

Planes, Trains, Wobblies and the Western Front

During the First World War, the need for aircraft grade spruce was great, and the highest concentrations of Sitka Spruce were located in the coastal forests of Oregon and Washington. When the private sector was unable to provide the quantities of lumber needed by the Allies, the U.S. Army stepped in, forming the Spruce Production Division of the Signal Corps. Under the leadership of Brice Disque, they accomplished the task, providing a steady supply of spruce lumber to the waiting aircraft factories.

The story of the Spruce Division is the story of a war fought, not in the trenches of France, but in the forests of Washington and Oregon; not against the German Army, but against the challenges of weather and terrain, and the daunting goals set for the organization.

Although the Spruce Division lasted only a short time, its effect on the timber industry was gigantic. Work weeks changed. Treatment of workers changed. Cheap surplus equipment flooded the market. Railroads appeared almost instantly.

This was the *Spruce Division*.

