

**The Rainbow Division Veterans  
Foundation  
World War One  
Centennial Anniversary  
Tour Companion Booklet**

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## Introduction

We have published this booklet to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 42<sup>nd</sup> “Rainbow” Division’s service during World War One. It is also intended as a companion piece to the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation (RDVF) Centennial Tour, taking place in France from July 20 – 30, 2018.

Follow along as we trace the combat history of a celebrated U.S. Army division from its humble beginnings to eventual triumph against the German foe. We will also meet several famous members of the Rainbow and walk the ground where these American heroes earned eternal glory.



Bulligny, France. Sept. 7, 1918: GEN John J. Pershing (second from left) awards Brig. Gen. Douglas MacArthur the Distinguished Service Cross. Also receiving awards are Col. George E. Leach and Lt. Col. William J. Donovan of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Div.

The history of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division in World War One is filled with tales of sacrifice, honor, and struggle. We hope our readers will gain new respect for the soldiers who served, especially those whose earthly remains still rest beneath the soil of France – a nation they died to help keep free.

It is to their memory that this work is humbly dedicated.

## Chapter One – The Rainbow in World War One

When Congress declared war against Germany on April 6, 1917, the U.S. Army numbered just 121,797 enlisted men and 5,791 officers. Also available were 181,620 personnel belonging to the National Guard, all of whom first had to be called into Federal service for duty overseas.

After the National Guard was Federalized and organized into divisions, there remained several unassigned units. An astute War Department staff officer, Maj. Douglas MacArthur, suggested these “leftover” organizations be formed into a new division. Secretary of War Baker Newton D. Baker agreed, and on August 1, 1917 the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was officially established.



New York City, Summer 1917: National Guard soldiers of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Regiment depart the Lexington Ave. Armory in Manhattan en route for Camp Mills, Long Island. The storied “Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>” would be redesignated the 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment after entering Federal service that August.

Soldiers from 26 states and the District of Columbia assembled at Camp Mills, near Garden City on Long Island, to train, organize and equip themselves for war. The unit received its nickname when MacArthur – now promoted to Col. and chief of staff – said “the 42nd Division stretches like a Rainbow from one end of America to the other.”

With a strength of over 27,000 soldiers, the Rainbow Division sailed to France in November and December of 1917. It arrived a powerful yet unproven force (see next page for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division’s wartime organization). Working with battle-tested French troops, the men of the Rainbow first entered combat at Baccarat, a city in the Lorraine region of France.

The division remained in Lorraine until mid-summer, when it was sent to the Champagne sector to help turn back a massive enemy attack on Paris. The 42<sup>nd</sup> distinguished itself there in heavy fighting while under French command from July 14 – 18, 1918.

During the Aisne-Marne Campaign of late July and early August, the Rainbow Division joined Maj. Gen. Hunter Liggett’s I U.S. Corps in the first American-led offensive of World War One. In ten days of constant fighting, the 42nd advanced 12 miles while decisively defeating a numerically-superior enemy. Casualties amounted to 184 officers and 5,469 men.



Essay, France, Sept. 20, 1918: Chemical warfare was a new and horrific experience for many Rainbow Division soldiers. Here, several men from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division pose while wearing British-designed gas masks and respirators.

