

Carlisle Barracks: The Early Years (1920 – 1945)

The last mutter of the guns had barely been stilled in November 1918, when it became apparent to the AMEDD's senior leadership that "the great many lessons learned... during the war should not be forgotten in the years to come, as it had been the custom of the past during the ensuing years of peace between wars." As was the usual practice, a war-weary public and a parsimonious Congress oversaw the dissolution of the magnificent medical enterprise that had mustered 152,000 medical officers, nurses and enlisted corpsmen to serve the over two million American troops deployed to Europe during the conflict.

Headquarters Section of the Medical Detachment of an Infantry Regiment

The regimental surgeon, the assistant regimental surgeon, dental officer, veterinary officer and enlisted personnel. During combat they establish the regimental aid station for treatment of casualties in the vicinity of regimental headquarters.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections.)



The Emblem of the Medical Field Service School

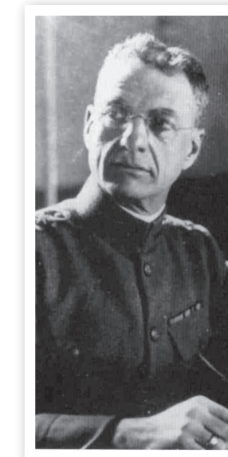


Battalion Medical Section of an Infantry Battalion

The Battalion Surgeon, the Assistant Battalion Surgeon and enlisted personnel. This section is divided into three squads, (1) litter bearer squad (2) company aid squad (3) Battalion Aid Station squad. They collect and treat the casualties in this battalion.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

The reduced AMEDD's postwar Surgeon General was Major General Merite W. Ireland, who had headed the department's effort in wartime Europe. He had observed an appalling ignorance of military procedures and tactics among many hastily inducted medical officers and was determined to correct the situation in future conflicts. The creation of a Medical Field Service School was very much the product of Ireland's personal vision, allied to the widespread realization that the swift pace of mobilization in any future war would require all serving medical professionals to possess the requisite military skills and knowledge from the start.



Major General Merite W. Ireland

(U.S. Army photo, www.history.amedd.army.mil)



Battalion Dispensary

Established in the field, the Battalion Dispensary is similar to the Battalion Aid Station, which is established during combat. Same personnel and equipment.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

Water Sterilizing Set

Water is chlorinated in this 36 gallon bag to provide proper drinking water in the field. Calcium hypochlorite is supplied for this purpose in sealed tubes containing one gram each.

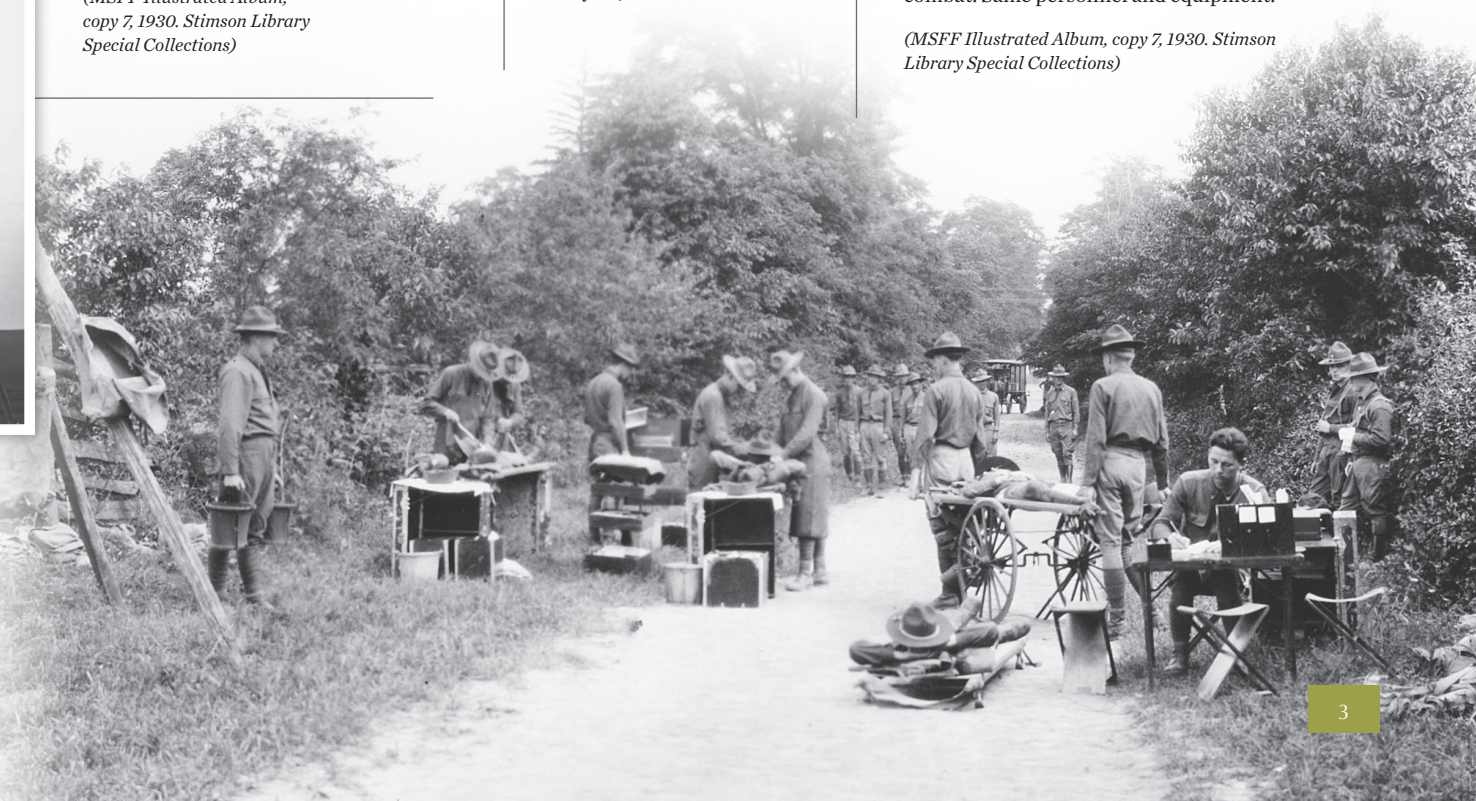
(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



