

World War I Snapshot: John Duren Reynolds 1894-1952

BY NORMA AND AMY ECKARD
FRIENDS OF FORT CASWELL RIFLE RANGE

John Duren Reynolds was born in Southport, according to his North Carolina World War I Service Card.

His brother, David Reynolds, also served in WWI. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on April 23, 1918, as a machinist mate second class. He was honorably discharged on Feb. 18, 1919. He was laid to rest in Salisbury National Cemetery in North Carolina after his death on Sept. 8, 1957.

John was ordered to report for duty on July 6, 1918, then sent to Camp Greenleaf in Georgia. He reported for duty along with three Brunswick County men, as shown in Calvin Peel Willett's WWI Snapshot. They were all trained for the medical department.

In only 18 months of operation, Camp Greenleaf trained 6,640 officers and 31,138 enlisted men (Source: WWI Centennial Commission).

John Duren Reynolds served overseas, first in Evacuation Hospital No. 25 in Vichy, France, as shown on his Army Transport Passenger List outgoing. His NC WWI Service Card incorrectly shows Base Hospital 25. The correct name, Evacuation Hospital No. 25, was confirmed with the 1928 U.S. Army Medical Department volume.

Vichy had many advantages as a hospital center. The location, although apparently somewhat distant from the battle lines, was well chosen owing to favorable railroad connections. Patients were received in some instances within 24 to 36 hours after receipt of injuries, and frequently they arrived with their original dressings, although a very large proportion of the patients had passed through evacuation or base hospitals.

Being a famous watering resort, established for many years, Vichy was a well developed small city. The streets were well paved and well lighted, thus greatly facilitating the handling of patients arriving on trains at night. There also was an excellent water supply; gas and electric current were obtainable in abundance.

On Feb. 11, 1919, Pvt. Reynolds was transferred

to Base Hospital No. 214 in Savenay, France. The hospital treated patients with mental and neurological conditions.

Base Hospital No. 214 came into existence Nov. 6, 1918, at Savenay, Department Loire Inferieure, in the base section No. 1, when the neuro-psychiatric service of Base Hospital No. 8 was organized into an independent unit and designated Base Hospital No. 214. This hospital functioned as a special hospital for mental and neurological patients and occupied a plant consisting of 10 wooden knock-down type of barracks. In January, 1919, when the admission rate increased, the unit was assigned to a type A, 1,000-bed hospital, the construction of which was not completed and, as special construction was necessary, this was done chiefly by the patients.

The personnel of the institution changed a great deal as it furnished officers and enlisted men to supervise transportation of convoys of patients to the United States and exercised supervision until patients were delivered to their destination there. The convoys consisted as a rule of from 50 to 200 cases, occasionally more. From Nov. 1, 1918, to Feb. 28, 1919, this hospital admitted 6,093 cases. The greatest number treated at one time was 700, including 40 officers. Base Hospital No. 214 ceased to function June 21, 1919.

As mentioned in the excerpt above, Pvt. Reynolds did actually serve as an attendant for casualties at the base hospital who were returning to the United States. This can

be seen in the Army Transport Passenger List.

Pvt. Reynolds debarked USS Leviathan on June 12 or 14, 1919, presumably accompanying his patients to Camp Merritt, N.J. He was honorably discharged on June 27, 1919.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows that John returned home to Southport. He later married and raised several children in Brunswick County, where he lived throughout his life.

John Duren Reynolds suffered a heart attack while home on June 2, 1952, and was laid to rest in Georgetown Holden Cemetery in Supply.

Sources: Base and evacuation hospitals formed at Camp Greenleaf: U.S. Government Printing Office (1928), The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War, Volume VII, Training, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 31, 56.

Base hospital information:

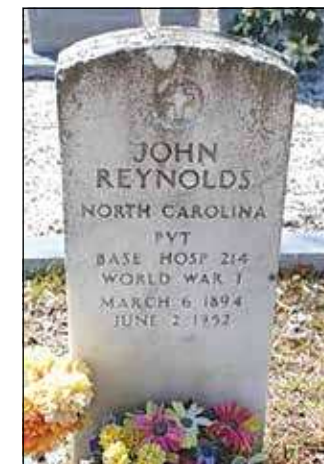
U.S. Government Printing Office (1928); The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War, Volume II, Administration American Expeditionary Forces, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 618-744.

If you would like to help us honor John Duren Reynolds or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email ficaswell-riflerange@gmail.com.

To purchase the book, "Brunswick County in the Great War: Preserving the

1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range and the Legacies of the Men and Women Who Served," call Norma Eckard at 278-7584.

The book is 584 pages and covers the history and preservation of the rifle range, includes profiles and snapshots of all of the courageous men and women from Brunswick County who served in WWI. They have been featured on the website and in the Beacon for over three years.



Photos contributed

John Reynolds' military headstone



Contributed Findagrave

John Reynolds' brother David's military headstone

Reynolds, John	2,586,970	1
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)
Residence: Southport Brunswick NORTH CAROLINA		
(Street and house number)	(Town or city)	(County) (State)
* Enlisted * R. A. * N. C. * F. R. G. * Inducted at Southport N C	on July 6, 18	
Place of birth: Southport N C	Age or date of birth: 25 4/12 yrs	
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers: MD Base Hosp 25 to Feb 11/19; MD Base Hosp 214 to disc		
Grades, with date of appointment: Pvt		
Engagements:		
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.		
Served overseas from Nov 11/18 to June 14/19 from to		
Honorably discharged on demobilization June 27/19, 19		
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported 0 per cent disabled.		
Remarks:		

John Duren Reynolds' North Carolina service card