## Organization of the 42<sup>nd</sup> “Rainbow” Division in World War One

- Division Headquarters
- 83rd Infantry Brigade
  - 165th Infantry (New York)
  - 166th Infantry (Ohio)
  - 150th Machine Gun Battalion (Wisconsin)
- 84th Infantry Brigade
  - 167th Infantry (Alabama)
  - 168th Infantry (Iowa)
  - 151st Machine Gun Battalion (Georgia)
- 117th Engineer Regiment
  - 1st Battalion, 117th Engineers (South Carolina)
  - 2nd Battalion, 117th Engineers (California)
  - Engineer Trains (North Carolina)
- Divisional Troops
  - 149th Machine Gun Battalion (Pennsylvania)
  - 117th Field Signal Battalion (Missouri)
  - Divisional Cavalry Troop (Louisiana)
  - 117th Military Police Company (Virginia)
- 67th Artillery Brigade
  - 149th Field Artillery Regiment (Illinois)
  - 150th Field Artillery Regiment (Indiana)
  - 151st Field Artillery Regiment (Minnesota)
  - 117th Trench Mortar Battalion (Maryland)
- Division Trains
  - 117th Headquarters Train (Virginia)
  - 117th Ammunition Train (Kansas)
  - 117th Supply Train (Texas)
  - 117th Sanitary Train (N/A)
  - 1st Ambulance Company (Michigan)
  - 2nd Ambulance Company (New Jersey)
  - 3rd Ambulance Company (Tennessee)
  - 4th Ambulance Company (Oklahoma)
  - 1st Field Hospital Company (Washington, DC)
  - 2nd Field Hospital Company (Nebraska)
  - 3rd Field Hospital Company (Colorado)
  - 4th Field Hospital Company (Oregon)

Following a period of reconstitution, the Rainbow became one of 18 divisions assigned to the First U.S. Army, then preparing for another large-scale American-led offensive operation. The 42<sup>nd</sup> attacked at Saint-Mihiel in September of 1918, helping to drive German defenders from this strategic salient in a four-day battle.

Throughout October the men of the Rainbow experienced their toughest fight of the war as U.S. forces attacked through the Argonne Forest. Their goal: break the Hindenburg Line, really a series of four defensive belts held by determined German troops. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, at a hill called Côte de Châtillon, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division successfully captured a network of formidable enemy defenses in a ferocious frontal assault.



American "Doughboys" assemble in the Meuse-Argonne region of France, October 1918.  
This was the largest U.S.-commanded campaign of World War One.

When opposing forces declared an armistice on November 11, 1918, the Rainbow was advancing on Sedan, a major transportation and logistics center for the German army. The division then served six months with the U.S. Army of Occupation in Germany before sailing for home in April of 1919.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division spent 164 days on the front lines during World War One. While in combat the unit suffered 2,950 men killed in action and 13,292 wounded in action, for a total of 16,242 casualties. One out of every 16 Americans killed or wounded in the war belonged to the Rainbow Division.

## Chapter Two – War on the Western Front

The global catastrophe we know today as World War One had been going on for three years before the United States of America took up arms. In this chapter we will briefly cover the causes of, and important events taking place during the First World War from 1914 to 1917.

The origins for this conflict are complex. In Europe, a system of political alliances, plus growing nationalism, imperialism, and militarism, created a political powder keg that was set off by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary in June of 1914.

Throughout that surreal summer, armies mobilized while politicians postured. The nation-states of Europe soon formed two opposing sides – the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire) vs. the Allied Powers (France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Russia).

On the Western Front, German forces enjoyed early success in their rapid advance across weakly-defended Belgium. They were finally halted by desperate French and British defensive operations just 50 miles from Paris.

Unable to advance and unwilling to retreat, both sides dug in. By the end of the year, a system of entrenchments stretching from Belgium's North Sea coast to Switzerland – 1,550 miles – scarred the European countryside.

Deadly weaponry, in the form of machine guns and heavy artillery, ruled the trench lines. Soldiers on both sides were massacred by the score in futile attempts to overwhelm what were by now near-impregnable enemy positions.



No-Mans's Land South of  
Malancourt, France



The city of Verdun, in France's Lorraine region, became a vivid symbol of war's horror. Both the Germans and the French wanted this strategic outpost on the Meuse River. They would spend four years and hundreds of thousands of human lives in a titanic struggle for possession of Verdun.



A field of crosses covers the French Cemetery at Douaumont, near Verdun. 714,231 men (377,231 French and 337,000 German) perished in this battle, one of the longest and most costly military encounters in human history.

