



Photo 1: Pvt. John H. Caison military flat marker.



Soldiers of the 167th Infantry (42nd Division) dug in near St Benoit on the Meuse River during the St Mihiel offensive in September 1918. Source: National Archives.

HEADQUARTERS PORT OF EMBARKATION
 Sheet 2
 Class 5
 PASSENGER LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THIS FORM
 Separate lists of TWELVE COPIES EACH will be filled out by each company or detachment commander as follows:
 1st Class: Officers arranged according to rank, Army Field Clerks, Field Clerks Q. M. C. Nurses and Civilian Employees. Names to be numbered consecutively, beginning with No. 1.
 2d Class: Non-commissioned Officers down to and including Color Sergeant (see A. R., Par. 9).
 3d Class: All Enlisted Men below Color Sergeant (Par. 3, A. R.), arranged according to usual formation of the Company, that is, BY SQUADS.

To be filled in by Organization
 Give full name of organization, including company and regimental designation

To be filled in by Embarkation Personnel Adjutant
 Name of Transport (Commercial Steamer)
 Date of Sailing
 Notify in case of EMERGENCY (Give name in full; for example: Mrs. Mary A. Smith)
 Relationship (Number, Street, City, and State. Do not abbreviate.)

Leave double space between entries. All typewriting must be in CAPITAL LETTERS.

NAME AND SERIAL NUMBER	Rank or Staff	Organization	Relationship	Address
31 WEST, ROBERT L. 2312276	COOK	ARMY MR. T. THOMAS H. WEST FATHER BANNERS BLK A ENG ENGINEERS SCHOOL		NORTH CAROLINA.
32 HENDERSON, LUBY R. 1878060	PVT 119TH	MR. C. G. HENDERSON FATHER TRENTON NORTH A INF INFANTRY		CAROLINA.
33 WRIGHT, DEWKINS H. 792672	MECH 18TH	MRS. MAGGIE WRIGHT MOTHER LIBERTY A INF MACHINE-GUN BATTALION		NORTH CAROLINA.
34 ROGERS, LEON S. 1893615	PVT 151ST	MR. GEORGE PIROGERS FATHER MAYSVILLE A ART FIELD ARTILLERY		NORTH CAROLINA.
35 CAISON, JOHN H. 1892361	PVT 166TH	MRS. JULIA CAISON MOTHER RFD # 1 BOX #84 A INF INFANTRY		SUPPLY NORTH CAROLINA.
36 SHOFF, ALBERT V.	CPL	MRS. EDWARD SHOFF MOTHER BRIDE RIVER WISCONSIN		

U.S. Army Transport Service, passenger lists 1910-1939.

WWI Profile: John Hillery Caison 1895-1984

BY NORMA ECKARD
 Supply, Brunswick County,
 NC
 U.S. Army, Private
 Served: May 27, 1918 –
 April 8, 1919
 Overseas: July 31, 1918 –
 March 21, 1919
 Wounded: Sept. 23, 1918

John Hillery Caison was born and raised in Brunswick County. His younger brother, James Cline Caison, and brother-in-law, Herman Dan Fulford, also served in WWI. There is a partial family tree in Family Search.

His WWI Draft Registration card shows he was single, living in Supply, and working on the family farm.

John was ordered to report for duty on May 27, 1918, along with 36 other men from Brunswick County [Source: Ancestry]. Included in the 36 were Jesse Lee Fayette Inman, David Bertram Frink, and Zade McLoud Williams (NC WWI Service Record not found). All four were sent to Camp Jackson, S.C., to train with the 81st Division, but transferred to the 42nd Division in August.

John Hillery Caison and Jesse Lee Fayette Inman became replacements for Company A, 168th Infantry, 42nd "Rainbow" Division. David Bertram Frink was assigned to the 166th Infantry and Zade McLoud Williams to the 167th Infantry, both with the 42nd Division.

Previous posts described the formation and training of

the 42nd Rainbow Division, along with the months in France up to Aug. 17, 1918, when the Rainbow Division, victorious in many battles, was finally given a chance to rest and resupply. Replacements such as Pvt. Caison, Inman, Frink and Williams arrived to serve with the battle-hardened troops. Those drafted at a late date such as these men were typically not trained and never even held a rifle before boarding ships to France. They were given uniforms and sent overseas quickly, which earned them the gruesome nickname, "Cannon fodder."

During the 42nd's rest in Bourmont area, changes were made. General Douglas MacArthur had been made a Brigadier General and placed in command of the 84th Infantry Brigade, which included the 167th and 168th Infantries. Pvt. Caison and Inman served in the 168th. The men from the 168th were originally National Guard members from Iowa. With ranks depleted from the heavy fighting, replacements had to be accepted.