Battalion Aid Station

Casualties are collected at these stations and given emergency treatment. Patients are then removed to the Collecting Station by litter bearers from that station.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

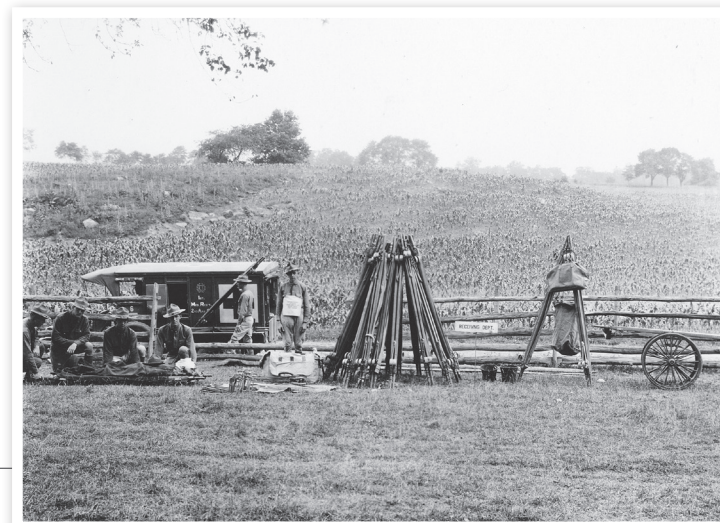


The Medical Department received authorization to establish a school on 15 May 1920. Surgeon General Ireland was advised by the Adjutant General, “Upon the discontinuance of the United States General Hospital No. 31, the Medical Department is authorized to utilize for Medical Field School purposes the Carlisle Barracks Military Reservation.” Colonel Percy Ashburn, the school’s first commandant, and his staff were charged with creating an institution that answered the need for reservists and regulars alike. On 27 May 1921, the first class of student officers reported to the school to begin its quarter-century of proud service at that location.

The Receiving Department of a Collecting Station

The wounded are collected and sorted at this point and property is exchanged to prevent depletion of supplies at stations farther forward.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



As sternly dedicated as they were, the Carlisle faculty were serving in a peacetime Army fielded by a nation that wanted no more of Europe’s wars. Funds were sparse and resources limited. By the close of the 1930s, less than 2,000 members of the postwar AMEDD had attended a course of study at the Pennsylvania campus. The Medical Field Service School in many ways reflected the Army it served. “Things were held together by custom, habit, standard operating procedure, regulations, and a kind of general conspiracy among the responsible officers,” noted a contemporary observer. “In the stillness of peace, the system worked.”