By 1917, both the Allied Powers and Central Powers had been bled white by this colossal conflict. In April of that year the United States joined the Allied cause, while in December Russia – then in the throes of the Communist Revolution – made a separate peace with the Central Powers.

Many credit the arrival in France of fresh American troops as the one key element that brought about victory for the Allies. In truth, a number of military, economic, political, and social factors caused Germany to seek an armistice. The guns finally fell silent at 11:00 AM on November 11, 1918.

The total number of military and civilian casualties in World War I exceeded 41 million. It is estimated there were over 18 million people killed and 23 million wounded, ranking it among the most deadly conflicts in human history.

## The War on the Western Front – Sites



Inside the Museum of the Great War



On display at the Verdun Memorial is a battle-damaged French steel helmet

**Museum of the Great War, Meaux, France:** The Great War museum holds a rich and diverse collection which addresses the conflict in both military terms as well as from a human and societal point of view. <https://www.museedelagrandeguerre.eu/en.html>.

**Verdun Memorial, Verdun, France:** This newly-opened museum remembers the French, German, and American combatants who fought here, along with the civilian population lost during the Battle of Verdun. <http://memorial-verdun.fr/en/>

**Fort Douaumont, Verdun, France:** Fort Douaumont was the largest of 19 large defensive strongholds protecting the city of Verdun, France, during World War One. A nine-month battle for control of this key fortification resulted in the deaths of 300,000 men on both sides. The fort and its surrounding battle-scarred landscape are now open for tours.

**Douaumont Ossuary, Verdun, France:** Thousands of men who perished at Verdun could never be identified. Their remains were recovered and laid to rest in the Douaumont Ossuary, an impressive memorial dedicated to the memory of these unknown soldiers. <http://www.verdun-douaumont.com:80/en/index.html>.

### Chapter Three – First Combat

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was the fourth U.S. expeditionary division to reach France, arriving there by ship during the late autumn of 1917. Allied commanders decided the division would enter battle gradually, and under the guidance of combat-versed French officers. Training began in earnest that December.



French and American soldiers wave to the camera during a break in the fighting.

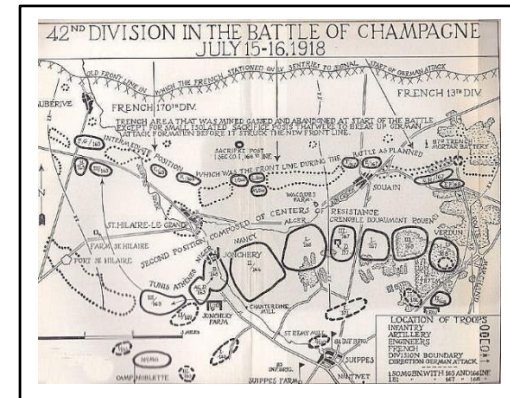
It was a grueling experience for the Rainbow. At Christmastime they performed a foot-march through severe winter conditions that sorely tested their fighting spirit. By February, the division found itself occupying a quiet sector of trench line near Baccarat in the easternmost part of France.

Things did not remain quiet once the aggressive “Doughboys” (nickname for U.S. soldiers in World War One) took over. They quickly learned how to survive in the trenches, enduring poison gas attacks, artillery fire, and unseen snipers. Here the 42<sup>nd</sup> sustained its first casualties, including 20 infantrymen killed when a German shell exploded directly on top of their bunker.

Later, poet-soldier Sgt. A. Joyce Kilmer of the Rainbow Division would immortalize these victims in his work “The Rouge Bouquet” (reproduced on the inside front cover of this booklet).

In July of 1918, French General Henri Gouraud’s Fourth French Army found itself frantically attempting to beat back a huge enemy attack then boiling out of the Champagne region. This was part of the “Peace Offensive”, Germany’s all-out push to seize Paris before fresh American troops overwhelmingly tipped the scales of battle on the Western Front.

