

History of the 12th Separate Company, Infantry, California National Guard 1918-1919

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TWELFTH SEPARATE COMPANY

(MODESTO)

Twelfth Separate Company, Infantry, California National Guard.

References: Adjutant General Files

Locations: Modesto, Stanislaus County

Mustered in March 9, 1918*

Mustered out March 12, 1919**

Commanding Officers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Commission</u>
James T. Townson, Capt. (resigned July 10, 1918)	Mar. 9, 1918	Mar. 27, 1918
Dyas P. Boothe, Capt. (resigned Oct. 30, 1918)	Aug. 30, 1918	Aug. 30, 1918
Lawrence M. Farrell, First Lieut. (resigned Nov. 5, 1918)	Mar. 9, 1918	Mar. 23, 1918
Geo. A. Ashmun Jr. Second Lieut.***	Mar. 9, 1918	Mar. 23, 1918

Activities:

The Twelfth Separate Company, California Infantry, was organized and mustered in as a unit of the California National Guard, at Modesto on March 9, 1918. Colonel D. A. Smith, United States Army, acted as mustering officer and before administering the oath gave the men a short talk in which he urged each man to take the right path in military life if he wished to attain the best results and serve his Country well. He complimented the men on the splendid condition of the Company. Mayor D. W. Morris and Superior Judge W. H. Langdon also addressed the company.**** James T. Townson was elected Captain and Lawrence M. Farrell, First Lieutenant of the Company.

The first parade in which the Twelfth Separate Company participated was on May 30, 1918. From a Modesto correspondent the following paragraphs are taken:

"Modesto is paying tribute to the soldier dead today. Veterans, civilians, women and children, patriots all, are pausing from their tasks to say a word over the graves of the heroes of three wars, and to lay flowers on the mounds that mark their last resting place in Citizen's Cemetery. The occasion means more this

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*Twelfth Separate Company, mustered into the service of the State, March 9, 1918. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 116.

**Twelfth Separate Company, mustered out, March 12, 1919. Adjutant General Report 1914-1920, page 119.

***Geo. A. Ashmun Jr. Second Lieutenant, in command of Twelfth Separate Company October 30, 1918 to March 12, 1919.
General And Special Orders 1918, Special Order No. 58, page 46.
General And Special Orders 1919, General Order No. 44, page 8.

****The Modesto News March 11, 1918, page 6, column 8.

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TWELFTH SEPARATE COMPANY (Continued)

Activities: (continued)

year than usual, because this nation has its Armies 'over there' in France, fighting to make the world a better place in which to live. There are forty-five Grand Army of the Republic Veterans sleeping in the cemetery here. Veterans of the Spanish-American conflict also are buried there. Four boys, too, who gave their lives in the present struggle, occupy four newly made graves; all bearing silent testimony of patriotic duty for the Stars and Stripes at home and across the seas. To all of these alike, is Modesto doing honor this day.

The feature of the day was the parade. Assembling at 12th and I Streets, the marchers moved out I Street to the cemetery shortly after ten o'clock. There was no blare of band. Simply bugle, fife and drum did their service for the marching patriots. The line was headed by the Home Guard under command of Captain Kirk, and followed by the National Guard, under command of Captain Townson. Next came the veterans of Foreign Wars with Captain C. C. Parks of Thomas Enright Post, in command. Grant Post, Grand Army of the Republic and the Women's Relief Corps in automobiles came next in line and the High School Cadets were last, due to a misunderstanding as to the time and place of formation. The usual ceremonies were held at the cemetery, at the cenotoph, which represented the graves of the unknown and at the grave of every soldier who laid down his life for the cause of liberty. At the close of the decoration ceremonies, taps were sounded by Charles Givens. The Home Guard then fired a salute over the graves. Captain Townson of the Twelfth Separate Company delivered a patriotic address during the exercises.**

About a month later on, July 10, 1918, Captain Townson resigned his commission, in order that he might enter Y.M.C.A. work over seas. Again the News correspondent writes the following item:

"Captain J. T. Townson, influential in organizing the Modesto Home Guard and the Twelfth Separate Company and Deputy Sheriff of Stanislaus County, during the last three years, was honored at an informal reception held last night in the First Baptist Church. The reception was attended by the members of the National Guard, the Home Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Exemption Board, the County Council of Defense, the Baptist Boy Scouts and the Ministerial Union. Captain Townson expects to leave Friday for

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*The Modesto News May 30, 1918, page 5, column 3.

Activities: (continued)

New York to report for over seas duty with the Y.M.C.A. At the close of the meeting the National Guard members presented the ex-Captain with a handsome traveling bag; Sheriff Davis showed his appreciation of his former deputy as a faithful officer, by presenting him with a valuable wrist watch; and Under-Sheriff Loren Davis presented him with a toilet kit on behalf of the Sheriff's office force."

The resignations of Captain Townson in July, and that of Captain Dyas P. Boothe who succeeded him, in October 1918, followed early in November by the resignation of First Lieutenant Lawrence M. Farrell were severe blows to the Twelfth Separate Company. Also the drafting and enlisting in the Federal Service of many members of the unit, so weakened the organization that in February 1919, all hope of continuing the Company in existence was abandoned. The following General Order was issued by the Adjutant General's office on March 1, 1919:

"The Twelfth Separate Company, California Infantry, National Guard, Modesto, California, having fallen so far below the required minimum enlisted strength that it is not believed said organization can be recruited to the minimum enlisted strength set by the United States War Department, is ordered disbanded and mustered out of service of the State, to take effect March 12, 1919."

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*The Modesto News July 9, 1918, page 5, column 4.