them back to Fort Worth. In another instance, Sergeant Alvin O. White travelled to Slayton, Texas, not far from Lubbock, in search of Private M.J. Foreman of Company G. White returned without the prisoner, however, and informed Colonel Bloor that Foreman was in a Lubbock hospital with pneumonia, and that the “doctor states his chances for recovery are slim.”⁵⁰ However, most of these cases went smoothly, although the sheriff in Seymour, Texas wrote to Colonel Bloor in September asking for a reward of \$150 for the “apprehension, arrest, conveyance and delivery to your Lieutenant Colonel John D. Jennings,” of three deserters from the Seventh Texas. The sheriff claimed that Jennings told him he would “immediately send me the papers, upon which I might procure my money,” but nothing had arrived. Bloor did not reply until October 22, when he sent the sheriff a voucher “in payment of your services.” Most of the soldiers who went AWOL were tried by court martial when they returned. The men who went AWOL over combining the two regiments were required to

⁴⁹ *Wichita Daily Times*, September 13, 1917; *Wise County Messenger*, February 15, 1918.

⁵⁰ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, HQ Corr and Doc File, 10-499, Memorandum from Company G, 142nd Infantry, to Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, subject: Private Merton B. Foreman, November 27, 1917.

“drill during portions of the drill period and perform hard labor during balance of day.”

The AWOL soldiers were also sent on a sixteen-mile “practice march,” with a prison officer and fifteen guards.⁵¹

While it was generally enlisted men who were absent without leave, occasionally an officer of the regiment was charged with being AWOL, as was the case with Captain Clifford Childers, a former member of the First Oklahoma Infantry. Bloor gave the officer the opportunity to respond to the charges. In his explanation, which by its tone suggests that Childers did not take the charges too seriously, he explained that he had planned to return before reveille on the morning of November 1, but that “circumstances arose that prevented it.” Childers then wrote that “those circumstances were none other than a sudden decision to get married,” followed by two days of apartment hunting in Fort Worth. Childers claimed that asking for leave would have “caused delay in the arrangements and probable defeat of the opportunity” as his “bride to be” would have left for Seattle. How Colonel Bloor responded to Childers’s explanation for his absence is not known. Whether Bloor considered this a challenge to his authority and the ultimate disposition of the case is not known. However, when the regiment went into action in France, Childers was no longer with the regiment.⁵²

⁵¹ NARA, RG 391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Special Order No. 50, October 22, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378 HQ Corr: Books and Doc File, Letter from J.B. Self to Colonel A.W. Bloor, September 29, 1917, and Memorandum from A.W. Bloor to J.B. Self, Subject: Payment of Reward for apprehension of Deserters, October 22, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, 2nd Indorsement, Hq. 142d Infantry to the Commanding General 71st Infantry Brigade, Oct 29, 1917.

⁵² RG391, HQ Doc File 500-1150, Memorandum from Captain Clifford Childers to Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, subject: Statement to accompany charges, November 19, 1917; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 344-347.

While AWOL cases took much attention, a look at the typical strength returns of the regiment illustrates the smaller scope of the problem in a regiment of more than 2,000 men. It was not nearly as great a problem as it might sound. For example, personnel strength returns of the regiment for the week of January 28, 1918, through February 2, 1918, are available, except for Company G, which at the time was “on duty at training school.” These returns not only place absences without leave in context of the entire regiment, but also serve to demonstrate the fluid nature of the regiment’s time at Camp Bowie because of the near constant fluctuations in the regiment’s total personnel as soldiers came and went for various reasons. First, during the week mentioned, there were a total of 304 reported unauthorized absences from the regiment. At first glance, this looks large, and might be interpreted as a discipline problem. However, when averaged out among the strength of the regiment, the numbers were not as serious as they might appear. For example, on Monday, January 28, the regiment reported a total strength of 2,822 men, of whom 77 were reported as AWOL, a figure that equated to 3 percent of the regiment, and that was the highest figure for the week. For the rest of the week, the AWOL figures ranged between 1 and 3 percent of the regiment per day, surely not an unmanageable figure. It appeared that Company E reported the largest single number of unauthorized absences during that week, with thirty unauthorized absences reported on the evening of January 28, 1918, and thirty-five on Tuesday morning.⁵³

⁵³ NARA, RG391, Box 2394, Machine Gun Company, Correspondence, Doc. File, and Sick Reports, Strength Returns for the Week of January 28, 1918-February 2, 1918.

Furthermore, the strength returns for that week illustrate the fluid nature of the regiment as soldiers came and went either through discharges, transfers, or attendance at various military schools. On Monday, January 28, the regiment's strength was reported at 2,822 men. The next day, it was 2,756 men, and by the end of the week on Saturday, the regiment's strength was listed as 2,761 men. Thus, there was a daily fluctuation in the strength of the regiment. This also extended to the line companies, as the average strength of the companies during the week ranged between 212 to 217 soldiers. However, some companies, such as the machine gun company, remained constant at 160 soldiers, while Headquarters Company and Company E were the largest companies with strengths of 250 and 240 respectively.⁵⁴

For the most part, the soldiers of the old Seventh Texas performed well, although it was clear there were always going to be times when the men grew tired of what they were doing, especially after the newness of training camp life had worn off and they still had no idea when they going to France. This growing boredom led to more infractions, although most were minor and some humorous. Such was the case of Private Jim Herblin of Gainesville, who received two hours of extra guard duty because he ate more than three plates of beans. Apparently this was okay with Herblin as a local reporter wrote of him: "he will march for four hours if they let him eat all he wants." Herblin later earned a commission and served continued to serve in the Thirty-Sixth Division.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ NARA, RG391, Box 2394, Machine Gun Company, Correspondence, Doc. File, and Sick Reports, Strength Returns for the Week of January 28, 1918-February 2, 1918.

⁵⁵ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 16, 1917.

Colonel Bloor also had his own difficulties in training a regiment of two thousand soldiers, and occasionally had to explain various problems to his commanding officer, General Hutchings, or even to General Greble. However, it appeared that problems that reached these senior officers did not, in the end, reflect poorly on Colonel Bloor's leadership and managerial skills, but instead illustrated the nature and difficulty in training a large group of men who had recently been civilians into skilled soldiers. Sometimes there were simply mental lapses, as when one of the battalions of the regiment which was scheduled to train in the trench system failed to show up. Unfortunately, the battalion commander simply forgot about it, "his mind being occupied with the fire which occurred in this regiment at an early hour this morning." In his explanation to General Greble, Colonel Bloor wrote that he "regretted exceedingly this seemingly inexcusable failure to comply with instructions, and am sure it will not occur again."⁵⁶

A clear example of the difficulties Bloor faced in turning recent civilians into soldiers occurred on the night of November 8, 1917, when Captain Noah Roark of Company M served as Field Officer of the Day. Part of his duties required him to inspect the brigade area and file a report with the brigade commander. His report, written the next day, began ominously by pointing out that five prisoners escaped from the guardhouse of the 142nd Infantry. The report also described the lax attitude of the guards. At 2:30 am, Roark visited the guardhouse and found the officer of the guard and sergeant of the guard absent. Roark noted that the sentry he did talk to "did not even present arms

⁵⁶ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, From Hq., 142nd Infantry to Commanding General 36th Division, October 29, 1917.

when I approached. He did come to Port Arms while I was talking to him.” In his report, Roark noted that the prisoners in the guard house “seem to consider their imprisonment as sort of a holiday,” as they were provided with “cards, dice, smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco and other conveniences for their enjoyment.” Roark also drove an automobile through the brigade area at 1:00 am without being stopped by any sentries he passed. In his report, Roark noted that few of the sentries on duty could repeat the General Orders and only a few could tell him what they were supposed to do in case a fire started. When he asked a sentry why the man allowed Roark to drive through the area without stopping him, the soldier responded that “he had only received orders to stop people on foot or horseback and had no orders with reference to people in automobiles.” As if that were not enough, Roark reported that he arrived at brigade headquarters and found the sentry “sitting down on the running board of an automobile where he remained until I requested him to rise and assume the proper position.” At the conclusion of his report, which clearly indicated a lax attitude on the part of the regimental guard, Roark did not recommend filing charges against the guards who allowed the five prisoners to escape because “there were no lights in the rear of the guard house,” and the guards could not see the men escaping.⁵⁷

Roark was obligated to forward the report to General Hutchings, who quickly dispatched an angry letter to Colonel Bloor, writing that “Guard houses are not to be turned into pleasure resorts” and prisoners were not to be given “sufficient entertainment to alleviate the mental anguish caused by separation from their comrades who may be

⁵⁷ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, Memorandum from Noah Roark to Brigadier General Henry Hutchings, subject: report of Tour of Duty, November 9, 1917.

then on the drill field.” Hutchings told Bloor in no uncertain terms that “stringent measures will at once be adopted by you to correct the lax condition into which guard duty has been allowed to lapse in your command.” Furthermore, Hutchings demanded daily written reports “as to the deplorable conditions now existing until such time as guard duty in this brigade can be looked upon with pride instead of with disgust.” There is no record if this strongly worded admonishment was sent to the commander of the 141st Regiment as well, although it most likely was.⁵⁸

Colonel Bloor could do little except to assure General Hutchings that the requirements of the “manual for interior guard duty are being strictly complied with and in addition thereto a Field Officer has been appointed to instruct the guard.” Colonel Bloor ended by writing Hutchings that “Guard Duty has at all times been given special attention by me,” and every effort was being made to ensure the officers and men understood the importance of it. Although the soldiers caused some trouble for their commanding officer, most came to respect him. Members of Company K considered Bloor “Grade A,” and as Corporal Hart wrote, Bloor was athletic enough that he “might have played the outfield alongside [Ty] Cobb or [Tris] Speaker.”⁵⁹

While most of the soldiers of the Seventh Texas were not far removed from their homes while at Camp Bowie, an element of homesickness emerged for many of the lower ranking soldiers. However, many officers were able to bring their families with them.

⁵⁸ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, Memorandum from Commanding General, 71st Infantry Brigade to Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, November 9, 1917.

⁵⁹ NARA, RG391, Box 2378, 1st Indorsement, from Hq. 142nd Infantry, to Commanding General 71st Infantry Brigade, November 9, 1917; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 19.

For example, Captain Steve Lillard's wife and daughter were featured on the front page of the *Wise County Messenger* under the headline, "Former Decatur citizens residing in Fort Worth until husband and father sails for battlefield." In fact, the issue was important enough that General Hutchings wanted to know where every officer's wife was living. Of thirty-three married officers in the regiment, twenty-two, including Colonel Bloor, brought their wives to Fort Worth.⁶⁰

On the other hand, some men married while they were at camp, such as Private Charlie McDonald of the Seventh Texas, who married a local woman in September of 1917. Indeed, the Fort Worth County Clerk's office reported that in September of 1916, only 154 marriage licenses were issued, but in September of 1917, the number was 255. The County Clerk believed the increase was "due to the activity of Dan Cupid among the soldiers of Camp Bowie." It was also reported that while a number of men married local girls, other brides had come "from a distance" perhaps knowing that if not then, they might never get married. Dan Cupid was also busy in nearby Dallas, which noted that more than half of the 453 marriage licenses granted in December of 1917 were "taken out by soldiers from camps at Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Waco."⁶¹

While the soldiers of the Seventh Texas developed relationships with the local Fort Worth community, the communities that they came from continued to find ways to support "their" soldiers, as they had since they first arrived. For example, residents of

⁶⁰ *Wise County Messenger*, January 18, 1917; RG 391, Memorandum from Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, to Commanding General, 71st Infantry Brigade, Subject: Addresses of Officers' wives, November 23, 1917.

⁶¹ *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, October 1, 1917, and January 3, 1918.

Wichita Falls started a campaign to provide Wichita Falls soldiers with winter clothing as the winter of 1917 got closer. The local Red Cross chapter chairwoman, Willie Kell, visited the soldiers in late October and reported that the camp was on a “windswept hill.” She urged soldiers’ relatives to make one winter shirt each for the Wichita Falls soldier boys. Soon, the efforts of the Red Cross expanded beyond the needs of the Wichita Falls soldiers and included the camp hospital. The Wichita Falls Red Cross chapter ended up sending five boxes of “bedding and other hospital supplies” to the camp in the first week of December and a week later had sent a total of three shipments, while the Cleburne Rotary Club donated 100 blankets. Even these efforts by local Red Cross chapters were not enough. General Greble printed an urgent request in local newspapers for 25,000 “comforts” for the soldiers. The Red Cross field director at Camp Bowie also attempted to allay any fears of government negligence in supplying the soldiers, claiming that “the boys in Camp Bowie had exactly the same equipment as those in New York and other northern camps,” and that the need for the supplies was because of the large number of Texas soldiers from south and east Texas who “had never become inured to cold winters, and simply could not stand it.” On the other hand, a large shipment of winter clothing arrived in Galveston and was transferred to six railroad cars and rushed to Fort Worth on the same day that the Red Cross Field Director offered his rationale for General Greble’s plea. Perhaps in rebuttal to the Field Director’s comment that Camp Bowie had the same equipment as northern ones, the Wichita Falls Red Cross chapter received a telegram of

thanks from the Camp Bowie Quartermaster Department, which stated “the government is *now shipping here* sufficient comforts to provide one for each man...” (Italics added).⁶²

While many of the supplies sent by local communities were for all members of the division, especially the sick soldiers who benefited from 225 jars of jelly sent by Cleburne residents, some residents simply wanted to help a single soldier from their community. Such was the case of a woman close to Abilene who wanted the address of Private Chesley Gore, also from Abilene, whose mother had died. This lady wrote to the Chief of Staff, stating that “as I have no boy in the war I want to take care of some motherless boy and send him boxes of good things to eat.” Whether she ever connected with Private Gore is not known. However, the urge to maintain a connection between the people in the local communities and the soldiers at the camp remained strong.⁶³

Of course, throughout their time at Camp Bowie, the soldiers found relaxation in the city of Fort Worth. But before they could enjoy everything that Fort Worth offered, they needed to be paid. Indeed, men of the Seventh Texas appeared to be jealous when two Texas cavalry units were paid on September 12. Some of the men of the Seventh Texas thought the First Texas Cavalry was paid \$40,000, while the Fifth Texas Cavalry earned \$73,000, which was surely a miscalculation. Just a few days later, however, soldiers of the Seventh Texas finally received their first payday at Camp Bowie. A member of the company quipped in a letter that they were expecting to get “the cool

⁶² *Wichita Daily Times*, November 1, 4, and December 2, 9, 10, 21, 1917.

⁶³ *Dallas Morning News*, December 16, 1917; NARA, RG391, Box 2378, HQ Corr books and Doc File 10-499, letter from Mrs. Lutella B. Fuller to Chief of Staff, Camp Bowie, October 15, 1917.

dimes about Monday evening.” However, even by September 21, some companies such as Captain Wagstaff’s men from Abilene, had failed to receive their pay and were desperate even to buy matches for their cigarettes.⁶⁴

As a general practice, fifteen percent of each company in the regiment was allowed to go into town each night during the week after the evening meal, although they had to be back by 11:00 p.m. each evening. A reporter for the *Clarendon News* described how a group of soldiers went on their leave: “Those going to town are lined up and inspected, and only after each individual is found to be faultless as to dress and personal appearance, and has shown himself to be able to repeat the orders of the day, is allowed to enjoy his coveted trip to town.” The men then climbed aboard a streetcar that took them “swiftly” to Main Street, where they were “emptied into that surging stream of humanity on pleasure bent that nightly rolls up and down that busy street.”⁶⁵

Much like the relationship the members of the old Seventh Texas had with their local communities, the same situation existed on a much larger scale between Camp Bowie and the city of Fort Worth, whose residents hatched numerous plans to entertain the thousands of Camp Bowie soldiers who visited the city on leave. For example, “block” parties were held where residents would open their homes to any soldier who wished to “get acquainted.” These block parties often included a street dance as well as card games and other things to help soldiers pass their free time. Dozens of churches, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Salvation Army, the Hebrew Institute,

⁶⁴ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 12, 16, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, September 24, 1917.

⁶⁵ *Clarendon News*, October 5, 1917.

and numerous athletic programs were just a few of the opportunities that the soldiers could enjoy when they were not training. The city also donated the use of Trinity Park to the soldiers for their duration in Camp Bowie, free admission was given for local horse shows, and movie theaters frequently provided free admission on weekends.⁶⁶

Members of the regiment also came up with their own entertainment, as when the Texas officers of the regiment held a “dinner dance” at the Metropolitan Hotel, in honor “of the Oklahoma officers of this regiment.” The band of the former First Oklahoma Infantry was used as well. Interestingly, this dance might be seen as a way for the officers of the regiment, which had been combined just two weeks prior, as a way to get to know their colleagues better and smooth over any bad feelings that might have remained.⁶⁷

While the officers held dances, members of the regiment found other ways to amuse themselves. Sergeant A.G. Poe won a contest by coming up with the most original name for the Camp Newspaper, *The Camp Bugler*, which won him \$100 and a record player for his company. On the other hand, a number of Captain Tyler’s Gainesville soldiers enjoyed watching a lieutenant try to ride a horse. The lieutenant was not well-versed in horseback riding and was thrown so high that he got “an aeronaut’s view of Camp Bowie.” True to their rural northwest Texas roots, one of the men “hopped onto the outlaw and showed the spectators how a Cooke County boy can ride a government

⁶⁶ *Abilene Reporter*, August 21, 1917; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 75, 77; *Dallas Morning News*, September 1, 1917.

⁶⁷ NARA, RG391, HQ Corr: Books and Doc File, From: Adjutant, 142nd Infantry, to Commanding General 36th Division, subject: dance music, October 30, 1917.

broncho [sic].” Further proving their ability with horses, two men in the supply company, “Baby Jim” Bush and Bill Emerson “eared” a recalcitrant mule and turned the animal into a “pet.” Later, “Baby Jim” Bush was appointed guardian of the unit’s mascot pup, “Texas,” and he spent hours trying to teach the dog to stand at attention and salute Lt. Thomas D. Mitchell whenever he passed. Although the Seventh Texas was an infantry regiment, they did receive their share of horses and mules. For example, the machine gun company was assigned “several teams of horses” and planned to use “its share of saddle horses.” However good the men were with amusing themselves with horses and mules, it did not necessarily transfer to taking care of the animals according to government standards. After an inspection at the end of October, Colonel Bloor had to explain dirty harnesses and uncared for animals, writing that “a determined effort has been, and is still being, made in this regiment to properly care for all animals, and to that end an officer is required to be present at stables and I make frequent personal inspections of corrals at stables and at reveille.”⁶⁸

Of course, alcohol and prostitution were problems for the division throughout its stay at Camp Bowie. For example, there were approximately 178 saloons in Fort Worth in 1917 as well as a large and “growing number of bootleggers.” Although rumors circulated that “wagon loads” of drunk soldiers were returned each night to Camp Bowie, conditions were not quite so bad, although soldiers were arrested nearly every night. Of course, the 142nd Infantry and members of the old Seventh Texas were not exempt from

⁶⁸ *Gainesville Daily Register*, September 12, 16, 18, 1917; *Abilene Reporter*, September 25, 1917; RG391, Box 2378, Doc File 10-499, 2nd Indorsement, Hq. 142nd Infantry to the Commanding General 71st Infantry Brigade, October 29, 1917.

these vices. For example, a number of the regiment's soldiers were arrested for drinking and fighting, including one soldier who purchased a pint of whiskey for two dollars and who "was willing to plead guilty to drinking the whiskey, but I remember nothing of the circumstances of the fight." The investigating officer, Lt. Clark Owsley of Denton, laconically wrote that "the only extenuating circumstance is that the accused appears to have been drunk." In another case, police arrested a soldier from the regiment for "affray and drinking" in a Fort Worth hotel, and in Dallas, a city detective charged two men of the regiment with "attempted auto theft," although there were no other details on the case.⁶⁹

By February of 1918, General Greble had instigated a "morality campaign" in an attempt to dramatically limit the sale of alcohol and stop prostitution. Interestingly, historian Lonnie White argued that Greble's campaign was undertaken not because of horrendous conditions, but because Secretary of War Newton Baker and Raymond Fosdick of the Commission on Training Camp Activities forced his hand by making it a national issue. Eventually, Governor William Hobby stated that he was aware that "the traffic of liquor and prostitution among the peddlers of both has in the vicinity of certain army camps in Texas reached alarming proportions," and led the way in introducing legislation in the Texas legislature to ban the sale of alcohol within ten miles of any

⁶⁹ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 71; NARA, RG391, Doc File 10-499, 1st Indorsement, Hq. 142nd Infantry to the Commanding General 36th Division, October 29, 1917; 3rd Indorsement, Hq. 142nd Infantry to the Comdg. Gen'l 36th Division, November 10, 1917, doc 364.

military camp in Texas, which was passed. By late April of 1918, Fort Worth garnered a reputation as the “cleanest city morally in the Southwest.”⁷⁰

The camp also suffered from much sickness, including an epidemic of Spanish Influenza and quite a few cases of pneumonia, which occurred as early as October of 1917, and continued through the winter. At its highest point, in November of 1917, the camp hospital reported 1,867 patients, although capacity at the time was just 1,000 patients, and normal occupancy was 800. As a result of these diseases affecting thousands of soldiers at many of the training camps, the Surgeon General of the Army Major General William C. Gorgas toured many of the camps, arriving at Camp Bowie in early December to investigate health conditions there. On the day General Gorgas visited the base hospital, it still held 1,440 soldiers. General Gorgas met privately with Governor Hobby, who was also in Fort Worth, and then reported to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Tasker H. Bliss, that over the previous month the camp had suffered 2,900 cases of measles and 409 of pneumonia, which had resulted in 41 deaths. However, his inspection resulted in the base hospital eventually receiving a new sewer system, hot baths, and more doctors and nurses, although repairs were not completed until February. Furthermore, he wanted 3,000 more tents for the camp so that there would be fewer men per tent. Before General Gorgas departed Fort Worth, he dismissed suggestions that “German intrigue” lay behind the pneumonia epidemic in the southern camps. Despite General Gorgas’s efforts, Texas Congressmen James C. Wilson, John N. Garner, and Tom Connally expressed concern about the camp conditions. During

⁷⁰ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 72-74; *Dallas Morning News*, February 16, 1918; Richard F. Selcer, *Hell’s Half Acre* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 1991).

Gorgas's visit, at least twenty-five men died of pneumonia in the camp, although none were reported from the 142nd Infantry. The average age of the soldiers who died in those two days was just twenty-two years old.⁷¹

The epidemic did affect the regiment however. For example, three of Captain Simpson's men returned to the company while they waited for their discharges, "on account of tuberculosis of the lungs." Simpson did not want these men living in tents and using the same mess hall with soldiers who were not sick, and he requested that the men remain at the hospital until their discharges were finalized. Unfortunately, it is not known how this particular incident turned out, but the sick men were probably not allowed to stay with Company H.⁷²

The pneumonia epidemic, however, did not prevent the commanding general of the division from authorizing a Christmas furlough for approximately 50 percent of the men at the Camp, which equated to about 13,000 soldiers. Greble also ended a medical quarantine of the camp on December 18, 1917. As Christmas got closer, it was reported that soldiers with furloughs were "leaving as rapidly as they can get away from the camp and obtain railway accommodations." The soldiers who remained at the camp were those "with no home ties" or soldiers whose relatives lived nearby in Fort Worth. Thus, while thousands of soldiers could look forward to Christmas with their friends and families,

⁷¹ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 58-59; *Dallas Morning News*, December 3, 4, 5, 6, 30, 1917.

⁷² NARA, RG391, Box 2378, HQ Corr and Do File 10-499, Memorandum from C.O. Co. H, 142nd Infantry to C.O. 142 Infantry, subject: Member of Company H, 142, returned to duty from base hospital for surgeon's certificate of disability on account of Tuberculosis of the lungs, November 7, 1917.

there were still 1,200 patients in the hospital, many of whom “were struggling to retain their hold on life.” For the men in camp, Christmas day must have been lonely, as the *Dallas Morning News* reported that the camp was “almost deserted” on Christmas except for guards and medical personnel. The paper reported that “the few soldiers who remained at the camp spent the time within their tents.” However, there were two bright spots at the Camp. The Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and the Isabella Cottage provided dinner for “many parents and their sons.” At the YWCA, the families ate their Christmas dinner next to a large fire in the cafeteria. Furthermore, just after Christmas, the local papers announced that the health situation at the camp was improving and that the death rate had declined from eight men per day to two per day.⁷³

Finally, one of the most important interactions between the Camp Bowie soldiers and the citizens of Forth Worth revolved around the major parades and reviews that occurred. In one instance, General Hutchings’s Seventy-First Brigade, which consisted of the 141st and 142nd Infantry, were chosen to parade in front of Governor Hobby and Oklahoma Governor Robert L. Williams for the opening of the camp rifle range on November 21, 1917. As the *Dallas Morning News* reported, the “soldiers of the two states in company formation went swinging by, and that the review “was conducted with true military precision.” The paper also estimated that between 10,000 and 30,000 people watched the parade and wholeheartedly gave vent to their approval. After the parade,

⁷³ Lonnie White pointed out that about 1,000 soldiers went AWOL for Christmas. Unfortunately, it is not clear how many of these men were from the 142nd Infantry, or the old Seventh Texas, Lonnie White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 60-61; *Dallas Morning News*, December 16, 26, 1917.

both Governor Hobby and Fort Worth Mayor W.D. Davis drew parallels with the military history of the state and drawing on its military tradition. Hobby said that “when I see the proud stride and flashing eyes of these young soldiers I am reminded of the heroes of San Jacinto,” while Mayor Davis drew on his roots as a son of a Confederate veteran. He was glad to “see the sons of men who followed the Union flag and those who followed the Stars and Bars fighting side by side for a common cause.”⁷⁴

A review of the entire Division occurred in February of 1918. However, while the division engaged in a number of parades and reviews, the most impressive one occurred in April of 1918, and was declared “a parting gift to the people of Texas and Oklahoma,” although the division still did not know when it was leaving for France. For this massive parade, an estimated crowd of 150,000 and 225,000 people watched the division march through Fort Worth. The parade itself consisted of at least 25,000 men, 5,000 animals and 1,200 vehicles, and lasted for three hours.⁷⁵

When the soldiers of the division returned from their Christmas furloughs, the training program resumed where it left off, although the men caught a break in late January when a snowstorm prevented the soldiers from outdoor drilling and training. Instead, they spent the day “tossing snowballs, shoveling snow, cutting wood and feeding the fires in the camp stoves,” after they awoke to find four inches of snow covering the camp. The men also used their energy in “bloodless battles, in which snowballs instead

⁷⁴ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 82; *Dallas Morning News*, November 22, 1917.

⁷⁵ It was reported that Governor Hobby was persuaded to take a few shots at the rifle range and scored a “bull’s eye” from 1,000 yards, *Dallas Morning News*, November 22, 1917; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 82-83.

of cannon balls were used as ammunition.” This spirit of play that the soldiers exhibited, however, appeared to mask a growing restlessness with their training.⁷⁶

While many of the men of the Seventh Texas assumed that they would only stay at Camp Bowie for a few months before shipping out to France, such was not the case. As the men returned from their Christmas furlough, evidence began to mount that they were not going anywhere soon. This impatience was reflected in the local papers, which reported on the feelings of the soldiers and expressed dissatisfaction with the continuous training through editorials. For example, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that “something that resembles a spirit of unrest now prevails in some of the units.” Indeed, for the soldiers of Company K, drill consisted of little more “than a hike out to the field, where the Company would dawdle through a few exercises, then sit around smoking and gabbing.” Thus, General Greble, in the first week of February, announced that drill would proceed “with all possible dispatch,” because he had noticed a “laxity” in the soldiers. To drive the point home, the general’s order directed officers to “report those who do not know their drills that they may be gotten rid of.”⁷⁷

General Greble also proved he was serious about training by issuing an order to the division in early February at 11:30 pm announcing that a “supposed enemy was encamped at the Clear Fork of the Trinity River...and the entire Thirty-Sixth division was directed to make preparations to go out this morning and engage the enemy in combat.” By 8:30 am the division, including the 142nd Infantry, was on the move. The

⁷⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, January 22, 1918.

⁷⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, January 30, February 1, 1918; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 38.

soldiers marched nearly twelve miles before engaging in a “sham battle” about 11:00 am and marching back to Camp Bowie by mid-afternoon, the men being “a little cold.” General Greble was pleased with the maneuver but let it be known that “many such maneuvers will be tried out without any advance notice being given.” Greble kept his word, as Corporal Hart recalled as late as the beginning of July, they were being awakened after taps and marched three or four miles “through the countryside.” In spite of these efforts to keep the men focused on their training, it was clear that the soldiers were ready to go and local opinion reflected the same sentiment.⁷⁸

In early June, for example, an editorial in the *Wise County Messenger* asked, “When is the Greble division going to France?” The editorial hinted that the soldiers of the division “want to go” but that the senior officers of the division did not. Of course, there was no basis in fact for such a statement. Furthermore, the *Messenger* reported that a French inspector stated that the soldiers in the camp were being “drilled to death,” and that in his opinion the 36th division was “fit for France six months ago.”⁷⁹

The soldiers of the division, including the men of the old Seventh Texas, finally began to realize their time at Camp Bowie was coming to an end in June of 1918 when General Greble had the entire division engage in a “practice packing” of their equipment and had new identification tags issued to the soldiers that no longer had each soldier’s organizational designation on it, just their serial numbers. The soldiers caught on that the unit information was removed because it could prove useful to the enemy. However, it

⁷⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, February 2, 1918; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 38.

⁷⁹ *Wise County Messenger*, June 7, 27, 1918.

was not until July 2, 1918, that the division finally received orders to sail for France. Additionally, because the War Department did not wish it to be known when military movements took place, there was little fanfare and coverage of the regiment or division's final days at Camp Bowie.⁸⁰

As the men prepared for their trip to France, the soldiers found out that General Greble would not sail to France with the division. Instead, the War Department retained him in the United States, in part because of physical problems. In his place, the War Department, in consultation with General Pershing, appointed Major General William R. Smith as the division's new commander. Smith would lead the Thirty-Sixth Division through the war and bring it back to Texas and Oklahoma in 1919. The new division commander had started the war as a Coast Artillery colonel but was promoted rapidly and had most recently commanded the 62nd Field Artillery Brigade of the Thirty-Seventh Division, which trained at Camp Sheridan in Montgomery, Alabama. Originally from Tennessee, Smith, like Greble, was a West Point graduate, but he was just fifty, ten years younger than Greble. Smith was confirmed as a major general and placed in command of the Thirty-Sixth Division on July 6, 1918. He was also already in New York, preparing to lead the 62nd Field Artillery overseas, when he received word of his new assignment. He stayed in New York and waited for his new command to arrive.⁸¹

⁸⁰ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 83, 89.

⁸¹ *Wichita Daily Times*, July 8, 1918; Lonnie White, "Chief of the Arrowheads: Major General William R. Smith and the 36th Division in France, 1918-1919," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, 16:3, 149-176.

Besides speculation as to who the new division commander would be, there were other changes occurring to the 142nd Infantry in which more men of the old Seventh Texas failed to move beyond Camp Bowie. Another of the original officers of the regiment, Captain Noah Roark, who raised the Denton company and commanded the regiment's Company M, failed his overseas deployment physical and remained behind. Thus, not only had the regiment lost several of the original officers, such as Captains Homer T. Merrill and Noah Roark, but a number of soldiers remained behind, their fate uncertain. For example, the Machine Gun Company recommended three men for Surgeon's Certificate of Disability on June 18, 1918, just a few weeks prior to departure, one of whom was an original member of the Machine Gun Company, First Sergeant William C. Culp. Culp had apparently lost the use of his left arm and hand. The company also recommended that nineteen men be left behind for "labor and casualty organization," for reasons such as "unfit for MG work; no education; unable to learn work. Fit for Infantry," or "Unreliable; unable to learn MG work; fit for labor organization." However, it appears that none of these nineteen men were from the original Gainesville machine gun company raised by Captain William Tyler. Nevertheless, these nineteen prove that the 142nd regiment had expanded well beyond the original complement of Texas and Oklahoma National Guardsmen.⁸²

⁸² NARA, RG391, World War I-Organizational Records, 142nd Infantry, Box 2394, Machine Gun Company, 1-100, Memorandum from Commanding Officer, MG Co., 142nd Infantry, to Commanding Officer, 142nd Infantry, subject: List of men recommend for SCD and Transfer, June 23, 1918.

The officers of the regiment also had to deal with last minute pleas from family members who did not want their relatives to go overseas. In one case, Captain E.W. Whitney, who had taken over the Machine Gun Company from Captain Tyler, received a letter from Mrs. Jesse B. Scott of Abilene dated June 22, 1918. In it, she asked Whitney to “assist in helping my child and I secure a discharge for my husband who is in your company.” She continued: “Sir: I need my husband at home to help support myself and child very badly as my child is too young for me to leave and work myself.” Unfortunately, there was little that Whitney or any of the other officers could do in situations like these, as much as they might have wanted to help. Captain Whitney’s response to this woman was not known.⁸³

The companies also had to take care of administrative details prior to shipping out. The Machine Gun Company provided a typical selection of things that had to be accomplished. These included winding down training as well as determining the training status of the company’s soldiers. For example, Whitney reported that no members of his company had fired or were qualified in “Special Course C,” although five officers and ninety enlisted men had been “tested” in accordance with the Machine Gun Training Manual. Furthermore, Captain Whitney had to report on the experience level of the men in his company. In response to a query from Colonel Bloor, he reported that the Machine Gun Company only had one man who had less than one month of military training, no men who had one to three months, and 144 men who had more than three months service.

⁸³ RG391, Box 2394, Machine Gun Company, Correspondence Book, Doc.File, and Sick Reports, letter from Mrs. Jesse B. Scott to Captain Whitney, June 22, 1918.

Whitney wrapped up his administrative tasks, much as the other companies did, by making sure all debts incurred by the company were paid, reporting on men who were still absent and making recommendations for promotion or demotion concerning soldiers in his company. This last task occupied him even after the trip had started.⁸⁴

Each regiment set aside four days to make the trip from Texas to the embarkation ports around New York City. The division was travelling to New York during the most intense movement period in the war, July and August of 1918. For example, on July 13, one of the days that the division was travelling, the United States Army moved 41,000 soldiers on 77 special trains. Most of the Thirty-Sixth Division travelled the same route, although there were some variations. The majority went east to Atlanta and then north to Jersey City, where the division made a final stop at Camp Mills before departing for France. One member of Company F, William T. Phillips, remembered departing Camp Bowie on July 12, 1918, and travelling through Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia before arriving in New York on July 15, 1918. Other units of the 142nd, however, such as the Headquarters Company, followed a more northerly route. One member of Captain Wagstaff's Headquarters Company, Daniel O. Blackmon, sent

⁸⁴ RG391, WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum, subject: Report on Memo, June 27, 1918, June 28, 1918; RG391 WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum, June 28, 1918; RG391, WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum, June 29, 1918; RG391, WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum: Report of Indebtedness, July 7, 1918; RG391, WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum: Absences, July 16, 1918; RG391, WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum: Appointment of Non-Commissioned Officers, July 18, 1918; RG391, WWI Organizational Records, Machine Gun Company, Memorandum: Recommendation for reduction and appointment of non-commissioned officers, August 1, 1918.

postcards home at several stops, including Little Rock on July 12, Cleveland on July 14, and Brooklyn on July 17. On the other hand, a member of one of the former Wichita Falls companies, Corporal Archibald S. Hart, sent a postcard home from Little Rock, knowing that he could not be very specific about his location. Instead of continuing north toward Cleveland like Private Blackmon, Hart's unit arrived in Memphis at 2:00 am, where Captain Simpson of Company H marched the sleepy soldiers through the town to another train. Early the next morning, Hart saw a sign that read "Tupelo," and realized they were crossing Mississippi heading for Atlanta. At this point, Hart finally realized that they were no longer recruits going to training, but "troops on the way to war."⁸⁵

After passing Birmingham, Hart's train pulled into a siding near a small town where a number of African-American and white residents of the area gathered around the train. According to Hart, he and a friend, "Chuffy," had been discussing "the pettiness and indecency of race-hatred" because of "raucous yells and jeers" that many of the soldiers made at African-Americans that the train passed while travelling through the south. As Hart talked to Chuffy, his attention was drawn to a young African-American in a "blue suit, white shirt, and hard straw skimmer," who stepped closer to the train to get a better look at the Texas soldiers. Suddenly, Hart recalled, several soldiers in his car dumped a bucket of "dirty water" on the man, which "drenched his Sunday suit and straw hat." Hart's friend Chuffy, who had politely listened to Hart's dismay of "race-hatred," suddenly leaned across to the window and shouted "How do you like that you Black

⁸⁵ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 91; Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 241; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 40-41; Daniel O. Blackmon Collection, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

bastard?” Hart, at the time a corporal, did not believe he could do anything about what had occurred. Instead, he found First Sergeant Corley Smart, who grabbed the three men who had dumped the pail of dirty water and, as Hart recalled, cursed them “with every obscene fighting epithet he knew.” Hart was sure that Smart was ready to fight the three privates if they made any move, which they did not. Smart was the same sergeant who had been dispatched to Oklahoma to bring back six AWOL soldiers.⁸⁶

Hart continued on to Jersey City through Raleigh, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, where there was a sudden rumor that they were one day late and their transport had sailed without them. While the officers in charge of the men found quarters for the men, Hart’s Company K and other soldiers of the regiment got to swim, fifty men at a time, in a local YMCA swimming pool. Hart recalled travelling by barge to Brooklyn, the company assembling on a “large weedy area on which a hundred or so tents had been pitched.” While some soldiers of the regiment spent three days in New York City, other units such as Hart’s were only there one night. Rather than sleep in the none-too inviting tents, most of the soldiers of Company K slept under the stars. The next day, without any food, the men travelled to a Hoboken pier, where they were finally given a cup of cocoa and sandwiches. After spending most of the day there, Lieutenant Joe Kell and Sergeant Corley Smart formed the men up and marched them onto their transport. As Hart recalled, as they crossed a narrow ramp he happened to look down and

⁸⁶ Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 41-42.

saw the dirty water of the Hudson River, or else he would not have realized “the exact time when Company K became sea-borne.”⁸⁷

A few men found time to send a note to relatives after they arrived in New York and before they boarded their transports. In spite of all that the soldiers of the old Seventh Texas had gone through, and all the changes that had occurred, there still remained a large core of men who had been there from the beginning in the summer of 1917. As Captain Ethan Simpson wrote briefly to his wife when his company was safely on board their transport, “they are the finest company on earth, and that he loves them and they love him.”⁸⁸

With that, the 142nd Infantry as part of the Thirty-Sixth Division left New York for France. Corporal Hart recalled that there was nothing special about their departure, as the men considered Hoboken just another stop on their journey. The real departure, he believed, had been when they left Camp Bowie. For the trip across the Atlantic, the 142nd Infantry occupied several ships. For example, the Headquarters Company, the Machine Gun Company, the Supply Company, the medical detachment, and the Second Battalion, with companies E, F, G, H, sailed on the *Rijndam*. The First Battalion, including Companies A, B, C, and D, sailed on the *Maui*. The Third Battalion, with companies I, K, L, and M, sailed on the *Lenape*.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 43-44; Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 241.