Note: Rosters of Brunswick County veterans and organizations of the Divisions can be found on the World War I Army/Marine Division Roster webpage.

Excerpts below taken from The Story of the Rainbow Division, source listed at bottom:

Replacements, those freshly arrived, untried soldiers at whose advent the veteran

survivors of hard battles look askance, and without whom no division could continue its career as a division, came to the Rainbow in great numbers. The gaps in the ranks were filled. Lost and battle scarred equipment was replaced by new, up-to-date fighting material. The Rainbow Division, in a sort of new Camp Mills, having found its fighting spirit in the field, now was being made over, getting its second wind, so to speak.

The WWI Profile of Herbert Burnell Ward (5th Division) described their next battle. It was the first all-American operation of the war. St. Mihiel. Fourteen American divisions were gathered for the operation 1, 2, 4, 5, 26, 42, 82, 89, 90 and Reserve 3, 35, 78, 80, 91.

The Rainbow Division had started forward on Aug. 30. Moving always at night and resting during the day in inconspicuous places (for the attack was to be a surprise) it marched about one hundred and twenty kilometers to the Foret de la Reine. There it went into camp in shelter tents. It became a division of mud-dwellers, lying quietly in the sticky black muck all day and wallowing about in it through the night, for by daylight no movement of men or transportation was permitted.

Rain fell steadily and the roads became horrors. Through the downpour and the absolute blackness the

men of the 117th Supply Train and the 117th Ammunition Train struggled forward inches at a time with the deep mud sucking their trucks back and the pitch-dark roads seeming to fall away beneath them. Nearly always about twenty-five per cent of all the Rainbow's transportation was stalled impotently in the mud and wrecking crews were at work day and night.

The attack began on Sept. 12. Brunswick County men Pvt. Jimmie Griffin from the 2nd Division had been killed by sentry the night before, while Cpl. Herbert Ward from the 5th Division was KIA that day.

The Germans were taken by surprise.

Intelligence found on captured prisoners showed that the Germans did not expect the attack during the rain, and that they considered it a rather mean thing to do – an advantage that would not have been taken by the French and British.

The Germans retreated to the Hindenberg Line, which they thought was impenetrable. It too would be defeated soon.

Under constant fire from the German artillery, the Rainbow Division remained in place, sending raiding parties out to keep the Germans unaware of the Army's plans elsewhere. The 42nd remained in the area until October 1.

Pvt. Caison was severely

wounded on Sept. 23, while the Division remained in the area. It appears that he did not return to combat. During the operations, Pvt. Caison's 168th Infantry reported 61 KIA, 30 Died of Wounds, and 289 wounded. Pvt. Inman was also wounded during these operations.

Pvt. Caison returned to the U.S. with other casualties from North Carolina on March 6, 1919, from Marseille Embarkation Camp, as shown in the passenger list shown. There are no details of his severe wound or if he was recovering from that one or a new illness/injury, but his status is indicated as B2, which means he could no longer serve in combat. That seems to indicate his injury was disabling but there was no disability at discharge reported on his NC WWI Service Record.

According to the 1920 Census, John returned to Lockwood Folly to the family farm. When his father died, he remained with his mother (1940 Census). There is no record of him marrying.

John Hillery Caison passed away in 1989 and was laid to rest with his family in Holden Beach. A military flat marker is shown.

Sources

Reilly, Henry J. (1936). Americans All, The Rainbow at War: Official History of the 42d Rainbow Division in the World War. Columbus, Ohio: Heer.

Sherwood, Elmer W. (1929). Diary of a Rainbow Veteran. Terre Haute, Ind.: Moore-Langen.

Thompkins, Raymond S. (1919). The Story of the Rainbow Division. N.Y.: Boni & Liveright.

World War I American Battle Monuments Commission (1944). 42d Division Summary of Operations in the World War. Washington, D.C.: GPO.

If you would like to help us honor John Hillery Caison or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range at fcaswellriferange@gmail.com or go to caswellriferange.com.

A future fundraiser, Oktoberfest, is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 12, at the Caswell Beach public service facility building (fire station) to raise funds for publishing the book of Brunswick County men and women that served in WWI; to continue historic preservation of the rifle range memorial; and to honor Brunswick County WWI veterans. There will be a dinner and dance with music by The Back Porch Rockers. More information will follow soon.

Also, another Roll Call is planned for Veterans Day on Monday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. beside the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range Memorial in Caswell Beach.