Gouraud asked for and got the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division to help buttress his lines. For this campaign, Fourth Army would employ a clever “defense-in-depth” tactic to lure enemy forces into its trap.



When the Germans attacked on July 15<sup>th</sup>, they were opposed by a number of small two-man outposts instead of Gouraud’s full defensive line. Recklessly, the enemy charged forward into a morass of carefully-laid minefields and wire obstacles. Allied artillery pummeled these exposed infantrymen, causing heavy casualties. The Germans, increasingly disorganized and worn down, then had to advance six miles before hitting the Allies’ primary positions.

Dug-in Allied divisions, including the 42<sup>nd</sup>, easily blunted these thrusts. Then, after the enemy assault was spent, U.S. Doughboys fixed bayonets and counterattacked. By July 18<sup>th</sup> the Germans had been pushed back at great cost to their original front-line trace. General Gouraud praised the Rainbow Division for its role in helping to win this impressive Allied victory.

There was little time for celebration, however. A crisis to the west required every available American combat outfit to assemble at a small town along the Marne River. That town was called Chateau-Thierry, a name soon to become famous in the annals of history.

## First Combat – Sites

**Ossuary of Navarin, Souain, France:** This large pyramid-like structure, overlooking ground once held by soldiers of the 42nd “Rainbow” Division, has become a major remembrance site of The Great War. Inside its main chamber rest with honor the bones of 10,000 unknown French soldiers.

<https://www.lamarne14-18.com/en/navarin-ossuary-monument>



The Navarin Ossuary was built in 1923 to honor the dead of World War One

**Sommepy American Monument, Mont Blanc, France:** The World War One Sommepy American Monument commemorates the achievements of those U.S. divisions that served in combat with the French Fourth Army during the summer and fall of 1918. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division is one of four American units to have its insignia carved into this monument. Its observation tower affords superb views of nearby battlefields. Inside is an inscription describing U.S. Army operations in the vicinity.

<https://www.abmc.gov/>



The Sommepy American Monument

## Chapter Four – To The Ourcq River

By the summer of 1918, American soldiers were arriving in France at the rate of 10,000 men per day. Their commander, a 57-year-old professional soldier named Gen. John J. Pershing, was anxious to employ these troops under U.S. leadership. In July of that year he got his chance.

But first the German “Peace Offensive” had to be stopped. As he had done with the Rainbow in France’s Champagne district, Gen. Pershing fed into battle his most combat-ready divisions wherever they were most needed. These fresh American forces fought tenaciously, earning glory at places such as Cantigny, Belleau Wood and Chateau-Thierry.

Pershing knew wars are won by offensive action, though, and in late July he saw an opportunity to attack. The enemy had left his flanks vulnerable; now four U.S. divisions were poised to strike in the first American-commanded operation of World War One. It was called the Aisne-Marne Offensive.

