

Military Timeline - Albany Medical College

World War I 1914-1918



"The medical profession, as is usual in all great events, has stepped forward to the front ranks of duty and every American doctor, old and young, is proud in being an effective aid to his government in winning this great war. Doctors who are not wearing the uniform of the United States soldier or sailor are lending their abilities, their brains and their dollars to the men who are wearing the uniform . . . Doctors, as civilians, have ever stood ready to do their duty; and so again doctors, as soldiers, are standing ready to do their duty and do it well . . . The Medical Corps was the first to make up its full quota and is, with the largest reserve, the most completely organized corps of the army; and all this has been brought about by the remarkable and creditable response of the medical profession. These medical men have been earnest and grave and have patriotically sacrificed everything to perform their duty, that they might splendidly uphold the high ideals of our profession for courage and devotion."

Howard E. Lomax, MD
Class of 1892
Captain, M.R.C., U.S. Army
Lecturer and Demonstrator of Anatomy at AMC

Base Hospital Unit No. 33

Albany Hospital staff and Albany Medical College faculty's reaction to the United States declaring war upon Germany in April 1917 was to establish Base Hospital Unit No. 33. The unit was given the name of the Albany Hospital and Medical School Base Hospital Unit No. 33 and had several College faculty members and College alumni serving with it, including Dr. Arthur W. Eiting as the head of the unit. The unit included 24 physicians and surgeons carefully selected from a large applicant pool as well as 152 enlisted men, carefully chosen to represent all essential skills needed. Additional unit personnel included 65 nurses and 6 civilians. Medical students were not allowed to enlist but were encouraged to continue their study of medicine in an effort to fill in future physician gaps caused by the war. The base unit arrived at Portsmouth, England in May 1918 with the expectation of serving in France.

Famed physician, Sir William Osler, wrote of the unit:
"Eiting made things hum at first, and Corning (Dr. Erastus) was an unqualified success as his successor. The clinical and pathological laboratory was one of the very best I have ever seen, and the x-ray outfit was extraordinarily good."



Thomas William Salmon, MD
Class of 1899
Chief Consultant in Psychiatry;
American Expeditionary Force
Distinguished Service Medal
Brigadier General, Medical Officers' Reserve Corps

"Medical experiences of the war went far toward breaking down the isolation of mental medicine. Physicians in psychiatry had the opportunity of working side by side with those engaged in general medical and surgical work, in the divisions at the front and in base hospitals. The striking problems created by the war neuroses were studied under these novel conditions, but the most important influence exerted by war experience was the demonstration, upon an immense scale, of the results of managing these problems by several entirely different methods. In one army, where the war neuroses were dealt with, until it was too late to change, in accordance with an erroneous physiological theory that ignored psychological factors, the practical results seriously threatened man-power and morale. In another army, where methods of treatment and prevention were based upon psychological facts, striking success was achieved."

Dr. Salmon, "the first psychiatrist honored in any army, would hold sessions with soldiers who had retreated out of fear - sit up all night with any one individual soldier, three people being present - himself, the Devil, and the soldier - and win out over the Devil. Dr. Salmon and Dr. Alfred E. Cohen of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, had noticed a nervous heart disease which proved curable, as it was not organic. . . I did not yet know Dr. Salmon, but his reputation proved him one of our great war leaders." (Elizabeth Shepley Sargent, *Willie Cather, A Memoir*. N.Y. Lippincott, 1952. p. 156)



Willard Elmer Wheelock, MD
Class of 1914
First Lieutenant, Medical Corps, 307th Infantry

The following is a recommendation for the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary bravery and heroism in action at Remilly-Sur-Meuse, France: "Lieutenant Wheelock maintained the battalion station in this town, which was under heavy enemy artillery fire. During this incessant shelling, the building in which the aid station was located, was demolished by artillery fire. There were many patients in the station at the time. During all this Lieutenant Wheelock was giving first aid to the wounded, and assisting in the removal of the patients to a nearby cellar. Just as the last patients were about to be placed in safety a shell entered the building, mortally wounding Lieutenant Wheelock's assistant. He calmly saw to it that all patients were in safety and administered to his dying companion, in utter disregard to his own personal danger. The splendid example set by this officer was an inspiration to all."



William P. Howard, MD
Class of 1914
Lieutenant, Medical Reserve Corps.
Radiologist with Albany
Base Hospital Unit No.33.



John T.H. Hogan, MD
Class of 1914

"Dr. Hogan was among
the first six American
physicians to enter foreign
soil in WWI and the first
American doctor to be placed
in charge of a British hospital."



Malcolm Douglas, MD
Class of 1904
Captain
Albany Base Hospital Unit
No. 33.
American North Russian
Expeditionary Force.



(WWI Poster; "From the
New York Public Library")

World War I 1914-1918



Walter R. Grunewald, MD
Class of 1912
Captain
342nd Motor Ambulance Company,
86th Division, Camp Grant, Ill.
Camp Hospital 49, supplying
80th Division at Chatillon France.
Area surgeon, American University, Beaume, France.
Commanding Officer, Co. 63.

John Heslin, MD
Class of 1915
AMC Faculty - Urology

"He joined the Medical Reserve Corps of the U.S. Army in 1917 and in 1918 sailed to Europe with the Ambulance Company of the 33rd Division of the Illinois National Guard. He served with the Australian and American forces in France during World War I and was in the Battle of Argonne, receiving a citation from Gen. John J. Pershing. Dr. Heslin was part of the occupation services in Luxemburg after the armistice and was discharged in 1919 as captain."



(Dr. Heslin's WWI identity card)

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