(Eugene Venable, Command Historian, U.S. Army Health Services Command, draft manuscript, “A History of the U.S. Army Medical Field Service School, 1977.)

The Slightly Wounded Department of the Collecting Station

The less seriously wounded are treated in this department and prepared for further evacuation to the rear. Many of these casualties are returned to the firing line.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Seriously Wounded Department of the Collecting Station

Seriously wounded soldiers are prepared for further evacuation. Field surgery is limited to stabilizing to combat shock and help the patient endure transportation to larger combat hospitals in the rear.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Collecting Company

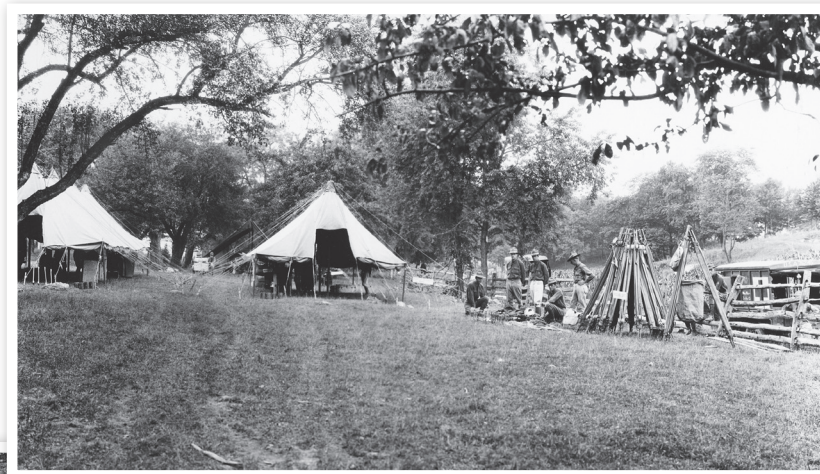
Each medical regiment contains three of these companies. The company is divided into a company headquarters and three platoons. The first platoon makes contact with the brigade which it serves and also establishes and operates the Collecting Station. The second and third platoons are litter bearers who bring the wounded from the aid stations to the Collecting Station.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



Colonel Percy Ashburn

(Downloaded from www.history.amedd.army.mil)



A Collecting Station

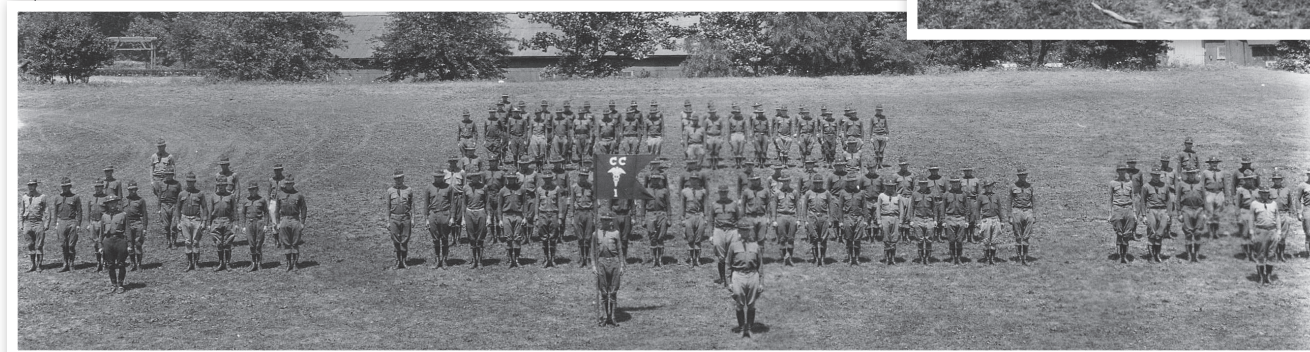
One of these collecting stations is established by the Collecting Company for each brigade in action. At this station, patients are sorted, given temporary treatment and prepared for evacuation to the Hospital Station in the rear.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

Collecting Company Headquarters, Message Center and Record of Patients

A record is made, at this point, of the number and type of casualties passing through the station. This is also an important center for messages.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



With the rise of global tensions during the 1930s, the AMEDD underwent a modest expansion while the Carlisle school remained dedicated to its mission. “...Courses conducted were many and varied with one endeavor in mind: to train the medical officer in such a manner as to equip him with the knowledge and skills required of a military officer and to enable him to function efficiently as a member of the armed forces.” The pace and scope of operations were soon accelerated as President Roosevelt declared a limited national emergency which became a state of war as events proceeded in Tokyo and Berlin. The period of 16 September 1940 to 7 December 1945 is known in the school’s history as the “War Program.”