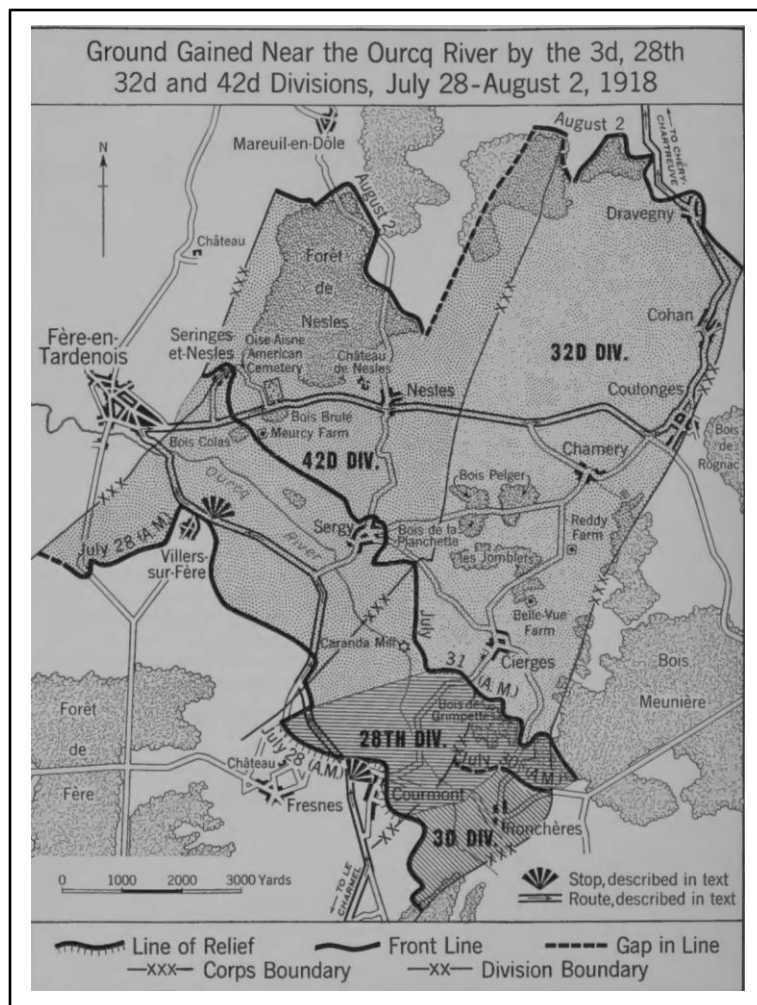
The newly-formed I U.S. Corps began its assault northwest of Chateau-Thierry on July 18<sup>th</sup>. At that time, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was still fighting in the Champagne region but moved up by rail to join the battle three days later.



Soldiers of the 167<sup>th</sup> (Alabama) Inf. Rgt. provide covering fire from a trench in France.



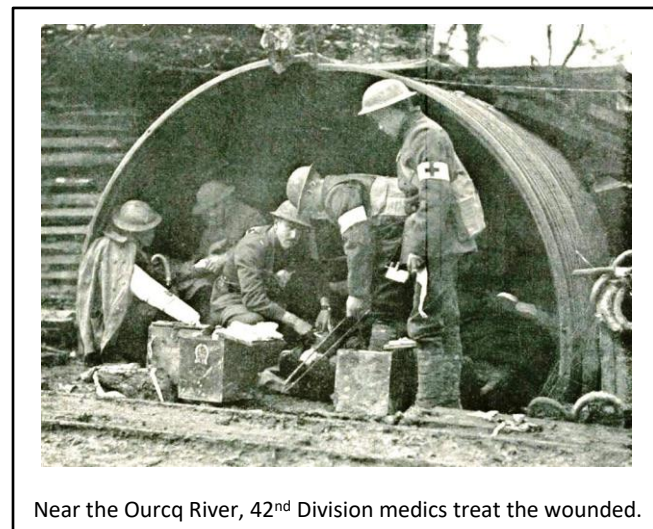
On July 25<sup>th</sup>, the men of the Rainbow took over from their 26<sup>th</sup> “Yankee” Division comrades, soldiers who had suffered horrific losses during an eight-day attack. It was now the 42<sup>nd</sup>’s turn to endure heavy artillery, chemical munitions, and machine gun fire as that outfit pushed onward.



The Rainbow Division’s objective was high ground north of the Ourcq River. In between were several fortified farm buildings, known locally as the Croix Rouge and Meurcy Farms, which were defended by soldiers of the German Seventh Army. Other key terrain in the 42<sup>nd</sup>’s zone of attack included the village of Sergy and the heavily-wooded Forêt de Nesles (see map above).

The 84<sup>th</sup> Brigade went in first. Attacking the Croix Rouge Farm at dusk on July 26<sup>th</sup>, Doughboys of the 167<sup>th</sup> (Alabama) and 168<sup>th</sup> (Iowa) Inf. Rgts. wrested control of this strongpoint from the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. It was, as Brig. Gen. Douglas MacArthur later recorded, “one of the few occasions in which the bayonet was decisively used.”

