

THE "PANTHER" DIVISION



The 36th Infantry Division was officially organized on July 18, 1917 and would fill its ranks by combining several Texas and Oklahoma National Guard units. The first men of the 36th arrived on August 17, and Major General Edwin St. John Greble assumed command on August 23. At full strength the division consisted of more than 26,000 soldiers including infantry, artillery, engineers, medical, quartermasters, and supply trains.

Infantry divisions of this day were all marching and horse-drawn units, as the limited vehicles were used primarily for ambulances or supply transportation. These soldiers, fresh from the farms and cities as civilians, looked at their time in the service as a grand adventure in the "Great War." They shared these thoughts in the many letters and postcards they sent home describing their fondness for Fort Worth. The warm relationship between the soldiers and the residents of the city grew daily as men enjoyed the hospitality of regular citizens, and officers were entertained at River Crest. The pride that Fort Worth held for the military was on full display when a review of the "Panther Division" prompted the first full parade of the war in downtown. The estimated attendance of 225,000 people would make it the largest parade in Fort Worth history. After 10 months of training at Camp Bowie the 36th Division departed Fort Worth for overseas duty in July 1917.



A) Officers of the 36th Division enjoy a lunch out in front of River Crest Country Club in 1917. The country club was just a few 100 yards from Division Headquarters. National Archives

B) Major General Greble sits atop his horse at Division headquarters. River Crest Country Club can be seen in the background. Dalton Hoffman Collection, Tarrant County Archives

C) Major General Edwin St. John Greble. Dalton Hoffman Collection, Tarrant County Archives

D) Postcard portrait of 36th Division soldier mailed home to family from Camp Bowie. Courtesy, Dalton Hoffman Collection, Tarrant County Archives

E) Men of the 143rd Infantry Regiment wait to wash out their mess kits behind the mess hall after having a meal. National Archives

F) Men of the 144th Infantry Regiment stand at attention in formation for an inspection. The civilians had to drill these types of formations to instill discipline in following commands and becoming good soldiers. National Archives

G) Men of the 131st Field Artillery practice formations for movement on their horses. All field artillery guns were towed by horses, and the ammunition was towed in caisson wagons. Courtesy, Ben Guttery

