

**FORGING THE SWORD:
THE STORY OF CAMP
DEVENS, NEW ENGLAND'S
ARMY CANTONMENT**

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Forging the Sword: The Story of Camp Devens, New England's Army Cantonment by William J. Robinson

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THE STORY OF CAMP DEVENS

New England's Army Cantonment



By

WILLIAM J. ROBINSON

*Author of "Fourteen Months at the Front" and Boston Globe
Correspondent at Camp Devens*

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TO
THE AMERICAN LEGION

AMONG WHOSE MEMBERS ARE THOUSANDS WHO FIRST DONNED
THE UNIFORM AT CAMP DEVENS, AND WHO, WHETHER THEY
"GOT ACROSS" OR NOT, PLAYED THE GAME LIKE TWO-FISTED
FIGHTING MEN, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH ADMIRATION
AND RESPECT.

FOREWORD

By

MAJOR GENERAL HENRY P. MCCAIN, U. S. A.

*Commander of the Plymouth (12th) Division and later cantonment
commander at Camp Devens*

CAMP DEVENS is the only national encampment in New England. The work done there in preparation for the World War measured fully up to the country's expectations. Every New Englander and every man who served at Camp Devens will be interested in an account of its activities.

"Forging the Sword" gives in chronological order, from the arrival of the first man at Camp Devens to the demobilization of the 26th Division, a full account of how New England's manpower was assembled, equipped, trained, and thousands sent across to fight. The author, Mr. William J. Robinson, correspondent of the *Boston Globe*, is equipped by nature and by experience to undertake this important work.

He lived in the cantonment for more than a year. He did not simply exist there. He was always on the job regardless of weather or other conditions. He had access to all places and to all formations, and he saw the troops being equipped, he saw them in training, and he saw them during the distressing epidemic of influenza. He knew the officers and thousands of the enlisted men, and associated daily and freely with them, on and off duty. He was liked by them and had their confidence. What he has written can be relied upon as the true story of Camp Devens. I am pleased to commend his story of how the sword of New England was forged to all who are interested in Camp Devens and to all who are justly proud of the part played by New England in the great war.

H. P. MCCAIN,

Major-General, U. S. A.

December 1, 1919.

PREFACE

A SUGGESTION is really a germ. A request might be called a germ grown up. And an order—well, everybody who has been in the army knows what an order is!

Now there are without doubt many better qualified to turn out a history of Camp Devens than the writer of this volume, and for that among other reasons it is hoped that this book will not be considered a history by prospective readers of its pages. If they start with the idea of reading a history, they will be disillusioned before they get very far. But the idea of a "story" of Devens has been suggested, requested and "ordered"—all three, and the compliance of the writer will be found on the pages following.

As a story containing most of the high lights of the activities at Camp Devens it is the honest belief of the writer that it will be found sufficiently accurate. That many, many details have been necessarily omitted is granted. It pretends to be a general story of what happened at New England's cantonment during the World War, garnished with lighter details here and there to give courage to any disinterested reader into whose hands it may fall; that and nothing more. As such it is offered to those who are interested.

If any credit is to be given to the publication of the story here described, the major share of it belongs to the *Boston Globe*. That newspaper published more news of New England troops during the World War than any other Boston daily, and carried in its columns nearly three quarters of a million words of news regarding the troops at Camp Devens alone.

The *Globe* was also the only New England newspaper to have a staff correspondent accredited to the first New England division overseas. A *Globe* staff correspondent was kept at Camp Devens from the time the first National Army recruit