But the 84<sup>th</sup> Bde. had lost almost 50% of its strength in this one-day fight. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Bde. now came forward as the Division’s main effort. They advanced steadily toward the Ourcq River, seizing on July 29<sup>th</sup> another fortified farmhouse – the Meurcy Farm – in heavy fighting.



Near the Ourcq River, 42<sup>nd</sup> Division medics treat the wounded.

To make up for combat losses, the U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> Division’s 47<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt. was attached to the Rainbow for this campaign. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, the 47<sup>th</sup> took and lost Sergy four times against ferocious German counterattacks.

That next day, Sgt. Joyce Kilmer of the 165<sup>th</sup> (New York) Inf. Rgt. was killed by a sniper’s bullet near Meurcy Farm. His loss shocked and saddened all who knew this gentle yet fearless warrior.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> continued attacking until August 3, when it was finally relieved by the U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> Division. While a tactical success, the Aisne-Marne Offensive came at great cost. A total of 5,529 Rainbow Division soldiers were killed or wounded in this ten-day battle; on average, 117 Doughboys died per day.



## To The Ourcq River – Sites

**Chateau-Thierry American Monument, Chateau-Thierry, France:** The World War I Chateau-Thierry American Monument commemorates the sacrifices and achievements of the Americans and French armies before and during the Aisne-Marne Offensive. A new visitor center there interprets America's involvement in World War One. <https://www.abmc.gov/>

**Aisne-Marne American Cemetery, Belleau, France:** This 42.50-acre cemetery contains the graves of 2,289 American servicemen, most of whom fought in the Marne Valley during the summer of 1918. The Rainbow Division has 172 of its sons buried here. Belleau Wood, site of a famous U.S. Marine Corps battle, adjoins the cemetery. <https://www.abmc.gov/>

**Croix Rouge Farm and Rainbow Division Memorial, Fère-en-Tardenois, France:** An impressive sculpture honors the service of the 167th (Alabama) Inf. Rgt. and the 42nd Rainbow Division. Still visible are remnants of the Croix Rouge Farm, along with interpretive signs installed by the RDVF that help explain this decisive combat action. <http://croixrougefarm.org/>

**Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, Seringes-et-Nesles, France:** Joyce Kilmer, the American poet, rests here along with 371 of his fellow fallen 42<sup>nd</sup> Division comrades. Dedicated in 1937, this 36.50-acre cemetery consists of a memorial, map room, chapel, and burial area where 6,012 American war dead slumber for all eternity. <https://www.abmc.gov/>



Croix Rouge Farm



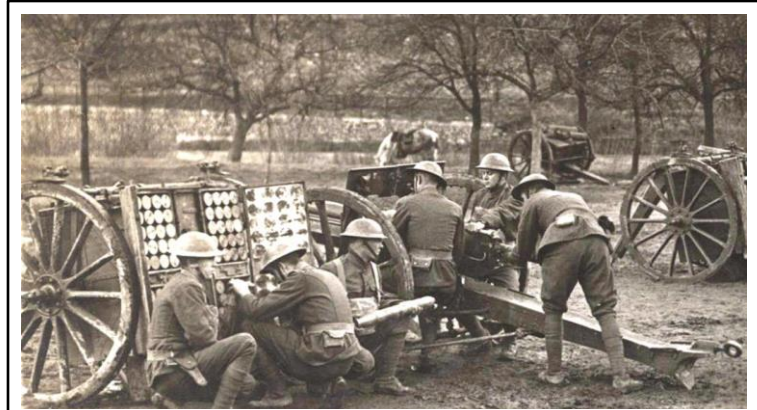
Aisne-Marne American Cemetery



Oise-Aisne American Cemetery

## Chapter Five – Saint-Mihiel

In August's heat the Rainbow rested and absorbed replacements. Meantime, Gen. Pershing itched to put his newly-organized First U.S. Army into action. This command, of which the 42<sup>nd</sup> was a part, began advancing toward a salient, or bulge in the lines, at Saint-Mihiel south of Verdun in early September.