The Forwarding Department of the Collecting Station

Patients are moved to this department to await transportation to the rear. A Loading Post is established at this point by an Ambulance Company of the regiment, and patients are transported by ambulance to the Hospital Station.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



A Litter Squad

Four bearers are used for the average carrying distance. Two bearers are sufficient when using the wheeled litter or when carrying short distances.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Collecting Company Kitchen

This kitchen prepares food for the company and hot liquids for patients. A rolling kitchen and water cart are provided.

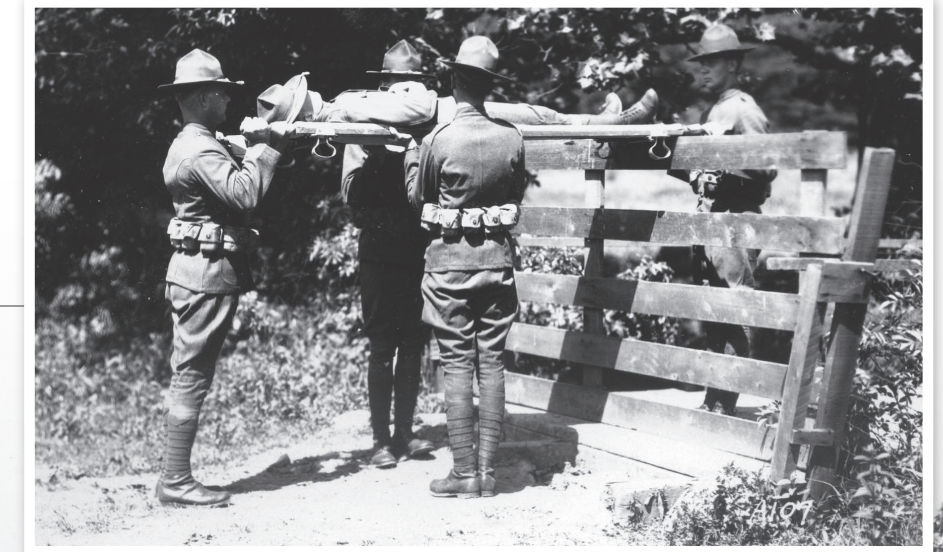
(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

The curriculum and scale of instruction expanded along with the war effort, but on 1 July 1941, the Medical Administrative Officer Candidate School opened at Carlisle. This course played a significant role throughout the conflict. Carlisle was the sole source provider for these valuable specialists until a new facility opened at Camp Barkley, Texas in 1942.

Litter Squad Clearing an Obstacle with a Loaded Litter

Soldiers at the front could be miles from motorized transport. Soldier - Litter drill, described in Training Regulation 405-50, was a vital part of the medical department curriculum.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



Litter Squad Picking Up Patient

The Litter Squad must be thoroughly trained in this procedure as outlined in War Department Training Regulation 405-50.

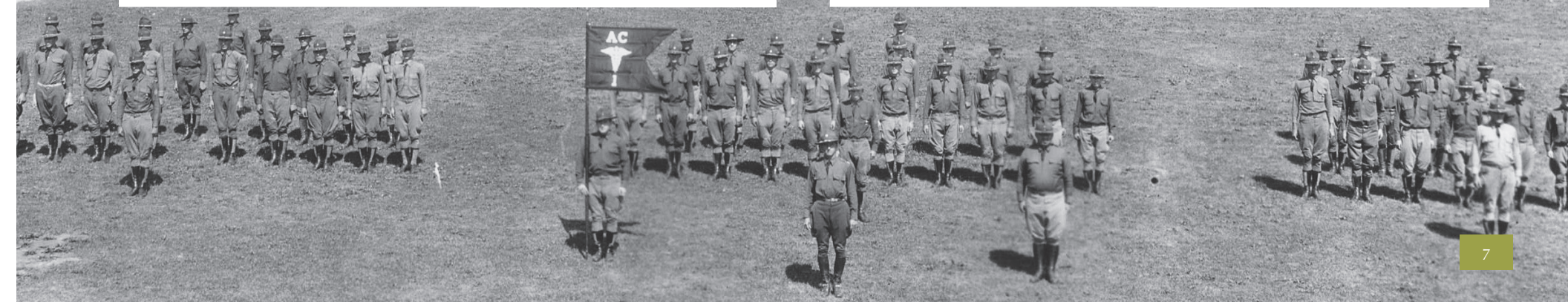
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Patient Being Placed on Litter