⁸⁸ *Clarendon News*, August 1, 1918.

⁸⁹ Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 44; RG120, Records of the 36th Division, Box 14, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Station Lists.

The trip was generally without incident, although the ship's crews took target practice, and much seasickness was in evidence among the soldiers. Those aboard the *Rijndam*, which one soldier described as a "captured Dutch ship and they call it a mighty lucky ship," watched their escort ships attempting to fend off a German submarine. As Private John T. Payne of the 142nd Band recalled, "a little German sub got after us and believe me, you ought to have seen the ships scatter." Payne wrote that it was "a little exciting, but somehow I wasn't alarmed at it at all." While the soldiers on the *Rijndam* had that excitement, the worst most had to deal with was the seasickness. As William T. Phillips recalled, "Had a few storms and a lot of sick boys, myself included, but managed to get across the big pond." Private Hardy Wall of Company K wrote his sister that, "we sure were some crowded and my but lots of the boys were seasick." With hindsight after the armistice, Wall concluded about the trip overseas, "We thought we were having a hard time, but we were in paradise considering what we went through since." Perhaps Zack Salmon of Company M was the envy of his shipmates because he wrote to his father that he enjoyed the trip and had "plenty to eat and lots of good books to read. I didn't get the least bit seasick."⁹⁰

Corporal Hart claimed that "social life aboard the *Lenape* couldn't be called dull," however, as there were "Yankee units and Mid-western units along with the Texans." Hart also recalled that it was almost impossible to move easily around the ship and that a group of soldiers became a human conveyor belt, moving the ship's fuel in "coal carts" from the front to the back of the *Lenape*. Company D's Dee McHaney might have

⁹⁰ Hornaday Collection, Volume 12, 88, Volume 4, 241, Volume 7, 129, Volume 12, 243.

expressed the general feelings about the trip, when he simply wrote his sister that “we were twelve days crossing the fish pond...I was sure glad to see dirt again.”⁹¹

Thirteen days into the trip, Hart and his companions noticed the color of the sea had changed from a dark blue to green. Before long seagulls swirled about the ship, as did a French dirigible. Soon they could see a “hazy smudge” on the horizon which they realized was France. That night the *Lenape* dropped anchor in Brest. On their way in, one member of the regiment recalled passing a “great fleet of fishing boats and saw great schools of a strange looking fish.” This man, Lieutenant Roland L. Shine, recalled that the passing fishing boats greeted their large liner with shouts and cheers. He also noticed an American sailor on a hill signaling rapidly in semaphore; something Shine could only guess meant “welcome to France.” That night, the soldiers remained on board the ship. Corporal Hart and a companion sat on the rail of the ship letting their feet dangle over the edge, talking and looking at the “myriad lights of the city” that were “sprinkled variously from shore-line upward to what seemed in the darkness to be the crest of a towering mountain.” The next day, July 31, 1918, as the soldiers of the 142nd Infantry debarked from the *Lenape*, Hart thought to himself: “Ah, a foreign county. I’m now in a foreign country.” They were twelve days ahead of the transport *USS Maui*, which did not arrive in Brest until August 12, 1918, while the companies on board the *Rijndam* debarked at St. Nazaire, well to the south, on the same day as the *Lenape* reached Brest.⁹²

⁹¹ Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 46-47; Hornaday Collection, Volume 10, 65.

⁹² Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 48; RG120, 36th Division, Box 14, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Station Lists; Letter from Lt. Shine, *Houston Post*, date unknown.

Once the men arrived in France, they were able to express themselves not only about their journey to Europe, but their attitudes and perceptions of the land and people of France. Roe McBroom of Company L wrote to his father that they arrived in France safely and that he was doing fine. Lawrence Melton wrote his mother that he did not get seasick on the way over to France, but that it was a distinct possibility, he believed, on the return journey. Ernest Britton of Cleburne expressed surprise that the ocean was “so wide as it is,” and that he was sick the first three days and “staggered around like a drunk man.” In his view, the trip was so bad that he hoped “the ocean will go dry.” The *Wichita Daily Times* reported on August 2, 1918, that the Wichita Falls soldiers had arrived safely overseas after Lieutenants Joe Kell and Gordon Porter managed to send telegrams from “an Atlantic Port,” simply stating “the ship on which I sailed has arrived safely overseas.”⁹³

Charles Meeker of Cleburne, however, took a more prosaic view of the trip, writing to his parents back home that he did not get seasick on the trip over and that he wished they could see the things he had seen and that “to watch the water day and night and to see the moon rise seemingly right out of the water...” He also described a fish or “substance” in the water that “looked just like the stars.” On the other hand, when Lt. Shine walked off the *Lenape*, he felt the urge to scoop up a handful of French dirt, only to realize that the “dirt looked pretty much like the dirt around the docks at Galveston, so I

⁹³ *Wise County Messenger*, September 20, 1918, August 23, 1918; *Cleburne Enterprise*, August 27, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 2, 1918.

concluded then and there that, in as far as the earth was concerned, it was no different from that of my own country.”⁹⁴

With that, the majority of the 142nd Infantry regiment had arrived in France. Almost a year earlier, many of these soldiers had been members of the Seventh Texas Infantry, Texas National Guard, untrained, with no uniforms, convinced by each other and by their communities that they were the best and bravest soldiers in the United States. They had arrived at Camp Bowie untested and untried and quickly discovered that the promises they had been made about serving with local friends in the Texas National Guard could not hold up under the massive bureaucracy of the United States Army. Along the way, they lost officers and they lost soldiers, but they also became soldiers, spent months training, and had finally made it overseas. Now that they were in France, the soldiers who remained of the old Seventh Texas Infantry would continue the journey that they had started so long ago in northwest Texas. Everything so far had been preparation, now they would be put to the test and come face to face with life and death as soldiers in the United States Army.

⁹⁴ *Cleburne Enterprise*, August 26, 1918; Letter from Lt. Shine, *Houston Post*, date unknown.

CHAPTER 8

PREPARING FOR THE FRONT

The soldiers of the 142nd Infantry Regiment, still with a large contingent of men from the old Seventh Texas Infantry and the former First Oklahoma Infantry regiments of the National Guard, arrived in France at a critical moment in the war. The German Army had launched a massive spring offensive in March of 1918, which German leaders hoped to end the war before the influence of the United States could be felt too strongly on the Western Front. However, while German forces gained territory, by the summer it was clear that the series of German offensives along the Western Front had failed to achieve their strategic objectives, and it opened the way for bringing the full power of the American Expeditionary Forces into the field.¹

As commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), General John J. Pershing had long struggled against the Allied leadership as to whether or not American units arriving in France should be “amalgamated” into the European armies or used to create a strictly American army. Obviously, Pershing desired the creation of an American army, while the Allies pressed for amalgamation. However, when the 142nd Infantry arrived with the Thirty-Sixth Division at Brest and St. Nazaire, Pershing’s goal had been realized with the establishment of the First American Army. However, the

¹ David F. Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 84.

question for Colonel Bloor and the soldiers of the 142nd Infantry was how they were going to fit into this larger picture, and where and with whom were they going to fight on the Western Front. As they would learn, neither the Thirty-Sixth Division nor its four infantry regiments would serve with Pershing's First American Army in combat. Instead, Pershing would loan the American Second and Thirty-Sixth Divisions to the French, where they would see combat in the devastated Champagne region east of Rheims. Before their first taste of combat, however, the Thirty-Sixth Division would spend weeks at one of the AEF's training areas undergoing a training program meant to provide final preparation for service on the Western Front.²

After their arrival in Brest aboard the *Lenape* and the *Rijndam*, the soldiers of the 142nd marched ashore and spent their first few days in France at the Pontanezen rest camp, near the famous barracks that dated to Napoleon's era. While at the rest camp, the division spent several days preparing to move deeper into France. While at least one soldier recalled sleeping on "chicken coop beds," for the most part the "rest camp" consisted of open fields near the Pontanezen Barracks, where the men made do with shelter halves, which did not provide much protection from daily rain showers. Each unit of the division averaged a stay of seven or eight days at the camp before they departed for the training area. However, before the majority of the soldiers left the rest camp, they had several important visitors. In early August, the barracks of the 142nd Infantry "buzzed with excitement." Word filtered down that the regiment was to be paid a visit by

² Edward Coffman. *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 262-263.

the Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, General Pershing. Company K was selected to provide an honor guard for Pershing's arrival and Captain Sneed Staniforth of Wichita Falls selected Corporal Archibald Hart, also of Wichita County, to form the guard. While Hart failed to recall anything memorable about Pershing's speech, his presence may have served to convince the soldiers that they were finally in France, and finally on their way to the Western Front. Likewise, Pershing wrote in his memoirs that the soldiers of General Smith's division were "impatient when they could not be moved promptly to the front," which, he was well aware, tended to be the case with all newly arrived units. Additionally, the President of France, Paul Poincare, visited the division while it was still in Brest. Perhaps more interesting to the men, however, was catching their first glimpse of German prisoners working on the docks.³

While waiting, many of the men had the chance to write their families and convey their first thoughts on France. A Wichita County soldier, Private John Butts, commented that "the Wichita boys with the Camp Bowie Panther Division, arrived in France in splendid condition, fit to get down to serious business and all of them most anxious to do

³ John. J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War, Volume II* (New York: Da Capo, 1995 reprint of 1931 edition), 201; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 14, 1918; Ben H. Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth: The Experiences of the Thirty-Sixth Division in the World War* (Oklahoma City: Harlow, 1920), 37, 40, 39. Archibald S. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vantage, 1969), 50; Lonnie J. White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War I* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1984), pp. 100-101.

so.” However, he was stretching the truth, as the trip over had weakened a number of the soldiers. On the other hand, Sam Jones, also of Wichita Falls, expressed a general sentiment when he wrote that France was “a beautiful country, everything looks different from the part of the good old U.S.A. I started from.” Laurence Melton of Wise County, still a member of Captain Lillard’s company, wrote his mother, “at last I am in France and doing fine.” He also commented that “we are in an ancient city and there are lots of wonderful things to see...and there are lots of things that are amusing to a boy who never traveled much.” Another Wise County soldier, Roe McBroom, wrote to his father that “I like this country fine, but it is queer; the buildings are strange looking structures, and the people wear wooden shoes.” Many of the soldiers were quick to note the wooden shoes worn by the French, causing one soldier to write his sister, “They say we get women’s fashions from France. Well, the girls wear wooden shoes, so you will have to get you a pair.” Perhaps it was the wearing of “sabots,” rather than the visit by Pershing, that truly convinced the soldiers that they were in France.⁴

After about a week, the division received orders to move to Training Area 13, which was centered on the city of Bar-Sur-Aube, a town of about 4,000 people that rested along the Aube River, some 120 miles southeast of Paris and just over 100 miles from the

⁴ Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 36; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 21, 29, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, August 23, September 20, October 18, 1918; In a humorous aside, another Wise County soldier, Bill Schulkey, who was not part of the 142nd Infantry, wrote home that when he marched off the boat onto French soil, he noticed a little girl standing nearby who burst out in a popular song of the day: “Hail, Hail, the gang’s all here; so what the hell do we care!” *Wise County Messenger*, August 23, 1918; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 39.

front. When the regiment was ready to depart for the training area, the 142nd Infantry consisted of 82 officers and 3,458 enlisted men, the largest infantry regiment in the division at the time. The division itself totaled 965 officers and 25,922 men. The soldiers travelled by rail, some through Versailles and Paris and others along a more southerly route, passing through Tours, Orleans, and Dijon. Many of the soldiers recalled the trip on the French locomotives, which some described as “toys” because of their small size. However, perhaps Bryan Autry of Company M put it best in the language that Texans could understand when he wrote his father that the French railcars were so small they “would not hold as many cottonseed as Mr. Marshall’s wagon you built for him.”⁵

Laurence Boyd wrote to his family back in Decatur that the tiny French railroad cars, “40 and 8s” for forty men or eight horses, were certainly crowded, although “we have learned to overlook such little inconveniences as this.” Boyd, however, noticed the countryside they travelled through and wrote that it “was simply beautiful. This is the season when the trees, flowers, shrubbery, growing crops, clover fields, etc. have on their best dress.” Perhaps because he was a farmer, Boyd noted that the area’s farms were small, and that seeing one on a hillside “with its small patches and many colors, looks like a large handmade quilt.” He also noticed that the “small grain” was “cut and bound” by hand and threshed by a “horse tread mill thresher which looks very old timey to us

⁵ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 103; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 41; RG120, 36th Division records, box 3268, folder 4, G3 reports, table: 36th Division Arrival Strength in A.E.F. by unit and date; *Wise County Messenger*, October 18, 1918; William Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, page 237, Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, Texas.

who know of the modern machinery of America.” To take their minds off the cramped conditions, a great number of the soldiers, including Captain Ethan Simpson of Clarendon, Roe McBroom of Decatur, and Travis Jones, also of Decatur, were amazed at the crops and how the French farmed and tilled their fields. In spite of the scenery, Company K’s Archibald Hart recalled how tempers flared during the two day trip, as the trains stopped and started continuously. Corporal Autry recalled that some men slept standing up, and those who were lying down were stepped on or had their faces “skinned by our hobnail boots.” The overcrowding may have also led to the death of the regiment’s first soldier in Europe. Company G’s Private Ed Strunce was sitting on top of a box car and was “knocked from the train and instantly killed” on the journey to Bar-Sur-Aube when the train passed under a low bridge.⁶

Once the regiment arrived at Bar-Sur-Aube, the companies marched to their various villages scattered around the countryside. When Corporal Hart’s train carrying Company K arrived, his company was put under command of Captain Simpson of Company H, who led the march to the village of Nuismont, fourteen kilometers away. Interestingly, the men were not told how long the march would be, and some members of the regiment considered this the hardest march that they had made up to that point. The soldiers, tired and exasperated after the train trip, were falling out and straggling, and in the darkness many were giving vent to their frustrations. Captain Simpson stopped the column of marchers and “berated the malcontents who in the darkness had felt safe

⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 19, 20, 1918; *Clarendon News*, October 19, 1933; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 53; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 27; Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 238.

voicing their profane objections.” When they finally arrived at their village, Corporal Hart threw down his gear and went to sleep at the foot of a stone wall. Over the next several days, the companies, battalions, and regiment settled in and organized their living arrangements.⁷

Training Area 13 consisted of a northern and southern section. General Hutchings’ 71st Brigade occupied the southern section, with brigade headquarters in the town of Bligny, while Hulen’s 72nd Brigade occupied the northern section. Within their section, each regiment, battalion, and company was assigned a headquarters village. Colonel Bloor’s regimental command post shared Bligny with General Hutchings, as did Headquarters Company, the medical detachment, and Companies C and D. The village of Urville hosted First Battalion Headquarters and Companies A and B. The Second Battalion, Captain Perkins’ Supply Company, and Companies E and F moved to Couvignon, while Companies G and H camped at Bergeres. Third Battalion and Company L were at Montmartin, Company I at Le Puits, Company K was billeted at Nuismont, and Company M at Meurville. The Machine Gun Company was billeted in the village of Le Val Perdu. Urville, Couvignon, Meurville, and Bergeres were all very close to regimental headquarters at Bligny. Montmartin, Puits, and Nuismont, were slightly west northwest of Bligny on the other side of a small forest. None of the villages

⁷ Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 54; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 41, 45.

had more than a few hundred inhabitants, and the terrain was described as “hilly and fairly well interspersed with forestage.”⁸

In each of these towns, the soldiers found billets mainly in stone buildings, such as houses, barns, or “vacant dwellings.” There were also some wooden barracks. A number of men in Company K lived in the mayor of Nuismont’s barn, but because threshing season was in progress the barn became filled with dust from the day’s work of a “huge Percheron” horse that walked a treadmill to power the threshing machine built into the barn. Rather than deal with the dust and the horse, Corporal Hart and others established a “pup-tent colony” outside. Laurence Boyd, in a letter home, said that his group was “quartered together in one building and are near a lake for bathing,” while Travis Jones wrote that he was “billeted in a large barn, with plenty of hay to sleep on.” In fact, he wrote, “I am just as well contented as I would be back at old Camp Bowie.” However, deficiencies existed, including a lack of bedding, clothing, and “fuel for drying clothes,” and not each village had a YMCA canteen to sell minor supplies. Many of the company headquarters had similar quarters, as Captain Simpson’s company headquarters occupied a “nice little house on the main road in the village.” Flying above the door to the headquarters was the battalion flag and the United States flag. In general, the living arrangements were not abysmal, although they were far from perfect.⁹

⁸ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Medical Report, 142nd Infantry, January 6, 1919; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 104; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 27.

⁹ *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 1918; *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 57.

At the other extreme were the quarters of the regimental commander, Colonel Bloor, who lived in a “wonderful old chateau or castle” belonging to a Count Etienne, who was a Paris judge. The house was richly furnished with paintings and tapestries; there was a hunting preserve and an artificial lake with a “built up beach.” One of Bloor’s officers had even managed to shoot a deer on the game preserve. Although Bloor could not know it at the time, the name Etienne would forever be linked with the 142nd Infantry regiment, not because of the chateau, but because of the name of a small village where the first combat of the regiment would take place in October.¹⁰

Once the companies were settled, they began their final training. While at Camp Bowie, the division, like others in the United States, had followed a course that stressed trench warfare. However, in France, the soldiers of the AEF received a dose of General Pershing’s training philosophy, which stressed maneuver or “open” warfare. Thus, Pershing established a new AEF training regimen, which the Thirty-Sixth started in Training Area 13. Much of the training consisted of field exercises on how to maneuver and how to attack machine gun posts arrayed in depth. In order to develop the ability to maneuver and advance quickly, endurance became a central aspect of training, which the soldiers developed through numerous hikes. The training also included standard tasks such as live grenade training, bayonet drills, and day and night maneuvers with “strict march discipline.” As Lawrence Melton of Decatur wrote his parents, “I am working hard over here but staying fat all the time; you can’t kill a good man, so there you are.” He was also a bayonet instructor and wrote that he was “teaching the boys to give them

¹⁰ *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918.

hell with the bayonet, and don't you worry, they will." Sergeant Joe Casey got his first taste of the front while attending a "gas" school and wrote home: "I have heard the cannons roar. The Americans are giving the Bosches hell!" Besides individuals, platoons and companies were sent off for specialized training as well. For example, the signal platoon, the pioneers section, the intelligence platoon, the 37mm platoon, and the Stokes mortar platoon all traveled to various French towns for more intensive training in their specialties.¹¹

Laurence Boyd of Decatur described the daily hikes that his company took, often while wearing a full pack. Once a week they hiked all day. On one of these hikes, his company marched sixteen miles with a ten minute break every hour and thirty minutes for dinner. On a different hike, his company left the road and "climbed a very steep hill and filed through the woods where the wild boar is occasionally found." Walking through these woods, Boyd began to think he was on a desert island. However, when he came to a clearing where he could see the valley of the Aube River with its houses, roads, and fields, he wrote, "the desert island dream was shattered."¹²

During this period, the infantry companies received new weapons. One member of the regiment, B.B. Bacon, described training with live hand grenades and that he received "new equipment every day." However, the biggest equipment change came when the division became the first American unit to be equipped with Browning

¹¹ *Wise County Messenger*, September 27, and October 25, 1918; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 27; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 105; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

¹² *Wise County Messenger*, September 27, 1918.

automatic rifles and Browning machine guns. On the other hand, the division did not get any practice in coordinated attacks with French tanks, something that Oklahoman Captain Ben Chastaine believed made the division's later success in combat "all the more remarkable."¹³

One soldier of the regiment, Joe Muldoon, wrote to his mother in September 1918 that "You must not worry about me for I am alright and have plenty to eat and we drill every day." Laurence Boyd echoed those sentiments when he wrote that his unit was "working reasonably hard," and that "our food is excellent but we miss ice cream, cakes, etc...," as did Laurence Melton, who wrote that he was getting "plenty to eat and you know I am satisfied when I am well fed." Lloyd Moreland described his dinner one day that included "fish, beefsteak, French fried potatoes, eggs, fresh tomatoes, jam and coffee." Then he wrote "Now wasn't that a good meal?" Although the food was good, some soldiers missed home cooked meals, such as Sergeant Joe Casey of Company L, who missed his mother's "chicken and good hot biscuit." To feed his craving, he and a friend bought a chicken and cooked it, but it did not taste the same to Casey. Finally, in the excited chatter of young soldiers, Eugene Minor of Decatur, a member of Headquarters Company, wrote home about some of the Decatur members of the regimental band: "The band without an exception is in the very best of health. In fact, they are as fat as pigs, and Phil, Grady, Pug, Sam Man and others simply can't get

¹³ *Wichita Daily Times*, September 16, 1918; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 53, 55.

enough. They are hungry all the time.” In addition to training and food, the soldiers continued to take in their surroundings.¹⁴

For example, they saw more German prisoners, many of whom passed through the area on trains. Captain Simpson came into contact with a group of prisoners who had been told that Paris “had been blown off the earth” and that there were only “500 Americans” in France who were starving and whose return the United States was demanding. As prisoners, however, they quickly realized the extent of the American presence and told Simpson that “we have been deceived, Germany is doomed.” Besides prisoners passing through the area, there were also a number of German prisoners who helped work farms in the area.¹⁵

Many of the soldiers continued to marvel at their glimpses of France, and honestly expressed their feelings in letters home. Grady Woodruff of Wise County wrote to his sister that the town he was in had “lots of pretty trees and flowers.” On the other hand, he wrote that the town’s streets were “narrow and dirty, and you can hardly tell which are stores and which are residences or stables.” Despite the beauty and ugliness, Woodruff concluded that “in spite of all this beauty, though, everything seems so weird and mysterious that you are almost afraid to breathe.” Private John Butts of Wichita Falls described France as “wondrously beautiful farming country,” while Charles Meeker of Cleburne wrote that France was “a beautiful country but of course is quite different from

¹⁴ *Cleburne Enterprise*, October 24, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 27, October 25, 1918; *Clarendon News*, November 14, 1918.

¹⁵ *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 14, 1918.

ours, and that makes it all the more interesting.” He told his parents that he wanted “to see lots more of the country before I return.”¹⁶

Laurence Boyd of Decatur wrote a long letter home describing his first glimpse of Training Area 13, commenting that “we are now billeted in a small village in the interior of France,” and all of the buildings were of “stone slate or tile roof.” Boyd also marveled at the presence of Dutch windmills “still scattered through the country.” As for the French climate, Sergeant Wayne Somerville described August in France as “almost like late fall in Wichita Falls and the nights are similar to those of Nebraska and Colorado; it is all delightful and ideal training ground for the boys of Texas.” Captain Simpson wrote to his wife about the French people they met. He wrote that the “little children hang around us saying ‘good Americans’ and hug our knees,” while the old men “all tip their hats to us.”¹⁷

With hard training, enough to eat, and the excitement of being in a new place, morale appeared to be strong while in Training Area 13. For example, as one member of Company L from Cleburne, Earnest McBroom, wrote to his mother: “This is a fine place to be. A fellow can’t help but be all o.k. so you needn’t worry about us for we are all well all the time.” Sergeant Sam Man of Decatur burst forth with an exclamation about the old Decatur company after making a “flying trip” to Captain Lillard’s Company L.

¹⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, October 18, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 21, 1918; *Cleburne Enterprise*, August 26, 1918.

¹⁷ *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 14, 1918; *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918.

He gladly reported that “Co. L is still in the bunch and that everybody in the company is well and enjoying the best of health.”¹⁸

The soldiers had by this point spent so much time together that they developed strong bonds and wrote home about how they felt about their comrades. Private Lloyd Moreland wrote that “I am still in the same company and am with the same boys. They all seem like brothers.” Sergeant Somerville of the medical detachment took the measure of his group of soldiers and wrote that “the whole detachment seems to be increasing in wisdom and stature and becoming real sure enough soldiers,” while Eugene Minor of Headquarters Company called his band mates a “jolly and happy bunch.” And although the mail took awhile to reach the regiment once it had gone overseas, even this did not seem to dampen their spirits. However, when some old copies of the *Wise County Messenger* arrived, the soldiers were grateful, and Lawrence Melton wrote home after reading one of the papers, “we noticed the political pot boiling and we are anxious to know the outcome.” He was perhaps referring to the 1918 Texas gubernatorial election, which pitted William Hobby against Jim Ferguson, who was attempting a comeback after his impeachment trial and resignation.¹⁹

While still inexperienced and familiar only with war from a secondhand perspective, the soldiers nonetheless expressed their bravado and often tried to reassure their families that things would be fine. The battle cry popular at the time was “Heaven,

¹⁸ *Cleburne Enterprise*, October 24, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 1918.

¹⁹ *Clarendon News*, November 14, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 14, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 27, 1918.

Hell, or Hoboken by Christmas!” One soldier from Captain Lillard’s company wrote that “I think I will get to eat Christmas Dinner at home, as we are going to whip these Huns before that time.” He also wrote his father that “This trip has been worth a million dollars to me, if I can get back safe and sound.” Along similar lines, Sam Jones of Wichita Falls told his mother, “Now, I do not want you to worry about me for I am all o.k., and ready for anything that comes my way.” Lloyd Moreland of Clarendon was not quite boasting, but he wrote home that “the war news is awful good. I think I’ll be at home next year to help you all make a crop.” Finally, Travis Jones wrote his mother in Decatur not to “worry too much about your soldier boy. If anything should happen to me, you would know about it just as soon as possible. I feel just as safe here as I would if I were at home.” He concluded his letter by telling his mother that he did not have the “least doubt in the world but what that I will be back in the good old U.S.A. by the time I am twenty-one years old. I wouldn’t take a thousand dollars for my trip over here.”²⁰

On the other hand, the way some soldiers ended their letters belied their bravado and sometimes indicated their homesickness or that they might never get to write again. For example, Captain Simpson closed a letter to his wife by asking her to “keep my memory green with my babies and mother. Remember I love you, and will write soon.” Roe McBroom of Wise County, who transferred out of the 142nd Infantry before it went into battle, told his father “don’t be uneasy about me, as I feel like I will make it through all right.” Lt. Alfred “Pat” Carrigan of Wichita Falls carried a locket with a picture of his

²⁰ *Wichita Daily Times*, October 14, and August 29, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, 20, 1918; *Clarendon News*, November 14, 1918.

mother in it, and after a church service, he wanted to show the minister the locket “but did not get a chance.” He wrote to his mother, “Don’t worry about me, whatever God and headquarters say I will do.”²¹

Some expressed their feelings about why they were in France, such as Charles Meeker of Cleburne, who told his mother that the French people seemed to think “we have come to redeem their country and bring back their loved ones. I know we have come here to help and I want come back home knowing I have had a part in helping a people who are so sorely distressed.” He also gave his parents an oblique warning about his possible fate in combat: “I know you both will get along all right and that God will take care of you and me, so don’t fear. All will be well at the end....” Along similar lines, but in a more practical manner, another soldier wrote his parents: “Do not take my name in a casualty list as serious for I will cable if hurt. Our lieutenant’s name has appeared four times and he has never been hurt.” Private Lloyd Moreland told his parents that he carried the Bible they had given him, and wrote that he held it “dearer than anything I have with me,” as it made him think about the “dear old father and mother that are waiting for me.” He concluded by asking his sister to take care of his horses and wrote, “Gee but I would love to step in for a few days visit. But when I do come back home, I’m coming back to stay.”²²

²¹ *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, October 4, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times* November 7, 1918;

²² *Cleburne Enterprise*, August 26, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, September 16, 1918; In this same letter, the soldier mentioned that the lieutenant who had been in command of

Of course, in spite of their busy schedule, the soldiers of the regiment also found time to relax. Some soldiers spent time at the local YMCA, such as Private Sam Banks, while others sought out the local French girls and places where they could obtain wine. A member of the division, Charles Ingram, gave a detailed report on the prices of alcohol in a poetic manner: “Say, wine is 40 cents per quart up and champagne, the kind that makes the drawing room lamp look like a flood of golden sunset and makes you see kind faced old cows standing in silvery streams of water—only \$2.40 per quart.” In the village of Bligny, there were three bars frequented by the soldiers, who also nicknamed them: “Dinty Moore’s Place,” “Ten Nights in a Barroom,” and “Red Onions.” As for the French girls, Earnest McBroom wrote to his mother, “The French girls are sure thick and they sure do have some time. They give us all the wine that you can drink. What makes me mad, though, is that I can’t understand what they say.” Indeed, Captain Simpson wrote his wife that “the old ladies ‘God bless us’ and want us to marry their daughters at once.” On the other hand, Private Sam Banks wrote that “I haven’t seen many pretty girls here yet. They all look alike to me over here and they don’t look like the girls at home, ha ha,” and Travis Jones of Decatur believed the French girls were “very bashful and it is almost an impossibility to get one of them to talk to you.” However, once they left the training area and headed for the front, Joe Casey of Decatur wrote home that “there is no danger of my getting married, as the French girls are all gone from the place

their platoon had been transferred and their new lieutenant had been in France for a long time and had come up from the ranks as a private. *Clarendon News*, November 14, 1918.

we are in now.” As for money, sometimes the soldiers, who had been given French money, did not know the value of the bills and coins and thus did not know how to spend it.²³

Other festivities were simpler. For example, soldiers of the Headquarters Company befriended a French family who lived for a time in New York and spoke fluent English. Captain Simpson, Captain Staniforth, and several other officers relaxed by singing with a “quartet from Company K,” and visited with a local French family whose daughter played the *Star-Spangled Banner* and the *Marseillaise* on the piano. The young lady played other pieces as well, which Captain Simpson described as his kind of music: “soft, slow, and dreamy.” Finally, Simpson noted how “funny” it was to “see how anxious these people are to please the Americans and how hard they try to make us understand them, and vice versa.” Indeed, after Simpson learned to repeat a particularly difficult French phrase, the old Frenchman joked, “Good, good, the commander will learn to speak French in two weeks.”²⁴

One day after retreat, an enlisted member of Company L managed to tag along with a group of officers who were going to regimental headquarters and then to Colonel Bloor’s chateau. Once at headquarters, the soldier heard “the latest news, which sure sounded good,” and found some letters for himself in the mail room. Afterward, he strolled to Colonel Bloor’s chateau where “the officers were having a get together party,”

²³ *Cleburne Enterprise*, August 18, October 24, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 21, September 27, 1918; *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, September 13, October 25, 1918; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

²⁴ *Clarendon News*, September 19, 1918; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

at which an English vaudeville troop performed. During the performance it started to rain and the soldier “took shelter with some of the headquarters boys, among whom were the top and mess sergeants.” It was his lucky day, because the “headquarters boys” invited him to eat dinner with them. He had a steak, for which he was grateful enough to write home about. The soldier then walked six miles back to his company village and was in bed by taps. Later, that same soldier and five of his comrades were taken by an old Frenchman to a “cascade” which came out of the ground and flowed over a “series of rocky falls.” Thus, in spite of the training schedule, the men seemed to have enough time to relax and take in their surroundings.²⁵

While many of the soldiers had the chance to enjoy the countryside and their interactions with the local population, some of them also understood the strains that the French people were living under and that conditions were not good for most of them after four years of war. In a letter home, Travis Jones wrote, “I certainly feel sorry for them and will be glad when this awful war is over so that the men can take care of them.” Sergeant Wayne Somerville noticed that all the children who had lost their fathers in the war “wear a black apron—little boys and girls alike.” Somerville also understood their sacrifices, but in a way indicative of the southern culture he had grown up in: “They are making sacrifices and adopting a standard of living that the average Negro would think pretty tough.”²⁶

²⁵ *Wichita Daily Times*, September 16, 1918.

²⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, September 14, 1918; *Wichita Daily Times*, October 14, 1918.

While the soldiers were undergoing their training and getting their first glimpses of a foreign country and the French people, support for them remained high at home, although one officer of the old Seventh Texas became a pawn in old-fashioned Texas politics. Captain Steve Lillard, who raised the Decatur company in the summer of 1917, was the focus of a political smear campaign by members of Charles F. Spencer's congressional campaign advisors, headed by his brother French Spencer. Both Spencers and Lillard hailed from Wise County, and the Spencer brothers' father, Richard F. Spencer, had served as Wise County judge at the turn of the century.

According to French Spencer, Lillard approached Spencer while the latter was a member of the Texas legislature and asked him to speak with Governor Ferguson on his behalf to secure Lillard a commission in the Texas National Guard. Spencer did this and Lillard received his commission, which was typical of the way such things were done at the time. However, according to Spencer, Lillard approached him again after impeachment charges were filed against Ferguson and suggested that if Spencer voted to acquit the governor, Lillard would be promoted to major and Ferguson and his allies would line up support for French's brother Charles Spencer to go to Congress "with such an overwhelming majority as no other candidate has ever received."²⁷

Apparently, French Spencer rebuffed Lillard, who angrily left the meeting. From that point on, French Spencer charged that Lillard tried to undermine Charles Spencer's campaign. As French Spencer wrote in the *Wichita Daily Times*, the "attacks upon Charles in this race is bottomed upon my failure to bow to him [Lillard] and trade off the

²⁷ *Wichita Daily Times*, August 22, 1918.

right of the people that he may be furthered in his attempts to be made a major.” While it is unclear to what extent the charges against Lillard were true, many residents of the area came to his defense, including his parents, who printed their own response to French Spencer’s allegations. It is also unclear how much Lillard knew of the controversy while he was in France. However, the *Wichita Daily Times* devoted a full page to French Spencer’s charges and the rebuttal by Lillard’s parents. Nevertheless, that issue illustrated the nature of Texas politics, as well as the complaints that regular army officers had concerning National Guard officers and the political favors, rather than abilities, which landed them their commissions. As events would prove, Lillard had more than enough ability to lead soldiers in combat. And while the residents of northwest Texas were distracted by these events, Captain Lillard and the soldiers of the 142nd continued their preparations.²⁸

Finally, in spite of the training, food, and camaraderie that existed among the soldiers of the regiment during the course of their training, things were not well from a medical perspective, at least according to the conclusion of the regiment’s chief medical officer in a report ordered by the commander. In his report, the surgeon pointed out that the soldiers’ clothing and equipment, which had been “barely adequate at the beginning,” were allowed to “diminish in quantity and deteriorate in quality” as time went on. This situation, combined with the fairly rigorous training of the soldiers in all weather conditions and the “widespread tendency on the part of line troops to disregard sanitary

²⁸ *Wichita Daily Times*, August 22, 1918.

and hygienic regulations,” led to a corresponding increase in illness among the regiment’s soldiers.²⁹

This increase in sickness was reflected by the greater number of cases of influenza and pneumonia among the soldiers at a particular inopportune time for these illnesses to return. To prevent the outbreak from getting worse, the regiment implemented “the most vigorous anti-epidemic measures,” especially in the villages of Bligny, Le Puits, and Montmartin. The “anti-epidemic” measures also meant that sick soldiers were isolated in “improvised infirmaries.” Although the regiment was never free from these diseases while in the training area, the regimental surgeon could claim that “an abatement of the epidemic was gradually effected” and the cases “were reduced to a relatively inconsiderable number prior to departure.”³⁰

Other medical concerns for Colonel Bloor and his staff included dealing with “defective bread issues” that caused intestinal problems, ensuring that “adequate bathing methods” were provided to the soldiers, and seeing that “vigilant care was exercised in [the] sterilization of water.” Staying clean could be a problem; as Private Jewel Young wrote home, all he lacked was “a bath and some clean clothes.” He also mentioned that “some of the boys here have also spoken of the shortage of water for bathing purposes.” Finally, the “type and care” of latrines was closely supervised, and Bloor implemented “strict policing measures” regarding sleeping areas and kitchens. Perhaps there was one

²⁹ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Regiment, Box 14, Medical Report, 142nd Infantry, January 6, 1919; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 52.

