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April 22, 2009

**THIS WEEK:** An excerpt of an article on Major Claude Stanley regarding his times with the Iowa Regiment, 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 42<sup>nd</sup> (Rainbow) Division during World War I. Stanley was elected to the Iowa Senate in 1932.

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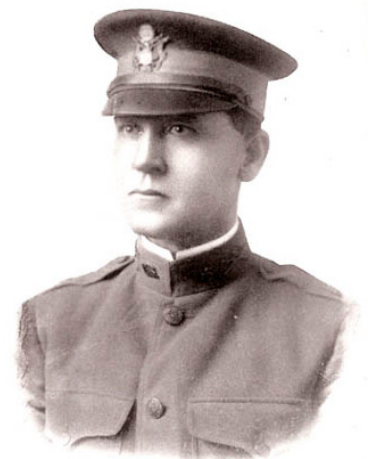
From the *Iowan* Summer Issue, 1965  
Excerpt of the article "Somewhere in France" written by Ruth S. Beitz

Suddenly the sky lit up. It seemed on fire. With a deafening roar, shells zoomed over and burst on the front lines and the town beyond. Dugouts and trenches caved in then hand grenades began to land, scoring direct hits that left one Iowan dead and others wounded.

Then with yells, the Yanks lunged forward to meet the enemy, inspired by the heroic French slogan, "They shall not pass . . . ." Shots and shouts split the air, sweat dripped from faces, blood poured from wounds . . . and this was WAR.

Eight-inch shells rained like hail over trenches, Stretcher-bearers staggered through knee-deep mud and along narrow, twisting gashes in the ground—out to pick up the pieces, living and dead, of their comrades.

This March 5, 1918, marked the "baptism of fire" of the Iowa Regiment, 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 42<sup>nd</sup> (Rainbow) Division. A.E.F. It also marked several birthdays—notably the forty-second of Lt. Col. Tinley, and the forty-sixth of Major Claude M. Stanley, commander of the Second Battalion.



Major Claude Stanley

“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!” screamed the shells, Stanley fancied, as they crashed over the front lines into the village and burst into tiny bits.

“Happy birthday, indeed” muttered Major Stanley, straining his eyes to peer through the fading darkness at Neufmaisons. What was happening up front? How were the men taking it—the peaceful lads from Iowa farms and towns who had traveled 3,000 miles to “make the world safe for Democracy...”? He could not have visualized this day even a year earlier at his home in Corning, Iowa.

Now through the storm of gunfire, fragments of the past crossed his memory. . . his birthplace on a farm near Milo, in 1872 . . . studies at the Corning Academy . . . the years of teaching school . . . enlisting in the 51<sup>st</sup> Iowa Infantry during the War with Spain . . . graduation from Drake Law School, his career as Corning City Attorney, then as Adams County Attorney . . . the United States declaration of war against Germany on April 6, 1917 . . .

That summer the Third Infantry Iowa National Guard, had been called up and was quartered at the Machinery Hall, Iowa State Fair Grounds. Later the men and officers, Major Stanley among them, had moved to a tent city on a knoll east of the Fair Grounds. Inducted into Federal service as the 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 42<sup>nd</sup> Division, composed of nation-wide National Guard units, the regiment had been ordered to Camp Mills near Hempstead, Long Island, New York. Major Stanley remembered the tearful farewells as the troops climbed into waiting trains at the Fair Grounds tracks . . . the pouring rain at Camp Mills, the short voyage on an unseaworthy vessel, the *President Grant*, the lone and stealthy return to New York for transfer to another ship . . . the arrival at Winchester, England, fabled meeting place of the Knight of the Round Table, the crossing to Sunny France, or rather Rainy France, the march to Lorraine, and now this . . .

March the fifth, indeed. Major Stanley was never going to forget that birthday. Back in Iowa forty-seven years later, as he approached his ninety-third birthday, the events of 1918 were still fresh in his mind. Nor would any other surviving members of the 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry forget that date. When the war ended, the survivors agreed to meet annually for a reunion every March 5, a tradition they honored for years to come.

November 11, 1918, the regiment was marching toward Briquenay. An army car came up to pass them, and a staff officer leaned out, calling that an armistice had been signed, and the war would end at 11 a.m. Nobody believed him. Then the men noticed a sudden silence. Guns seemed to have stopped firing. An excited Frenchman yelled, “*La Guerre est finie*” “The war’s ended.”

They were still half unbelieving, but when they reached the town, Chaplain Robb read the official announcement from the church steps. It was “over, over there!”

Lieut. Col. Stanley returned to Iowa and a long public career. He served in the Iowa Legislature, and in March 1937, he was appointed chief of the Iowa Unemployment Security Commission, a post he held for the next twenty-two years. When he retired, June 30, 1959, he was honored at a testimonial dinner and cited for “fair and courageous administration of a complicated law.”

His military career had spanned fifty-three years when he retired as Colonel, Infantry Reserve, in 1953.

#### **BACKGROUND:**



**Leadership Position:** Senator (R)

**Occupation:** Lawyer

**Home County:** Adams

**Bio:** STANLEY, CLAUDE

Senator from the sixth district, composed of Adams and Taylor counties, was born on a farm near Milo, Iowa, sixty-two years ago. He received his early education in a country school and graduated from Corning Academy at Corning, Iowa, in 1892. He taught school 1892-1898 and was principal of school at Carlisle, Iowa, 1896-1897. During this time, he taught school he studied law, attending Drake University during the summer terms and graduated from that school in 1900 with degree of LL.B., and since that time, he has practiced his profession at Corning as a member of the law firm of Stanley & Stanley. He served as city attorney from 1902-1904, county attorney from 1904-1908, and as member of school board, of which he was president from 1927-1932. He has been active in military affairs, serving in war with Spain in the 51st Iowa Infantry, in the national guard of Iowa from 1900 to 1917, and in the 168th Infantry in Rainbow Division as major and lieutenant colonel during the war. He now holds rank of colonel in reserve and commands 350th Infantry. He was married in 1902 to Laura E. Stephenson of Corning, Iowa, and they have two sons, C. M. and A. E. He is a member of the Methodist church, Masonic lodge and American Legion. Stanley was elected to the Iowa senate in 1932.

*Note: Douglas MacArthur named the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow Division. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was a composite division made up of elements of many states. Douglas MacArthur described it as an all-American division stretching like a rainbow clear across the United States.*

*The large photograph in the South hallway on the first floor of the Iowa State Capitol, was taken of the 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 42<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow Division on May 15, 1919.*