

4TH KANSAS REGIMENT RECHRISTENED 137TH

Will Perpetuate Spirit of State's Wartime Outfit.

Will Form Three New Battalion Companies—Was With 35th Overseas—Has Splendid War Record.

The single regiment of infantry in the Kansas National Guard organized in 1918 and since known as the Fourth Kansas Infantry, has been redesignated the 137th infantry, by a recent war department order, just announced.

The new numerical designation of this regiment brings joy to every member, because all Kansas is interested in the 137th infantry, and many of the officers and men of the present organization served in the old 137th infantry, a strictly all-Kansas regiment of the Thirty-fifth division, and the only volunteer Kansas infantry regiment that served in the World war. These ex-soldiers especially are delighted that the fine traditions and fighting spirit of the Kansas wartime regiment can thus be perpetuated in time of peace.

Reorganizes Old Thirty-Fifth.

The war department has reorganized the old Thirty-fifth division, with National Guard troops from Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri, Kansas furnishes mostly artillery, and the 137th is the only infantry regiment this state will have. The Thirty-fifth division is part of the Seventh corps, which has headquarters at Fort Crook, Neb., and is composed of the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth divisions, one regular army division which has not yet been designated, and two reserve divisions, which are "paper" organizations altogether.

The 137th regiment came into being at Camp Doniphan, Okla., October 2, 1917, when the First Kansas and Second Kansas National Guard regiments were consolidated to become the 137th United States Infantry. After nine months' training at Camp Doniphan the regiment went overseas, and occupied trenches in a quiet sector.

First's Act in War.

The first feat which distinguished the regiment was when a 250-man raiding party, consisting of company C, in command of Capt. Roy Perkins, of Salina, wiped out the battle salient within the German lines near the town of Sondernach, Alsace. It was in this raid that the first national guard officer from Kansas was killed—Lieut. Thomas Hopkins, for whom the Wichita American Legion post—the largest in the state—is named. Lieutenant Hopkins' body was returned from France only recently, in time to be buried with impressive ceremonies at Wichita on Armistice day.

When the Thirty-fifth division started its attack at the beginning of the great Meuse-Argonne offensive, the 137th was chosen as the first assault regiment, and led the attack on Vanquels hill, considered impregnable by the French and occupied for nearly three years by the Germans. It took the Kansas men about 15 minutes to push the enemy back from Vanquels. Two days later, Montrebeau woods, strongly fortified by the Germans with "hill boxes" and machine guns, was finally captured by the 137th after what was probably as terrific a battle as American troops ever engaged in. And the scattered remnants of the regiment—whose ranks were sorely depleted, but still pushed on with the indomitable spirit which has ever characterized Kansas soldiers—were among the first to reach the village of Evremont—the furthest point of advance of the Thirty-fifth division in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

Have Many Traditions.

Members of the old 137th, those who are members of the new regiment, have the traditions of past accomplishments to be proud of, and newer members are no less proud of the history of the old regiment. The battle colors carried at Camp Doniphan and in France now rest in the state house at Topeka, and will be preserved to be used only on formal or historical occasions, according to Colonel Charles N. Brown, of Horton, commanding the regiment. The new regiment has its own colors, which naturally cannot carry the battle insignia of the old 137th.

For One Big Army.

The redesignation of the 137th is in accord with the war department policy of one big army—the army of the United States. Orders permit the use of the abbreviation "Kan." in parenthesis after the number of the regiment. So the 137th U. S. Infantry (Kan.) is now the only infantry regiment of the United States army which is strictly a Kansas regiment. Its peace-time strength is 1,520 men, and while its present strength is only about half that, active steps are being taken to recruit it up to the full authorized strength.

Organizations of the regiment are now located at Wichita, Topeka, Kansas City, Atchison, Emporia, Council Grove, Lawrence, Liberal, Newton and Kingman. Three new battalions headquarters companies are soon to be formed, and there is active competition among various Kansas towns as to where they shall be located. The new National guard has all the equipment furnished the regular army, and with available trained officers, who have had war-time experience, it promises to become a dependable and valuable organization, not only to the state and nation, but to the men who become part of it.