³⁰ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Regiment, Box 14, Medical Report, 142ⁿ Infantry, January 6, 1919.

small victory for the regiment's medical staff: there were no cases of lice reported while in the training area. On the other hand, perhaps some soldiers realized the significance of the medical detachment receiving all of its combat medical supplies, an indication that perhaps the regiment was to move to front soon.³¹

While in the training area, besides sickness, the regiment also had to deal with more transfers, as soldiers transferred both in and out of the regiment, although perhaps the most important transfer was that of the regiment's brigade commander, General Hutchings, the former Adjutant General of Texas. Once the division had participated in maneuvers in the training area, General Smith, the new commander, was not impressed with Hutchings's performance and reported his lack of proficiency to the AEF Inspector General, Major General A.W. Brewster. Shortly thereafter, General Smith, with the concurrence of Brewster, recommended to General Pershing that Hutchings be relieved. Pershing agreed and removed Hutchings from command of the brigade on August 29, 1918. He was sent to the reclassification center at Blois, where he was offered a position at the rank of major, a significant demotion. Hutchings turned the offer down and was discharged from active duty and returned to Texas, leaving France on October 1, 1918, a week before his brigade went into combat.³²

The replacement for General Hutchings was Brigadier General Pegram Whitworth, a Louisiana native whose home of record was Tacoma, Washington. Pegram

³¹ RG120, 36th Division 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, medical report, 142nd Infantry, January 6, 1919; *Wichita Daily Times*, August 21, September 16, 1918.

³² White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 107-108.

had graduated next to last in the West Point class of 1894, although he earned three Silver Stars in the Spanish-American War and in the Philippines. Prior to being appointed brigadier general and assuming command of the 71st Brigade, he had been the commander of the 362nd Infantry Regiment of the Ninety-First Division, and had arrived in France shortly before the Thirty-Sixth Division.³³

Changes also occurred at the regimental and company level. Lt. Colonel Elta Jayne, an Oklahoma Guardsman who had served as the deputy commander of the 142nd Infantry under Bloor, was replaced by Lt. Colonel Irving Phillipson, who was not a National Guard officer but had served in various capacities with the division since its formation at Camp Bowie. In addition, Majors William Culberson and Alvin Owsley moved from the regiment to the division staff, with Culberson appointed division inspector and Owsley as division adjutant. At the company level, Captain Alonzo Drake, who had raised the Childress company and later served as regimental adjutant, was also sent to Blois for re-classification. While the changes were not overwhelming for the 142nd Infantry, the division as a whole had forty-five officers sent to Blois for discharge or reclassification, sixty-eight transferred to other units for various reasons, and eighty officers and eighty-six non-commissioned officers sent to various AEF schools and training courses, including Company I's commander Captain Robert Wagstaff and Company K's Lieutenant Joe Kell and First Sergeant Corley Smart. These schools were established by the AEF and were not frivolous wastes of time. Soldiers generally wanted to do well in them, such as Captain Wagstaff, who wrote his father that "I am getting

³³ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 108.

along fine in my work. I have really brought my average up the last few weeks, instead of dropping it,” as he worked to complete the AEF School of the Line at Langres, France.³⁴

Finally, another indicator of the loss of men from the original Seventh Texas Infantry can be seen in the number of officers who remained with the regiment when it went “into the line.” As will be remembered, the Seventh Texas arrived at Camp Bowie with 56 officers. When it was combined with the First Oklahoma Infantry, 49 officers of the old Seventh Texas transitioned to the 142nd Infantry. However, through the training at Camp Bowie and the trip to France, the bureaucracy of the Army took its toll on the officers of the old Seventh Texas. By the first week of October, 1918, only twenty-six (47 percent) of the original officers of the regiment were still with the unit. This of course, included Colonel Bloor, who remained the only regimental commander of the Thirty-Sixth Division to stay with his regiment throughout the war, as well as one of just a few National Guard officers to remain in command of his regiment from the beginning.³⁵

³⁴ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 107-109; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 60; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, January 1, and June 18, 1919; According to the *Abilene Daily Reporter*, Captain Wagstaff was assigned to the School of the Line on September 28, and left for Langres on September 29. The paper noted that “the detail to this school was not solicited by Captain Wagstaff and was unknown to himself until orders were received at Bar-Sur-Aube.” General Smith had selected Wagstaff to attend the prestigious school. Although it was a worthwhile school, the timing of Wagstaff’s selection would later cause him problems, *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

³⁵ Roster of Officers from Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 214-217, 245-247, 342-346.

Those Seventh Texas officers who were no longer with the regiment at this point included Captain Clyde Graham, who recruited the Foard County company; Captain William Tyler, who had raised the Gainesville Machine Gun Company as well as two of his three lieutenants, Horace Jennings and Thomas Mitchell; Captain James Wiley of Quanah; Captain Harry Baker of Vernon, and Lieutenants Jim Bomar and Lester Burns. Finally, Captain Harold McGrath of Tarrant County, and Lt. James Stiff, who received a commission from Major Decker two summers past in Denton, were no longer with the regiment.³⁶

On the other hand, several of the captains who raised companies still remained with the regiment and were still leading their companies as they went into battle. Several of these men would play key roles in the combat they were soon to experience. These men included Captain Thomas Barton of Amarillo; Captain Ethan Simpson of Clarendon, who raised the Donley County company and Captain Sneed Staniforth and Captain Duncan Perkins, the two Wichita Falls officers who raised companies F and G of the old Seventh Texas. Staniforth commanded Company K, while his friend Perkins commanded the Supply Company. Captain Steve Lillard of Decatur still ran Company L, and Captain Robert Wagstaff commanded Company I, although he was at school. There were also several lieutenants who had been with the regiment from the beginning, such as Lt. Sam Owens and Lt. Robert Armstrong of Company G, and Lt. Bert Davis, who was still with the Machine Gun Company. There was Lt. George O. Thompson, who had shifted to the Headquarters Company and commanded the Stokes mortars platoon, while

³⁶ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 342-346.

Lt. Nat Perrine and Lt. Daniel Blue served with Company B. Lieutenants William Murphy and Stayton Hankins of Quanah remained with Company H. Wichita Falls officers Lt. Joe Kell and Lt. Alfred Carrigan were with Companies H and L respectively, while Lt. Ed Sayles of Abilene carried on with Headquarters Company, in charge of the 37mm cannons. Colonel Bloor's younger brother, Bertram, also stuck with the regiment, and served as the unit's operations officer. Finally, Lieutenants Young Yates and Clark Owsley had made it this far, Yates still with Company M and Owsley as the regimental gas officer. Additionally, Lieutenants Gordon Porter and Earl Litteer, who were not listed on the combined roster of the 142nd Infantry, had made their way back to the regiment. Porter was with Barton's Company G, and Litteer, who had helped recruit the Cleburne company with Captain Underwood, commanded Company A as the regiment prepared to move into the line.³⁷

On the other hand, the number of enlisted soldiers who had joined in the summer of 1917 and remained with the regiment through Camp Bowie, the trip to France, and their training prior to entering the line, had decreased dramatically. When the regiment consolidated at Camp Bowie in September of 1917, there were over 1,900 men from northwest Texas assigned to it. As the unit went into the line, there were approximately 615 original members of the Seventh Texas Infantry left. Thus, only about one-third of the original complement of Texas soldiers remained, which was a far cry from the oft-quoted National Guard refrain that a man could serve with soldiers from his area. The numbers were whittled away by discharges and transfers, as well as men on duty at

³⁷ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 342-346.

schools or who were ill in a hospital. Nevertheless, although many considered this a “Texas” regiment, the original members had dwindled considerably.³⁸

Finally, the regiment underwent further changes as nearly 2,000 soldiers were transferred out of the Thirty-Sixth Division and sent to other units. These soldiers were taken from all of the regiments, although the 141st Infantry lost 700 men, far more than the other regiments. Many of these soldiers were sent to the Forty-Second “Rainbow” Division. At least two original members of the Seventh Texas transferred with the hope of getting to the front quicker. Roe McBroom wrote to his father, “I have transferred to the Rainbow Division, Co. K, 167th Infantry. I am sure glad I made the change, for a fellow always likes a change.” However, three weeks later, the *Wise County Messenger* reported that two Decatur boys, Roe McBroom and Newt Young, who were “tiring of [the] inaction that their regiment was being subjected to back of the fighting line in France, joined up with another regiment, one that was moving to the scenes of hostile acts.” The paper pointed out that “the joke is on the boys, for in a short time after they went up with another regiment, their regiment was ordered into action.” Although there were many departures, the division also received 783 former members who had been left at Camp Bowie because of sickness or because they were AWOL at the time the division departed for France. Perhaps this group included Earl Litter and Gordon R. Porter, the

³⁸ World War I Draft Registration Cards, National Archives Southwest Branch, Fort Worth, Texas.

two officers who were not on the combined roster of the 142nd, but were with the regiment when it went into the line.³⁹

One of the signs that the 142nd Infantry was preparing to move out of Training Area 13 and move to the front occurred when all sick soldiers were evacuated to Camp Hospital 42 at Bar-Sur-Aube. One soldier in this group, Victor Nobles of Decatur, was left behind by his company as he recovered from an illness. In a letter home, he told his sister that he would never be in the infantry again, and wrote: “the company left me behind. I sure hated to see them go,” in part because he was being separated from his brother, but also because of the bond he felt with his fellow soldiers: “I would have wanted to go with them anyway on account of the other boys.”⁴⁰

The division was alerted for its move about a week before completing their advanced training at Bar-Sur-Aube on September 23, 1918. Three days later, on September 26, the same day that Pershing’s First American Army launched its major offensive between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest, known as the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the Thirty-Sixth Division began its movement from Training Area 13 travelling almost due north toward Champigneul, between the towns of Epernay and Chalons. There, General Smith’s headquarters were located in the village of Pocancy. This location placed the division south of Rheims, where, instead of being assigned to

³⁹ *Wise County Messenger*, October 4, 25, 1918; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 109.

⁴⁰ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Medical Report, 142nd Infantry, January 6, 1919; *Wise County Messenger*, November 8, 1918.

Pershing's First Army, Pershing assigned it to the French Group of Armies of the Center (GAC), where the division was expected to serve as a reserve unit.⁴¹

While in the area, the French Fifth Army assumed responsibility for supplying and equipping Smith's division, although GAC commander General Paul Maistre maintained tactical control of the division. While under the control of GAC, the division received much needed equipment. The French Fourth and Fifth Armies together provided Smith's division with at least 300 horses and mules, 75 rolling kitchens, Stokes mortars, and signal pistols, while the GAC provided an additional 200 horses and 100 carts. Few supplies were available from the American First Army, which was putting all of its resources into the Meuse-Argonne. In fact, the Thirty-Sixth Division waited just to the west of the Argonne Forest, on the other side of which the First American Army was fighting. While the American First Army advanced east of the Argonne Forest, the French Fourth Army was to advance west of the Argonne; they would meet north of the Argonne, and continue their advances from that point.⁴²

According to General Smith, General Maistre originally planned to assign the Thirty-Sixth Division to the French Third Army, but circumstances dictated that the division be assigned to the French Fourth Army, then headquartered at Chalons, under

⁴¹ Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 57; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 116; AEF General Headquarters issued orders assigning the Second and Thirty-Sixth Divisions to the French on September 23, 1918, Historical Branch, War Department General Staff, Monograph No. 9, *Blanc Mont*, April, 1920, 1.

⁴² RG120, 36th Division, Box 8, Major General William R. Smith, Report on the Operations of the 36th Division with the French Armies, September 26, to October 29, 1918, 1-2; Trask, *the AEF and Coalition Warmaking*, 122.

the command of General Henri Gouraud. When the division, including the 142nd Infantry, moved to this area, one member of Company L, Private First Class Alton C. Poe, wrote home that “Don’t think Mamma it will be very long now before I will be fighting.”⁴³

On October 4, 1918, General Gouraud, through General Smith, transferred control of General Whitworth’s 71st Infantry Brigade, with the 141st and 142nd Infantry regiments, as well as the 111th Field Signal Battalion, to the French 21st Army Corps, which was engaged in combat operations just north of the French towns of Suippes and Somme Suippes. Smith had chosen the 71st Brigade for the attack because it was closer at hand than the 72nd, and could be transferred to the front more rapidly. The brigade received the task of relieving the American Second Division, which was just north of the Suippes area in the town of Somme-Py. The Suippes area was approximately fourteen miles to the northeast of Chalons, and Somme-Py was nine miles beyond Suippes. The relief would take place near the town of Saint Etienne-a-Arnes, which was just over five miles north of Somme-Py. Just north of Somme-Py was a small hill named Blanc Mont, which had been a major strong point in the Hindenburg line. At the beginning of October, the Second Division had relieved the French Sixty-First Division and taken over the left portion of the line of the French 21st Army Corps. On October 3, the Marine Brigade of the Second Division attacked German positions on Blanc Mont. In spite of heavy casualties, the Second Division captured Blanc Mont and pushed north toward

⁴³ RG120, 36th Division, Report on the Operations of the 36th Division with the French Armies, September 26 to October 29, 1918, 1-2; White, Panthers to Arrowheads, 118.

On October 4, the 142nd Infantry rode in trucks to Chalons and from there to Suippes. Captain Barton of Company G recalled loading his company after dark and driving without any idea where they were going. Barton's men "drove all night and at daylight on the morning of the 5th we arrived at Somme-Suippes." From Somme-Suippes they marched about four kilometers south and went into a rest camp of "dugouts, shacks and tents." As the regiment moved closer to combat, it was up to General Whitworth, and his regimental commanders Colonel Jackson and Colonel Bloor, of the 141st and 142nd respectively, to understand the concept of operations and how the brigade fit into the larger scheme of operations. On the night of October 5, 1918, Bloor accompanied General Whitworth to the Second Division command post, where they met with General Lejeune. Whitworth's brigade had been tactically assigned to General Lejeune's Second Division for the relief, and so it was technically detached from the Smith's Thirty-Sixth Division. Lejeune appeared pleased with the personnel of Whitworth's brigade but worried because the soldiers were "entirely lacking in combat experience." Lejeune hoped that the soldiers of the brigade would share time with his front line units in order to get accustomed to the front "before being called on for offensive operations." To help the 71st Brigade, the relief orders called for two battalions of the Second Division to remain at the front, while the Second's machine gun battalions, 37mm guns, and Stokes mortars would remain with the 71st Brigade for twenty-fours. Nevertheless, in the course of the meeting, the soldiers and Marines discussed the "best avenues of approach" to the front as well as the location of the main supply dump. Based on the maps available, the Marines, Whitworth, and Bloor decided to place the ammunition and supply dump at a

point about two kilometers south of the town of Somme-Py, which was also the planned rendezvous point for the Marine guides to take the companies of the 142nd into their places on the line.⁴⁵

The next day, October 6, Colonel Bloor, leading his soldiers, got the majority of his regiment started moving toward the rendezvous point south of Somme-Py, which the troops reached about 3:30 in the afternoon. On the way, Captain Barton was ordered to designate one platoon in each company to be ready to fire at enemy airplanes, should any appear. According to Barton, this was the first indication “the men had of our close proximity to the firing line.” The clues as to their proximity to the firing line would become much clearer as they passed through the old Hindenburg Line and began to see dead Germans and Frenchmen along their route. Once at Somme-Py, they discovered that the Marines had located the ammunition and supply dump closer to the town than expected, which, according to Colonel Bloor, required “large carrying parties and rendered obtaining of ammunition and supplies more difficult,” as groups of soldiers had to gather the material and move it to the rendezvous area. Captain Simpson later recalled handing out bandoliers of ammunition to his men in addition to the 200 rounds they already carried. He was also nervous about being near the ammunition dump, later writing that if an enemy shell happened to land there, he knew that he would be killed

⁴⁵ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Personnel Experiences Folder, Thomas Barton, 1, Colonel Alfred W. Bloor, January 14, 1919, 1; Historical Branch, *Blanc Mont*, 8; Lejeune, *Marine*, 360; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 127.

and his body would “certainly explore about one hundred different parts of the surrounding landscape at one and the same time.”⁴⁶

Once Colonel Bloor had settled the problem with the supply dump, he received a summons back to the Second Division Command post, again with General Whitworth. When he arrived at the command post at 4:00 pm, he was given a copy of the “Division relief” order for the Second Division, which had just been issued. Now certain that the regiment would be put into the line at any moment, Colonel Bloor tried to get maps of the area north of Somme-Py for his battalion and company commanders. Unfortunately, the maps were in sections and there was no “paste” to put them together. The Marine staff worked on new maps, but Bloor did not receive copies until it was nearly dark outside. As he later pointed out, the maps did not have critical information, and “most of the company commanders didn’t preserve the maps.”⁴⁷

Even without accurate and reliable maps, Colonel Bloor understood that his regiment would occupy the left side of the front, while the 141st occupied the right. The Marine guides, he was told, could be met at the Somme-Py church at 5:00 pm on the evening of October 6. Bloor dispatched an officer to meet the guides at the church and returned to his regimental command post. However, as so often happens in war, the simplest plan went awry and the Marine guides, who were in a truck instead of on foot, drove past the officer waiting for them. Luckily, by 8:00 pm the Marine guides finally

⁴⁶ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Personnel Experiences Folder, Irving Phillipson, 1; Alfred W. Bloor, 1-2; *Quannah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919.

⁴⁷ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Personnel Experiences Folder, Irving Phillipson, 1; Alfred W. Bloor, 1-2.

arrived at Bloor's command post but had forgotten what regiment they were supposed to guide into the line. When Bloor found out these particular Marines occupied the left hand sector of the front, he surmised that these were his guides, and quickly assigned them to each of his three battalions. By 9:00 pm, the regiment had completed its supply efforts and was ready to move out. Colonel Bloor had the soldiers leave their blankets behind under guard, and the 142nd Infantry began its journey to the front. It was the final leg of the journey on which the soldiers of the old Seventh Texas had started thousands of miles away in northwest Texas and the Panhandle.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Personnel Experiences Folder, Alfred W. Bloor, 2.

CHAPTER 9

THE WESTERN FRONT, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1918

As the soldiers of the 142nd Infantry Regiment marched north out of the French village of Somme-Py, they passed a group of Marines marching south, away from the front. One of the Marines later recalled that they were passing “full strong companies of National Guardsmen. They went up one side of the road; and in ragged columns of two’s, unsightly even in the dim and fitful light, the Marines plodded down the other side.” The Marines noted that the Guard companies “gibed” at them as they passed, heading toward the front. The Guardsmen were “singing and joking as they went. High words of courage were on their lips and nervous laughter.” The only response came from a few Marines, who said to each other, “Hell, them birds don’t know no better... Yeah, we went up singin’ too, once—good Lord, how long ago!...They won’t sing when they come out...or any time after...in this war.”¹

While the soldiers wended their way toward the front lines, Colonel Bloor made his way to the command post of the Sixth Marine Regiment, the unit they were relieving, and met their commander, Colonel Harry Lee. He arrived there about 11:00 pm on the night of October 6. There, the two officers conversed and waited for the relief to occur. At about 1:30am, however, Major William Culberson, the division inspector, arrived and

¹ John. W. Thomason, *Fix Bayonets!* (Charleston: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 2007 reprint of 1925 edition), 139; George B. Clark, *Devil Dogs: Fighting Marines of World War I* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 2000), 292.

told Colonel Bloor that the Marine guides had gotten lost with at least six companies of the regiment, which he had stumbled upon on his way to meet Colonel Bloor. Culberson was worried about the lost companies and wanted Bloor to personally guide them in. Colonel Bloor, however, refused as he was not familiar with the front lines, especially at night. Furthermore, Bloor believed the regiment was going to attack on the morning of October 7 and he wanted to “devote all of my time to a study of the map” and gather all the information he could about the situation at the front. To help, Colonel Lee provided more guides and Culberson led them to where the lost companies were waiting. By 3:00 am, the frontline battalion of the regiment was supposedly in its position and shortly after that Colonel Lee received a report that the “balance of the regiment,” except Headquarters Company, had reached their positions. This information was passed to Colonel Bloor, although after the armistice he discovered that while all the companies managed to get into the lines by daylight, they had not been in position at 3:30 a.m. as reported to Colonel Lee.²

Indeed, as Captain Barton recalled, his Marine guides realized they were lost about 2 am and halted Barton’s company along a road that was being intermittently shelled by the Germans. After conversing with some French officers of a nearby artillery unit, the battalion “cut across country” and “after travelling in several different directions

² National Archives and Records Administration, RG120, Records of the American Expeditionary Forces, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Personnel Experiences Folder, Alfred W. Bloor, 3-4, hereafter cited as Personnel Experiences Folder.

came to another road.” At this point, Captain Barton recalled that no one knew where to go, but after some “reconnoitering and argument” they were halted along another road at 4:30 am. At this halt, Barton’s company was shelled again, and had one man killed and two wounded in just a few minutes. Barton moved the men down the road to get away from the shellfire. He recalled that “it was fast approaching daybreak and everyone was nervous and anxious to get somewhere out of sight before daybreak.” While waiting, Sergeant Major Allen Beville, of Clarendon, “moved up and down the line, laughing and joking and keeping the men closed up.” When they were shelled, Beville laughed and told the soldiers near him, “Steady, fellows, that bird did not have our address on it.” Again after “considerable argument among the guides, they started forward with my company, one platoon at a time to relieve the Marines...” Barton realized that it was already becoming daylight and they still had a kilometer to go before reaching their position in the lines, which they finally did at 5:30 a.m. If Barton had a difficult and anxious time trying to get to the front, Captain Lillard whose Company L was in reserve, marched all night until “some officer in a Cadillac car found us and finally got us to our destination at daylight.” Somehow, Captain Simpson found humor in the situation when his men were marching along a dirt road when a French artillery battery opened up about fifty yards away from the road: “Every one of us thought German shells were after us. In the twinkling of an eye that road was vacant and the ditches at the side were packed closer than any sardines were ever packed into a can.” When they realized what

happened, Simpson recalled that Lt. John Boyce disgustedly said, “We are damn fools, that is our own guns.”³

On the other hand, as daylight on October 7 approached, rather than be caught in the open, Bloor’s Headquarters Company retraced its steps to Somme-Py to try again after nightfall. When Colonel Bloor found out that they had returned to Somme-Py, he decided to bring them in during daylight because the weather was rainy and foggy, and he believed the poor visibility would allow the company to reach their positions “in comparative safety.” However, the Headquarters Company did not make it to the command post until “late in the afternoon.” After the battle, Colonel Bloor considered the delay in the arrival of his Headquarters Company the most “serious injury that was done to the regiment through the inefficiency of the guides.” The reason was obvious: Headquarters Company was responsible for locating each company and battalion command post, marking routes to them, and identifying communications wires. Bloor also pointed out that dressing stations could not be located close to command posts either, because Headquarters Company did not have time to locate all of the command posts. Also on October 7, Bloor was able to bring up the 37mm cannons and the Stokes mortars, which had waited at Somme-Suippes while the frontline troops got settled and performed what reconnaissance they were able.⁴

³ Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 1-2, Lillard, 1; *Clarendon News*, December 5, 1918; *Quannah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919.

⁴ Personnel Experiences Folder, Alfred W. Bloor, 4-5; Edwin B. Sayles, “From Somme-Py and Back,” unpublished manuscript, Edwin B. Sayles Papers, 1892-1975 and undated,

Captain Perkins's Supply Company struggled to keep up with the infantry, and arrived at Somme-Py about 3:00 am on the morning of October 7, after marching from Chalons to Somme-Suippes and then on to Somme-Py. At one point, Perkins's men were ordered by the French military police to leave the main road "because of congestion." However, two kilometers north of Somme-Suippes the wagons bogged down in mud and he ordered the supply train to cut back to the main road, this time dismissing the protests of the military police and finally arriving at the regimental area. Once there, Perkins spent October 7 setting up Colonel Bloor's kitchen, "which was established in a hole in the ground until the night of the 11th." Furthermore, they tried to send food to each battalion, including corned-beef and tomatoes, the latter serving as a substitute for water. Perkins also managed to get a number of water-carts, although they found it exceedingly difficult to get water at Somme-Py because there were too many people trying to use the single water pump.⁵

Likewise, Lieutenant Ed Sayles, in charge of the 37mm cannons and Lt. George O. Thompson, in command of the Stokes mortars, struggled northward on the seventh, watching German "sausage" balloons drifting along the northern horizon. Sayles, however, was convinced that the regiment was heading to a quiet sector, and told a member of his platoon, "When we go in, it won't be for anything but a little training." As they marched from Somme-Suippes to Somme-Py, his attitude changed, as he could

Military Activities Folder, 1892-1975, Literary Productions, 1918, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, hereafter cited as Sayles, Manuscript, 1.

⁵ Personnel Experiences Folder, D.M. Perkins, 3-5.

see “flashes of light far ahead,” and there was a steady glow on the horizon, presumably from fires started by artillery shells.⁶

As they moved closer to the front, he saw red, green, and white flares shooting into the sky, and in their dim light saw a “skeletal forest of shattered tree trunks, winding rows of chalky earth from deep trenches, piles of rocks, and ghosts of walls.” Besides flashes of light, he could now hear the “thunder” of the guns. When they finally reached Somme-Py, Sayles described the little town as a “struggling village of shattered buildings straddling a shallow stream. The houses of the village were marked by “dirty grey stone, battered walls, gaping doors and windows, [and] splintered timbers.” While there, he received a meal consisting of “cold beans on a thick slice of bread and a cup of coffee.” When he sat down to eat it, however, he unknowingly rested his back against a dead French soldier, “his face and hands as blue as his clothing.”⁷

North of Somme-Py, Sayle’s platoon came to an intersection that was being shelled. As each shell crashed into the area, a supply wagon would race across the intersection, while the next one moved forward to wait for its chance to cross the area. Things only got worse for Sayles and his men as they plodded northward. Sayles saw his first dead American soldier, then more dead French soldiers, and finally “piles of Germans lying on their backs.” The detritus of war surrounded the bodies: broken guns, ammunition belts, machine gun tripods, gas mask canisters, and helmets. Finally, after

⁶ Sayles, Manuscript, 1, 2, 4.

⁷ Sayles, Manuscript, 7-10.

hours of trudging through torn, muddy ground, Sayles and Thompson arrived at Colonel Bloor's regimental command post with their 37mm cannons and mortars.⁸

The soldiers on the line spent October 7 settling in. The experience of Captain Barton's Company G serves as an example of what the other line companies of the regiment went through as they familiarized themselves with their positions along the front. Barton reported that on arrival at the front, his soldiers found no trenches but instead "little holes which the men had dug for themselves." According to Barton, this "necessitated my men having to dig in under shell and machine gun fire, with the German lines not over a hundred meters distant." During the day, some soldiers of the regiment caught their first glimpses of the enemy as German soldiers could be seen moving about, quickly crossing from one wood to another, forming occasional skirmish lines, and carrying wounded comrades. Company G held this position throughout the day without any communications or instructions from the regiment, and "without any food or water other than what little water the men still had in their canteens." As afternoon dwindled away, Barton sounded like an old veteran and reported that the Germans "gave us their usual afternoon barrage and I had one man killed." Indeed, the shelling that evening, according to the deputy commander of the regiment, Lt. Col. Irving Phillipson, was "the most severe" he experienced while in combat.⁹

⁸ Sayles, Manuscript, 11-12.

⁹ Personnel Experience Folder, Barton, 2, Phillipson, 3; Personnel Experience Folder, Intel Report; the lack of continuous trenches and shelter was also noted in Historical Branch, War Department General Staff, Monograph No. 9, *Blanc Mont*, April, 1920, 8.

Despite the confusion, as the evening of October 7 approached, Colonel Bloor had managed to effect a front line relief under difficult circumstances, with no maps and guides who got lost. He also had managed to set up his own command post, which was in an old German trench “twenty feet underground and reached by two sets of stairs opening in the trench, and facing to the north.” Realizing the entrance to the command post faced north and that it was a former German dugout, Lt. Sayles concluded that the Germans most likely knew its location, and would try to shell it. For Sayles, this meant a single shell “could be dropped into the trench at the mouth of [the] dugout,” effectively sealing it off. Inside, the command post was dim and lit by “flickering candles” that illuminated the “timbered walls, hung with equipment.” Wooden bunks, “crowded with regimental officers,” were built into the sides of dugout. Across from the bunks the officers’ equipment, helmets and packs, was piled up. Thick layers of tobacco smoke filled the command post, as did the odors of “tallow...damp woolen clothing, greasy food, and human bodies.” Lt. Sayles commented that in the candlelight, “faces were only recognizable when they came into the dim light.”¹⁰

While there was no attack on October 7, Colonel Bloor “felt morally certain” that the regiment would attack the next day, October 8. Thus, he wasted no time in continuing his preparations. This was certainly a tense time for the commander of an untried regiment, and so far Colonel Bloor had done an exceptional job under difficult circumstances. The situation however, was tense, and when General Lejeune of the

¹⁰ Sayles, Manuscript, 14, 25.

Second Division learned that the 71st Brigade planned to attack on October 8, he protested to the French 21st Corps commander, General Stanislas Naulin, and asked that the brigade be given several days to acclimate to the front. He declared that, in ordering the attack, Naulin expected “the impossible.” Nevertheless, the attack was ordered to proceed, and Naulin exclaimed, “Tomorrow will be another great day for the 21st Corps!” In continuing preparations for the forthcoming attack, Bloor received a boost when a French tank officer arrived at his command post and they were able to coordinate their operations for the attack. Bloor assigned the tanks to the assault battalion, in particular to Captain Barton, and the French officer reportedly told him that the tanks “should lead the line.”¹¹

In general, the terrain facing the 142nd as they prepared for their attack had been fought over for the last four years. The area in front of the regiment was flat, open ground “covered with old German trenches and wire.” Beyond that was a “ravine” in which the Germans had built a number of “fireproof dugouts.” Finally, beyond that the ground sloped up to a wooded height, which was controlled by the enemy. On the west, or left, of the regiment’s line rested the town of Saint Etienne. Who controlled the town was unclear, and Colonel Bloor was concerned that German troops might move into the town during the night and attack his left flank as his soldiers advanced. He had been told several times that the town was held by the French, and each time the reports had turned out to be false. Thus, Bloor “doubted” a report he received on October 7 that claimed the

¹¹ Personnel Experiences Folder, Bloor, 5; John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Quantic: Marine Corps Association, 1979 reprint of 1930 edition),361.

French had again occupied the town. If there were Germans in the town and cemetery just to the east, they would have a wide field of fire from the southwest to the northeast, which could easily fire into the left flank of his regiment. To ease his mind, he pressed Colonel Lee of the Sixth Marines to send two companies into the cemetery east of the town so that the regiment's flank would be covered. Colonel Lee, who had come to Bloor's command post, agreed to the proposal. At the same time, Colonel Bloor received a summons to the brigade command post, but to make sure of the Marines' cooperation, he waited until the officer in charge of the two marine companies arrived and received his orders from Colonel Lee. Bloor also asked Colonel Lee to secure copies of the Second Division attack order for Bloor's regiment, as a precaution. According to Lt. Sayles, the two colonels conversed at the end of the dimly lit dugout, where an army blanket hung from the ceiling to afford privacy.¹²

With this coordination with the Marines completed, Bloor proceeded to General Whitworth's brigade command post, leaving his own command post around 7:00 pm on October 7. By this time it had started to rain, and the roads were "congested with ammunition trucks, tanks, ambulances, artillery, [and] ration wagons." The road was also being shelled by the Germans so Bloor, in his motorcycle side car, did not reach the Whitworth's command post until around 8:30 pm.¹³

¹² Personnel Experiences Folder, Bloor, 5-6; Sayles, Manuscript, 25; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919; Historical Branch, *Blanc Mont*, 10.

¹³ Personnel Experiences Folder, Bloor, 6.

When Bloor arrived, Whitworth told him, Colonel Jackson of the 141st, and the commander of the 132nd Machine Gun Battalion, that an attack was being “contemplated” for the morning of October 8. Whitworth had just returned from a meeting with General Smith and he proceeded to give Bloor and Jackson verbal instructions and promised that the written order would be issued as soon as the divisional order was received. The colonels received more maps of the Saint Etienne sector, although Bloor was dismayed to find that these maps also were also in sections and that it took four of them to make a complete map of the sector. Leaving a runner at the brigade command post to bring the divisional order, Colonel Bloor left about 10:00 pm but did not reach his command post until nearly 1:30 am on the morning of October 8. By this point, Colonel Bloor had been actively engaged for at least twenty-four hours. However, there would be little time for rest over the next several days.¹⁴

Bloor immediately called his three battalion commanders to his command post. While awaiting their arrival, he received word that Colonel Lee’s marines had gotten into St. Etienne and were supposedly in the cemetery east of town as ordered. Bloor also received five copies of the Second Division attack order, which laconically noted that “the enemy, in an attempt to protect his withdrawal from the vicinity of Rheims, is resisting the advance of the Franco-American troops north of Somme-Py,” and set the time of attack for 5:15 am. The division would advance north toward the town of Machault. Bloor’s battalion commanders arrived slowly, and the last one did not get

¹⁴ Personnel Experiences Folder, Bloor, 6-7.

there until 3:30 am. Bloor gave each a map of the sector and explained the attack as best he could. While Bloor was occupied with preparing his battalion commanders, other preparations continued, such as establishing a closer ammunition dump that held small arms ammunition as well as rifle and hand grenades and flares. However, Colonel Bloor later reported that the assault battalion went into action without receiving any grenades.¹⁵

After briefing his battalion commanders, Bloor had essentially done all he possibly could to prepare his soldiers for the attack. His regiment, with the 141st on its right, was to advance two kilometers beyond Saint Etienne with the battalions one behind the other. The attack would be preceded by an artillery barrage from the Second Division artillery brigade. From this point, the success of the attack would depend on the will and the abilities of the regiment's frontline leaders and the soldiers who crawled from their dugouts and trenches and moved forward toward the enemy lines. In fact, because of the delays in getting orders, some of soldiers did not even realize that they were going on the attack.¹⁶

Indeed, Captain Barton, who was to lead the assault battalion, recalled the frantic preparations on the morning of October 8. He received an order to report to the battalion command post at 4:50 am only to find that Major William J. Morrissey, the battalion commander, had not yet returned from the regimental command post. Shortly afterward,

¹⁵ Personnel Experiences Folder, Bloor, 7-8; Historical Branch, *Blanc Mont*, Headquarters Second Division, Field Orders No. 40, October 7, 1918.

¹⁶ Lonnie J. White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War I* (Austin: Presidial, 1984), 133.

however, Morrisey arrived and told Barton and the other three company commanders, Captains Will Pearce, Carter Hannah, and Ethan Simpson, that the attack would occur at 5:15 am. Barton looked at his watch and told Morrisey, “Major, I cannot make it; it is 5:11 now.” According to Barton, Morrisey told him to get back to his company as soon as he could. Finally, Morrisey told his company commanders: “I have no maps but you attack in this direction,” and waved his hand and said, “leaving St. Etienne on your left.” Captain Barton believed these instructions were “rather indefinite,” as he had “dodged” shells and machine gun fire to and from the battalion command post, and it became “rather hard to tell what ‚this direction’ was.” Captain Barton was not even sure of the location of Saint Etienne, writing later “there was nothing ahead of me that I could see except a woods.”¹⁷

Captain Simpson’s Company H was next to Barton’s company in the line. As the night of October 7 dwindled away, Simpson managed to scrounge some coffee and beans from a Marine officer, which he shared with his first sergeant, Aubyn Clark, “while the shells screamed overhead to explode 200 yards in the rear” and “machine gun bullets would thud into the earth a few feet in front of us.” It was about 1:00 a.m. About every half hour, a “star shell would flare up to illuminate the earth as if every object was in the glare of a calcium light.” Simpson and Clark had a few minutes in which to discuss their homes, their loved ones, and “what we might do in case we were spared in the battle coming the next day.” Also during the night, one of Simpson’s sergeants, Star Johnson,

¹⁷ Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 2.

was blown out of his fox hole by an artillery blast and was “badly shell shocked.”