Battery F, 151st (Minnesota) Field Artillery in action with their French 75mm howitzers. Most artillery in World War One was horse-drawn.

The 200-square-mile Saint-Mihiel salient threatened Allied communications and had to be eliminated. Pershing's American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) got the job, making Saint-Mihiel the first major campaign of World War One independently planned and fought by a U.S. field army.

Now assigned to IV Corps, the 42nd Division was destined to play a key role in the Saint-Mihiel assault. Its objectives included the Bois de Thiaucourt, a forested area located five miles behind the enemy's front line. Those who had already seen combat believed this would be their toughest fight yet.

At 1:00 AM on September 12<sup>th</sup>, a massive Allied artillery barrage shattered the night. Weary, demoralized German troops cowered under this bombardment, which was followed four hours later by a ground attack from First Army's 14 American and four French divisions. Over one thousand Allied aircraft filled the skies, while down below 400 U.S.-crewed Renault tanks crawled across "no-man's land" spitting fire from their turret-mounted 37mm cannons and heavy machine guns.

Thousands of Doughboys went “over the top” on that cold and rainy morning. For the men of the 42<sup>nd</sup> this attack went surprisingly well. The Germans had been caught retreating and offered only scattered resistance.

Any enemy machine-gun nests that held up the infantry’s advance were handily dealt with by Renault crews of the attached First Provisional Tank Bde. Its commander, Lt. Col. George S. Patton, Jr., was often seen leading his unit on foot in support of Brig. Gen. MacArthur’s 84<sup>th</sup> Bde.



Boureuilles, France: American-crewed Renault FT tanks, like these two, helped speed the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division’s advance at Saint-Mihiel in Sep. 1918.

Spirits were buoyed by the astonishing number of Germans who chose to surrender rather than fight on. Another boost to morale occurred after dawn on September 13<sup>th</sup> when, in the words of 166<sup>th</sup> (Ohio) Inf. Rgt. historian Cpt. Raymond Cheseldine, “the mists were parted over the valley and the sun came through long enough to paint on the sky a giant Rainbow.”

By September 16<sup>th</sup> all primary objectives had been achieved. The Germans were soundly defeated, and the Saint-Mihiel salient existed no longer. Veterans of earlier fighting had expected a bloodbath; instead they got a pushover. The troops rejoiced in their easy victory.

This respite was short-lived, however. Senior A.E.F. commanders were even then preparing for the next campaign, one they believed might end the war. Some 60 miles to the north, in a forbidding region known as the Argonne Forest, stood Germany’s last line of defense. It had to be broken at all costs.

## Saint-Mihiel: Sites

**Montsec American Monument, Montsec, France:** The World War One Montsec American Monument is located on the isolated hill of Montsec (Thiaucourt), France. This majestic monument, commemorating the achievements of those American soldiers who fought in this region in 1917 and 1918, dominates the landscape for miles around. The monument was slightly damaged during World War II but has since been repaired.

<https://www.abmc.gov/>



Impressive statuary and immaculately-tended grounds lend a sense of reverence to the Saint-Mihiel American Cemetery, located about 35 miles south of the fortress city of Verdun.

**Saint-Mihiel American Cemetery, Thiaucourt-Regniéville, France:** The World War One Saint-Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial, 40.5 acres in extent, contains the graves of 4,153 of our military dead. Of these, 141 belong to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow Division. Beyond the burial area stands a white stone memorial consisting of a small chapel and map building. On two walls of this memorial are recorded the names of 284 of soldiers missing in action.

<https://www.abmc.gov/>



## Chapter Six: The Meuse-Argonne and Victory

The Meuse-Argonne campaign was the largest American offensive of World War One. It began on September 26, 1918 – less than two weeks after operations in the Saint-Mihiel region concluded.