The patient is held on bent knees while the litter is placed in position. The bearers always kneel on the knee toward the patient’s feet.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The scale of wartime training had revealed one great challenge that the Medical Field Service School could not address: its limited physical size. The post itself could not host field exercises by units larger than a battalion. The postwar AMEDD needed more room than could be acquired in the Carlisle area. The sun-baked and brush-dotted expanse of Fort Sam Houston, Texas was accordingly chosen as the new home of the Medical Field Service School. On 8 February 1946, the first unit from the school, the 32nd Medical Battalion, entrained for Texas and arrived at the post three days later. Other elements of the school quickly followed, most of them taking up new quarters in the old 9th Infantry Regiment Quadrangle. No one could have guessed it at the time, but the Medical Field Service School (MFSS) would continue to serve at its new home at Fort Sam Houston until it entered its second century of duty to the Army and the nation.

(A History of the Medical Field Service School at Carlisle Barracks, 1920-1946, by 1st Lt France F Jordan, 24 April 1961, Stimson Library Special Collections)

The Motor Ambulance Company

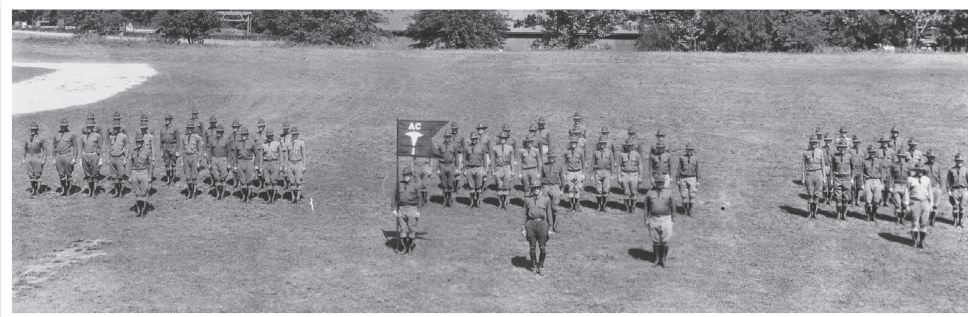
This company also has ten ambulances in each of the two platoons. Four ¾ ton trucks, one motor car and one motorcycle are included in the transportation.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

The Animal Drawn Ambulance Company of the Medical Regiment

This company is divided into a Company Headquarters and two platoons. It is principally used where roads are not suitable for motor ambulances.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Motor Ambulance Company

Each Medical Regiment has one ambulance battalion which consists of two motor and one animal drawn company. This company is also divided into a Company Headquarters and two platoons.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Hospital Company

Each medical regiment has one Hospital Battalion which consists of three such Hospital Companies. This company is divided into a Company Headquarters and two platoons. It establishes a Hospital Station for the sorting and necessary treatment of the sick and wounded of the Division to prepare them for transportation to the rear.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections.)



The Hospital Station

During combat, the sick and wounded are transported by ambulance companies from collecting stations to the Hospital Station. This illustrates the only Basic Unit which includes the admission, property, gas, bathing, surgical, shock, evacuation and company headquarters tents. Ward tents are added when expansion is necessary.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

Aerial View of a Hospital Station

Established on the Washington Monument grounds by the First Medical Regiment.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Veterinary Lead Line

Veterinary Aid Station are evacuated by means of the lead line. Four of these lines are provided for the company.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Veterinary Collecting Station

This station is established for the treatment of sick and wounded animals which are collected from the Regimental Veterinary Aid Stations. They are examined at this station, sorted for further evacuation, destruction or returned to the unit from which they came.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The ROTC Battalion in "Pup Tent" Encampment

The shelter tent is established at the end of the day's practice march. This is an interesting part of the practical training of the ROTC students in Field Services.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



ROTC Battalion Formed for Physical Exercise with Rifles

This exercise is performed as a silent drill and trains the students in proper posture, coordination and precision of movement.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



Evening Parade of the ROTC Battalion at Carlisle Barracks

This battlefield consists of four companies. Each company is in command of ROTC students under the direction of regular officers.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)



The Commanding Officers Tent

The National Colors are always saluted when passed.

(MSFF Illustrated Album, copy 7, 1930. Stimson Library Special Collections)