Simpson had Johnson come stay with him in his fox hole the rest of the night so he could keep an eye on him. Simpson also sent out several patrols and, with a Marine, himself ventured toward the German lines. On this patrol, the two men spotted two Germans and the Marine fired his shotgun at them before he and Simpson hustled back to their own lines. After this, Simpson presumably made his way to battalion headquarters like Barton to gather what details he could about the impending attack.¹⁸

What little information the Americans possessed revealed that the enemy lines extended about two miles along a road between Saint Etienne and Orfeuil to the east. The Americans were south of the road, again with the 142nd on the left and the 141st on the right. On the left, in Colonel Bloor’s sector, enemy lines were as close as one hundred yards. This area was generally open, with small clumps of trees and brush, which concealed German machine gun positions that had been arranged to support each other should one be captured. Belts of barbed wire were strung through the woods and across open areas. To the left of the 142nd Infantry was a battalion of Marines from the Second Division as well as the French Seventh Division, while the French Seventy-Third Division occupied the line to the right of the 141st. Between the 141st and 142nd Infantry, where there was a noticeable gap between the two regiments, an original member of the

¹⁸ *Clarendon News*, December 5, 1918; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919.

regiment, Lt. Young Yates, commanded a platoon and several machine guns. He was responsible for keeping in contact, or liaison, with the 141st.¹⁹

Facing the Americans and French, to the north of the Saint Etienne to Orfeuil road, were the German 195th, 213th, and 17th Divisions. While one of those units, the 17th Division, was considered “one of the best” German units, they had all been weakened by combat, and the division intelligence estimated there were approximately 5,000 Germans in the area opposite Whitworth’s 71st Brigade. The Germans seemed to be expecting an attack from the Texans and Oklahomans, having observed many of the preparations of the day before, particularly the arrival of the French tanks in the area.²⁰

In the 142nd Infantry, Major William Morrissey’s Second Battalion was selected to lead the assault. It included companies E, F, G, and H. Company G was commanded by Captain Thomas Barton and Company H by Captain Ethan Simpson. They were designated as the first two assault companies, to be followed by Companies E and F, under Oklahoman captains Pearce and Hanner. Going over the top with Captain Barton that morning were other former Seventh Texas officers Lieutenants Sam Owens, Gordon Porter, and Robert Armstrong. With Captain Simpson were Lieutenants Stayton Hankins and William Murphy, both of Hardeman County, and Joe Kell of Wichita County.²¹

¹⁹ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 130-131; C.H. Barnes, *History of the 142nd Infantry of the Thirty-Sixth Division, October 15, 1917 to June 17, 1919* (Blackwell, 1920); 67.

²⁰ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 131, 134.

²¹ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Memorandum: to Captain Spence, December 21, 1918, outlines the assault arrangement of the 142nd Infantry; Personnel Experiences Folder, Elijah Horner, 1-2; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 136.

Captain Charles T. Kuhlman of Waco commanded the First Battalion, which was next in line to follow the Second Battalion. First Battalion consisted of companies A, B, C, and D. Captain Earl Litteer still commanded Company A, and Company B included Lieutenants Daniel S. Blue and Nat Perrine, both former Seventh Texas officers. Finally, the Third Battalion, commanded by Captain A.M. Greer of Beaumont, included companies I, K, L, and M, and was the third line in the assault. Company I was commanded by Lieutenant Rudolph E. Fried because Captain Wagstaff was still attending the AEF School of the Line. Captain Sneed Staniforth commanded Company K, which included Lieutenant Andrew Y. Beverly of Foard County, who had enlisted in the old Seventh Texas, but earned a commission and was now back with the regiment. Company L of the Third Battalion was led over the top by Captain Steve Lillard of Wise County. His second in command was Lieutenant Alfred H. Carrigan, from Wichita County.²²

By the time Captain Barton returned to his company command post, it was 5:25 a.m., already ten minutes past the scheduled attack time. Approximately 100 meters in front of his position was “the edge of thick pine woods, which we knew from our own observation and what the Marines had told us, was full of machine guns.” Barton pointed out the edge of the woods to his mortar officer and “asked him to use his trench mortars freely.” The officer replied that he had only nine shells, and Barton replied to him, “Use them, as we will never need them worse.” In consultation with two lieutenants from the

²² *Foard County News*, June 7, 1918.

Machine Gun Battalion, he pointed out where he believed “the enemy machine guns were located” and asked one of them, “to give them all he had.” Barton then directed all of his Browning automatic riflemen and infantry to converge on that point. Finally, Barton called on another officer of the old Seventh Texas, Lt. Gordon R. Porter, and placed him in charge of the platoon that was nearest the German position in the woods. He told Porter that the minute “the enemy fire slackened to rush his platoon.” While making these final arrangements, the “rolling” artillery barrage started, meaning approximately every minute that barrage would shift 100 yards farther north. As the artillery began, the sky was lit up by “flashes from exploding projectiles,” as well as with smoke and dust. These rolling barrages were meant to provide protection to advancing troops, who would stay a certain distance behind the barrage and advance behind it. However, after the battle, the soldiers realized that the barrage overshot the German defenders and failed to provide help to the attacking soldiers. Major Morrissey may have had misgivings about the number of enemy they were facing, writing that in the early morning darkness, “flashes of machine guns were visible all along the enemy front, showing that he had many more guns that we had suspected.”²³

As soon as Captain Barton noticed a slight reduction in the enemy’s fire, believing that it was his “golden opportunity,” he jumped up and ran forward into what one member of the regiment described as “whizzing, whistling, screaming, bursting

²³ Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 2-3, William Morrissey, 1; RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 12, Special Report of tour in line of Seventy-First Brigade, 2; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

instruments of death.” Captain Emil Horner of Company E recalled that his men rushed forward “in short rushes,” and to Horner, it seemed “that there was not a square foot of air space through which bullets were not flying.” In spite of the fire, to Barton it “seemed that every man went forward with a single bound and before the Germans had time to realize what we were doing we were on top of them.” Across the line, the assault battalion moved, followed by the second battalion 800 yards behind. In the woods to his front, Captain Barton and his men discovered four dugouts. Barton saw Lt. Porter clearing out the first one with his platoon, and Barton and the rest of the company pressed forward, capturing the other three dugouts, which netted his company between fifty and sixty German prisoners. Out of seven officers in the company, three were wounded in that first opening struggle, including Porter.²⁴

Porter, who had been told by Barton to rush the woods when the enemy fire slackened, had moved from “hole to hole” until he was on the left of the line, where they were receiving machine gun fire from the right front. Two men were shot in the head near where he lay. When Barton’s machine guns opened up on the woods in front, which Porter estimated were sixty yards away, he advanced toward them with “a number of men from my company.” After securing the first enemy dugout, Porter advanced with Barton and the rest of the soldiers, but he saw a German machine gun position on his right and wrote that “evidently he didn’t see me so I walked right on the two of them.” The two Germans surrendered to Porter, who then reported after the fact: “I turned the gun around

²⁴ Personnel Experiences Folder, Horner, 3, Barton, 3; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 30.

and I could see Germans in advance and I operated the enemy machine gun on those people.” This occurred while Captain Barton was still getting prisoners from the dugouts in the woods. While using the machine gun, more soldiers came up to his position and pointed out another machine gun to Porter’s right front. Porter left the machine gun and ran to another strip of woods, where he took three more prisoners before being wounded. In Porter’s estimation, he was hit thirty to forty-five minutes after going “over the top.” Another member of the old Seventh Texas was not so lucky. Private Lloyd W. McGowan, who had moved out as part of an advanced sniper party, was shot and killed by an enemy sniper himself. McGowan had joined the company back in Amarillo in the summer of 1917.²⁵

While Porter was being wounded and McGowan killed, Captain Barton continued forward with soldiers from his company, capturing an estimated 150 more prisoners beyond the woods, which the Germans had begun to shell with gas. Moving beyond the woods, Barton realized that he had soldiers from every company mixed in with the assault battalion, but he could see no other officers. He then moved toward the left, looking for Captain Simpson. Instead, he found Lt. John T. Fulcher of Granger, Texas, who commanded the “remnant of H Company.” From Lt. Fulcher, he learned that Captain Simpson and Lieutenants Murphy and Hankins had all been wounded. Before long, Barton received word that Captain Willis Pearce of Company F had been wounded, and Captain Carter Hannah of E Company killed. This left Barton as the only remaining

²⁵ Personnel Experiences Folder, Gordon R. Porter, 1; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 124.

company commander in the battalion. Five messengers sent by Barton to contact the battalion command post were either killed or wounded, and with no communication from Major Morrisey, Barton took command “of the entire firing line” and operated it like one large company.²⁶

Captain Simpson’s Company H had gone over the top next to Barton’s company on October 8. Simpson however, was quickly wounded, shot in the left side and the left hip by what he believed was a German soldier operating a machine gun “from a platform located in a tree.” After being hit, however, Simpson was still able to shoot and kill the German machine-gunner. Along with Simpson, both of his lieutenants from Quannah, Stayton Hankins and William Murphy, were also wounded. Simpson recalled that a group of German prisoners were ordered to carry him to the rear. When one of them refused to work because he claimed to be an officer, an American soldier asked the German, “You devil, do you refuse to carry the captain?” When the German repeated that he would not work, the soldier shot the German prisoner in the head. In his letter, Simpson claimed not to remember the soldier’s name or what company he was in.²⁷

Besides many wounded officers and soldiers, Captain Simpson’s Company H lost a number of original members of the Seventh Texas, including first sergeant Aubyn Clark of Clarendon, who Simpson had shared his meal with on the night before the assault. Clark went over the top and advanced about seventy-five yards before he was “struck in

²⁶ Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 3.

²⁷ *Clarendon News*, November 7, December 5, 1918; *Quannah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919.

the breast by at least two machine gun bullets” and died “almost instantly.” When Simpson heard of his death, he wrote “I have lost the truest, best friend I ever had. He cannot be replaced.” Sergeant Bergen Waldrop was wounded on the morning of the assault and told to go to the rear; he refused and shortly after was “struck by a large shell and killed instantly.” Likewise, Sam Price was killed “almost instantly” by a machine gun bullet, while Private Alton C. Poe tried to advance across an open space that was within range of a machine gun. Sergeant Joe Wilson saw Poe try to take cover, but Poe was struck in the head and neck and killed. Corporal Roy Warren of Quanah took cover behind a tree but was shot in the shoulder. When he tried to move he was hit by a machine gun bullet and died a few minutes later. Private James Russell was lying in a shallow hole when he was hit by a piece of shrapnel in the right temple. He “murmured something” nearby soldiers could not understand and died. Thomas Bland of Quanah was killed, as was James Blanks of Clarendon, who refused to go to the rear when wounded and was killed shortly thereafter by machine gun fire. Corporal Charles Heneise, from Clarendon, was hit by machine gun fire, tried to get up, but was struck again and killed. Private Floyd Alvey, also of Clarendon, was hit “directly by a shell about the left knee,” and lived for just a few more minutes while Private Thomas B. Blevins stayed with him.²⁸

In the assault, Company K lost Sergeant Robert E. Moss, who was hit in the head by a piece of a large shell near Blanc Mont. Finally, Corporal Amos Childress lost his

²⁸ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 128-131, 134, 135-136; *Clarendon News*, December 5, 1918.

life when he was targeted by an enemy sniper, who shot him once in the left side and then in the head. Company M also lost several original members of the company early in the fighting. Corporal Roy C. King raised his head to fire at the enemy and was struck by a bullet “over the right eye.” Another man, mess sergeant Arthur O. McNitzky, went to the front just before Company M went over the top, although as the mess sergeant, he was told that “he had no business up here” and to go back. McNitzky refused, saying “I’ve come too far to go back, and besides its open season and don’t cost anything to kill ,em. I’m going to have my share.” McNitzky attacked with the company and sought shelter at the edge of a hole, where he was “working his rifle at his utmost and had fired about fifteen shots when a bullet struck him in the forehead, killing him instantly.” Sergeant Ollie Calvert and Corporal Warren T. Sweeney of Denton County were charged with escorting a number of German prisoners to the rear when they were caught in an artillery barrage and took cover in a roadside ditch. According to Sweeney, a piece of shell the “size of a man’s thumb,” struck Calvert in the chest, killing him. After the barrage ended, Sweeney continued escorting the prisoners to the rear, so he had to leave Calvert’s body there in the ditch. Fancher Reagan, who had been the first man to join Captain McGrath’s Tarrant County Company in the summer of 1917, was killed by machine gun fire on the crest of a hill southeast of Saint Etienne. Finally, Mechanic Freddie Butler, of Denton, along with Lt. Oscar Baker and another man, sought cover from machine gun fire. Lying behind a small ridge, Baker told the two men to “lie low as the Germans had found us.” The other man, Tom Collier, yelled at Butler to lie down just as Butler

received a “volley of machine gun bullets through his legs, and as he pitched forward, his body was riddled.”²⁹

Another soldier who found himself at the front was Bryan Autry of Denton, who served with the battalion intelligence section and did not have to join in the assault that morning. He served as a runner and was chosen to deliver a message to one of the companies just before the attackers went over the top. When he arrived at the front, he heard the captain of the company urging his men forward. Joining in the action, Autry went over the top and saw several of his friends “shot down by my side.” He made it until October 10, when what he described as a “lucky hit was all that saved me from being blown into bits of nothing.”³⁰

In spite of a steady machine gun fire from the left and right, as well as a “constant barrage” of artillery, Barton pushed his men forward to the road which ran east-west through Saint Etienne. Here, he halted them and had the soldiers dig in. About three hundred meters ahead of Barton’s position was a line of trenches, which he sent men to scout. The trenches were deserted, but they found more American soldiers who were part of Captain Steve Lillard’s L Company of the Third Battalion.³¹

²⁹ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 143, 145, 158-162.

³⁰ William D. Hornaday, Volume 4, p. 238, William Deming Hornaday Transcripts of World War I letters and Personal Accounts, Archives and Information Serviced Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

³¹ Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 3.

According to Captain Lillard, his battalion went over the top at 5:35 am. Like Captain Barton, he was shown a map, had the regimental order read to him, and was left to improvise the rest on his own. During the initial advance, Lillard noticed that the first two battalions had drifted to the right during their advance, while his own Third Battalion started a leftward drift. This put his battalion on a course toward Saint Etienne. Captain Lillard's soldiers were delayed by machine gun fire and wire entanglements, but Lillard was able to send Sergeants Kelly Nail and Chester Roberts with a platoon of soldiers to silence machine guns on the left front, an action that resulted in the capture of 17 German machine guns and 112 German soldiers. Nail later counted twenty-five bullet holes in his uniform and two in his helmet and yet managed to escape unscathed. Later he would suffer from gas inhalation. The machine gun on the right was silenced by soldiers that Lillard did not recognize. As Lillard's company moved forward, the old Seventh Texas lost one of its officers. Lt. Alfred Carrigan of Wichita Falls stopped at the wire entanglements to "pull one of his men, who had been hit, from the wire." Carrigan had trouble extricating the wounded soldier and called for help. Immediately afterward he was shot in the neck and killed. James McFadden, who had joined the Cleburne company, was also caught in the wire and struck by machine gun fire that riddled his body. Corporal Monte Dunaway of Decatur made it through the wire entanglements only to be cut down by enemy fire. In spite of these casualties, Captain Lillard's Company L and parts of Company I continued to press the attack and rounded up over two hundred prisoners. Lillard kept his soldiers moving forward into the graveyard on the edge of Saint Etienne, which the Marines had supposedly secured. In the cemetery, Corporal

Lloyd Smith from Decatur, already wounded and told by Lillard to go to the rear, refused and was hit in the head by shrapnel and killed instantly. Another Cleburne resident, Private Orla Shirer, was also killed near the graveyard while trying to deliver dispatches.³²

By this point, Lillard noticed that his soldiers were advancing in little groups, without cooperation, and that in the words of another officer, the “number of men who had penetrated as far as the town was amazingly small.” Lillard decided to stop the men and “established a line along the road.” He seemed to know that they had gotten ahead of the other battalions, but wrote after the fact that stopping the soldiers “was only done in order to reorganize the men, with a view of withdrawing them to a position in our rear which could be maintained; or if the troops on our right came up we could advance with them.” At that point, Captain Barton’s soldiers linked up with Lillard’s group, and Barton took command.³³

According to Lillard, both he and Barton knew they were exposed, and the 141st on their right had not kept pace with them. Barton sent one officer to try and find the 141st and another to find Major Morrissey and then report to Colonel Bloor with their position and status, and to ask if a battalion could be “thrown on our right and to make arrangements to get us ammunition as quickly as possible.” While in their advanced position, Barton and Lillard’s men were subjected to at least six artillery barrages and

³² Personnel Experiences Folder, Steve Lillard, 1; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 146, 148, 151, 153; *Dallas Morning News*, November 10, 1918, and July 13, 1919.

³³ Personnel Experiences Folder, Horner, 5, Lillard, 1.

received enemy fire from the right rear. Both Barton and Lillard were slightly wounded and given first aid in a dugout, where they also conferred about the best course of action, hoping that the 141st Infantry would advance along the right and come up even with them. While they conversed, the Germans began a counterattack to get around the exposed right flank, which killed Lee Finley of Decatur. According to Barton, they had two choices. The first was to stay where they were and most likely be captured. The second was to fall back to edge of the woods where, he wrote, “we knew there were an abundance of German machine guns and plenty of German ammunition.”³⁴

They chose the second option and withdrew about 200 yards, where they discovered Third Battalion commander Captain Greer with men from Captain Staniforth’s Company K. After pulling back farther, the soldiers under Greer, Barton, and Lillard dug in on top of a hill and waited for night to fall. Wanting more help because of the threat of a German counterattack, Captain Barton managed to coax a company of Marines forward and Captain Whitney with the Machine Gun Company arrived. As Barton wrote later, “This made the world look brighter.”³⁵

The area where Barton and Lillard holed up for the night was afterward called “Barton’s Hill” by members of the regiment. At this point, Barton estimated that losses in the Second Battalion from the day’s attack were close to 60 percent. Indeed, casualties were heavy, and there was much confusion. Lt. Sayles tried to maneuver one of his

³⁴ Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 4, Lillard, 2; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 152.

³⁵ Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 2, Barton, 4.

37mm cannon to Barton's men. On the way, he passed Lt. Carrigan's body, which lay in "an opening of barbed wire near the road." Because of the number of officers he had seen who had been shot, Sayles took everything that identified him as an officer off of his uniform. On the other hand, some men had been separated from their companies and fought almost alone, such as Corporal Hart of Company K, who started on the far left of the regimental sector and had become separated from his unit. He decided to become a sniper and took a shot at a German soldier about 400 yards away. While the man dropped to the ground, Hart had no idea if he had hit him or not.³⁶

While this action occurred, Colonel Bloor struggled to keep up with the fighting and to understand where his units were. Although the attack was well under way by 7:30 a.m. on October 8, it took that long to get a message to Bloor that the attack had even been launched. As the day progressed, it took longer and longer for messages to get to him. To remedy the situation, he established what he termed an "advance information center," under Lt. Temple Black, near where the Second Battalion command post had started the morning. Runners, instead of having to make it all the way to the regimental command post, could stop at the information center, where their messages could be relayed by phone to Colonel Bloor. Again, Colonel Bloor, in difficult and trying circumstances, found ways to keep himself apprised of the action and hopefully to control it.³⁷

³⁶ Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 2, Barton, 4; Sayles, Manuscript, 29, 34; Archibald S. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vintage, 1969), 73.

³⁷ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 74-75.

The evening of October 8 was filled with the constant rattle of machine guns for the men on Barton's Hill, as well as the fear that the Germans would launch a major attack the next morning. Lt. Sayles recalled that "all during the night, runners and signal platoon men, stringing wires, were passing so close to our holes as to cause the dirt to slide down our collars." While this went on, Captain Perkins's Supply Company continued to try and get food and water to the soldiers. Captain Perkins found three wine-casks between Somme-Py and Saint Etienne, which his men filled with water. One, however, was already full of red wine, which Captain Perkins reported "the boys" drank first, when they got it to the front. However, Colonel Bloor would not allow the Supply Company to take rations to the front lines, so Perkins established ration dumps at each battalion command post, and then guides were sent to each company to tell them where to get the food. The dangers of going to the ration dumps was quickly apparent as the next day Corporal Roland Polk of Quanah was "struck by a shrapnel and instantly killed" on his return from the ration dump. Those who made it back with their rations drank the tomato juice and had a loaf of soggy bread. One man had a can of corned beef, which had been previously opened, and "though it had some dirt in it, it went fine."³⁸

The men became increasingly nervous as dawn on October 9 arrived, but apart from some scattered automatic rifle fire and a few artillery shells, no enemy counterattack materialized on that frost covered morning. Thus, the brigade spent most of the day trying to reconsolidate and reorganize after the previous day's fighting. The entire line

³⁸ Sayles, Manuscript, 40, 52-53; Personnel Experiences Folder, Perkins, 5; Barnes, 131; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

was badly disorganized and each unit was ordered to sketch its location and turn the sketch into brigade headquarters in an effort to make some sense of where the regiment's units were and to mark the front. However, in looking at the sketches turned in, the regimental intelligence officer, Captain P.E. Barth, realized that "no one in the line knew where they were." For the men on Barton's Hill, the day passed with nothing "of special interest" except for a "terrific barrage later in the afternoon." Perhaps this was the barrage that killed Private Andrew Floyd, another Amarillo soldier. There were no witnesses to his death, however. This barrage might also have been the one that killed Private Sam J. Ford of Crowell, and Private Thomas L. Minor of Company K who was hit by shrapnel in the arm and the body while working on making a new defensive position. He was taken to the rear, where he died on October 11. This same barrage also cost the life of Private Willis Goodger of Denton, who was sharing a hole with two other men. Several shells landed close enough to shower the men with dirt, and after a particularly close one, one of the men said, "How do you like that one, Goodger?" There was no answer, and after looking at their comrade, found that a piece of shrapnel had "torn a hole through his head."³⁹

While the soldiers on Barton's Hill waited the day out, Colonel Bloor received an order to advance his regiment, as General Whitworth believed that the 141st Infantry was ahead of the 142nd, which was not true. Nevertheless, Bloor sent Captain Greer's Third

³⁹ Special Report Tour of the Line Seventy-First Brigade, 3; Personnel Experiences Folder, P.E. Barth, 2, Barton, 5; Barnes, History of the 142nd, 125, 139, 142, 157; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

Battalion forward, as well as a 37mm cannon from Lt. Sayles's platoon and several mortars. Bloor stayed in contact with the attacking forces by telephone. The attack, however, bogged down rapidly after an advance of just 200 yards. After Greer's battalion dug in, patrols were sent forward and confirmed that the 141st was nowhere in front of the 142nd. Additionally, Captain Barton had received a map that showed the 141st ahead of the 142nd, which he knew was wrong. It was not until the next day that the true position of the 141st was acknowledged by higher headquarters. Nevertheless, the effect of this attack was that the 142nd relieved two companies of Marines and engineers which had advanced to a line in front of Saint Etienne, although the relief was not completed until about 1:00 a.m. on October 10.⁴⁰

During the night of October 9-10, the 71st Brigade received information that the enemy had withdrawn during the night. To test this, General Whitworth ordered Colonel Bloor to advance "to gain contact." The morning of October 10 was again cold, and there was frost on the ground, covering the living and the dead, as Lt. Sayles remembered. Colonel Bloor made a trip to the front lines that morning, and shortly after 10:00 a.m., the regiment pushed toward a line of German trenches approximately 1200 meters north of Saint Etienne. However, the regiment only made it to within 300 yards of the German trenches on October 10. Some of the men were commanded by Captain Lillard, who was described during the attack as ambling "along as unconcernedly as though he were strolling on the campus of Decatur Baptist College." Although Lillard "bore a charm on

⁴⁰ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 69-70, 71; Personnel Experiences Folder, Phillipson, 6, Barton, 5.

his life that day,” the attack stalled when the Germans unleashed a withering barrage of high explosives and gas shells, although an expected counterattack never materialized. The barrage, however, swept away another member of the old Seventh Texas. Several men from Company M, including William Q. Curtis of Fort Worth, went to regimental headquarters to fill a number of canteens. On their way back, they came under shell fire and ran about 200 yards to regain the shelter of their hole “before the bombardment became too heavy.” Corporal Andrew Leonard recalled that as they were climbing into their hole, “a one-pounder shell exploded about fifteen feet to our right and a piece struck Private Curtis at the intersection of his neck and shoulders which killed him instantly.” In order to ease the pressure on his men, Captain Barton tried to get an artillery barrage to silence the German guns. Barton sent Lt. George O. Thompson back to Colonel Bloor’s command post to point out on a map where the barrage was needed. Again there were problems with brigade headquarters about the presumed location of the 141st. Eventually, Colonel Bloor ordered the barrage on his own responsibility, knowing that there were no American troops in the area. To help make a new sketch of the lines, two soldiers, Corporal Roy D. Blair of Barton’s G Company and Private Levi N. Cox of Simpson’s Company H, crossed “a heavily shelled area and penetrated through the village of Saint Etienne,” which was also being shelled with chemicals, in order to sketch a more accurate map of the regiment’s positions. Cox was an original member of the Donley County company and Blair was an original member of the Gainesville Machine Gun Company. Later, the 141st Infantry finally confirmed that their position was incorrect on the map;

according to Barton, “instead of being a mile ahead of us they were one mile behind us.”⁴¹

Lt. Sayles of the 37mm platoon watched the assault from Barton’s Hill that morning. As he later wrote, “a line of men was crossing the flat before us. The shells were falling amongst them. Some of the men were running and dropping into shell holes. We could see them throw the dirt out and hug the bottoms of the holes.” When he had the chance, Sayles would peer out of his own hole, where he watched a number of soldiers of the regiment “in shallow ‘fox holes’, huddled on their knees, their faces held close to the ground.” Sayles also was a quick study on how to distinguish close artillery shells from those that were far away. He noticed that “a cloud of dust and smoke would follow a burst of dirt where the projectile struck.” If he heard the explosion of the shell “just as the dirt spurted up, it was close enough to make it safer to duck the piece of shell that zinged through the trees and fell into our fox holes as hot as a coal fire.” On the other hand, if the spurt of dirt was followed by the smoke before he heard the explosion, “then the shell fell too far away to bother.”⁴²

After the attack on October 10 was called off by General Whitworth, Colonel Bloor received orders to continue reorganizing his regiment. Later that afternoon, the 71st Brigade was released from control of the Second Division and moved back under

⁴¹ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 71, 156; Sayles, Manuscript, 54; Personnel Experiences Folder, Phillipson, 8, Barton, 5; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 84; *Clarendon News*, December 5, 1918.

⁴² Sayles, Manuscript, 45, 50.

General Smith's command. By 5:00 p.m. that evening, General Smith issued the order relieving the 71st Brigade from the line. The soldiers of the 141st and 142nd were to hold in place while the 72nd Brigade under General Hulen moved up and took over the advance. When the 144th Infantry passed through the lines of the 142nd, Captain Barton wrote that he "stood in our trenches and watched them cross this shell pitted flat and go up the hill beyond the creek for two miles before there was a shot fired."⁴³

While the 72nd Brigade took over the positions, the Germans actually did fall back from their positions in a general retreat to the Aisne River, less than twenty miles to the north. The 72nd Brigade had the responsibility to maintain contact with the retreating Germans. While the 72nd pushed forward, Colonel Bloor moved his regimental command post closer to Saint Etienne to oversee the reorganization and resupply of his regiment. He also allowed his soldiers to rest until the morning of October 12, although he was concerned that Saint Etienne was "heavily laden with mustard gas" and ordered all troops to stay east of the town and "under no circumstances" to enter the village. However, the regimental gas officer found the town safe and soldiers received permission to move into it. Indeed, Lt. Sayles arrived in the town to find dozens of soldiers using the town's well to shave and wash up. Other men were lined up at a French wine cart that was filled with water, although the water "tasted strongly of the sour wine that had once filled the wooden keg." As the soldiers of the regiment filtered through the town, many were happy to see their friends who had made it through the fight, but they rapidly quieted

⁴³ Special Report tour in the line of Seventy-First Brigade, 3; Personnel Experiences Folder, Barton, 5; Historical Branch, *Blanc Mont*, 13.

down. Some of the soldiers “were smoking, sitting on the ground; others stood in the sunshine, waiting, silent.” As Lt. Sayles recalled, “I had come into the line with twenty men; two had been killed and three wounded. We were only three days in. And now were merely catching our breath before we should move forward again.” As rapidly as it had started, the first combat action of the 142nd Infantry regiment was over, and the soldiers who had joined more than a year earlier from northwest Texas had come face to face with combat and seen the death and destruction wrought by modern weapons. They had lost some of their friends and comrades, and more would be lost before their time at the front was over.⁴⁴

With the fighting over, it was time to count the cost. The assault battalion of companies E, F, G, and H had lost seventy-three men killed, including nineteen men from Barton’s company and twenty men from Captain Simpson’s Company H. The Third Battalion, which included Wagstaff’s Company I, lost eleven men, Captain Staniforth’s Company K lost eight, Captain Lillard’s Company L lost sixteen men killed, and Company M lost nine men. The First Battalion, comprised of members mainly from the old First Oklahoma Infantry, lost forty men in the fighting around Saint Etienne. The

⁴⁴ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14 G3 Memos, from Headquarters 142nd Infantry to Battalion Commanders, October 10, 1918; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 72; Sayles, Manuscript, 57-58; While in the town, the macabre sense of humor of soldiers in combat was evident when a sergeant approached Lt. Sayles and told him there was a “nice” room to rest in on the second floor of a nearby house. When Sayles went up to check it out, he found the room was full of dead French soldiers, some of whom had been there for a long time. Sayles, instead of being disgusted, wondered if they could remove the bodies and get rid of the odor. Sayles manuscript, 59.

medical detachment, Headquarters Company, and Machine Gun Company lost a total of nine more soldiers killed. As for those wounded in the fighting, Colonel Bloor later reported that the regiment, which went into action with 58 officers and 1,715 men, suffered 26 officers and 540 men wounded, 32 percent of the regiment. The 71st Brigade as a whole reported more than 1,600 casualties in the three days fighting around Saint Etienne, with 1,300 on October 8 alone. Although Brigadier General Henry Hutchings had been relieved of duty prior to the fighting, he still maintained a connection with the brigade. His son, Major Edwin Hutchings of the 141st, accompanied the assault battalion in that regiment and was killed after advancing three hundred yards. Two of Captain Barton's fellow company commanders in the assault battalion of the 142nd, Captains Carter C. Hanner and Captain Willis E. Pearce, both died, one in the fighting and the other from wounds he received. Both Ethan Simpson and Sneed B. Staniforth were wounded. Indeed, Captain Staniforth's wounds led his friend Captain Perkins to write home that his survival was "doubtful." Lt. Daniel S. Blue was also wounded in the arm during the fighting. However, of the original officers of the Seventh Texas, only Lt. Alfred Carrigan had been killed. In spite of these losses, two officers of the old Seventh Texas, Thomas Barton and Steve Lillard, displayed courage, initiative, and proved themselves strong leaders. Within several weeks, both Barton and Lillard would serve as battalion commanders, and one would lead the final assault of the 142nd Infantry in World War I.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 69, 77-80; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 139-140; *Wichita Daily Times*, November 6, 7, 1918; Personnel Experiences, Alvin Luebke, 2.

With the pause in the fighting, Colonel Bloor analyzed the performance of his regiment. He claimed that with the “exception of the trench system in front of Saint Etienne, my troops had cleared their sector of the enemy, as far as the intermediate objective, at 10:30 o’clock in the morning” of the first day of fighting. He singled out the performance of the regiment’s aid stations and Captain Perkins’s Supply Company during the fighting. As for his soldiers, he offered them simple praise by describing the “dogged resistance and bravery of tired men in the face of terrible casualties inflicted by all the arms of modern warfare.” On the other hand, Bloor strongly critiqued the artillery support, writing that “the visible and tangible support rendered by the artillery supporting me amounted to very little.” Likewise, the perceived boon of having French tanks in the initial attack turned out to be worthless, as the tank officer Bloor met in his command post was killed and “those tanks not crippled by the enemy’s fire were withdrawn.” Overall, Bloor himself proved to be an excellent regimental commander. Based on the limited information available, he made the correct decisions, assumed responsibility for the regiment’s actions, knew that his place was in the command post, and made sure that he stayed in communication with his front line troops. Nothing more could be expected from an untested regimental commander. With that being said, Bloor also bore responsibility for failing to get orders to his battalions in a timely manner. Furthermore, the army considered the attack by the 71st Brigade a failure. Nevertheless, Bloor and

many of his officers and men proved to be capable leaders and his regiment performed well as it could for its first time in action.⁴⁶

Although combat remained the main focus of Bloor's activities, he was still forced to deal with administrative issues. For example, he received word that a medic of the regiment had stolen a watch from a German prisoner as the prisoner's broken arm was set. The officer who set the broken arm allowed his subordinate to take the watch. Colonel Bloor sent an officer to investigate and, based on what the officer reported back, decided to write the matter off as a "souvenir taking episode" and let it go as he rightly had more important things on his mind. However, the regimental surgeon did not agree with Bloor's handling of the matter and followed up with the division surgeon, arguing that the lax medical officer's actions should be considered "moral turpitude." While he should keep his position as a surgeon, his promotion should be put on "hold" until "he lives it down." Whether Colonel Bloor knew about this second guessing by the regimental surgeon behind his back is not known, but Bloor most likely gave the offending medical officer's action no more thought. Bloor also had to deal with the Marines, who had scrounged a number of the regiment's BARs from the battlefield while accusing Bloor's men of taking the Marines' Springfield rifles. An arrangement was finally worked out where the Marines would return the Brownings once Bloor's men turned over the Springfield rifles they had found on the battlefield.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 69, 73-76; Historical Branch, *Blanc Mont*, 11.

⁴⁷ Sayles, Manuscript, 55; Memorandum from Captain Bruce to Division Surgeon, October 17, 1918, Texas National Guard Records, 1900-1964, Box 1, Folder 21 General

Although the first combat experience of many of the soldiers of the old Seventh Texas was over, the war certainly was not, and after the 72nd Brigade took over the front, General Whitworth's brigade followed Hulen's 143rd and 144th Infantry regiments in a general advance against the Germans, who had continued their retreat to the Aisne River. On October 13th, the 142nd Infantry started out north again to keep up with the advance. Eventually an abandoned German camp was reached, the soldiers were given a break, and a field kitchen caught up with the column of soldiers and gave many of them their first hot meal in five days. The men feasted on a small amount of "coffee, bread, jam, and beans," and ate raw turnips discovered in the German camp. The break allowed some of the soldiers to tease Captain Perkins of the Supply Company, who was "standing with his foot on the hub balancing a cup of coffee on his knee." Lt. Thompson asked why Perkins had not brought the field kitchen to the men when they first went into action, and one of Perkins's men teased the captain, telling Thompson that Perkins had "crawled under the kitchen when the shells fell on the road; he set his breeches on fire and we couldn't come up."⁴⁸

That evening, as the regiment camped about the village of Dricourt, some of the soldiers found it hard to sleep because it was so quiet. They had become used to the constant sound of artillery and machine guns, and the silence made some of them restless.

Files Miscellaneous, 1917-1943, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

⁴⁸ Sayles, Manuscript, 61-62; A similar story is repeated in Ben H. Chastaine, *Story of the 36th: The Experiences of the Thirty-Sixth Division in the World War* (Oklahoma City: Harlow, 1920), 210.

The next day, the regiment continued on and by dusk approached the new front lines near the village of Vaux.⁴⁹

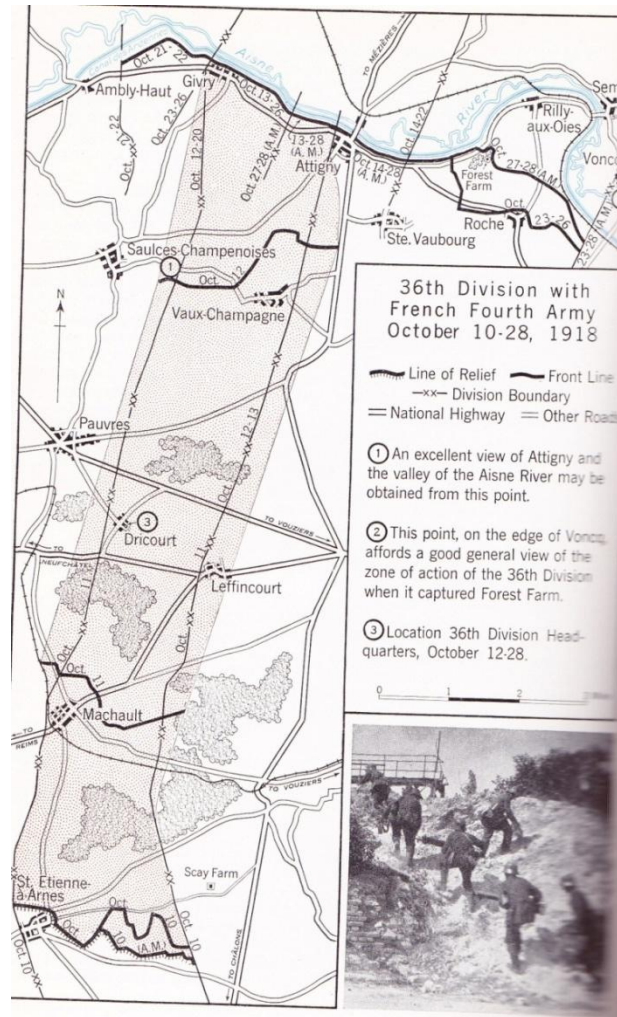


Figure 2. The advance to the Aisne. American Battle Monuments Commission, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 356.

⁴⁹ Sayles, Manuscript, 62.

