

## **A Brief History of Camp Sevier**

Camp Sevier was constructed as a training facility for the use of the federalized National Guard in response to the threat of World War I (1917-1918). The first troops reached the camp on July 10, 1917 and construction began on July 16, 1917. The men were housed in tents. The large concrete pieces situated in the Falcon Falls garden were parts of the foundations of some of the tents and main buildings of Camp Sevier.

The total size of the camp was approximately 2,000 acres and covered land from what is Wade Hampton Blvd. to State Park Road and from Mountain Creek Church Road to Reid School Road. The camp site was rented by the War Department from the Greenville Chamber of Commerce (\$1.00 per year) and individual property owners. The tract of land occupied by the Base Hospital, approximately 53 acres, was owned by M.C. Greene and the monthly rent was \$43.85. The Base Hospital was located almost directly across the street from the school, where Piedmont Park Baptist Church is today. The Camp Sevier hospital was one of the first hospitals in Greenville. The camp also had a large library for the use of the men. Water for the troops came from the lake at Paris Mountain.

The first troops trained at Camp Sevier were formed into what is known as the 30<sup>th</sup> Division or Old Hickory. This highly decorated Division was made up of National Guard units from Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina and had about 30,000 men. It became known as the Old Hickory Division and fought in Belgium and France. Twelve medals of Honor were awarded to members of the Thirtieth, six of which were to South Carolinians. The 118th Infantry Regiment had more Medals of Honor recipients than any other regiment during WWI. More than half of all British awards to Americans went to members of the Thirtieth.

The 81<sup>st</sup> Division trained here and the 20<sup>th</sup> Division was in training at the time the armistice was signed on **November 11, 1918**. Approximately 100,000 men were trained at Camp Sevier and sent to Europe. The principal contractor of construction was the Gallivan Building Company and the supervising engineer was J.E. Sirrine of Greenville.

The order for discontinuing the use of Camp Sevier was issued on January 22, 1919 and the Camp was closed gradually until finally at midnight April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919 the camp was officially closed.