

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE CIVIL AFFAIRS REGIMENT



Colonel Irvin L. Hunt
U.S. Army, Posthumous

Inducted November 2, 2018



Colonel Irvin L. Hunt was born in California on July 11, 1877. Col. Hunt began his military career as a graduate from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1899, and was commissioned as an Infantry Second Lieutenant. From November 1918 to April 1920, he served as the Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs, Third United States Army. In this position, he directed the completion of the study, American Military Government of Occupied Germany, 1918-1920. Known as “The Hunt Report”, this study inspired Army Officers at the Army War College to develop Army publications on Civil Affairs, leading to doctrine, a Civil Affairs School, Department of the Army-level Civil Affairs staff section, and eventually Civil Affairs units by World War II.

In 1916, Hunt transferred to the Judge Advocate General Department. When the U.S. entered World War I, he was made the Judge Advocate of the Northeastern Department. He soon became the Judge Advocate of the 80th Division, Fort Lee, Virginia, and deployed to France in May 1918. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on Aug. 11, 1918, then Lt. Col. Hunt transferred to the staff of the Commanding General, II Army Corps. As a staff officer in II Corps, Lt. Col. Hunt served as a liaison officer with the British Second Army Headquarters. Later, when II Corps was attached to the British Fourth Army, Lt. Col. Hunt served during the Second Battle of the Somme. While serving as the Executive Officer, Operations Division, General Staff, Lt. Col. Hunt was promoted to Colonel on Nov. 8, 1918.

With the signing of the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918, Col. Hunt was posted to the newly created U.S. Third Army, then in Luxembourg, to draft plans for the conduct of military government in the sector of Germany assigned by the Allied Command to be occupied by the Americans. Arriving at Coblenz, Germany, Col. Hunt was made the Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs, American Forces in Germany, serving until April 1920. For his service, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Order of the Black Star (France), and the Order of Michael and St. George (Great Britain).

It was in this position that Col. Hunt secured his legacy by overseeing the production of the publication, American Military Government of Occupied Germany: 1918-1920. A detailed account of the U.S. Third Army Civil Affairs duties in Germany to date, it provided a readable account of how the U.S. Army conducted military government during the occupation. Widely disseminated, Army officers at the War College, then in Washington, D.C., studied what became known as “The Hunt Report.” Their recommendations led to the realization that the Army needed a permanent Civil Affairs capability. By World War II, the Army had Civil Affairs doctrine, staff sections and units.

As the Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs, American Forces in Germany, after World War I, Hunt directed the initial forays of the modern U.S. Army into military government/Civil Affairs. Due to his efforts, the U.S. Army recognized a need for a permanent Civil Affairs capability. This makes Col. Hunt one of the most important figures in U.S. Army Civil Affairs history, and because of his efforts, is often referred to as the “Father of Modern U.S. Army Civil Affairs.”

Col. Hunt passed away on Aug. 21, 1933, while serving on the Army General Staff in Washington, D.C., and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.