Colonel Bloor also moved his command post to the village of Dricourt, which was approximately seven miles north of Saint-Etienne, and then Vaux, as the regiment went back into the line beyond Vaux Champagne in front of the city of Attigny, which rested on the Aisne River. On the night of October 13-14, the 71st Brigade moved back into the line to the right of Hulen's 72nd Brigade. The 142nd was on the left side of the brigade sector, and the line between the 142nd and the 143rd of the 72st Brigade was approximately 100 yards west of Attigny. Eventually, however, the regiments were aligned so that the 141st was on the left side of the brigade sector and Colonel Bloor's 142nd was on the right side. This put the 71st Brigade near the point east of the city where the Aisne River made a horseshoe bend to the north, creating an area on the south side of the river that the Germans had fortified strongly. Some of the brigade's positions were only sixty yards from German strong points in the bend of the river. Indeed, the horseshoe bend, known by the Americans as Forest Farm, was one of only two points south of the Aisne River still held by the Germans in the sector, and there was a fear among French and American officers that the area could be used as a "bridgehead" to attack General Gouraud's French Fourth Army. On the other hand, it was thought that if the French or Americans could get into the horseshoe area, they could outflank the German defenses in Attigny. Thus, the Germans had fortified it with a trench running across the entrance of the mile and a half wide horseshoe. The trench was protected by numerous logs and at least three belts of barbed wire, with three strong points interspersed with supporting machine guns. In

total, it was reported that there were at least sixty machine guns facing the 71st Brigade in the horseshoe bend of the Aisne River.⁵⁰

As the 142nd Infantry filtered into their lines on the night of October 13, 1918, they were not aware that in several weeks they would have to attack such a strongly fortified position as Forest Farm. Lt. Sayles and his weapons platoon dug in on the side of a hill and managed to bring up straw from Vaux to line their holes with. Several soldiers also found doors to use as roofs over their fox holes, but it turned out they had taken them from regimental headquarters and had to return them. From this point, the soldiers of the regiment waited and tried to stay comfortable and warm. Whenever he went to sleep, Sayles wrapped his scarf around his stomach and wrapped his feet in a rain slicker, and slept in the same hole as another man so they could keep each other warm. Over the next several days, Sayles's platoon dug a "long gallery" into the side of the hill, covered the floor with straw, kept the sides from caving in with branches, and created an "arbor" that kept some of the rain out, although the "roof was always dripping in some place, and little rivulets broke out under the deep mat of fallen leaves that covered the ground." On the other hand, the dugout was large enough to hold half of his platoon, who would crowd into the dugout to eat. At the top of the hill, above their "gallery," he placed two 37mm cannon, ready to fire across the river on the German positions north of the river. Not everyone had it so great, however. Part of Company I dug into an area that was "so flat it was nearly a lake," and the soldiers were "living in the slush," trying to

⁵⁰ White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 154-155, 159-160.

keep the rain away with shelter-halves stretched over their holes, and had covered the bottoms of their holes with blankets and overcoats scrounged from dead Germans. Still, “everything oozed water.”⁵¹

Sometimes the men could eat well. Occasionally the field kitchens got them a hot stew of dried potatoes and carrots mixed with corned beef. They also sometimes received sugar, which they ate on bread, and considered a “rare delicacy.” As for the bread, Lt. Sayles recalled that each loaf had the date stamped on it and that the bread was so tough it could be stockpiled, covered with a tarpaulin, and last for days. As he recalled, the bread “always tasted good when it could be dried out over a fire,” and it was “fine with jam.” Besides eating the bread, some soldiers found creative uses for it, such as sticking it on their bayonets when marching, as it was a “practical method for carrying the dishpan sized hunk of fodder, it also would keep rain drops out of” rifle barrels. Other foods devoured by the soldiers included condensed milk on bread and “oleomargarine,” which was “cut in thick slabs which was eaten like cheese.” Just as often, the hot food did not stay hot on its way to the men at the front and they had cold coffee and stew that had become “a solid mass with a hard layer of grease on top.”⁵²

When the regiment moved into the line, the rapidly moving front stabilized, and the four regiments of the division continued to dig in and watch their front. Despite the static nature of the front, there was plenty of activity. From October 14 through October

⁵¹ Sayles, Manuscript, 66-68, 70, 71, 73.

⁵² Sayles, Manuscript, 72, 79; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 138.

26, the 142nd rested in front of the Aisne River, trying to get a feel for the enemy, who had snipers in Attigny and was present in force north of the river. Furthermore, the weather was generally cloudy and cold, with rain more often than not. The rain and fog often reduced visibility and made it difficult to detect enemy movements. In fact, the daily operations report of the regiment frequently described the gloomy nature of the weather during the last two weeks of October in terms such as, “very dark and rainy,” “raining,” and “dark and cloudy, observation poor.” Indeed, during this period on the front, the regiment reported only two periods of clear weather, October 18 and October 23-25. There were, however, things much more dangerous than the weather that they had to deal with.⁵³

Artillery fire was a constant threat to the soldiers of the 142nd, both on the front and in reserve areas. For example, out of thirty-seven operations reports filed during the period October 16 to October 27, twenty-four reported enemy artillery fire somewhere in the regiment’s sector. Sometimes it was a light or “desultory” fire without a particular target, such as “occasional shells fell in Attigny between 17:30 and 18:30 o’clock,” or “harassing fire on Vaux and advanced positions.” Other times, the shelling was more purposeful, such as on October 17, when German observers noted American soldiers “attempting to reach a station in church steeple at Attigny,” and brought down high explosive shells on them. Another instance occurred on October 20, when it was reported

⁵³ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Daily Operations Reports, October 16-18, 23-25, 1918; See also Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 196, for a characterization of the regiment’s time in front of Attigny.

that “enemy shelled our front line last night,” which resulted in “counter battery action taken by batteries in this sector.” By October 25, artillery barrages were so commonplace that the operations report considered 100 high explosive shells falling in the area to be “light,” although on October 27, operations officer Captain Bertram Bloor reported nearly 200 shells fell in the regimental area. Finally, there was always a danger of shells containing gas. For example, on the afternoon of October 25, the enemy shelled the regiment’s support battalion with high explosives and mustard gas for several hours. The soldiers of the regiment seemed to handle the gas situation calmly, however, as Captain Bertram Bloor reported that “when these shells land near positions the men move away from it. The general dispersion of gas is not strong and continued wearing of gas masks in not necessary.” However, the next day, 100 rounds of mustard gas fell around the village of Mery during a twenty-four hour period, which resulted in thirty-two men being listed as “inhalation” casualties. While artillery was a constant danger and killed and wounded men in the regiment, it was not the only hazard at the front. They also had to be constantly aware of the enemy infantry activity, which often took the form of sniper and machine gun fire.⁵⁴

On the morning of October 16, a regimental patrol was fired on by a German sniper, and the next day, Captain Bloor reported “enemy snipers were active this morning, the least exposure of members of our patrol bringing shots. Snipers still located on strip of land between canal and river.” On October 24, Captain Bloor again reported

⁵⁴ Daily Operations Reports, October 16-27, 1918.

that “enemy snipers are very active along front” and reported that “owing to the bright moonlight and clear days action above ground north of Chufilly is practically prohibited. Small parties using cover move at night.” However, Captain Bloor concluded his report with “our snipers returning fire shot for shot.” By October 26, Captain Bloor passed on the information that “enemy activity decreased to practically nothing during the night,” although American snipers remained active. Lt. Sayles and his 37mm cannon were active as well, at one point firing thirty-two rounds at an enemy strongpoint, which reportedly reduced the enemy machine gun fire from that location. Of course, with these threats, it remained very dangerous for soldiers to be seen out in the open. But, during this two week period, the regiment could not afford to wait and watch. It had to gather intelligence, and did this by sending out patrols.⁵⁵

For example, on October 17, a small patrol of one officer and three men went out, crossed the Aisne River at 8:30 pm, and took two prisoners in a clump of woods north of the river. The Germans in the woods resisted being captured, so the patrol opened fire on them, wounding one. Fearing that the firing had disclosed their location, the patrol made it back across the river with the two prisoners. Later the same evening, the regiment sent out another patrol, but it failed to get over the river because of a “lack of facilities to cross.” The patrol then came under “heavy artillery fire” and returned. In another instance, a patrol was sent to the canal in Attigny because of reports of trucks moving. When the patrol got close to the river, they realized the truck sounds were

⁵⁵ Daily Operations Reports, October 17, 24, 26, 1918.

coming from the north side of the river but could not determine the purpose of the trucks' movement. Other patrols simply tested the defenses of the enemy, such as one that approached the bridges crossing the Aisne River only to discover that the "bridge sites remain covered by enemy machine guns and snipers." These patrols were obviously stressful for those who went on them. In one case, Lt. Sayles was in regimental headquarters when a lieutenant returned from a patrol in which he lost three men. The lieutenant came in "wet, muddy, and blubbering," and after explaining what had happened to his patrol, began to cry.⁵⁶

On October 19 and 20, the regiment made an effort to improve its position, sending out numerous patrols in their sector in order to get a better feel for the ground to strengthen their own positions "for defensive action." On October 21, however, the regiment received word from division headquarters that the enemy "had evacuated the territory to our front." The regiment immediately sent two patrols to "gain contact with the enemy." Both patrols, however, did not get far. One made it seventy-five meters beyond the river crossing before it was "fired upon by machine guns and snipers." Two men were wounded, and the patrol was forced to seek cover. The second patrol fared even worse, being stopped by enemy fire as soon as it crossed the river. After both of these patrols made it back south of the river, one more patrol was sent out. This patrol, consisting of a corporal and three men, reached the river and attempted to cross a German foot bridge. In the attempt they were fired on and "rushed by about twenty-five or thirty

⁵⁶ Daily Operations Reports, October 17-20, 1918; Sayles, Manuscript, 77.

infantrymen.” Only one man of the patrol made it back by swimming the canal, while the other three were captured. By this point, the report that the enemy had evacuated the area was obviously incorrect, and Captain Bloor, writing down his “general impression of the day” in the operations report, wrote that “enemy is still holding river bank to the north of our sector with a number of machine guns and probably one hundred infantrymen. It is inadvisable to attempt to patrol strip of land between canal and river without considerable artillery support.” Indeed, as if to prove that they had not left the area, the next night a patrol of fifty Germans was seen to cross the river. Later, several flares were shot from the general location of the German patrol but there was no attack.⁵⁷

Patrols also had to be sent out to maintain liaison with the regiments to the right and left. The distance between the 141st and the 142nd was about 1200 yards, which was patrolled only by the 142nd to prevent friendly fire accidents. However, Captain Bloor believed this gap was “far from satisfactory,” and worried that Germans could easily infiltrate the area. “They are too far from us,” he wrote. The situation along the front was always tense, with rumors passed back and forth from division to regiment. Soldiers on the front saw and heard unusual things. For example, Lt. Sayles was awakened in the night to the sound of music playing. At first he believed he was dreaming, but other members of his platoon heard it as well. The last thing he remembered before falling back to sleep was “the sound of the liveliest tunes coming clearly through the cold night air.” One night, men at the sniper posts reported “a great deal of talking, barking of dogs

⁵⁷ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Patrol Reports, Memorandum from Private Lester Smith; Daily Operations Reports, October 19-22.

and noise of motor trucks” across the river, and at one point a fire of unknown origin burned in front of the lines. Finally, a soldier in an observation post saw a “brilliant light” opposite his position,” and had no idea what it was. However, intelligence officers believed it was a “projector gas attack.” At a more mundane level, Captain Bloor became concerned about officers “visiting positions.” Apparently, officers would occasionally approach front line positions by “observed routes” which would bring enemy shells crashing down. In one day, for example, the regiment had five men wounded and one man killed after receiving an estimated 2,000 shells, including 100 that fell on an “unimproved road” near Company M’s position.⁵⁸

Thus, the period from October 14 until October 27 in front of Attigny and the Aisne River passed in a dangerous, cloudy, and cold haze for many of the regiment’s soldiers. The stress of their position was felt by many of the men. Lt. Sayles often surveyed the area around the village of Voncq, which was north of the river. Because it was elevated, it served as a prime area for German artillery observers. Sayles looked at the area through his binoculars and although he never saw movement, he was nervous

⁵⁸ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Field Messages, Memorandum from Intelligence OP with 142nd Infantry “No. 56 reports 18:00”, signed Lt. Reid, no date; Daily Operations Reports, October 22, 25, 1918; Sayles, Manuscript, 76; A projector attack was a device resembling an “electric slingshot,” that was used by both sides to fling gas shells. The British Livens Projector could launch a gas shell as far as 2,000 yards, Michael S. Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 267.

because the “Germans were there and no doubt watching us with more powerful glasses, and possessing more information of us than we had of them.”⁵⁹

Toward the last week in October, however, things began to change. While there had been discussions at higher levels about attacking across the Aisne River, the French and Americans wanted to take the horseshoe bend area south of the river away from the Germans. French units had recently attacked Forest Farm twice, only to be repulsed with heavy losses. Now the 71st Brigade was directly across from the bend, and on October 24, French and American officers decided to attack the Forest Farm area again. The men of the old Seventh Texas who still remained with the regiment would be among those who found themselves preparing to go “over the top” once more.⁶⁰

On October 24, 1918, General Whitworth submitted his plan for the capture of Forest Farm. General Whitworth’s memorandum was titled “preparation for minor offensive,” which perhaps it was in the larger plan of attack, although the men who would have to take it were not likely to consider it “minor.” Nevertheless, Whitworth stressed a massive artillery preparation, followed by a frontal assault, in which the “infantry should go over the top in attack formation, using the lanes cut thru the wire by

⁵⁹ Sayles, Manuscript, 83.

⁶⁰ By this point, one of the active leaders of the regiment, Captain Thomas Barton of Amarillo, who had been placed in command of First Battalion during the two weeks in front of Attigny, was summoned to the division Chief of Staff. On the way, he believed he “had probably drawn a ticket to Blois”—the reclassification center. Instead, he found he had been placed in command of the 111th Military Police Battalion, and was no longer on the front, RG120 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Personnel Experiences, Thomas Barton, 5; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 160.

the artillery and such other openings as they may be able to make by wire-cutters the night before the attack.” Although the experience of tanks at Saint Etienne had not turned out well, General Whitworth suggested that five or six light tanks could mash the barbed wire and aid in “destroying machine gun nests.” Also, and perhaps most importantly, General Whitworth stressed that to take the Forest Farm position, the town of Voncq, which was just northeast of the horseshoe bend on a slight hill that commanded the area, had to be taken or else enemy artillery could devastate the attackers. Finally, if they were not careful, German troops in Attigny would be able to fire into the left flank of the attacking soldiers, which could also present problems. Thus, far from being a minor operation, there were a number of concerns Whitworth expressed, and the 141st and 142nd Infantry had to overcome, if the attack was to succeed. Furthermore, the failure of the French 73rd Division to capture the position was common knowledge among the soldiers of the regiment.⁶¹

Because the Germans constantly shelled the area, and listened to many of the Americans’ communications, General Smith wanted to ensure that the preparations for the attack went undetected. Indeed, as Colonel Bloor wrote in a report after the armistice, “There was every reason to believe every decipherable message or word going over our wires also went to the enemy.” In fact, at one point, the division had passed on false coordinates to each regiment about the location of a main supply dump, and in thirty

⁶¹ RG120, 36th Division, 71st Brigade, Box 12, Combat Plans folder, Memorandum from CG, 71st Infantry Brigade to CG, 36th Infantry Division, subject: Preparation for Minor Operation, October 24, 1918.

minutes “enemy shells were falling on the point.” While it is not clear who thought of the idea, Choctaw Indians from the old First Oklahoma Infantry were used to pass messages over the wire, saving time for translation and confusing the Germans. According to Colonel Bloor, “There was hardly one chance in a million that Fritz would be able to translate these dialects, and the plan to have these Indians transmit telephone messages was adopted.” The regiment tested the process out on October 26, with successful results and then used Choctaw Indians to relay messages during the assault on October 27.⁶²

Chosen to lead this attack for the 142nd Infantry was an officer who had been in the thick of the fighting around Saint Etienne and an original member of the Seventh Texas, Captain Steve Lillard. Still with the Third Battalion, Lillard had spent several days in divisional reserve after the fighting around Saint Etienne and after the 72nd Brigade continued the advance to Attigny. On October 22, Lillard’s battalion was put into the line near the village of Roche, which was on the southeastern edge of the Forest Farm horseshoe bend, and just across the river from Voncq, where the Germans maintained observation over the surrounding countryside. On October 25, Lillard assumed command of the battalion, and the next day he was called to Colonel Bloor’s

⁶² RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14, Memorandum from C.O. 142nd Infantry to Commanding General, 36th Division, subject: Transmitting Messages in Choctaw, January 23, 1919; Colonel Bloor noted that some words had to be substituted for weapons, such as “big gun” for artillery, “little gun shoot fast” for machine guns, while the three battalions were identified as “one, two, or three grains of corn.”

command post and told that his battalion would lead the upcoming attack on the twenty-seventh.⁶³

The final plan called for the Third Battalion, with Lillard in command and including Company I under Lt. Rudolph Fried, Company K under Lt. John Douglas, Company M under Lt. Verne Hillock, and Company L in support, commanded by Lt. Alvin Leubke. The command arrangements illustrated the casualties sustained by the regiment: not one of the assault companies was led by a captain, the standard rank for a company commander. Of the three companies in the assault battalion commanded recently by members of the old Seventh Texas, only Lillard was available for the assault. However, there were other Seventh Texas officers, including Lt. Nat Perrine, Lt. Sayles and his 37mm cannon platoon, who had just found out he had been promoted to captain, and the Stokes mortar platoon commander, Lt. George O. Thompson.⁶⁴

The assault battalion had four days to observe the enemy line, and with adequate planning and preparation, Lillard's battalion was as ready as it could possibly be. As Lillard wrote after the fact, "we had had 24 hours advance notice of this attack, with maps and definite orders. Every man in the organization knew just what he was going to do." Lillard also stressed the cooperation of senior commanders and that they had plenty of artillery support. This, he believed, "made it impossible for anything but success." Thus, on October 27, 1918, a day that began clear and sunny, members of the old Seventh

⁶³ Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 2-3.

⁶⁴ Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 3; Sayles, Manuscript, 88.

Texas waited to go “over the top” across muddy fields and into the teeth of the German main line of resistance across the horseshoe bend of the Aisne River.⁶⁵



Figure 3. Assault on Forest Farm, October, 1918. NARA, RG 120, Records of the American Expeditionary Forces, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Folder, Tracings Positions, October, 1918.

⁶⁵ Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 3; On October 26, the Americans raised observation balloons to try and get a better look at the enemy positions, *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

Lillard's soldiers knew that the enemy barbed wire was thick, the strong points covered by at least three belts of wire that were twelve yards wide, while other areas were blocked by one or two belts of wire. To overcome this, engineers were assigned to Lillard's battalion who would advance with the infantry. Lillard's men also knew that the main objective was the trench line cutting across the horseshoe bend. The attack was scheduled to begin with an artillery preparation at 4:00 p.m. and the assault battalion would go over the top at 4:30 p.m. As the men waited through the day, the clear skies gave way to clouds and rain. The soldiers had their usual meal of bread, beans and coffee several hours before the Second Field Artillery Brigade opened fire on schedule for twenty minutes on the strong points. The Stokes mortars fired on the enemy trenches and tried to cut the belts of barbed wire, and other artillery units fired barrages against Voncq, Attigny, and north of the Aisne River, in an effort to disrupt German observation areas and destroy machine gun nests which could fire across the river at Lillard's attacking soldiers. Close to the assault battalion, Lt. Sayles's 37mm cannons "were firing as fast as they could be loaded." Sayles saw the engineers pass him by with "rifles slung, each man carrying a pair of long-handled wire-cutters."⁶⁶

At 4:30 p.m. Lillard's battalion moved out and discovered that the artillery preparation had succeeded in keeping the enemy in their dugouts as well as helping to cut the barbed wire. Although the enemy attempted a counter barrage, it did not hold up Lillard's men, who moved forward in a "single line of skirmishers" armed with "rifles,

⁶⁶ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry, Box 14 Forest Farm Engagement, Operations Report, October 27, 1918, 1-2; Sayles, Manuscript, 89, 91.

Browning Automatic Rifles, pistols, trench knives, [and] grenades.” Lillard’s attackers stayed close behind their rolling barrage, made it quickly through the wire, and were waiting for the Germans when they began to come out of their dugouts. When the Germans scrambled out to reach their weapons, Lillard’s men either captured or killed them. Lt. Sayles recalled the sound of Browning Automatic Rifles firing from the front as he advanced with his cannons, while “machine gun bullets were still cracking overhead” from an American machine gun barrage. Indeed, Sayles believed the sound of the bullets was so close overhead that it “caused many a man to hesitate at first, thinking that he was being fired on by the enemy.” Luckily, the soldiers did not hesitate for long but continued the advance. A shell hit near Sayles, knocking him down and his helmet off. He managed to get back to his feet and continued to direct his platoon. Lt. Nat Perrine, with a platoon of about twenty-eight men, continued to advance and captured a trench. His leadership brought with it a promotion to captain.⁶⁷

Less than an hour later it was over, and the entire attack had gone off almost without a hitch. The only major mistake occurred to Company M, which ran into its own artillery barrage because the artillery inadvertently fell short of its intended target. Otherwise, the main German line was overrun in about forty-five minutes. Lillard’s men captured 109 prisoners, most of whom were “taken as they came out of dug outs and trenches,” after the artillery barrage passed. The Germans “seemed to be glad to be taken

⁶⁷ Forest Farm Engagement, Operations Report, October 27, 1918, 2-3; Sayles, Manuscript, 92; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, June 18, 1919; *Clarendon News*, November 7, December 5, 1918.

prisoners and offered no resistance.” They also captured German equipment, including twenty-one Maxim machine guns, known as the “Devil’s Paintbrush.”⁶⁸

Once Lillard’s men captured the German line, they sent two patrols to the river, and managed to round up twenty-seven more prisoners. The patrols also reported that there were signs of “enemy confusion” along the north bank of the river. Machine guns were brought up for support in case of a counterattack, and mopping up parties “threw grenades into dugouts and trenches, doing excellent work.” Captain Lillard noted that by 6:00 pm, maps had been drawn showing the location of all friendly troops, and by 9:00 pm word was passed by Lt. Hillock that “our line would withstand any counter attack of the enemy’s, should he dare to make one.”⁶⁹

Although the operation went smoothly, it was not without cost to the 141st and 142nd regiments and to Lillard’s battalion. The initial reports estimated that the 142nd killed forty Germans in the assault, but that eight American soldiers were killed and twenty were wounded. Several members of the old Seventh Texas lost their lives at Forest Farm, including Private Oscar Fry of Company K, who was knocked down by an artillery shell. Corporal Hart, who was thrown in the air by the same shell, asked Fry if were hurt and Fry replied that he was not. When Hart urged him to keep moving, Fry

⁶⁸ Forest Farm Engagement, Operations Report, October 27, 1918, 3; RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Memorandum from C.O. 142nd Infantry to Commanding General, 36th Division, subject: Machine Guns captured in Forest Farm engagement, November 6, 1918.

⁶⁹ Forest Farm Engagement, Operations Report, October 27, 1918, 3-4; Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 3.

“kindly laughed and said that he couldn’t go any farther,” and Hart left him. He later learned that Fry was killed by “the shock of the explosion.” Another Company K veteran, Corporal Bruce Cobb, was shot in the chest by a sniper, although one of his fellow soldiers, Private Robert Lynch, saw the sniper’s location and shot him in return. Company M lost Private Will C. Curtis at Forest Farm as well. Curtis was struck in the right temple by a 37mm shell and sank slowly to the ground without uttering a word. While the soldiers of the battalion and regiment were perhaps grateful for the minimum number of casualties, the violent deaths that some of their comrades suffered had to weigh heavily on their minds.⁷⁰

In the operations report prepared after the battle, operations officer Bertram Bloor wrote that “Operations were carried out exactly as planned. The plan was good. The morale of the men was good...The operation was not difficult.” At least one officer of the regiment, Captain R.E. Fried, believed that much of the credit should have gone to Captain Lillard. In his written observations of the battle, Fried pointed out that when Lillard took command of the Third Battalion, all “confusion ceased and from that time on until we were relieved the battalion functioned as smoothly as a well trained organization would at home in peace times.” According to Fried, this was because with Lillard there

⁷⁰ Forest Farm Engagement, Operations Report, October 27, 1918, 3; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 123-124; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 141, 143, 155; According to Corporal Hart, Lynch’s shot did not kill the German soldier, who they found with a terrible wound to his head. They pulled him out of his dugout and “laid him on the ground, within arm’s reach of Cobb’s lifeless body.” When stretcher bearers took Cobb’s body away, Hart asked them to come back and pick up the wounded German. Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 127.

was “mutual confidence between battalion and companies,” which was something that arguably only the commander could instill. Indeed, Corporal Hart believed that Captain Lillard was as popular in Company K as he was in his own company. On the other hand, as the men settled into their new positions that night, Captain Lillard could not keep them from hunting for souvenirs. Officers engaged in souvenir hunting as well, as Lt. Sayles found a heavy cane which he believed would help him navigate shell holes as well as a pair of green cloth mittens and a “knitted bellyband” that he wore on his head and over his ears.⁷¹

On October 28, the Germans began shelling the regiment’s new position in the horseshoe bend, but the shelling was “without material effect.” More importantly for the soldiers, however, they knew that their second stint in the line was coming to an end. Following a plan developed prior to the attack on Forest Farm, the First Battalion, which was in brigade reserve, and the Second Battalion, in regimental reserve, were relieved on October 28 by French troops. Both battalions marched south toward Somme-Py, where three weeks earlier they had arrived as inexperienced troops awaiting their first taste of combat. However, in accordance with the plan of relief, Lillard’s Third Battalion had to remain in its position in the horseshoe of the Aisne River for an extra day. This did not sit well with Captain Lillard, who later wrote that “all of our supporting troops, including the artillery were withdrawn and we were left to the mercy of the German artillery with

⁷¹ Forest Farm Engagement, Operations Report, October 27, 1918, 3; Personnel Experiences Folder, Rudolph E. Fried, 5-6; Hart, *Company K of Yesterday*, 144; Sayles, Manuscript, 95.

French infantry to support us and with French artillery to give excuses for not firing when we called upon them to do so.” The Third Battalion was shelled by the Germans all day on October 28 and into the early morning hours of October 29. While waiting to be relieved, Sayles studied the terrain behind him, trying to memorize it so he would be able to lead his platoon out during darkness. The stress of waiting for relief grew on the men as each shell impacted the area. Every time he heard a shell on its way in, Sayles closed his eyes “so tightly that the sound was partly drowned out.” After the shell exploded, he “relaxed until the next one came over.”⁷²

At approximately 3:30 a.m. on October 29th, Captain Lillard’s Third Battalion, including Sayles’s 37mm platoon, was relieved by the French and marched south to the village of Marchant. Shells continued to fall along their route, and during brief stops, soldiers tried to lighten their packs by dropping some of the souvenirs they had collected, including Sayles, who dropped a “small automatic pistol and had emptied my pockets of brass belt buckles and red and black decorations.” In Marchant, trucks took the Third Battalion the rest of the way to the “old artillery camp” just south of Somme-Py, where the regiment was waiting. On their way to Somme-Py, they passed through Saint Etienne. Sayles noticed that the streets had been cleared of “loose stones and timbers,” and that several old people watched them drive by. As they left Saint Etienne, east of the village they passed the trench they had fought over several weeks before. Now, it had been filled in and a long line of crosses marked the final resting place of many of their

⁷² Daily Operations Reports, October 28, 1918; Personnel Experiences Folder, Lillard, 3; Sayles, Manuscript, 97-98.

comrades who had been killed in the fighting. In fact, as each unit had passed through Saint Etienne, most found the time to “halt and permit the men to look at various points where comrades had been killed and to clear up hazy impressions that existed about the lay of the land during the fighting.” The weather was clear and the daily operations report, for the first time in weeks, made no mention of casualties or enemy machine gun operations, or the status of patrols. On October 30, the 142nd Infantry Regiment marched from the artillery camp to the town of Valmy, arriving in the late afternoon. The weather had become cloudy again, but that probably did not matter much to Colonel Bloor’s soldiers. The daily operations report did not take long to write that day, as it contained just four words: “Not in the line.”⁷³

Although the war would continue for almost another two weeks, and the Thirty-Sixth Division would finally be assigned to the American First Army to the east, there would be no more fighting for the soldiers of the Thirty-Sixth Division and the 142nd Infantry Regiment. At least thirty-five original members of the old Seventh Texas had lost their lives in the twenty-three days their regiment spent on the Western Front, and dozens more were wounded. Those who survived had seen the horrors of combat and felt the loss of their comrades keenly. Their ideas of what war really was had changed, but now that it had ended for them, their thoughts would turn to trying to describe and understand what they had experienced. Their thoughts would turn to home.

⁷³ Daily Operations Reports, October 29-30, 1918; Sayles, Manuscript, 102, 104, 106, 107; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 240.

CHAPTER 10

HOMECOMING AND CONCLUSION

On April 10, 1919, “out of a clear blue sky,” the Thirty-Sixth Division headquarters received a message from the AEF First Army Chief of Staff announcing that General Smith’s division had been relieved of duty with the Eighth Corps of the American Expeditionary Forces. The Texans and Oklahomans were finally going home five months after the armistice took effect. The message transferred the Thirty-Sixth Division to the AEF Services of Supply, to which the division would report on its way back to the United States. In the formal language of the memorandum, First Army formally tasked the division with proceeding by rail from the Sixteenth Training Area to an “Embarkation Center to prepare for embarkation to the United States.” Smith was ordered to begin moving his division by April 27, 1919, and to appoint baggage and billeting officers to handle the real work of moving a full division to its port of embarkation. There is little to indicate the feeling that must have spread through the division when this message arrived at division headquarters. Just over two years since the United States declared war on Germany, the soldiers of the Thirty-Sixth Division and the 142nd Infantry had received their orders to return home. The five months that had passed since the armistice of November 11, 1918, had been spent impatiently by the soldiers, training, playing sports, and attending schools and taking leave. They had been presented with decorations and awards for their actions in combat and lauded by the press. They discovered old friends

who they had thought had been killed in combat, and perhaps most importantly, they talked and wrote about their experiences in combat to each other and to their families. At the same time, the communities of northwest Texas from which the soldiers of the old Seventh Texas had left so long ago, struggled to gather information about their loved ones, and the excitement of the soldiers impending return generated enthusiasm, praise, pride, and celebration. Like hundreds of thousands of other soldiers throughout the AEF, in a few short weeks they would be home and all of their experiences would become memory. However, before the reunions of these soldiers and their loved ones could take place, it is important to understand how the regiment's soldiers spent their final six months in France after they left the line near Attigny in late October, 1918.¹

After leaving the lines, the division moved to the town of Valmy. As they left the line, James McCan of Quanah recalled that his comrades were “the worst looking bunch of men you ever saw,” and that in his group, about “half a dozen could barely talk above a whisper as our lungs were full of gas.” From Valmy, the division marched southeastward toward the sector of the First American Army, receiving a day of rest near Thiaccourt on November 2. The next day, members of the regiment could hear artillery at the front more distinctly than at any time since they had left the Aisne River nearly a week earlier, and believed they would soon be back at the front. Soon, the division was at the southern edge of the Argonne Forest, encamped around the town of Bar-Le-Duc.

¹ RG120, 36th Division, Box 2, Special Orders Number 67, 10 April, 1919; Ben H. Chastaine, *Story of the 36th: The Experiences of the Thirty-Sixth Division in the World War* (Oklahoma City: Harlow, 1920), 271.

There, the division made preparations to return to the line, including receiving replacements from the Thirty-Fourth Division. The soldiers received new uniforms and fresh equipment, and each company's strength increased to about 200 soldiers. Before moving to the front, however, word came on November 7 that the Germans had asked for an armistice. Four days later, on November 11, as the division's soldiers drilled, they could hear the sounds of the artillery at the front steadily increasing in volume, which caused more than a few soldiers to think that the Germans had broken off the expected armistice. At 11:00 a.m., however, "the bombardment ceased and all was quiet." It was none too soon for some members of the regiment, one of whom heard rumors that they were to be used as "shock troops" near Verdun. The evening of November 11 found the men celebrating the armistice, and "serious faces that had been drawn for weeks, relaxed and gave vent to smiles and laughter." The regimental chaplain wrote that evening the village of Loup-le-Petit "woke up," and was bedecked with lights and serenaded by music from the 142nd Infantry band. One soldier, Wayne Wheeler, of Company G, wrote home that his company was in the village of Conde when the armistice took effect and that "of course we were not allowed to shoot up the town but we celebrated."²

² *Quanah Tribune Chief*, February 6, 1919, and January 17, 1919; Ben H. Chastaine. *Story of the Thirty-Sixth: The Experiences of the Thirty-Sixth Division in the World War* (Oklahoma City: Harlow, 1920), 242-243, 246-247; Chaplain C.H. Barnes, *History of the 142nd Infantry of the Thirty-Sixth Division, October 15, 1917, to June 17, 1919* (Blackwell Job Printing Company, 1922), 41-42; William D. Hornaday, Volume 3, pp. 250-252, William Deming Hornaday Transcripts of World War I Letters and personal accounts, Archives and Information Services, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

The next day, in the 142nd area, “the solemn tones of a funeral dirge came floating into Regimental headquarters,” causing confusion among some of the officers, who wondered where the music came from. A number of officers went outside to see what was happening. As the regimental chaplain wrote, “soldiers will be soldiers and what one cannot think of the other fellow will.” The soldiers of the regiment had decided to “bury the Kaiser.” In a solemn procession that included soldiers and townspeople, led by a soldier dressed as a priest and the regimental band, a group of soldiers carried the remains of the “Kaiser.” The group wended their way to a nearby bridge, and the “remains” were “raised tenderly to the banister and at the proper time were gracefully dropped into the creek.” As soon as that occurred, the regimental band “hit up a lively tune and amid cheers” the soldiers “retuned to quarters feeling they had expressed themselves.”³

A few days after the armistice, the division received orders to proceed to the Sixteenth Training Area, near Tonnerre. The march started on November 18, and took until Thanksgiving for all of the troops to arrive in the training area. In an effort to keep the soldiers’ minds off of going home immediately, the regiments of the division competed to see which could march to Tonnerre with the fewest number of soldiers falling out. The 142nd Infantry took the honors, having the fewest number falling out while remaining “in the van of the movement” and reaching “its billets in the Tonnerre area ahead of all others.” Along the way, the regiment passed through Bar-Sur-Aube and

³ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 142-143.

its soldiers had a brief reunion with the people who had been kind to them several months previously.⁴

In the Sixteenth Training Area, the regiment spread out across various towns in the area, much like they had near Bar-Sur-Aube. Regimental Headquarters was in the village of Flogny, and the battalions and support units were scattered around them. There were few descriptions of these towns, although one soldier described the area in which his unit was based. In peacetime, he wrote, the village had a population of 1,000, but the war “has cut it down to a small bunch of women and children. They wear wooden shoes and drink red wine, and that is all you can say for them.” The village also had just one “wine joint” which also sold bread to the entire village and the soldiers. The regiment would stay in this area for the next five months, and when they arrived, conditions were not ideal. However, with “hard work and excellent supervision,” things began to change. Many soldiers had worn out their boots on the long marches after being relieved from the line, and there was a shortage of firewood as the coldest months approached. Captain Sam Owens, who originally served as a battalion adjutant in the Seventh Texas, wrote that after he left the front all he had left were his clothes, his rings and watch, a fountain pen, a pocketbook, and one five dollar American bill. He also pointed out the dramatic changes that occurred to the personnel of the regiment, commenting that only about 30 of the 232 men in his company were original members. Over time, however, living conditions improved, as Owens moved into a house. His bedroom included a “white

⁴ Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 248-249; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 46.

marble fireplace,” a tiled floor covered with carpets, and a large mahogany feather bed.” Also during the winter months, the worldwide influenza epidemic made its way through the ranks of the AEF, taking a toll on many American divisions in France. The epidemic, however, was not quite so severe for the Thirty-Sixth, which reported only 160 cases of the deadly virus.⁵

General Pershing maintained a fairly rigorous training schedule, insisting that the AEF remain prepared to continue fighting if the need arose. Indeed, the regimental chaplain declared that the time they spent in the training area were “not months of leisure by any means.” Another soldier, C.M. Harvey, recalled that much of their time during this period was spent in holding inspections and reviews, but only about five hours per day on “squads right and left” because it got dark so early. Captain Ben Chastaine of the old First Oklahoma Infantry wrote that the soldiers were willing to endure just about any hardship to end the war, but once it was over the “work and exercises soon grew uninteresting and irksome.” Nevertheless, the regiment participated in many practice assaults. For example, at the end of February, 1919, the regiment received orders to “attack within the regimental sector at 6:30 am....capturing or destroying the enemy and continuing our advance.” For soldiers who had participated in the hard fighting around Saint Etienne and had made the successful attack on Forest Farm, these practice assaults must have been tiring and pointless. However, Willie Carpenter of the Machine Gun

⁵ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 46-47; Hornaday Collection, Volume 5, 85-86; *Blum Bulletin*, January 9, 1919; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 260.

Company put it another way, “I had rather drill than be on the front for that is a busy place.”⁶

Of course, the regiment was not immune to organizational changes during this period. While Colonel Bloor remained in command, Captain Wagstaff completed his course at the AEF School of the line and returned to the regiment on December 28, where he was placed in charge of the Headquarters Company until March 1919, when he became brigade adjutant. Lt. Sayles was promoted to captain on October 29, 1918, and assumed command of Company A. After Captain Barton took command of a military police company in October, he earned a promotion to major and received orders to return to the United States as an instructor. However, when the armistice took effect, his orders were changed, and he helped run a German prisoner of war camp until he returned home late in 1919. Captain Ethan Simpson, wounded on October 8, returned to the regiment on November 4. Although Simpson was “thankful to be alive,” he was still “intensely grieved” over the deaths of twenty-four men from his company.⁷

The soldiers also had to spend a second Christmas away from their loved ones. Some men wrote home, hoping their families would send gifts. Clifford Young of Company M asked his parents for “a fountain pen and some good stick candy, or most

⁶ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Records, Box 14, “Field Order,” 28 February, 1919, P.C. 142nd Infantry; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 47; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 248; Hornaday Collection, Volume 2, 345, and Volume 9, 258.

⁷ *Abilene Reporter News*, September 27, 1942; *Amarillo Daily News*, November 30, 1919; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919; Edwin Sayles Collection, Box 1, Officer’s Record Book, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

anything will be well pleased.” Another soldier received three pictures of his family over Christmas and was “glad to receive them,” while Regimental Sergeant Major Herman Stroud hoped to receive a good fountain pen and fruit cake from his family. On the other hand, in response to a friend who asked how he spent Christmas, Private Nat Grimes retorted, “You asked me what kind of Christmas I spent, I did not spend any Christmas at all, I did not know when it passed.” For most, however, it was a day of rest. Private Camilla O. Hanks of Abilene described Christmas for his sister: “Christmas is gone. It seemed more like Sunday to me than anything else. I sat around the fire almost all day. We sang songs and ran around most all day and had a pretty good time.” He also noted that they were given the afternoons off between Christmas and New Year.⁸

As winter gave way to spring, the morale of the soldiers was generally good and the rigorous training schedule gave way to organized sports. Football provided an outlet for the men of the division, much as it had back in the early days of Camp Bowie. In France, the Thirty-Sixth Division football team reached the AEF Championship game, which was held in Paris and attended by the King and Queen of Belgium, General Pershing, and other senior AEF officers. After a close game, the Eighty-Ninth Division defeated the Thirty-Sixth by a score of 14-6.⁹

There were also many local athletic events and theatrical productions to help pass the time. In fact, each regiment appointed a “regimental entertainment officer” who was

⁸ Hornaday Collection, Volume 1, 298, Volume 3, 250-252, Volume 5, 347, Volume 4, 253-255; *Abilene Reporter*, February 5, 1919.

⁹ Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 259-261.

responsible for scheduling events and keeping up the morale of the soldiers. Sports remained important. For example, one entertainment officer noted that 60 volleyball games had been played in one week, attracting 250 soldiers, and that during the same week, his company played five games of baseball, three games of basketball, as well as football and soccer, while boxing and track were also offered. Indeed, according to several platoon sergeants, “every man in their platoons has boxed at least one two minute round.” Company entertainment halls were also maintained. In a report to the regimental entertainment officer, officers of companies E and F noted that large numbers of men came to their entertainment hall to write letters home, there were plenty of magazines and books, and that the NCO in charge of the hall kept it clean and neat. Furthermore, “stag dances” were held almost every night, and religious services were held on Sunday. During the week the hall was used for the automatic rifle school. As for theatrical shows, a number of impromptu troupes travelled around the divisional area putting on shows, including “IK’s Worry Chasers” and the “Texas Rustlers.” In a contest held in April, 1919, the prize winning theatrical troupes included the “Forest Farm Follies” of the 141st Infantry, and the “Ste. Etienne Warriors,” of the 142nd. Of these types of theatrical events, one soldier, Clifford Bills of the 142nd Infantry Ambulance company, wrote that “the boys all say that last night’s show was the best they’ve seen or heard since they’ve been in France, and the beauty of it is, it was held in an old shackly [sic] barn with no platform...it was as good as anyone could expect any theater in a large town.”¹⁰

¹⁰ RG120, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Box 14, Memorandum from: Entertainment Officer, headquarters Company, 142nd Infantry, to: Regimental

The soldiers also had opportunities to attend various schools, including some of the best universities in England and France as well as more basic schools taught by members of the AEF who taught illiterate soldiers to read. Besides athletics and educational opportunities, the men were given the chance to take leave and visit Paris or the French Riviera. According to the divisional historian, Captain Ben Chastaine, out of 18,000 soldiers who were given leave during the six months after the armistice, only 18 had reports of “misconduct” filed against them. However, there were also opportunities for sightseeing closer to the regiment’s camp. The headquarters of the 71st Brigade was near a historic Roman army camp, and members of the 142nd Infantry, perhaps including some members of the old Seventh Texas, dug up a number of Roman coins and took them as souvenirs.¹¹

Also during this five month period, the division and a number of individual soldiers received awards for their actions and service. In total, four members of the division received the Congressional Medal of Honor, two of whom were from the 142nd Infantry. However, only one man, Samuel M. Sampler, was an original member of the

Entertainment Officer, 142nd Infantry, Subject: Entertainment report for the week ending March 21, 1919; Memorandum from: Entertainment Officer, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, to: Entertainment Officer, 142nd Infantry, subject: Report of Amusements for week ending March 22, 1919; Memorandum from : Entertainment Officer, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, to: Entertainment Officer, 142nd Infantry, subject: Report of amusements for week ending April 10, 1919; Memorandum from: Division Entertainment Officer, to: Lt. Chaplain F.W. Fann, 142nd Infantry, subject: Theatrical Contest; Hornaday Collection, Volume 8, 33.

¹¹ Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 262-263, 267.

Seventh Texas Infantry, having joined Captain Wiley's Company in Quanah, coming from Jackson County, Oklahoma, just across the Red River.¹²

Although Sampler was the only member of the old Seventh Texas to receive the nation's highest award, a number of men received the Distinguished Service Cross for their actions near Saint Etienne or Forest Farm, including Thomas D. Barton. Two members who joined Captain Underwood's Cleburne company, Sergeants Kelly Nail and Chester Roberts, also received the Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix De Guerre. After the armistice, when Roberts's family learned their son had been decorated, his mother wrote that "when the boy comes home I will rest my burdens on his broad shoulders." Other men who received the award included Sergeant Joe Wilson of Quanah, who was kissed on both cheeks by a French general during the ceremony, which caused him to remark laconically that he was more "frightened during the ceremony than he was during the battle." Wilson received three wounds on October 9, but he still managed to claim in a letter home that "I am too tough for it to have much effect."¹³

The French government also bestowed the Croix de Guerre, an award of valor, on a number of the former Texas National Guardsmen, although a number of these awards were bestowed posthumously, such as in the cases of Private Orla Shirer, born in Cleburne and killed near Saint Etienne. His medal was sent to his parents in Johnson

¹² Samuel M. Sampler, Draft Registration Card, Jackson County, Oklahoma, National Archives and Records Administration, Atlanta, Georgia.

¹³ *Amarillo Daily News*, November 30, 1919; *Dallas Morning News*, July 13, 1919; *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 8, 1919; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, February 6, 1919.

County, as was the medal for Private Ben Fuller. Lt. Alfred Carrigan, who was shot down outside of Saint Etienne on October 8, also received the medal posthumously based on the recommendation of Colonel Bloor. Other men such as Clarence J. Casey earned the award for his “courage and zeal in maintaining telegraphic communications between units of the Thirty-Sixth Division.” However, one soldier from Amarillo, Ike Brauney, perhaps had the most interesting story for a Croix de Guerre recipient: He was a color bearer at an awards ceremony and the presenting general, who had several medals left over, gave him one for holding the flag.¹⁴

Other members of the old Seventh Texas who received the award included Steve Lillard, Edwin Sayles, James G. Herblin, Bert Davis, Sneed Staniforth, and Corporal Roy Green. From Captain Simpson’s Clarendon company, Sergeant Matthew Lane and Privates Obe Holland and William H. Hodges received the award, all original members of the Seventh Texas. Reporting on the award of the medal to these three men, the *Clarendon News* noted that the men “covered themselves with glory” and showed “what Texas and Oklahoma could do,” and that their actions brought credit upon “the great Panhandle which they call home.” Barton also received the Italian Croix de Guerre, perhaps the only member of the regiment to do so.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, August 14, 1919, July 2, 1919, April 26, 1919; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 12 and 14, 1919.

¹⁵ *Abilene Reporter News*, September 27, 1942; *Amarillo Daily News*, November 30, 1919; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 18, 1919; *Clarendon News*, May 1, 1919.

While the men received awards and decorations, they also received much written praise for their short time in combat. General Stanislas Naulin, commander of the French Twenty-First Corps, under whom the Thirty-Sixth Division served, was quick to praise the unit, writing to General Smith while the unit was still in combat that although the division was inexperienced, Smith's "young soldiers...rivaling, in push and tenacity with the older and valiant regiments of General Lejeune, accomplished their mission fully. All can be proud of the work done." Naulin also expressed his "appreciation, gratitude, and best wishes for future successes. The past is an assurance of the future." Shortly after the armistice, the governors of Texas and Oklahoma sent telegrams to General Smith. Governor Hobby wrote that "all Texas is proud of her brave sons and rejoices over their wonderful achievements." The men of the old Seventh Texas had apparently upheld the Texas military tradition.¹⁶

Once the press published Naulin's expression of thanks, the story spread and many other newspapers joined in praising the division, and the Associated Press carried a major story on the division. In fact, the praise accorded the division was published even before the division had made its successful attack against Forest Farm. Of course, much of this praise found an outlet in Texas, where newspapers across the state quickly picked up on the activities of the division.¹⁷

¹⁶ Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 277-278; Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 43.

¹⁷ Lonnie J. White. *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War I* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1984), 157-158.

The *Wichita Daily Times* printed the Associated Press article that focused on the exploits of both the Second and Thirty-Sixth Divisions and called their contribution to the fighting in the Champagne region “the most glorious contribution of American military history in this war.” While overstating the importance of the actions of these two divisions, it is clear that the communities back in Texas perceived the services of the division as a monumental effort that should be written into the lore not only of American military history, but also Texas military history as well. The Associated Press report also specifically praised the Thirty-Sixth as it was “new to fighting and without ever having heard shell fire before, the division withstood the most bitter German counterattacks without flinching,” a theme which only served to add luster to the actions of the division in the minds of many Texans. Other papers in Texas also picked up on the exploits of the division, as the *Dallas Morning News* wrote that all over Texas the news of the division’s exploits were being celebrated because “Texans and Oklahomans knew all the time that the Thirty-Sixth Division would at once begin the winning of the war when they got into action.” In Quanah, the *Tribune-Chief* headline blared: “Panhandle Kids Swept Prussian Veterans before them.”¹⁸

All of those articles served to shape the way that Texans perceived “their soldier boys” when the men returned home. Additionally, this magnification of the actions of the division, while understandable, was also propagated to a certain extent by the soldiers themselves, and some of them took to referring themselves as “this famous outfit of

¹⁸ *Wichita Daily Times*, October 20, 1918; *Wise County Messenger*, October 25, 1918; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919.

Texas Rangers and Oklahoma ranchers and oil men” whose “smartness and snap” in saluting made them “famous all through the AEF.”¹⁹

Later, when General Smith returned to the United States, the city of Fort Worth held a dinner in his honor, and he too contributed to the amplified view of the division when he spoke of the “fighting character” of the men. Smith considered the division’s officers “too brave” and the soldiers too “eager to follow their leaders, regardless of the danger.” Smith also made sure to point out to his audience that he had his own connection with Texas besides commanding the Thirty-Sixth, pointing out his longstanding “interest in Texas” because his grandfather was a cousin of Sam Houston. Similar to the summer of 1917, when the old Seventh Texas was recruited, General Smith commented on the “marvelous physique of the Texans and Oklahomans” and that he was impressed by “the spirit of the men.” According to General Smith, “the world has known no greater soldiers,” and concluded, “we knew that men like the Texans and Oklahomans could whip the stuffing out of the Huns but we had no idea that they’d be as fearless as they were.”²⁰

While the newspapers at home may have been celebrating the exploits of the division in grandiose and sometimes overstated terms, many members of the old Seventh Texas began to examine their experiences and put their thoughts about what they had seen and felt on paper in letters to their friends and families back home. Of course, they

¹⁹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 9, 1919.

²⁰ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 19, 1919.

wrote about a wide range of topics but always included glimpses, if only briefly, of what they had gone through at the front and how they were affected by their experiences.

These Texas soldiers wrote in straightforward language, usually free from excess. For example, Corporal Clifford Young of Company M penciled a few lines to his parents to let them know he had survived the fighting and had returned from the front where he had spent the last “23 days and you can guess how I felt without washing or pulling off my clothes and no sleep or rest. I went over the top twice, and thank God I never got a scratch.” He concluded his letter by telling his parents: “I am a crack shot at these Huns sure is some style of hunting game.” Dee McNaney wrote “you can tell the world that being in actual battle is something you will never forget,” although he also admitted a strange attraction when he arrived at the front on October 6: “the fireworks were going on believe me, and it was all new to me, but strange to say, I liked it for some cause.”²¹

Clete “Pug” Coleman, a member of the regimental band, wrote in a letter that the work of the regiment was “no boys play, for we sure work since crossing the Hindenburg line and there’s plenty to do.” Even though he was in the band and was slightly back of the front, he noted that German shells “sing right over us, and when one bursts about fifteen feet from you, it sure makes you think a little.” Luckily for Pug Coleman, the worst injury he received was a burn on his hand from a pot of coffee. One soldier from Hardeman County, who served with the Supply Company, wrote home that even though he had seen “many dead Boche,” the chief memory that would stay with him was of the

²¹ Hornaday Collection, Volume 1, 298, Volume 10, 65.

artillery, "I will never forget the sounds of those shells. I was never under heavy shellfire, but the shells were passing over me day and night." Another man wrote home relating how he came across the body of a friend, examined the body to determine how he had been killed, and identified him only because of a letter lying in the mud next to the body. After describing this in a letter home, he wrote, "I couldn't begin to tell you all that I could if I were with you and I will tell you all when I come home." However, Sergeant W.B. Hardison of Vernon seemed to have no qualms writing to his father about the fate of a battalion runner who jumped in the same hole with him. The runner asked Hardison if might stay in the fox hole with him until the shelling stopped. Hardison wrote: "I told him to get down low, and had no more than gotten the words out of my mouth when a big shell hit a few feet to our rear, caving the ground in on our feet. His brains splashed in my face."²²

One soldier in Captain Simpson's company, upon hearing from Simpson that they would be on the front lines the next morning, tried to describe his thoughts about it to his family: "'Look here young fellow, you are about to step into something that you don't know too much about.' I just wondered what it was going to be like." Sometimes, the soldiers wrote home about their close calls on the front, which perhaps only served to increase the worry of parents and relatives. After James McCan left the front with Company H, he managed to write home that "I learned to pray and do everything else while up there and all who lived did the same, I think. One of those G.I. cans hit almost

²² *Wise County Messenger*, November 29, 1918; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919, and January 2, 1919; Hornaday Collection, Volume 5, 321-323.

under my feet. Not a piece hit me, but the explosion was so great that it knocked me senseless for about an hour. Outside of that I never got a scratch.” Another man, Corporal Wayne Wheeler, wrote home that nothing exciting happened on October 7, except for “machine gun bullets whizzing by or a big shell exploding occasionally.” He also told his parents that he did not know if he actually killed any Germans, although he boasted that “I helped take a big bunch of prisoners.”²³

Sometimes it was more difficult for soldiers to write home. On the one hand, they may not have been educated enough to express themselves well, and on the other they may have realized that they simply could not describe what they had been through. One soldier from Abilene, George W. Bolling, tried to express his feelings, but perhaps like many soldiers, he had trouble. On a rainy evening after the armistice, he wrote to his parents, telling them that “we have been to the front. I can’t write much about it.” He mentioned that several of his friends had been killed and a number wounded and that he had “acquired a fondness for holes and dugouts.” He then blandly concluded his description of the front by writing, “I think our regiment was especially mentioned in the war orders.” On the other hand, another soldier, E.T. Bennett, of the Headquarters Company, put it simply and straightforwardly: “At 8:30 am we went over the top and it was hell from there on out.” However, he concluded his letter to a friend by writing, “I will tell you all the war gossip when I get home. I have seen things that you wouldn’t believe.” Private Adolph Windel recalled that he “had pulled through several hard shell

²³ *Quanah Tribune Chief*, February 6, 1919, and June 5, 1919; Hornaday Collection, Volume 3, 250-252.

fires, when the whole earth was trembling, and full of gas, smoke, and shrapnel.” One member of the Supply Company, E.P. Taylor, wrote home that although his unit had not lost a man, “You should hear some of the big shells whistle over. Makes you get ‘gully low.’ You good folks back home, no matter how many descriptions you read, can have no idea of the destruction and slaughter going on and of what an infantry man has to go through.” James Kincaid wrote to a friend that he was “busy trying to dodge shrapnel and bullets. You tell ‘em it was hell.”²⁴

In some cases, a soldier wrote home about a particular event, such as C.M. Harvey, who wrote home about an officer who captured several Germans in broad daylight. However, Harvey seemed to realize that in recounting the actions of the officer, he might have given the impression that the front might not be too dangerous. Lest his friends or family draw such a conclusion, he added, “Don’t think for a minute, however, that those Dutchmen wouldn’t or couldn’t shoot, for they certainly could.” Trying to express his feelings about what he had seen, Arthur Nobles of Decatur wrote that “it was simply hell on the front to see the boys get killed,” and Donald Dealey of Company E wrote home that “I have seen and done and endured things that were pretty tough, but I am proud that I am a Doughboy.”²⁵

Many members of the regiment also noted when they passed the Hindenburg Line just north of Somme Py. Bryan Autry wrote of the Hindenburg line: “that is the one that

²⁴ Hornaday Collection, Volume 3, 81, 217, 219, Volume 4, 241, Volume 4, 27-28; *Wichita Daily Times*, November 15, 1918.

²⁵ Hornaday Collection, Volume 2, 346, Volume 4, 28-29, Volume 7, 269.

Germany said could never be broken, but it was and we put the finishing touches on it.” Another soldier, James McCan, wrote, “We crossed what used to be the Hindenburg line and such a sight I never saw before or since. There was not a tree or even a bunch of grass living for about four miles across it.” As McCan later wrote home, the night he first approached the front was a night “that I will always remember as if it were last night.” Captain Ethan Simpson recalled in a letter home that as his soldiers approached the front lines, everywhere “lay stark, stiff staring things that had once been human beings, now lying cold and stiff or reduced to bits of bloody rags.” After hearing his first artillery shells, Simpson later wrote: “It certainly made one feel queer and creepy to hear those big shells start miles away and come moaning one’s way and not know just where they were going to hit.”²⁶

The soldiers were honest in their expressions of fear and the things they had seen and felt. Corporal J.F. Austin, of Company L, told his father and sister that “I had some mighty close shaves but what it took to lay close to the ground I happened to have, and a prairie dog hasn’t a thing on me when it comes to digging in.” Austin told his relatives that he had been gassed and wrote “Believe me it sure makes you sick. I can still feel the effects of it. Most everybody that is gassed is short-winded afterward.” Roscoe Kile of Valley View tried to describe for his brother what it was like to be under artillery fire, writing, “it sure makes you think of everything you ever did. And something you ought to do.” In typical Texas fashion, he then bluntly described the various German artillery

²⁶ Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 237; *Quannah Tribune Chief*, February 6, 1919, and January 23, 1919.

shells, claiming, “He has shot everything at us from a blackland farm to a small town like Fort Worth.”²⁷

Roscoe Kile wrote another letter while he was still on the front, which was unique in several respects, not least because he documented for his parents when enemy shells fell nearby: “Life isn’t what it used to be. I used to think if I could get to the front and fight I would be satisfied, but now I think if I could get off, I would like it better.” He described the attitude which seemed to take over frontline soldiers. When a shell approached, he wrote: “the only thing to do is flatten out on the ground and maybe it will pass over you and maybe it won’t, and if it does, why should you worry, and if it doesn’t you don’t have time to worry.” Finally, Kile had words of advice for any soldiers who had yet to make it to France: “Well, I’ll tell you it is bad enough at the best, and those boys there had better get right with God before they come over here for they might not have time after they get here.” He closed this letter to his parents thus: “Those who get back will have lots to tell and if anyone says war isn’t hell you will know he hasn’t been here (another damn can. Fritz sure has it in for us, he sent three that time.)” Zack Salmon wrote to his family about being in a precarious position on October 7. While he was “resting easy” in his fox hole a shell landed right in front of him and tore his rifle apart, and he had to “go over without any gun, but I hadn’t gone far until I had one and was shooting for all I was worth.”²⁸

²⁷ Hornaday Collection, Volume 5, 58-59, Volume 8, 229-230.

²⁸ Hornaday Collection, Volume 12, 321-322, Volume 12, 244.

While many of these soldiers wrote about how they felt or what they had experienced at the front, at least one member of the old Seventh Texas found an outlet by drawing pictures. Although Lt. Edwin Sayles wrote about his experiences and later composed a memoir, he also drew pictures of things he saw during the fighting that were often stark, black and white reminders of the devastating effect of war. He drew dozens of pictures, some of which were battlefield scenes or terrain sketches. One of them depicted an American soldier being shot. "Hit" was the simple caption of the drawing and in the penciled lines the soldier has lost his grip on his rifle and is in the process of raising his other arm and stumbling forward.²⁹

Sayles also drew an image of a dead German soldier, with the typical detritus of war lying next to the body, including a helmet and grenade. One can almost imagine Sayles stumbling upon the body near an abandoned machine-gun position and pausing to take in the details and sketch it. Another image he drew was of two soldiers resting in a fox hole, their helmets and long bayoneted rifles sticking out of the top of the hole. The battlefield sketches drawn by Sayles often reflected the confusion of the scene and probably were drawn during the fighting. Besides drawings of soldiers and the front, Sayles tested his pencil on German prisoners and French refugees. Perhaps the most striking image that Sayles drew was of a fourteen-year-old French boy, who in the drawing looks to have more in common with an eighty-year-old man, including a mustache and a cane. Needless to say, these images impart a different sense than do the

²⁹ Edwin B. Sayles Collection, Field Message Book Folder, 1918, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

letters written home. They were most likely done quickly, a reflection of something that caught a soldier's eye on the spur of the moment. Sayles also had a way with words, in one instance jotting down the sounds of a French Village: "Geese...Chickens cackling...Bread wagon horn...Bell at gate...Soldiers cussing...Dog barking...Truck passing on highway...French people talking...Small French kid whistling...Creak of farmer's wagon...Wooden shoes on hard ground...Cattle mooing...Rooster crooning...Chain on well...Wheelbarrow squeaking."³⁰

While members of the old Seventh Texas attempted to describe their actions in combat and what they had seen, their letters were often clear about one thing: their praise for each other. Soldiers would frequently write home descriptions of the actions of their fellow soldiers and what they thought of them. They ranged from simple statements of praise to in-depth tributes to the men killed and wounded. George W. Bolling offered simple praise of one of his unit's officers: "of the officers who were with us at Abilene, only Lt. Sayles remains and I expect he will be a captain before long. He has proven to be a brave and excellent officer." Other simple words of praise came from one officer to another. Lt. Stayton Hankins of Company H reported that all of the officers of his company had been shot by six a.m. Lying in a shell hole after being shot in the left leg, he recalled Captain Duncan Perkins of the Supply Company, and wrote that "he did for

³⁰ Edwin B. Sayles Collection, Field Message Book Folder, 1918, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

the Quanah boys whatever was humanely possible besides keeping our company supplied.”³¹

On the other hand, Captain Lillard’s men were “loud in their praise of his work in the front lines,” because he “was always in the lead, with words of encouragement for his men, and with aid and sympathy for those who were unfortunate.” However, the *Wise County Messenger* noted that Captain Lillard was “very reticent as to his work in the battle line, always giving credit to his men for the great work done.” Lawrence Melton wrote to his parents after the armistice, “At last I am back with Captain Lillard. Mama, I can’t express my admiration for him. Anyway, I would gladly die for him if necessary...I can certainly say that he is a brave man.” Even though Lillard was modest about his own actions, he heaped praise on the soldiers he commanded. In a letter to his parents, Lillard wrote that “it was the greatest privilege in my life to command, first Company L, composed of the home boys and boys from Cleburne and Childress. There never were braver, truer, nor more loyal fellows than these.” During the fighting, he recalled the actions of his first sergeant who tried to take care of him. When the first sergeant was wounded, Lillard wrote that the man “did not want to go back and leave me to the tender mercy of the Germans without his able assistance.” Lillard also seemed to take pride in several of his soldiers who advanced with the 144th Infantry, and who were finally ordered back to the 142nd after rations became scarce and the men were “kicked

³¹ *Quanah Tribune Chief*, January 23, 1919; Sayles Papers, Military Activities Folder, 1892-1975 and undated, undated newspaper clipping: “Sergt. Geo. W. Bolling Tells of Overseas Life.”

out of the mess line a couple of times.” Finally, Lillard bared his feelings to his parents: “These boys do not think that they can do enough for me, and while I thought a great deal of them before going under fire, there is a closer feeling now than I ever thought ever could be between us.” He added, “I think so much of them that I can hardly correct them—and it is a very little correcting that they need, for they are true soldiers and veterans.” Lillard also wished that he could tell his parents all the “little funny things come up to help make you enjoy yourself when you are laying out in a little hole with the enemy sniping at you with six-inch shells.” In conclusion, Lillard told his parents to “keep on fattening the fatted calf, for your wandering son is coming home soon. We have fought a good fight and are ready to rest.”³²

The feelings the men expressed were often personal. Victor Nobles tried to explain to his mother what it meant to him to see his friend Monte Dunaway killed: “Mother, you said you didn’t understand what I meant by losing my pal. Monte Dunaway got killed the first day we went over the top by a machine gun bullet or by a sniper. He was just too brave, but believe me, he did his duty as a soldier. I was in his squad and the only one left the next day.” Nobles concluded his letter, “Don’t know when we will start for home, but I hope it will be soon.”³³

When Captain Ethan Simpson first learned that First Sergeant Aubyn Clark had been killed, he not only praised Clark’s actions but also offered Clark’s family revenge,

³² *Wise County Messenger*, June 27, 1919; Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 58-59, Volume 6, 221-224.

³³ Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 28-29.

swearing to them that, “I will kill in cold blood every Hun I see no matter how quickly he plays the coward and throws up his hands and cries ‚kamerad, kamerad.’” The bond between Simpson and Clark was strong enough that Simpson also wrote: “I never had a brother and I gave the men of my company who were so loyal to me all the love I would have centered on a brother, through all these years, but as Aubyn was my top sergeant, he and I were closer than any others.”³⁴

Simpson also praised many of his other soldiers, calling Harry Warren “brave as a lion” and Corporal Herman Percival “a real man at all times,” and writing about Sgt Ira Hanson, that “there was none better.” Then there was Jack Rutherford, who, Simpson wrote, “fought like a wild man,” and George Taylor who “developed into such a cool, capable, brave, clean fellow that I promoted him to sergeant and sent him to school,” which also kept Taylor out of combat. Perhaps stretching the truth a little, Simpson acknowledged Corp. Lindsey Taylor, who “coolly rolled a cigarette in front of his squad while under intense shellfire and proceeded to knock down Germans like he was on a rifle range.” Finally, Simpson praised three other local Clarendon members of his company, writing that the last he saw of them, “they were fighting like tiger cats.” While these statements may be exaggerated, they are indicative of the bond these soldiers developed amongst each other through their shared experiences, something that would stay with them for the rest of their lives.³⁵

³⁴ *Clarendon News*, December 5, 1918.

³⁵ *Clarendon News*, Dec 5, 1918.

More often than not, the praise elicited by one soldier for another referred to some action in the fighting that the soldiers themselves deemed above and beyond. In one case, Roy D. Blair and Levi N. Cox took great risks in attempting to map the frontlines during the fighting around Saint Etienne. Their battalion commander, Major Morrissey, tried to get the two men cited for bravery, writing, "I consider the work of Corporal Blair and Private Cox as deserving of special citation and reward." Morrissey passed on a copy of his letter to the men, who sent it home, where the *Clarendon News* published Morrissey's statement. It may have been worth more than a medal to Blair and Cox. Corporal Bryan Autry of Company M, an original member of the regiment, had praise for his entire company, writing his parents that although he had joined "this fighting bunch of men" against his parents' wishes, he was glad he had done so and wrote, "Sure am proud that I can say I was one of them," and Captain Barton wrote to a friend that "I believe our division has done its share in helping win the war and believe that Texas has no right to be ashamed of the part which it has played." Other times, although the praise was simple, it may not have been wholly accurate, as Sergeant Breeze, a member of the Headquarters Company, wrote "in the entire Division there was not a streak of yellow." In perhaps another exaggeration, one member of Company B noted that after leaving the front it was strange not to hear "shells bursting and the loud reports of cannon, and the popping of machine guns." However, he noted that the "boys are as happy there on the front as they are here, especially when we went over the top, every one with a smile."³⁶

³⁶ *Clarendon News*, December 5, 1918; *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 22, 1919; Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 237, Volume 8, 6; *Lubbock Avalanche*, January 2, 1919.

For the most part then, the soldiers generally seemed to return from the war not necessarily with a fear of combat, but a clear understanding of the seriousness of war and the human cost to the men who experienced it. They evinced a readiness to come home, and also frequently expressed their admiration for their comrades. For the soldiers of the 142nd Infantry then, these were the significant topics that stood out in their writings home: a realization of the brutality of war, a desire to come home as soon as possible, and an admiration for their fellow soldiers.

While it is clear that the soldiers of the regiment did not want to get their hopes up too much about the end of the war, it was a topic of much discussion among them and in their letters. Clifford Young expressed common feelings about the approaching end of the war, as rumors swirled about a possible armistice in the first weeks of November. In a letter from his relatives that mentioned the possibility of the war ending, Young remained cautious in his optimism: “You spoke of the war being about over, but I can’t say for fear it isn’t but hope so anyway.” Young also told his parents that they “need not worry about me staying over here after the war is over, the old U.S. is too good for me.” Willis McMahan of Company K echoed those feelings, writing home that the end of the war could not be very far off, “for the war is going our way in every direction. You know more about it than I do, I suppose, because we hardly ever get any news we can decide upon.” Private Adolph Windel, of Company M, a recent transfer to the unit although he was from Texas, wrote home that “the hopes [sic] of being at home soon makes me extremely happy.” Interestingly, Windel could not write to his parents in their native German as there was no officer in his company who could “read or censor the

letter.” By October 24, however, Captain Duncan Perkins was optimistic, writing in a letter to his wife that “the Kaiser’s days were numbered as the Allies armies were advancing all along the line.” Finally, one of Perkins’s men, E.P. Taylor of the Supply Company, wrote home that “I shall be glad when we get back to civilization and sanity,” and C.M. Harvey, a late addition to Company M, was ready to return home because of the weather. Complaining of the fall and winter rains, he wrote: “Talk of sunny France, but give me sunny Texas all the time.” Finally, when the news of the armistice reached members of the regiment, one soldier, Wayne Wheeler, wrote that “the armistice saved us from going back to the front, but we were not so disappointed.” Another man wrote honestly to a friend, “I am feeling good since the war is over. I had all I wanted of that front when it closed.” Willie Carpenter of the Machine Gun Company wrote of the armistice: “I sure was glad when God looked down on us and said stop. They are whipped and there was a crowd of glad boys and I know that you were too. You should have heard us shooting guns and ringing bells.”³⁷

Of course, a central aspect of the soldiers’ lives during the months following the armistice concerned when they might possibly be going home. Most were ready to leave immediately, and many seemed prepared to leave France without a second thought. Again, C.M. Harvey, like many soldiers, heard nothing but rumors, writing “It is hard to even express an opinion. I suppose somebody knows when but I am not sure many [do].”

³⁷ Hornaday Collection, Volume 1, 298, Volume 5, 85-86, Volume 4, 241, Volume 2, 345, Volume 3, 250-252, Volume 4, 253-254, Volume 9, 258; *Wichita Daily Times*, 15 and 27 November, 1918.

He also wrote that his captain said they would be lucky if they made it home by April. Harvey, however, seemed resigned to not knowing: “Just be patient and remember there are two million of us and each wants to go home as bad as the rest and we all can’t go at once.” Similarly, Captain Barton wrote to a friend that they had moved to a training area and spent much of their time “speculating on when we will be sent to God’s country, but this you know as much about as we do.” Barton also believed that the division would be used as part of the American Third Army for occupation duty. Oscar Horton of the Machine Gun Company plaintively wrote that there was “very little sickness, except for homesickness” in his camp. Writing in April of 1919, he believed the division would not sail for home for at least another three months, which was too long to suit him: “I will not be a bit sorry when we leave this God-forsaken country. You have heard of ‘Sunny France’ but it is all a mistake.” Horton also let his impatience with the French get the better of him, believing they were “the filthiest people on earth.” Another soldier perhaps expressed a general feeling of the soldiers. In a letter to a girl from home, James Kincaid wrote, “I wish you were over here to see this beautiful country. It is a Dinger—rains here all the time, mud is about knee deep. But that don’t worry me a little bit. Nothing don’t bother me [sic], only having to stay over here.” Indeed, Kincaid concluded his letter by telling his female friend that if she “had anything against anybody over there, send them to France. That will be punishment enough for them. Makes no difference how bad you hate them.”³⁸

³⁸ Hornaday Collection, Volume 2, 346, Volume 4, 27-28; *Cleburne Enterprise*, May 14, 1919; *Lubbock Avalanche*, January 2, 1919.

William T. Phillips told his mother that “I have had some tough experiences over here, but it is worth ten years of my life.” Nevertheless, he was ready to come home, “Believe me, it is good to think about getting back home and among friends, for the people here are strange to me, and when I get back to the states I will take myself to Rosston faster than the Germans took themselves back to Hun-land when once they started.” Thinking of home, Corporal Austin wrote to his father that “this trip over here had made a home stayer out of me and most all the rest of them, so you might just figure on my staying close around when I get back.” Carl Appling of Company H also looked forward to coming home, hoped to find a job around harvest time, and longed to be paid in “biscuit and pie.”³⁹

Not only did individual soldiers want to come home as soon as possible, but the Texas government also sought the early return of its soldiers. In May of 1919, the Texas House of Representatives passed a resolution advising Secretary of War Newton D. Baker that “the people of Texas desire that Texas soldiers now in Europe be sent home and discharged as quickly as possible.” If it was not possible to return Texas soldiers early, however, the resolution asked that Texas soldiers be “relieved of road construction and all other work of a nonmilitary nature.” Evidently, a number of soldiers had been employed working on repairing roads damaged during the fighting, and these Texans had complained to their relatives about working on “these damned French roads.” Some state legislators opposed the resolution, believing it might reflect negatively on the War

³⁹ Hornaday Collection, Volume 4, 241-242, Volume 5, 58-59, Volume 11, 102.

Department, which, opponents of the resolution argued, was doing everything “that is possible to hasten the return of troops now in France.” However, the resolution eventually passed by a vote of sixty-three to fifty-two.⁴⁰

While soldiers expressed themselves from Europe, their families back in Texas also found ways to express themselves, although it was frequently centered on reactions to learning of the deaths of sons, brothers, or husbands. When this kind of news arrived, local papers frequently printed an announcement, which was often followed by eulogies and other words of praise about soldiers who would not be returning home. Sometimes a death notice was just a simple announcement, such as: “relatives at Blum received word today that Corporal Elmer Bradshaw had been killed in action in France,” or that “word has been received by relatives that Corporal Allan L. DeCordova...had died in France of wounds received in action.” Sometimes the effect of these telegrams was clear, such as the news in the *Cleburne Enterprise*, which announced that Joe Dunn “is killed in action overseas Oct. 15; Message Nov. 17.” The *Enterprise* reported that the news “came as a crushing blow” to Dunn’s family, who did not get the telegram until they returned from a trip to Fort Worth, where they visited another son who was sick with influenza.⁴¹

Because of the confusing nature of the fighting in France, and because of the number of letters written home with conflicting information about who had been killed or wounded, a writer for the *Clarendon News* took it upon himself to caution local residents

⁴⁰ *Dallas Morning News*, May 7, 1919.

⁴¹ *Dallas Morning News*, November 18, 25, 1918; *Cleburne Enterprise*, November 21, 1918.

not to make generalizations about soldiers. The reporter noted that many of the reports they received from soldiers were “more or less exaggerated after they have passed the mouths of a few folks.” However, it was clear to this reporter that the residents of Donley County “must all nerve ourselves up for what may come.” Other times, the news was certainly painful for families who discovered the fate of loved ones through letters of other soldiers. Such was the case of one Cleburne Soldier, Art Miller, who had been killed in France and whose body had been covered with brush and not found until well after the fighting. Another Cleburne soldier, taking a walk, described discovering the body to his parents: “He was covered with brush and had lost his right arm and the side of his head was blown off.”⁴²

Sometimes the tributes were more in-depth and attempted to express the anguish that people experienced with the loss of their loved one in France. In some cases, these eulogies were written by leading citizens of the community. Thus, much as they had led the recruiting drives of 1917 with rhetoric and patriotic speeches, after the armistice, when the news filtered in about soldiers killed in action, these citizens may have believed it was their duty to comment on the deaths of those soldiers. For example, Harwood Beville, a member of the Donley County Exemption Board and father of Seventh Texas veteran Arthur Beville of the 142nd Infantry, eulogized Sergeant Aubyn Clark: “I turned away with tears coming to my eyes when I heard it for he was my friend.” Beville wrote that Clark had made the “supreme sacrifice” and that he “went to his death” proving that

⁴² *Clarendon News*, November 7, 1918; *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 20, 1919.

the “American and Texas soldiers are not to be sneered at.” Beville also laid claim to the soldiers of Captain Simpson’s Donley County company, “loving them as my own.” He concluded by saying “they are the bravest of the brave, and better fellows never breathed...Clarendon and Donley County is honored in honoring these brave men.”⁴³

Monte Dunaway, killed near Saint Etienne, was eulogized in the *Wise County Messenger* by his uncle, who wrote simply: “We will miss his cheerful face and quiet way of moving about our homes. As we walk life’s path, we will cherish the memory of our nephew.” A similar eulogy was printed for Sergeant Loyd W. Smith, who joined Captain Lillard’s Decatur Company on June 15, 1917. His friend noted that “when last seen in action he was splendidly upholding the American reputation as a fighter and those who knew him here know that he gave his country his best service.”⁴⁴

Finally, the *Abilene Reporter* carried a eulogy of Private Ben Fuller in the fall of 1918. Fuller enlisted in Captain Wagstaff’s company, and had to secure a “minor’s release” in order to join, which his father signed after accompanying his son to the recruiting office, where the elder man realized that his son was “determined to enlist and serve his country in her need.” The news of Fuller’s death came in a letter from a close friend of his, Billy Hughes, also from the 142nd, but because the word was not official, it left open a sliver of hope for Fuller’s parents that perhaps their son had not been killed, even though they “placed much credence” in Hughes’s letter “because of the personal

⁴³ *Clarendon News*, November 28, 1918.

⁴⁴ *Wise County Messenger*, November 22, 1918.

friendship existing between Ben and Billy Hughes and particularly because the latter is known to be thoroughly reliable.” Nevertheless, the lack of official news and the snippets of information that relatives received in letters from others must have been difficult for them to resign themselves to their son’s fate. Such scenes were doubtless repeated across the region where the Seventh Texas originated as the news of the war’s human cost filtered back to these communities.⁴⁵

While there was much painful news about soldiers who had been killed, there were also opportunities to celebrate. Once the armistice went into effect on November 11, the entire emphasis of many Texas communities shifted from supporting the war effort to celebrating the end of it. In northwest Texas, most communities closed their business districts, local newspapers ran extra editions detailing “salient points” of the armistice, and draft calls and physical examinations were immediately halted. In every county and nearly every town some type of celebration or meeting was held, which helped to spread the news. Interestingly, these celebrations could be used to track the progress of the war on the home front: there had been patriotic meetings and parades when war was declared, for draft registration day, for recruiting purposes, for the Fourth of July, and of course, for the armistice, and then for the soldiers’ homecoming.

The news that the armistice had gone into effect on November 11, 1918, caused wild celebrations throughout northwest Texas, although some communities were at first cautious about accepting the news. Such was the case in Donley County, where word of

⁴⁵ *Abilene Reporter*, November 3, 1918.

the armistice reached Clarendon over the “railroad wire” from Fort Worth. However, the *Clarendon News* noted that “our people were cautious at receiving such momentous news and refused to accept it” until the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* confirmed it. With the confirmation, the “wild-cat siren broke the news to the surrounding community and from that moment the lid was off and a general jollification ensued.” Indeed, in Clarendon, the local paper believed the “jollification” was “the most gigantic celebration in the history of Donley County” and lasted until midnight.⁴⁶

The party in Clarendon went into full swing as residents sang patriotic songs, trucks were “put in place for the speakers and singers” to stand on, and even a piano was put on a truck to provide accompaniment. As the celebration grew in intensity, the *Clarendon News* reported that 1,500 men and women “did a snake dance from one end of the business district to the other, following the Stars and Stripes.” Much like the members of the 142nd Regiment and their procession that buried the Kaiser, in Clarendon a “super sad event” was held in which the local residents buried the leader of the Hohenzollerns. Children tossed firecrackers as the procession wended its way through Clarendon and eventually approached a stand “erected for the orator whose sad duty it was to deliver the enthusiastic address over the low-lying body of the departed, who was low-lying in death as he was in life.” Once the orator finished the “funeral oration,” the “body” was thrown into a bonfire. As the *Clarendon News* facetiously reported, “a

⁴⁶ *Clarendon News*, November 14, 1918.

paroxcism [sic] of sorrow seized those „round about the funeral pyre and no other method of expression could be thought of except the aboriginal dance around the cremation.”⁴⁷

In Wichita Falls and the surrounding counties, the celebration followed a similar line. The county presented a “gala scene” as the news of the armistice was received. Before the sun rose on November 11, the citizens of Wichita Falls celebrated the armistice with “a fusillade of shots in true western style,” which was about the same time as the *Wichita Daily Times* “rolled” its first extra edition of the day. The city’s population “went mad, wildly gloriously and enthusiastically mad.” This “patriotic fervor” brought the local residents of Wichita Falls onto the streets “long before the accustomed rising time” and lasted throughout the day without regard to “business, meals, or any other consideration.” The only thought on people’s minds, reported the *Wichita Daily Times*, was “victory and the end of the war.” Impromptu parades formed and drew thousands of people. Additionally, the soldiers at Call Field, the aviation field on the edge of the city, joined in the celebrations, and there were discussions of holding a review of those troops. Continuing in true “western style,” a man pulled out a “six-shooter” and shot up several Western Union telegraph wires. Needless to say, the paper reported that the celebration was of the kind “the likes of which has never before been seen on the streets of Wichita Falls.” By the evening of November 11, city officials held, “as a fitting climax,” a “mass meeting of jubilee and thanksgiving” in a local theater. The meeting’s theme was “Victory.” The *Wichita Daily Times* urged all the citizens of the

⁴⁷ *Clarendon News*, November 14, 1918.

town and county to attend, and for those who could not find seats in the theater, organizers arranged an “overflow” meeting. By the time the day was done, the *Wichita Daily Times* had printed three editions.⁴⁸

There was a similar outpouring in Abilene, where the *Abilene Reporter* headline read: “Stores close at noon and the people give themselves up to rejoicing!” The paper also reported that the day “would go down in history as a great holiday upon which most nations will celebrate.” Schools and businesses closed, children paraded in the streets, and in an open area “there was a gathering such as was never witnessed in this city,” estimated at seven to ten thousand people. Congressman Thomas Blanton wired news of the armistice to the city: “Terms of armistice are unconditional surrender. No American need be ashamed of armistice terms. All draft calls are cancelled. Our brave soldiers will be streaming home shortly.” In Cleburne, the *Enterprise* advertised a “public celebration” that was to be held on the courthouse square, which would be “swept and roped off for the purpose.” Officials asked the Santa Fe Railroad Band to play and the paper joined in urging citizens to “come out and put Cleburne on the map for a genuine old-time rejoicing. Music—pep—big crowd—,n everything!”⁴⁹

Thus, while both the soldiers in France and the communities in Texas enjoyed the end of the war, time passed and on May 2, 1919, the 142nd Infantry Regiment moved toward its embarkation port of Brest, passing through the Le Mans area, where the unit

⁴⁸ *Wichita Daily Times*, November 11, 1918, May 12, 1957.

⁴⁹ *Abilene Reporter*, November 11, 1918; *Cleburne Enterprise*, November 11, 1918.

underwent several rigorous inspections. According to the regimental chaplain, the commander of the Le Mans area “informed Colonel Bloor that of over 500,000 troops to pass through his area, the 142nd Infantry had passed the best inspection.” On May 18, the regiment arrived at Brest, and twenty-four hours later, the majority of the regiment boarded the troopship *USS Pueblo*. The Third Battalion, with many Texas troops, boarded a separate transport for the journey. Finally, on May 19, 1919, the Thirty-Sixth division and the 142nd Infantry began their journey back to the United States.⁵⁰

Just prior to the armistice, General Pershing issued an order that all divisions in the AEF design a unique divisional patch. The final design approved for the Thirty-Sixth Division was of a khaki “T” superimposed on a blue arrowhead. The “T” represented the Texas members of the division, while the arrowhead represented the Oklahoma members. Although the division was nicknamed the “Lone Star” division, the soldiers from Texas frequently referred to themselves as the Panther Division, the nickname by which “they are mentioned in fondest affection in the southwest.” When the division was boarding their transports for the trip home, port inspectors on the docks noted that all the men wore the new patch on their shoulders.⁵¹

The trip home was not without cost, however. On the second day at sea, the transports moved into an area of “heavy, deep swells,” that became “quite rough” as the day passed. Unexpectedly, the ship “nosed into a wave much larger than any” that had

⁵⁰ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 48.

⁵¹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 9, 1919; Chastaine, *Story of the Thirty-Sixth*, 271-272.

been experienced earlier, and “a wall of water swept over the bow,” injuring several men and washing two soldiers overboard. One of the men swept overboard was an original member of the Seventh Texas, Private Joseph C. Strong of Clarendon. His body was not recovered, while the body of the second man, Corporal Harry S. Hovey of Company E was. One of the soldiers injured in the mishap was Osborne Banks from Cleburne, who was only saved from being swept overboard by a soldier standing near him. Although Banks escaped with his life, he lost an eye and was “unconscious for several days.” The next day, the hatchways of the transport were covered and the soldiers were not allowed on deck until May 25.⁵²

On May 31, 1919, the *Pueblo* arrived in New York, and the division marched to Camp Merritt, New Jersey, where the soldiers remained for about one week before beginning the journey to Camp Bowie, where they would be demobilized. Arrangements were made for the regiment to travel through Oklahoma on their way to Texas. In Oklahoma, the regiment paraded through Enid, El Reno, and Chickasha before finally wending its way to Camp Bowie.⁵³

While the soldiers in the regiment knew they were on their way home, thousands of miles away in Texas there was confusion regarding just when the Texas soldiers would be home. Some soldiers passed along bits of information in letters and telegrams, but for the most part, news of the movements of the division remained difficult to come by. For

⁵² Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 49-50; *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, June 24, 1919.

⁵³ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 53-54; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 214.

example, the War Department did not release the news that the Thirty-Sixth Division had been assigned to a convoy until May 18, 1919. While local newspapers printed estimates of when the soldiers of the division might arrive back in the United States, the news generally was not accurate until early June, about the time the division arrived in port in the United States. Thus, on June 2, the *Cleburne Enterprise* could finally report: “Company L arrives in New York,” after approximately 1,000 soldiers of the 142nd Infantry arrived in Manhattan. Besides Company L, this contingent contained medical troops, third battalion headquarters, and Companies I, K, and M, all of which were companies comprised predominantly of former members of the Seventh Texas. Even though the company’s personnel had changed dramatically over two years, that did not matter to the *Cleburne Enterprise*, which noted that “Cleburne claims Company L as its own, as this city formed the company not only in the present war, but in the Spanish-American conflict, and so feels that Company L is peculiarly its own organization.”⁵⁴

In preparation for the homecoming, many local communities flew flags in their towns, and many who had family members in the military placed “service” flags on their homes, churches, schools, businesses and public buildings and waited for the soldiers to return. Excitement and anticipation continued to build throughout the first few weeks of June. In Gainesville, excited residents found out that a troop train carrying members of the 142nd Infantry regiment would be passing through the city on its way to Camp Bowie. The next day, four more troop trains passed through Gainesville, carrying the 111th

⁵⁴ *Wichita Daily Times*, May 18, 1919; *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 2, 1919; *Lubbock Avalanche*, May 1, 1919.

Engineers. Although only two men on the train were from the local area, a “large crowd assembled at the station to greet the returning heroes,” who had to switch trains prior to completing their trip to Camp Bowie. However, Gainesville residents could not determine if the local machine gun company was on any of the trains or if they had arrived at Fort Worth yet. Two days later, The *Gainesville Daily Register* published word that that the local machine gun company would be passing through Whitesboro, several miles east of Gainesville. Nine car loads of Gainesville residents drove to Whitesboro to “greet the home boys” during the company’s brief stop in that city. Those who made the trip to Whitesboro returned with the news that the soldiers “were looking fine” and were glad to be back in the state. There were a few brief reunions in Whitesboro. For example, the wife of Gainesville soldier Nick Fairless held up their infant son for him to see for the first time. Furthermore, the *Gainesville Daily Register* contributed to the growing reputation of the Thirty-Sixth Division by writing, “No men in all the great American armies did more valiant work than these Cooke County boys of the Thirty-Sixth Division....”⁵⁵

Once residents of North Texas realized that 142nd Infantry and other units were arriving at Camp Bowie, many people gathered at Fort Worth to greet them. In one case, when the expected troop trains failed to arrive by midnight, Camp Bowie guards forced the large crowd to disperse and go home for the night. However, the crowd was back in force before 5:30 a.m. the next morning and as the troop trains pulled in, the crowd gave

⁵⁵ *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 16, 1919; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 13, 14, 16, 1919.

the soldiers a “demonstrative welcome.” In spite of this effort, many of the soldiers believed their reception in Fort Worth was “cool.” As historian Lonnie White has pointed out, however, Fort Worth had seen the arrival of thousands of troops in a very short time and these arrivals had become a common occurrence. On the other hand, for these particular troops, family members and fellow soldiers who had already come home were waiting to greet them, including Roy Orsby, who had lost his arm at Saint Etienne. However, most of these reunions at Camp Bowie were short, as the soldiers required physicals and a number of other administrative tasks before they could be discharged, and many of the soldiers had not slept for several nights. However, some of the soldiers at least had brief exchanges with their friends and families, although as the local paper noted, “the homecoming was not without sorrow” as people heard details of those who had been killed or who were still in France. One young woman, after learning that her “sweetheart” had volunteered to remain in France for an additional eighteen months, sat down on the side of the road and cried.⁵⁶

As the soldiers began to descend on Camp Bowie, preparations were made to discharge them as rapidly as possible. For the 142nd Infantry the process neared completion by June 17, 1919, as most men were given a train ticket and a sixty dollar bonus, along with their discharge paperwork. While in the process of being discharged, many of the soldiers visited the “old regimental site” where they had trained the year before, and recalled the memories of their arrival at Camp Bowie and what they had gone

⁵⁶ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 14, 1919; White, *Panthers to Arrowheads*, 214-215.

through since then. Despite these more solemn moments, there were also dances and band concerts for the soldiers as well as receptions for the division's general officers, including one which included Brigadier General Pegram Whitworth of the 71st Brigade, and the man he replaced, Brigadier General Henry Hutchings.⁵⁷

Through the first three weeks of June, the local communities in north and northwest Texas anticipated the arrival of "their" local soldiers. The *Cleburne Enterprise* reported "Our men now nearly home; messages come hourly from them—some received today." In some cases, this anticipation was heightened when a wounded soldier returned early from France. For example, Sergeant Henry Warren of Captain Simpson's Company H received a severe chest wound early in the fighting on October 8, 1918, which doctors did not believe he could survive. However, after several months in a Paris hospital, he was transferred to Camp Bowie, and finally received a furlough to visit his parents. As the local newspaper phrased it, Warren survived because "a good physique, a will to live and superb treatment brought him through and made it possible for him to again walk the streets of Clarendon to the unspeakable delight of his parents...and his hundreds of friends in this city." Indeed, the *News* pointed out that five of its former employees had joined the military and one had been killed, two wounded, and two were still "in the ranks." In Quanah, the *Tribune Chief* pointed out that returning soldiers were becoming more numerous, and "with fine crops and prosperity before them why shouldn't our people be happy over all these good things coming to them this year?" Along similar

⁵⁷ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 54; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 13, 1919.

lines, when the mother of Distinguished Service Cross recipient Chester Roberts of Cleburne found out her son was on his way home, she compared the just ended 1918 with the possibilities of 1919: “Isn’t this a perfect world now? Only last year there was no rain, the whole earth was burning up, the war on and our boys going away to what seemed certain death. This year everything is abundant, the flowers blooming everywhere, the grain is high...the earth seems to smile and our boys are nearly home.”⁵⁸

Farther west, in Abilene, County Judge E.M. Overshiner appealed to the citizens of Taylor County, and pointed out that every man, woman, and child represented a “welcoming committee” for returning soldiers. When word arrived that the Headquarters Company of the 142nd would pull into the station the next day, the news spread rapidly and the paper exclaimed: “Let us make this the grand reception in the history of Abilene,” by pinning bouquets on the returning soldiers and pelting “them with flowers.” Echoing a common occurrence throughout the nation, the *Abilene Reporter* printed a full picture of the 142nd Infantry on its arrival in New Jersey, and printed pieces by Captain Wagstaff and Captain Sayles describing their combat in France. The paper printed portraits of both officers on the front page, Wagstaff in profile, and a full length portrait of Sayles.⁵⁹

It was a similar situation in Amarillo, where the *Daily News* kept watch for the arrival of local soldiers, reporting on June 18 that “members of Captain Barton’s old company of the 142nd infantry, who did valiant service in France,” would arrive later that

⁵⁸ *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 8, 12, 1919; *Clarendon News*, April 10, 1919; *Quanah Tribune Chief*, July 10, 1919.

⁵⁹ *Abilene Reporter*, June 18, 1919.

day. The paper noted that although there was no “formal celebration” scheduled for their arrival, “every man, woman, and child in the city is expected to be at the depot when the train pulls in and cheer the return of Amarillo’s boys.” Again adding to the luster of the regiment, the paper noted that “Captain Barton’s Company distinguished themselves in action, advancing in the face of terrible machine gun fire many times the distance they had been ordered to cover,” and were part of the “organization which „put the Hun on the run,”” which was not wholly accurate. However, it illustrates the way the actions of the regiment began to be translated from reality to memory only months after the actions had occurred.⁶⁰

As the soldiers began to make their way home from Camp Bowie, they came in groups rather than as complete units. Although the soldiers were doubtless excited to be going home, their communities were just as excited, and perhaps more so. Several days after the Gainesville Machine Gun Company arrived in Fort Worth, the word spread in Gainesville that the local soldiers of the Machine Gun Company had been discharged and would be arriving in Gainesville late on the evening of June 20, 1919. When the train finally pulled into the station late that evening, a crowd estimated at 1,000 people waited to meet “the returning heroes.” As a reporter wrote, “Probably no train has ever brought so much joy and sunshine into the hearts of Gainesville and Cooke County people as that which brought home this bunch of our soldier boys.”⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Amarillo Daily News*, June 18, 19, 1919.

⁶¹ *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 20-21, 1919.

For those who lived north of Camp Bowie, such as in Denton County, it was a short trip home, and many were discharged in the morning and were able to catch an afternoon train and be home the same evening. A train derailment caused delays for a number of these soldiers, but that did not stop a group of Company M veterans, who rented a private car to drive them to Denton. Once they arrived at the courthouse square, they met one of their comrades, Ernest Boggs, who had returned home early because of injuries. In a simple ceremony on the south side of the square, they read Boggs' citation for the Croix de Guerre and pinned the medal to his chest. For these Denton County soldiers, they had finally come home.⁶²

In Wise County, soldiers from the Thirty-Sixth and Ninetieth Divisions began to trickle into Decatur and the surrounding communities by the middle of June. On arriving in Decatur, one soldier exclaimed, "Decatur is the prettiest town in the world!" Furthermore, whenever a soldier arrived in Decatur, the *Wise County Messenger* reported that "when a boy hits the square it takes him an hour to get around the square, for everybody has to shake his hand and tell him „glad to have you home!”" In a published welcome home message to the Texas soldiers, the *Wise County Messenger* exclaimed: "We welcome the Wise County heroes home. We hope the future holds for each of you enough of happiness to repay you for the great sacrifice you have made." Of course, with all the arriving soldiers, officers and enlisted, the local paper could not help but quip: "The country will soon be in the condition prevailing after the civil war, when you

⁶² *Denton Record Chronicle*, June 17, 18, 1919.

couldn't throw a brick in any direction without hitting a colonel or major or at least a captain!"⁶³

In Clarendon, local residents awaiting the arrival of local soldiers were described as having "faces eager, faces intent, faces longing, and all expectant." While perhaps overstated and stylized, the local paper believed it was a blessing to "see a mother clasp her son as he stepped from the train with the sturdy tread of the conqueror," or to see "some father's eyes grow filmy as he embraced his son." These descriptions only served to contribute to the perception of the returning soldiers as "conquering heroes." Like other papers in these communities, the *Clarendon News* also described the soldiers in an outsized manner: "One who saw those boys did not have long to ask why we were able to whip Germany. Everyone showed that he had been developed until, from the mere physical side, he was a giant. This plus his character and his ability to do for himself spelled certain defeat for Imperial Germany."⁶⁴

Captain Ethan Simpson returned to Clarendon several days after his company arrived, joined on the trip from Camp Bowie by his wife. Simpson was "looking the best and is in fine spirits" and was more "than glad to be at home once more." The *Clarendon News* printed his citation for the French Croix de Guerre, and then wisely refrained from

⁶³ *Wise County Messenger*, June 20, 27, 1919.

⁶⁴ *Clarendon News*, June 19, 1919.

additional effusive praise: “Any words of praise that we might attempt are useless—he has been cited by those who saw him fighting.”⁶⁵

On the other hand, late in 1919, a number of Amarillo citizens came together to honor Major Thomas D. Barton, who had returned home long after his company. Barton was described as “one of the best known men in the Panhandle that had ever worn the American uniform.” A number of speakers offered praise on his behalf, including Ethan Simpson of Clarendon, who had also returned home. Barton was given a gold watch by his friends, who included Colonel Ernest Thompson and Major William Brownell, both veterans of the division. During his short remarks, Barton suggested the most fitting memorial to the soldiers of Company G was a memorial in the city of Amarillo.⁶⁶

Perhaps the *Cleburne Enterprise* best expressed the generally optimistic feeling that descended over northwest Texas as the soldiers returned home, “Our soldiers are either at home or coming fast,” the paper noted. “All over this fine county of ours, rejoicing mothers are planning and baking... Yes, they are coming home, and everyone is happy. The earth is fair and smiling and welcome awaits in everyone’s heart.” The same sentiments were expressed in Lubbock, where the *Avalanche* also noted the optimism in the region: “The rains have come and the country is rapidly recovering from the serious drouth [sic] stroke, the people are returning, the soldiers are coming home, and there is every reason for us to feel exceedingly good.” Thus, for many in northwest Texas, the

⁶⁵ *Clarendon News*, June 26, 1919.

⁶⁶ *Amarillo Daily News*, November 30, 1919.

last week in June meant that a journey begun in the summer of 1917 was finally coming to an end.⁶⁷

Most communities wanted to recognize the efforts of their local soldiers, and northwest Texas was no different. In order to do this, dozens of northwest Texas communities found that the Fourth of July provided a ready-made occasion to celebrate the homecoming of their servicemen. The patriotic expressions common to the holiday, combined with the desire to thank newly returned veterans served to foster major celebrations centered on the nation's birthday. These events were large, and in some cases planning started well before most of the soldiers made it back to Texas. For example, in Wise County, planners began shortly after the armistice went into effect. Even Texas Governor William Hobby felt the need to connect the Fourth of July with the soldiers' homecoming, and declared the Fourth of July a "special day of welcome" for all veterans. He asked the recently returned soldiers to wear their uniforms and become "familiar" with the American Legion.⁶⁸

However, there were times after the much anticipated arrival of the soldiers but before the Fourth of July celebrations, when tempers frayed. Sometimes there was the perception in some communities that local residents were not doing enough for the soldiers. For example, in Cleburne the *Enterprise* reported on June 9 that "Cleburne has certainly signally failed to show any sort of appreciation for what these men have done."

⁶⁷ *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 8, 1919; *Lubbock Avalanche*, June 12, 1919..

⁶⁸ *Wise County Messenger*, November 22, 1918; *Abilene Reporter*, July 2, 1919.

According to the writer of the article, local soldiers were coming home and “what are doing for them? Absolutely nothing. What is the matter with Cleburne? Do we lack patriotism? Do we lack appreciation of our own men?” The writer urged the city to appoint “a leader” to organize some type of celebration “for all the boys of all divisions as soon as they all get home.” By June 12, the Cleburne Chamber of Commerce took up the task of preparing for the Johnson County celebration, and the *Cleburne Enterprise* claimed that its editorials had drawn “hundreds of requests” for an official homecoming celebration.⁶⁹

By July 2, the local paper cautiously asked: “Are we all ready for the soldiers Fourth of July? If anything has been left undone committees want to know.” The paper announced that the preparations for the homecoming celebration were complete, and admonished: “don’t let a single soldier go hungry or uncared for!” However, the worries were apparently unfounded as “the good people of Johnson County came together as a unit to make pleasure for our soldiers.” Indeed, the “tables groaned with good things to eat” and those in attendance listened to speeches, watched “broncho [sic] busting,” track and field events, a boxing match, and a baseball game between soldiers and sailors. Interestingly, the speeches in this celebration failed to draw a connection to Texas military history, and instead compared these modern soldiers with George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, and Robert E. Lee. Nevertheless, the homecoming celebration was considered a success and an example of “good old Texas hospitality.” When it was over,

⁶⁹ *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 9, 12, 1919.

the local paper estimated that between fifteen and twenty thousand people welcomed home the soldiers and sailors of Johnson County.⁷⁰

Amarillo, Abilene, Lubbock, Denton, and Clarendon followed suit with their own celebrations, while Crowell and Vernon combined theirs, all scheduled around the Fourth of July. In Abilene, the plan was to have a real “home cooked dinner,” although organizers cancelled an open air dance. Much like Cleburne, a committee was created which planned the event in Amarillo, while in Clarendon, the celebration continued a thirty-two year trend and the 1919 celebration was to be “turned into a gala day for „the boys.”” In Lubbock, two airplanes were scheduled to fly over the celebration. Gainesville residents promised “an old time basket picnic” for the combined holiday and homecoming, and offered free refreshments for everyone. The local paper stated that “It is up to Gainesville and Cooke County to give a royal welcome to all her brave boys who served in any capacity during the war.” However, citizens expressed concerns similar to those in Cleburne. The *Gainesville Daily Register* asked, “Will Gainesville fail the soldiers?” The Chamber of Commerce reported that few people had volunteered to furnish food for the proposed picnic. The newspaper lambasted local citizens, writing that “we can’t believe that the good people of Gainesville will refuse to render this small service for the men who placed their all upon the altar of our freedom and safety.” Citizens were also urged to consider that the soldiers “went hungry days and days in the trenches in order that we might continue to live in peace and plenty....” Although there

⁷⁰ *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, July 2, 6, 1919; *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 1919.

was concern that Gainesville might fail the returning soldiers, the city of Valley View in the southern edge of Cooke County did not have the same concerns, holding a dinner and celebration for three hundred people. The soldiers from Valley View “marched in formation to the banquet yard,” although a heavy rain delayed the feast for several hours.⁷¹

The Gainesville celebration finally got on track with enough local residents stepping forward to provide food. Soldiers were asked to attend the picnic in their uniforms so that “the various committees may show them special favors and that the people generally may recognize easily the guests of honor.” At least one resident of the county, Lillian Gunter, Chairwoman of the Cooke County Historical Committee, was historically minded urging each soldier to stop at a “historical booth” set up on the fairgrounds and fill out a brief questionnaire documenting their military service. In the local paper, Gunter wrote that such records “may not seem important right now, the time will soon come when they will be of great historical and perhaps of personal value.” Finally, in order to keep the theme of an old fashioned picnic, the *Gainesville Daily Register* reported that there would be no “steam swing, no snake charmers, no forty-nine camp, no wheel of fortune, no doll racks, no knife table, no shell games, nor other skin games, classed as „amusements.””⁷²

⁷¹ *Amarillo Daily News*, June 18, 28, 29, 1919; *Abilene Reporter*, July 2, 1919; *Foard County News*, June 20, 1919; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 18, 30, 1919; *Lubbock Avalanche*, June 12, 19, 26, 1919.

⁷² *Gainesville Daily Register*, July 2, 3, 1919; *Abilene Reporter*, January 22, 1919.

The celebration in Amarillo started with a parade led by Thirty-Sixth Division veteran Colonel Ernest O. Thompson, older brother to Seventh Texas veteran Lt. George O. Thompson. The parade drew an estimated fifteen thousand people. After the parade, the crowd watched a baseball game, had a picnic lunch, and then held a street dance. Soldiers played baseball in Gainesville as well, although with a slight twist as the game pitted Thirty-Sixth division soldiers against Ninetieth Division veterans. The Thirty-Sixth division team included Lt. Bert Davis of the old Seventh Texas among others. After an “interesting game of ball,” the Panthers of the Thirty-Sixth Division won, nine to four, in seven innings.⁷³

Although a celebration was held in Abilene, there were conflicting views between local residents about the planning for the event, including some who were opposed to having a dance. The deeper problem, however, appeared to have been with the soldiers, many of whom were doubtless tired and were more interested in spending time with loved ones and trying to return to a normal life. Homecoming Committee Chairman Deter Hardwicke asked local soldiers to wear their uniforms on the Fourth of July because of a number of requests from local townspeople. He then made a plea to the soldiers themselves: “I hope we will not let the very unpleasant condition that has arisen as to the street dance keep us from doing what has been asked by the people who have us at heart.” Continuing his appeal, he got to the heart of the matter: “There has been some talk like this: ‘Let’s not wear our uniform or take any part in this celebration.’ Fellers,

⁷³ *Amarillo Daily News*, July 4, 5, 1919; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 24, and July 5, 1919; *Dallas Morning News*, July 3, 1918.

don't do this, just remember this: 99 percent of the people in this county have not seen soldiers parade or drill, they will appreciate this, so on the Fourth let's do this for those people." The soldiers agreed, although they refused to wear their "blouses" because of the hot weather, and insisted that Captains Wagstaff and Sayles form them up and lead the march to the fairgrounds.⁷⁴

Despite the criticism, the Abilene parade turned out well, and included a ribbon studded group of "grizzled" Confederate veterans, and small boys who struggled to keep step with the soldiers. The parade included approximately 500 men not only of the Thirty-Sixth division, but the Ninetieth, the Forty-Second, and "practically of every division of the United States Army." As the soldiers lined up in preparation for the parade, the paper reported that "formalities were nil when the officers and men met on the side wall. They shook hands and slapped each other on the back. Funny what a little time will do." Finally, the men got into the spirit of the celebration, as it was reported that they were "a good natured lot of boys, despite the heat and glaring sun. They took pride in showing people they took pride in the uniform that they wore." Captain Wagstaff's father, Judge R.W. Wagstaff, gave the keynote address, and built the image of Texas soldiers in the war, commenting that: "427 years ago Columbus discovered America; 143 years ago England discovered America; and a little less than two years ago, Germany discovered America; and a little less than a year ago at Chateau Thierry, Germany discovered Texas and discovered Abilene and Merkel and the other towns

⁷⁴ *Abilene Reporter*, July 2, 3, 1919.

represented by the boys who went from Taylor County.” Indeed, the *Abilene Reporter* believed that Wagstaff’s speech “portrayed to the crowd perhaps better than they ever read in any books just what grand old Texas did in the great war....” When the celebration ended, the *Abilene Reporter* noted, “Abilene feels proud. Taylor County feels proud.”⁷⁵

In Clarendon, the County Fair Association extended the homecoming celebration into a three day affair, July 3-5, with a “great free barbecue dinner” on July 3. As the *Clarendon News* illustrated, these homecoming celebrations were not strictly aimed at the soldiers themselves. Although the soldiers were the center of attention, there were sometimes other motives involved: “During the stress of war our people have gotten together very little and this great gathering of the citizenship of this and adjoining counties will do much to wipe out the bitterness of war’s sacrifices and bring about more good fellowship.” The paper concluded with, “Tell all your friends and neighbors that Clarendon will celebrate the Fourth of July as it never has been celebrated before.” In Clarendon, the local baseball game pitted two African-American teams from Clarendon and Amarillo. While Congressman Tom Connally was set to speak, the major address of the day was a speech given by Captain Ethan Simpson, who planned to present a “narrative” of the combat service of the 142nd Infantry. The *Clarendon News* expected Simpson’s speech to be “remembered as one of the platform gems of this generation” and “worth going a hundred miles to hear.” As the Fourth of July drew closer, the *Clarendon*

⁷⁵ *Abilene Reporter*, July 4, 6, 1919.

News issued a warning to those who did not feel patriotic or feel like participating in the celebration: Anyone who attended the celebration and left hungry or “who isn’t hoarse from wild applause when the day is over is not fitted for citizenship in this grand and glorious republic and ought to be deported on the same ship with the Bolshevists, IWWs, Pro-Germans, etc....” Thus, underneath the patriotic rhetoric and the homecoming celebrations, an undercurrent existed that those who did not fit in were not wanted. In a sense this also referred to the African-American population of northwest Texas. Although it was not large, there were no references found in the local papers of any homecoming celebrations held by the local African-American communities.⁷⁶

Another thing that many local communities in northwest Texas considered was some type of monument dedicated to the service and memory of the soldiers who came from a particular county or city. Of course, in most cases these monuments were not strictly for the local National Guard companies that formed the Seventh Texas, but included all the soldiers, whether Army, Navy, Marine, or National Guard. As early as November 14, 1918, Donley County broached the idea of a monument that residents hoped would succeed in “emblazoning their names high on the tablets of fame which time in its furthest recesses cannot efface.” While plans were being made, and discussions were held as to what the monument would look like, the *Clarendon News* suggested that “the unveiling of the monument be reserved until the return of Company H, 142nd Inf., upon which day the county will be host to the company at this place, with a

⁷⁶ *Clarendon News*, April 10, and July 3, 1919.

ceremony even surpassing that vouchsafed for kings.” Although the *Clarendon News* reported that a monument might be had for \$5,000, some residents expected the final price to be closer to \$10,000, and hoped that “no one is likely to be found miserly enough to begrudge this voluntary, public, democratic way of showing our pride and love for OUR BOYS!”⁷⁷

Cleburne residents also followed suit with an early suggestion for a monument that was to be the cornerstone of a new park system. According to the local paper, a park would “serve a practical purpose,” but would also “notify all who visit of the patriotic nobility of our sons.” Thus, there were two motives in creating a memorial park for the Johnson County soldiers. One was to memorialize the soldiers and sailors of the county, those who “gave their whole hopes, their prospects, their future, their comfort, their sound, young bodies, their lives, that we might be safe and peaceful at home.” The other was practical: “no city is complete without an adequate park system and if Cleburne is ever to secure a park, now is the time to begin to lay the foundation.” Much like Clarendon and Donley County, the issue rested on the will and ability of the citizens of the community “to acknowledge our everlasting debt of gratitude to these boys in some way.”⁷⁸

The push for monuments in Wise and Potter Counties was also rapid. In Decatur, the suggestion originated with a local schoolteacher. Such a monument, it was said,

⁷⁷ *Clarendon News*, November 28, 1919.

⁷⁸ *Cleburne Enterprise*, January 5, 1919.

“would be a source of pride, not only to the boys who will return, but to the relatives and friends of those who have died; also to every citizen in the county.” In Potter County, local Red Cross representatives suggested a massive monument to the soldiers and sailors of the county which would include a “great auditorium, with a natatorium, reading-room, library, gymnasium and ballroom.” According to the Red Cross representatives, the memorial would be a “comfort house and trophy room for all visitors from across the Panhandle sector.” In Gainesville, Congressman Lucian W. Parrish pushed to have a captured German cannon delivered to the county seat as a monument to the soldiers of the Thirty-Sixth and Ninetieth Divisions. If everything went well, according to the local paper, “our citizens may be able to look upon one of those grim monsters fashioned to subjugate the world but which failed in that design.”⁷⁹

In Abilene, Judge J.M. Wagstaff pushed the idea for a monument to soldiers of the war, who appointed an individual from each precinct to raise money. The committee, of which Wagstaff was the chairman, studied the options, including whether it would be a building, a statue, or a “club room.” While Wagstaff had been placed in charge, the idea had been “gaining in popularity” since the armistice. Another member of the local elite, John W. Woods, stated that the city should “erect a monument that time will not efface,” because “no county in Texas, population considered, gave more boys to this great cause than Taylor County.” While many of these counties wished for a unique and timeless design, four of the counties, Foard, Wilbarger, Tarrant, and Wichita, eventually opted for

⁷⁹ *Wise County Messenger*, November 22, 1918; *Dallas Morning News*, March 30, 1919; *Gainesville Daily Register*, June 9, 1919.

purchasing copies of E. M. Viquesney's famous statue "Spirit of the American Doughboy." The residents of Foard County also purchased a copy of Viquesney's "Spirit of the American Navy." Also in Crowell, a former member of the Thirty-Sixth Division, Claude Adams, donated a German 77mm artillery piece that he managed to bring back from France. The artillery piece was dedicated in 1929, and the statues were "unveiled" in 1932.⁸⁰

Although not specifically dedicated to the men of the Seventh Texas or the 142nd Infantry, citizens of Fort Worth, in conjunction with the local American Legion post, dedicated a park at the site of Camp Bowie in 1920. Eight years later, a temporary monument of seventeen stones was placed at the future site of a divisional memorial, which was planned by the Thirty-Sixth Division Association. The seventeen stones represented the men killed and wounded by the Stokes Trench Mortar accident in May, 1917, which took the life of Lt. Allen J. McDavid of Abilene and ten others, and wounded six more "while the rest of the division's 30,000 officers and men were looking on."⁸¹

Thus, by the end of summer, the celebrations were over, monuments were planned by many of the communities, and the soldiers had begun to get on with their lives, their two year "adventure" at an end. All that they had done and experienced, all that they had seen was now in the past, and time would begin to dim the memories of

⁸⁰ *Abilene Reporter*, July 6, 1919, and November 26, 1918; Jo Hitt, Cynthia Myers, Jim Rich, and Faye Statser, *Foard County and World War I* (No publisher: 2007), 4-5.

⁸¹ *Dallas Morning News*, November 6, 1920, and January 24, 1928.

Saint Etienne and Forest Farm, not only for the soldiers who experienced the horror of war, but so too would time takes its toll on their local communities and the state which took so much pride in celebrating its “conquering heroes.”

In the immediate years after the war, residents continued to celebrate the end of the war, and Armistice Day proclamations were issued by President Wilson and echoed by the state governors, including Governor Hobby in 1919. In turn, many local officials in northwest Texas issued their own statements, such as that by the Cleburne mayor John H. Short, who called “the attention of the people to this important date in our Nation’s history.” Short noted that for many residents, the question was whether or not the celebration should be public or “private in character.” Regardless of the character of the celebration, the mayor believed that the “entire American people shall pause to scatter the flowers of memory on their sacrifices, lives and ambitions” of those “whose dear ones lie sleeping on the Fields of Flanders.” While such sentiments were doubtless echoed by many in the city, a few people did object to closing the business district for the day, and the school board declined to close the Cleburne schools because “no set program had been prepared” for Armistice Day. To show its disappointment, *The Cleburne Daily Enterprise* noted on November 11 that the day was a “legal holiday” because of Governor Hobby’s proclamation, and asked its readers: “Have we forgotten so soon? How have we remembered those heroes? How have we commemorated that historic day when shells

ceased to shriek and shrapnel burst no more? Have we forgotten in one short year the flood of ecstasy that filled our hearts...?”⁸²

By 1928, ten years after the end of the fighting, Armistice Day was a well recognized holiday across the nation. Many of the people who had thrilled with the excitement at the end of the war were still alive, and in Texas many communities, including those of the old Seventh Texas, acknowledged the holiday, mainly with church services and parades. In Amarillo, workers completed the “Dough Boy memorial,” which was dedicated and “presented to the World War veterans of the Panhandle.” Oddly enough, an advertisement taken out by an Amarillo department store seemed to carry the sense of Armistice Day and its place in American history: “The rancors of the struggle have vanished long ago. With our generation will die the distant recollections of undersea destroyers, Liberty Loan parades and ghostly troopships fading down the misty reaches of New York Bay. But the memory of the lad who marched into the east on those long ago mornings shall ever remain sacred in our hearts and those of our children and our children’s children.”⁸³

In Decatur, while there was a “general” closing of the stores, no special celebrations or parades had been planned. On the other hand, Clarendon and Donley County held a program sponsored by the local American Legion post. All of the local churches urged their congregations to attend a combined church service, followed by

⁸² *Cleburne Daily Enterprise*, November 9, 11, 1919.

⁸³ *Amarillo Daily News*, November 11, 12, 1928.

patriotic music performed by a local band and the “school glee clubs.” In Gainesville, the city held an armistice parade that “traversed the principal business sections” in the morning, which was followed by a memorial service by an out of town speaker. After the “solemn” services, the rest of the day was spent in “various forms of amusement,” including a rodeo and a turkey shoot. While most businesses closed for the anniversary, the Gainesville schools remained open, although “patriotic programs” were scheduled.⁸⁴

By 1938, however, many Armistice Day celebrations began to assume a different character. In Dallas, the theme of the 1938 parade was “reconciliation” between the “Peace” and “Preparedness” groups. However, a similar parade in Fort Worth denied a peace group’s float a place in the city’s parade, which caused a stir. The *Dallas Morning News* aptly titled its story on the 1938 Armistice Day celebration, “Ghostly Hosts of Nov. 11, 1918 to March Again...,” and opened the article with the words: “Dead men with bayonets will rule Dallas Friday.”⁸⁵

However, out in Abilene, at least 9,000 people attended the twenty-year anniversary of the armistice, which included a high school football game followed by a “sham battle” and fireworks, which were to simulate “actual artillery, rifle, machine gun, and bomb barrages.” Organizers kicked off the event with a parade of World War I veterans. Despite the more martial atmosphere, one of the speakers during the celebration sounded a more somber tone, arguing that the last twenty years of peace was

⁸⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, November 11, 1928; *Gainesville Daily Register*, November 12, 1928.

⁸⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, November 10, 11, 1938.

on the verge of failing. Beyond the parades and reminiscences of the war, reporter Bruce Francis of the *Abilene Reporter* also pointed out that not all was well with many veterans and that for some, “their bodies were wrecked by the ravages of armed strife, even their souls scarred. Thousands and thousands have died prematurely because of that war; others are skeletons of their former selves.”⁸⁶

By 1948, the remembrances of the armistice had become much less personal, and instead focused on the war itself rather than the effect it had on individuals and local communities. Of course, in 1948, the United States had emerged from World War II, and the *Dallas Morning News* made it clear how that war had changed the way people remembered the earlier world war. The writer of the article sarcastically questioned whether or not, at the conclusion of World War II, France had regained possession of the railway car where the 1918 armistice had been signed and where Germany later accepted France’s surrender in 1940. But as the writer noted, it actually no longer mattered whether or not France had the railroad car back again because “the events of November 11, 1918, matter no longer, either.” Furthermore, the writer pointed out that “We go on celebrating the day. Americans behind the lines the world over in 1942-45 observed it as a holiday of sorts, for there was not much of any kind of holidaying with a war going on. And our troops abroad had too many dead of their own to think back on the men who fell in 1917-18.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Abilene Reporter*, November 11, 1938.

⁸⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, November 11, 1948.

By 1958, Armistice Day had become “Veteran’s Day.” The *Dallas Morning News* reported that few people paused to remember the armistice on November 11, 1958, because “another world war, a violent ‘police action’ in Korea, and a never-ending, ever-grinding cold war, filled with the horror of nuclear bombs which people just won’t discuss...apparently took the glory away from the armistice of the war to end all wars.” At a small celebration held at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that when the speaker, Army Adjutant General Major General Robert V. Lee asked the assembled veterans “Where were you 40 years ago today?” many of them “had to try to recall.”⁸⁸

Interestingly, by 1968, Veteran’s Day shifted again, this time in the midst of the Vietnam War. While the bitter memories of 1948 and 1958 might have led to disparagement of the holiday, the tragedy of Vietnam combined with the fiftieth anniversary of the armistice shifted the focus away from the failures of the armistice and instead centered on the surviving “doughboys.” The *Dallas Morning News* reported that 7,100 veterans of World War I still lived in Dallas County. Another story focused on the memories of one veteran. Additionally, the Council of Veterans Organizations of Greater Dallas held two memorial celebrations in 1968, one at the Memorial Auditorium, the second at the veteran’s hospital, another indicator of the effects of the passage of time for the World War I veterans. In Abilene, a veteran’s celebration was held, in which sixteen veterans of the war received a “fifty-year pin” from the American Legion. Officials from

⁸⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, November 11, 1958.

Dyess AFB and cadets from the Reserve Officers Training Corps at Hardin-Simmons University attended the ceremonies. The *Abilene Reporter* printed a general article about the war, but failed to mention the contributions of any Texas soldiers to it. Indeed, the fiftieth anniversary of the armistice did not merit front page attention in the *Abilene Reporter*. Instead, the newspaper focused on a local soldier who had just been killed in Vietnam, and noted that American forces were engaged in three different battles there. Thus, fifty years later, although the focus shifted back to the veterans of the war, the local effects and consequences of the war took on the sepia tones of an old photograph as compared to the all too real and bloody television footage of the Vietnam War.⁸⁹

As time passed, the reminders of what northwest Texas experienced in the war became fewer. However, in the immediate years after the war, the consequences of the war were still apparent as soldiers who had died in France were returned to Texas for burial. In one case, Mess Sergeant Arthur McNitzky's body, of Denton's Company M, was returned to Texas and buried in the local International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) cemetery, and the local American Legion Post carried his name. The body of Lt. Arthur Stuart Brown, a doctor who was not a member of the regiment, but who performed physical inspections of many of the men, was returned to Abilene for burial in 1921. Also in 1921, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that an army transport ship, the *Wheaton*, arrived in New York with the remains of 5,212 American soldiers, forty-two of whom served with the Thirty-Sixth division, and ninety-nine with the Ninetieth Division.

⁸⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, November 10, 11, 1968; *Abilene Reporter*, November 11, 1968.

The War Department initially planned to send the *Wheaton* on one round trip to France every six weeks until all of the war dead had been returned. Of course, many soldiers of World War I remained in cemeteries in Europe.⁹⁰

The passage of time also brought changes to the military organization that the soldiers had fought for. After the war, the Thirty-Sixth Division and the 142nd Infantry reverted to control of the Texas National Guard. This meant that the division was purely a Texas organization, no longer combined with Oklahomans. Furthermore, the old Seventh Texas Infantry was gone forever. By 1924, General John Hulen, who commanded the 72nd Brigade during the war, commanded the division, which was headquartered in Houston. Also in 1924, Colonel Robert D. Field, a wartime member of the 142nd, commanded the regiment, headquartered in Gainesville. Headquarters Company was in Amarillo, commanded by Captain George O. Thompson, while the Service Company, commanded by Captain Robert Wright Armstrong, was stationed at Brownwood. Major Robert Wagstaff commanded the First Battalion at Abilene, which included companies at Brownwood, Bangs, Ballinger, and Stephenville. Major Ethan Simpson commanded the Second Battalion in Claude, Texas, with companies in Hereford, Canyon, and Clarendon. Finally, Major Claude Adams, a veteran of the division, commanded the Third Battalion, headquartered at Crowell, with companies at Crowell, Stanford, Vernon, and Chillicothe. Thus, within a few short years, only a handful of officers of the old Seventh Texas still served with the Guard, and even many

⁹⁰ *Dallas Morning News*, May 20, and September 10, 1921.

of the communities which hosted companies in 1917 had no longer did so seven years later.⁹¹

By 1930, things had changed even more. Most of the officers who had served in the war and remained in the Guard had retired. However, Major Nat Perrine, who had helped to form the Donley County Company with Captain Ethan Simpson and who earned a promotion to Captain during the attack on Forest Farm, still served on the headquarters staff of the regiment. Years later, a World War II veteran of the Thirty-Six Division recalled serving under Perrine during the annual two-week training camp at Camp Hulen near Palacios, Texas, in the 1930s. The man remembered that Perrine had “close cut hair” and frequently woke them at 3:00 am to go on fifteen mile hikes. Thus, Perrine, who had endured the constant training marches at Camp Bowie and marched hundreds of miles in France during the war, was not about to let the next generation of National Guard soldiers off easy.⁹²

Although the Thirty-Sixth Division remained an active unit of the Texas National Guard, reunions of the division’s veterans were held as early as 1919. The first veteran’s meeting was held on October 10, 1919, the first anniversary of the day when both brigades of the division were active on the battlefield near Saint Etienne. The date also marked the creation of the Thirty-Sixth Division Association. Colonel Alfred Bloor

⁹¹ *Official National Guard Register for 1924*, Militia Bureau, Washington, D.C., May 1, 1924 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), 764, 771-772, 774.

⁹² *Official National Guard Register for 1930*, Militia Bureau, Washington, D.C., June 30, 1930 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1930), 984; *Victoria Advocate*, Marcy 8, 1995.

presided over the first session and delivered the opening address. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, his speech focused on current National Guard legislation in Congress, especially the Wadsworth-Kahn bill on compulsory military training. In addition to other speakers, the association held a memorial service for the division's dead. Furthermore, the *News* reported that the day "will be devoted to renewing old friendships and to living over the days when the division was „Over There.” Although the headquarters of the association were in the Adolphus Hotel, former members who could not find or afford accommodations could "procure a cot, mattress, pillow, two sheets and two blankets at the temporary camp."⁹³

The association continued to meet through the 1920s, holding reunions in places such as Dallas, Fort Worth, and Waco. But in 1922, the association held a major reunion in conjunction with the State Fair of Texas. Commemorating the four-year anniversary of the division's time in combat, organizers invited former division commander General William R. Smith as a guest speaker. In his speech, Smith, recalled "when the immortal Thirty-Sixth began a drive that stopped only after they had pushed back the crack troops of the German army to a point beyond the Aisne River." He also commemorated the "memory of those matchless soldiers of the Thirty-Sixth Division, who lie out there on the chalky hills of France." A local paper described Smith's speech as one of "exceptional brilliance." Of course, Smith followed the trend of expanding the actions of the division, even comparing the division's feats to Civil War combat: "I would not

⁹³ *Dallas Morning News*, October 10, 1919.

detract from the heroism of the Confederate troops who faced what was then an insurmountable artillery fire—I do want to say though that those battles were nothing as compared with the obstacles the Texas and Oklahoma boys faced and conquered.” Finally, Smith noted, the “men from Texas and Oklahoma showed the Germans a brand of fighting they had never dreamed was in existence.”⁹⁴

While reunions continued to be held up to World War II, the last major reunions occurred in Fort Worth in 1931, 1932, and 1934, in which at least 50,000 invitations were sent to former members of the division and guests including General Pershing, former French Army Commander General Henri Philippe Petain, and Secretary of War Patrick Hurley. The list of distinguished invitees also included Texas governor Ross Sterling, Oklahoma governor William H. Murray, and New Mexico governor Arthur Seligman. General William R. Smith, now superintendent of West Point, also returned for the reunion. Indeed, the 1931 reunion was considered the largest held at the time. Like the 1919 reunion, the 1931 edition was held in conjunction with the Texas State Fair, which designated October 18 as “Thirty-Sixth Division day.” As if the celebratory atmosphere was not enough, the Texas and Oklahoma football game was scheduled for October 17. A week later, there was a parade through Dallas, a dinner honoring the distinguished guests, and finally a “grand ball” at the Adolphus Hotel. Several members of the old Seventh Texas remained active in the association and served on various planning committees, including Thomas D. Barton, Robert W. Armstrong, Henry Hutchings, and

⁹⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, September 11, 1922, October 9, 11, 1922, and October 8, 1930.

Ethan Simpson, while Alvin M. Owsley greeted General Smith upon the latter's arrival at the Dallas train station.⁹⁵

Fort Worth hosted the 1934 reunion, where it was reported that the veterans "piled back into town Saturday, staged a colorful parade and made merry with their old buddies." For many, the highlight was a dance held by a woman who had done the same in 1917 and 1918. By 1938, the division association held a small reunion in Dallas in which only sixty veterans "answered the roll call." Although a larger reunion was staged in Fort Worth, the veterans spent much of their time watching current National Guardsmen "use new combat equipment to maneuver over the same terrain" where the Camp Bowie trench system had once been.⁹⁶

While the Thirty-Sixth Division association represented thousands of veterans, some veterans established much smaller groups. In one case, veterans of the old Seventh Texas formed the Company G Association of Amarillo. As late as 1967, this association included eighty-nine members of the regiment, including John K. Boyce, Homer T. Merrill, Sam H. Owens, and Gordon R. Porter. The association also listed eighty-five

⁹⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, May 9, 1927, September 4, 1928, August 16, 1931, September 14, 1931, September 17, 1931, October 6, 1931, October 8, 1931, October 24, 1931; Governor Sterling, however, did not arrive, and sent Colonel Paul Wakefield, "of his personal staff," to represent him. The Lt. Governor, Edgar Witt, arrived for Sunday's ceremonies. *Dallas Morning News*, October 25, 1931.

⁹⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, October 7, 1934, October 10, 17, 1938.

deceased members of the regiment, including Robert W. Armstrong, Alfred W. Bloor, Thomas Barton, Duncan M. Perkins, Ethan Simpson, and George O. Thompson.⁹⁷

While veterans held reunions and associations of old combat buddies were formed, and the combat actions of the division were remembered for the bravery of the soldiers, some members of the Army studied the lessons of the Great War. In 1920, members of the Army's General Staff authored a study of the Second and Thirty-Sixth Divisions at Blanc Mont and Saint Etienne. The authors characterized the 71st Brigade's attack as a "failure," and noted that "haste seems to have characterized this whole attack." A number of years later, an officer of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, Lt. Colonel George C. Marshall, critically examined the action around Saint Etienne. Marshall authored a study titled *Infantry in Battle*, which he published in 1934. Marshall's hope was that the work would check "the ideas acquired from peacetime instruction against the experience of battle." In the book, Marshall sought to examine how infantry tactics might be improved, and he illustrated his work with dozens of examples from the Great War. One of the lessons he sought to impart covered "the importance of timely orders," and one of the examples Marshall uncovered to illustrate the point was the 71st Brigade's attack near Saint Etienne on October 8. Marshall highlighted the failure of higher headquarters to provide timely orders to subordinate units, commenting that "no matter how perfect an order may be, it fails in its purpose if it

⁹⁷ Roster, *Company G Association, 142nd Infantry, 36th Division, A.E.F.*, Amarillo, Texas, April 1, 1967, Homer Troy Merrill Papers, Folder: 1964 annotated, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

does not arrive in time.” Thus, for at least one officer, the actions of the Texas and Oklahoma unit were not exaggerated or overblown, but rather carefully scrutinized, and illustrative of the importance of time and adequate preparation on the battlefield, something the soldiers themselves understood when they compared their actions at Saint Etienne and Forest Farm.⁹⁸

Finally, what became of the men who joined the Seventh Texas Infantry in the summer of 1917? Many of the officers and men of the old Seventh Texas moved on and lived full lives. Thomas D. Barton remained in the Texas National Guard and Governor Pat Neff appointed him Adjutant General of the state in 1921, although there was some political opposition to the appointment. Barton was supposedly chosen by Neff because he wanted an “actual soldier” in the position instead of a “desk warrior” or “theoretical soldier.” Barton served successfully as Adjutant General, and received praise for increasing the strength of the Texas National Guard from forty-seventh to fourth in the nation. By 1924, rumors swirled that Barton considered running for governor, although he at first claimed that “he was too busy with official duties to discuss politics.” However, he did not dispel the rumors. Barton described himself as a “straight Democrat” and claimed he was content to watch politics rather than participate in them. Also reportedly in the mix for the governor’s office was Alvin M. Owsley of Denton, another original member of the Seventh Texas, and Barton’s friend. In fact, Owsley’s

⁹⁸ Historical Branch, War Department General Staff, Monograph No. 9, *Blanc Mont*, April, 1920; George C. Marshall, *Infantry in Battle*, Second Edition (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1939), iv, 164.

name had been discussed for Congress as early as November of 1918. However, observers believed that Barton, because of his “brilliant war record,” could control as much as 80 percent of the veteran vote. However, the 1924 Democratic Primary saw a field of nine candidates, including Felix Robertson and Miriam “Ma” Ferguson. Barton finished fifth in the balloting, securing just 29,217 votes.⁹⁹

Steve Lillard, who raised the Decatur Company and fought at both Saint Etienne and Forest Farm, returned to Texas and became vice president of the Ranger State Bank, moving his family to Ranger. In December of 1926, Lillard and a friend wrecked their automobile while returning from a deer hunting trip. Lillard’s friend was killed, and he was injured. Lillard returned to his home, but complications from his injury forced him eventually to enter a Dallas hospital. Several days later, the *Wise County Messenger* reported that Lillard was “making a losing fight against an enemy more dangerous and overpowering than those he had met on the battlefields of France.” However, Lillard was “cheerful and faced the issue with that bravery and fortitude that characterized his conduct on the fire swept ground.” Lillard could not overcome his injuries, however, and died on February 17, 1927. He was buried in Decatur.¹⁰⁰

Upon his return to Clarendon, the *Clarendon News* reported that Captain Ethan Simpson would resume his law practice, which he did, but only for a short time in

⁹⁹ *Amarillo Daily News*, July 22, 25, 1923; *Wise County Messenger*, November 1, 1918; *National Guard Register*, 1924, 763; *Texas Almanac*, Elections of Texas governors, 1845-2006, <http://www.texasalmanac.com/politics/gubernatorial.pdf> (accessed 2 April, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ *Wise County Messenger*, February 11, 18, 1927.

Clarendon before moving his family to Amarillo. In 1921 he returned to Clarendon but then in 1926 moved permanently back to Amarillo. While living in Clarendon, Simpson provided room and board for a former member of his company, Native American George Smith. Also in Clarendon, the Simpson's home burned down. After his final move to Amarillo, Simpson retired as a colonel from the Texas National Guard, and belatedly received the Distinguished Service Cross in 1930. Simpson wanted the ceremony held in Clarendon, however, because, "any honors coming to him accrued through the heroism and loyalty of the Donley County boys, it was his wish that the ceremony be held in Clarendon." Interestingly, Simpson held the ceremony at the Aubyn Clark Post of the American Legion, named in honor of Simpson's First Sergeant, and with whom Simpson had lain in the trenches and talked of home and family on the night of October 7, 1918. Simpson's son, Everett Selden Simpson, not only joined his father's law firm, but followed his father into the Texas National Guard as well, serving with the 142nd Infantry Regiment in World War II. Everett also received the Distinguished Service Cross and finished his career as the commanding general of the Thirty-Sixth Division from 1961-1969.¹⁰¹

Captain Robert Wagstaff returned to Abilene where he enjoyed a long career in law and politics, serving in the Texas legislature from 1929-1932, and also ran

¹⁰¹ *Clarendon News*, June 26, 1919, and February 20, 1930; *The History of Donley County, Texas, 1879-1990, Presented by the Families of Donley County, Texas, both Past and Present* (Dallas: Curtis Media Corp, 1990), 385-386; For information on Everett Selden Simpson, see <http://www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org/articles/simpson.htm>. (accessed April 1, 2010).

unsuccessfully for Congress twice. He later helped establish the World War II training base Camp Barkeley, and then later Dyess Air Force Base. He also secured a historical marker describing Company I, Seventh Texas Infantry, and their 1917 temporary camp in Abilene's Fair Park. However, because he was not in the line when the regiment went into combat, Wagstaff was criticized for this, the implication being that he managed a school assignment to stay out of combat. In an effort to undercut such criticism, Wagstaff received an endorsement from Colonel Bloor in 1920. As Bloor pointed out regarding the timing of the school, "You did not ask to be sent to this school, but, like the excellent officer which you are, you obeyed the order detailing you to the school." Indeed, Bloor summed up Wagstaff's service in the following manner: "Your company was always among the best in my regiment, and I attribute its excellence to your good management and soldierly attributes." After the war, Alvin M. Owsley, who served as one of the original battalion commanders of the Seventh Texas, returned to Denton to practice law. However, in 1921 he was elected National Commander of the American Legion, and later served as the United States Ambassador to Romania, Ireland, and Denmark, before leaving the service of the United States government.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Letter, A.W. Bloor to R.M. Wagstaff, July 11, 1920, Robert M. Wagstaff Papers, Box 4, Military Papers, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Owsley, Alvin Mansfield," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/OO/fow2.html> (accessed March 27, 2010); See also Marion S. Adams, *Alvin M. Owsley of Texas: Apostle of Americanism* (Waco: Texian Press, 1971); *Abilene Reporter-News*, March 15, and April 12, 1981.

At least one former officer of the old Seventh Texas had a successful, if notorious, later career. Captain Noah Roark, who raised the Denton County Company of the Seventh Texas, did not go overseas with the unit after failing a physical. Roark accepted a discharge and returned to Dallas, where he became a prosperous and well-known attorney. He dabbled in local politics, and considered running for Dallas Police and Fire commissioner in 1920. Roark also participated in several high profile trials in Dallas County. However, his notoriety reached its peak in February of 1933 when Roark argued with two men in a downtown Dallas building, pulled out a revolver, and shot both men. Roark was charged with two counts of assault to murder, but when one of the men died, one of the charges was elevated to murder. After two trials, Roark, who pleaded insanity and whose own wife testified that he was “failing mentally,” was found guilty of murder and received a forty year prison sentence.¹⁰³

In 1936, Roark tried to secure a six months furlough, but Governor James V. Allred denied his request. However, Roark did receive a furlough in 1941, and in 1942 he received a full pardon from Governor Coke Stevenson and had his citizenship restored. Roark was sixty-two years old at the time he was pardoned. In 1952, at age seventy-three, Roark died at a Dallas Hospital. His obituary noted that he was a “fiery tempered man,” but only briefly mentioned his role in organizing Company M of the Seventh Texas.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ *Dallas Morning News*, December 18, 1920, April 3, 1925, May 6, 1927, February 11, 1933, April 9, 1933, October 21, 1933.

¹⁰⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, December 23, 1936, April 19, 1942, August 15, 1952.

Two men in the regiment wrote extensively of their experiences. Ed Sayles, who helped raise Abilene's Company I and who led the 37mm platoon, worked for a mining company after the war in Globe, Arizona, where he penned a memoir about his experiences in a manuscript titled, "To Somme and Back." Sayles attempted to have the story published by the *Dallas Morning News* and *Fort Worth Star Telegram* in the 1930s, but neither paper committed to printing it in serial form, perhaps because of its graphic nature. Whether or not Sayles attempted to get his memoir published anywhere else is not known. However, Sayles eventually tucked it away and it was largely forgotten until it was discovered in his personal papers at Texas Tech University. Sayles went on to study archaeology, co-founded the Texas Archeological Society, and wrote several books. On the other hand, Corporal Archibald S. Hart of Wichita Falls succeeded in publishing his memoirs, title *Company K of Yesterday*, in 1969.¹⁰⁵

Finally, while many of the men who served in the regiment made their mark on their local communities, Texas, and the literary world, what became of their commander, Colonel Bloor? Shortly after the armistice went into effect, Bloor received high praise from divisional commander General Smith, who noted that Bloor was the "only regimental commander of the division who brought his regiment to France and took it back to the United States," which was an impressive feat in and of itself, considering the

¹⁰⁵ *Abilene News Reporter*, September 27, 1942; Archibald S. Hart. *Company K of Yesterday* (New York: Vantage, 1969); *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Texas Archaeological Society," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/bat1.html>, (accessed April 3, 2010).

not always congenial relationship between regular Army and National Guard officers. Smith, himself regular Army, complimented Bloor's ability as an officer, and believed that he demonstrated "sound judgment, force, energy, and initiative." Smith praised Bloor's leadership of the 142nd, stating that he was "extremely fortunate to have had the services of so able an officer as yourself in command of a regiment in this, the world's greatest war."¹⁰⁶

When Bloor's regiment returned to Texas in 1919, members of the Texas Senate invited Bloor to speak during the second session of the Texas Senate. Bloor gave a brief history of the regiment from its formation through combat, and praised the enlisted men of the regiment and singled out the actions of Lt. Alfred Carrigan of Wichita Falls, killed outside of Saint Etienne. Finally, Bloor argued that when National Guard soldiers were properly trained, they were the "equal of any troops." The *Dallas Morning News* also published his after action report of the regiment's time in combat, which ran in several installments starting on March 29, and he had two special maps of the combat actions of the regiment made, which he presented to the state governments of Texas and Oklahoma. As noted, Bloor was chosen to preside over the first meeting of the Thirty-Sixth Division association, and on September 1, 1919, Governor Hobby appointed him commander of the Second Texas Cavalry of the Texas National Guard.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Barnes, *History of the 142nd*, 57.

¹⁰⁷ *Cleburne Enterprise*, June 2, 1919; *Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 30, and August 27, 1919; *Journal of the Senate, State of Texas, Second Called Session Thirty-Sixth*

At some point in 1919, Bloor chose to remain in the Army, although he did so at the reduced rank of major, a common occurrence in the post-war drawdown. In 1920, he attended the School of the Line at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and earned distinction as a “distinguished graduate” in the summer of 1921. Bloor obviously impressed his superiors at the school for he remained at Leavenworth and completed the General Staff School, completing that school in the summer of 1922, although not as a distinguished graduate. However, he received notice that the Army considered him eligible for service on the General Staff and that he would be eligible to attend the Army War College at a future date.¹⁰⁸

Bloor continued his service in the Army, and like many others belatedly received decorations for World War I service. In Bloor’s case, he received a French Croix de Guerre in 1924. In 1925, Bloor travelled overseas and served as a military attaché in Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica, also earning membership in the Order of Neptunus, an unofficial Navy award given to those who cross the equator for the first time. In 1928, Bloor returned to Texas where he served as Provost Marshal of Fort Sam Houston for two years. In 1930, he received a four-year

Legislature, convened June 23, 1919, adjourned July 22, 1919 (Austin: A.C. Baldwin, 1919), 91.

¹⁰⁸ Diploma, Major Alfred W. Bloor, School of the Line, June 21, 1921, Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas; Certificate, Major Alfred W. Bloor, General Staff School, June 30, 1922, Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas; Grade Sheet, General Service Schools, Major Alfred Bloor, June 23, 1922, Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.

assignment to Washington as a member of the War Department General Staff, and served briefly as Chief of the Legislative and Liaison Division. Bloor retired from the army in 1940 and returned to Austin where he worked as an attorney. Bloor died in 1952 at the age of 78. Prior to his death, he and his wife planned a trip to Europe, in part to walk over the ground where the regiment had fought in 1918. Also in Austin, Bloor's younger brother Bertram, the operations officer of the 142nd Infantry, joined his older brother as an attorney, and died a year after his older brother and former commander in 1953.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, it is not as easy to track the nearly 2,000 enlisted men of the old Seventh Texas Infantry to see how they fared in later life, and how the war affected them. However, the evidence suggests that in most cases, the soldiers returned home and picked up their lives. Twenty-five years after the war, the *Abilene Reporter News* tracked down many of the soldiers who had joined Captain Wagstaff's Company I in 1917 and listed their occupations. Some returned to farming, such as the oldest man in the company, Edgar O. Breeze, who was nicknamed "Dad." Others worked in the drug, automobile, or retail business, a few were bankers, and at least two worked for the Taylor County Sheriff's Department. One man, Joe Clemons, became the superintendent of a hospital in New York City. Thus, this glimpse of the later lives of these soldiers, while certainly not

¹⁰⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, February 27, 1930; *Austin American-Statesman*, July 4, 1952, and November 19, 1953; Certificate, Croix de Guerre, Major Alfred W. Bloor, July 28, 1924, Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas; Certificate, Domain of Neptunus Rex, Major Alfred W. Bloor, Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas; James E. Hewes, *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1975), 383.

exhaustive, illustrates that many picked up their lives where they had left off to join the National Guard.¹¹⁰

In the end, what is to be made of the actions of the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment and its participation in World War I? Why is it important to know who these soldiers were and what happened to them? There are a number of salient points that stand out. Studying these soldiers at a local level provides a graphic description of certain aspects of Texas society in the early twentieth century, particularly from the perspective in understanding the concept of patriotism. Studying these soldiers also provides a closer look at the nature of combat in World War I. Other points are clear. First, the men who made up the regiment were young, averaging twenty-three years of age. The majority of them were farmers or unskilled laborers, although there was a large minority of professional and skilled workers, particularly among the officers. Most of the original members were from Texas, and most of those who were not came from other southern states. An overwhelming number of the men were not married, although more than might be expected claimed dependents, particularly a mother or father. Most of these men had no prior experience in the military and most had no reason to try and remain out of military service.

Second, while certainly not unique to the state of Texas, the relationship between the soldiers of the regiment and their communities stands out. From the very beginning of the war, the attitude throughout much of northwest Texas was one of patriotic fervor

¹¹⁰ *Abilene News Reporter*, September 27, 1942.

and support. There was a surge of patriotic rallies and speeches and parades, all designed to generate support for the policies of the federal government. These rallies, speeches and parades were also designed to help convince the young men of these communities to participate in serving their country. The more prosperous members of each community frequently took it upon themselves to take on a leadership role in generating support for the draft and recruiting for the Army, Navy, and Marines. Without a doubt, there was pressure to enlist, and there was an undercurrent of fear and anger against those who were different or who did not wish to participate. By the same token, there was also a sense of community and a sense of belonging, which remained strong throughout the summer and fall of 1917. This sense of belonging could be seen at several levels: at the county level, at Camp Bowie and Fort Worth, and at the state level. This sense of community and belonging was demonstrated on the one hand by young men volunteering to join the Texas National Guard. On the other hand, local residents who could not join the military attempted to find other ways to support the troops and demonstrate their own version of patriotism and belonging. Thus, a strong communal sense developed between soldiers and civilians in northwest Texas that lasted throughout their service and remained when the soldiers returned.

Also, Texas soldiers did face one unique difference that added pressure on many young join: the Texas military tradition that extended from the Texas Revolution through the Civil War. Throughout the recruiting process and even after the war, the soldiers were constantly asked to live up to the legends of their military forefathers such as Sam Houston, Ben Milam, and Civil War figures, both north and south. Thus, while many

units in the United States Army could trace their lineage back to the Civil War and were able to draw on the military tradition emanating from that conflict, Texas soldiers faced an added pressure to live up to the ideal of the Texas Revolution. However, in spite of the rhetoric, it is not clear that all of the soldiers believed it, although some certainly did, and others, such as Captain Robert Wagstaff, had relatives who participated in the revolution. Thus, Texas soldiers of World War I were exposed to three “traditions” that they were compared with: the American Revolution, the Texas Revolution, and the Civil War.¹¹¹

This point was evident in the combat actions of the 142nd Infantry Regiment and the Thirty-Sixth Division. Although the division ranked in the middle of the American divisions that experienced combat in terms of miles advanced, prisoners taken, and equipment captured, the reactions of those at home magnified the combat service of the regiment until many came to believe that the Thirty-Sixth Division ended the war single-handedly. Furthermore, this magnification of the actions of the division appeared to occur because the soldiers were from Texas and Oklahoma, and many expected that they would easily defeat the enemy, because of the Texas military tradition. Such was also the case with the frequent comments on the physical size of the soldiers from Texas, as if

¹¹¹ *Abilene Reporter News*, June 29, 1952. Robert Wagstaff’s great-grandfather was Dr. Ducalion Aldrige Perry, who was assigned to “care for the women and children in the „runaway scrape”” that eventually ended at San Jacinto; Joseph G. Dawson, *The Texas Military Experience: From the Texas Revolution through World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M, 1996).

they were larger than life. While this perception existed in Texas, it was not altogether a common picture among the soldiers themselves.

However, prior to arriving in France, many of the soldiers believed their own rhetoric, that they would help quickly end the war. After engaging in combat, most of the soldiers of the old Seventh Texas gained a new and altogether more sobering assessment of war and the destruction it caused. Most expressed a desire to get away from the front, and few seemed to exaggerate or glorify war. However, the soldiers frequently praised the actions of their comrades, and marveled at their feats of bravery or their calm demeanor under fire. For many, the bond between them grew stronger during their time in combat, which was not a surprise. For the most part, officers and men evinced respect and friendship for each other. This was due, in part, because in some cases the officers and men hailed from the same area, but it was also due to the professionalism they displayed and the training they underwent.

In essence, the soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry were not different from thousands of other soldiers in the United States Army during World War I. For various reasons, they left their farms and jobs and careers across northwest Texas, volunteered to serve in the National Guard, were trained and shipped to France, and found themselves in combat for the first time on October 8, 1918, outside of an obscure French village near the Hindenburg Line. There, they fought, advanced, and fought again before being relieved from the line. When the armistice came, they waited their turn to come home, where they were feted and worshipped as heroes. The government established a national holiday to celebrate the end of the war. Throughout the states, monuments were built to

honor the soldiers of 1917-1918, and memorialize those who lost their lives. Indeed, in all fourteen counties that raised companies for the Seventh Texas Infantry some type of monument remains. Some, such as in Crowell in Foard County, are old and isolated. Others, such as in Lubbock, have been enlarged to encompass veterans of other wars.

Over time, however, because the combat of 1917-1918 was eclipsed by World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, and Iraq and Afghanistan, the actions and experiences of World War I soldiers have often been overlooked. As the soldiers returned home, most were able to merge back into society and carry on meaningful and successful lives, although many were also doubtless changed by their experience of war. In 1919, the soldiers of the Seventh Texas Infantry laid down their weapons and celebrated their homecoming on the Fourth of July, the most patriotic of holidays. The war was over, and the rest of their lives awaited them. Perhaps many thousands of Texans echoed the sentiments of the *Clarendon News* when it wrote about members of Captain Simpson's company who had returned home: "Success to them all—they heard their country's call in the hour of need, and responded—they have done their work well—success to all of them."¹¹²

¹¹² *Clarendon News*, June 19, 1919.

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