The initial assault involved nine A.E.F. divisions attacking along a 19 mile-wide front. By war's end, this campaign involved 23 American divisions and 1.2 million U.S. troops (not counting French units). An estimated 110,000 men were killed or wounded in the Meuse-Argonne, or more than 2,300 casualties per day.



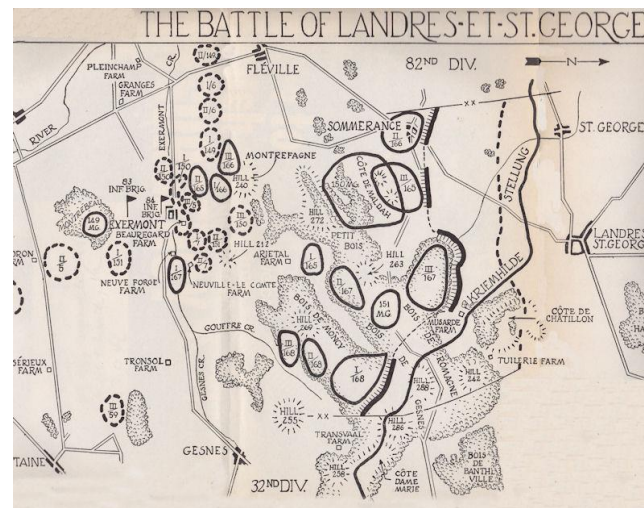
Doughboys of the 166th (Ohio) Inf. Rgt. move forward with weapons at the ready during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October 1918.

General Pershing's objective was the French city of Sedan, a major rail transportation hub and supply depot for the Imperial German Army. The capture of Sedan would cut off and isolate over two million enemy soldiers in France and Belgium. Put another way, it might well end the war.

Standing in the Americans' path, however, were 450,000 desperate Germans manning a series of defensive belts known as the Hindenburg Line. Defeating these battle-hardened troops would not be an easy – or swift – task.

American commanders chose not to employ the Rainbow Division in the operation's initial phases. Instead, it was set aside for a planned assault against a section of the Hindenburg Line called the *Kriemhilde Stellung*.

By this point in the war, the men of 42<sup>nd</sup> were considered “shock troops” to be kept in reserve for the A.E.F.'s toughest missions. As these Doughboys moved toward the Meuse-Argonne, they had no way of knowing this would be their most difficult task to date.



Marching mostly at night to avoid observation, the Rainbow Division arrived at an assembly area in the Bois de Montfaucon on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1918. It was the site of a recent battle involving several inexperienced American outfits; casualties among these green troops were catastrophic.

The first stage of the operation went so poorly, in fact, that U.S. officers had to suspend operations so their weary combat outfits could reconstitute and rest. To maintain momentum, elite formations such as the 1<sup>st</sup> “Big Red One” Division were committed into battle well ahead of schedule.

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, the 1<sup>st</sup> Division ran up against the *Kriemhilde Stellung* (Hindenburg Line) west of Landres-Et-St. George along a hill mass known as the Côte de Châtillon. There the Big Red One's attack stopped, its troops no longer able to press forward.



The men of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Div. relieved their 1<sup>st</sup> Div. comrades that evening, launching an impetuous assault at dawn on October 14<sup>th</sup>. MacArthur's 84<sup>th</sup> Bde. led this two-day drive, notable for its sophisticated use of airpower, artillery, trench mortars, and heavy machine guns to suppress enemy defenses.

In the meantime, infantry advanced under cover of smoke to seize the Côte de Châtillon. In a sharp but brief fight, Doughboys of the 168<sup>th</sup> (Iowa) and 167<sup>th</sup> (Alabama) became on October 16<sup>th</sup> the first Americans in the Meuse-Argonne area of operations to crack Germany's vaunted Hindenburg Line.

Yank troops had done it, penetrating the *Kriemhilde Stellung* in a dashing attack later characterized as "one of the most brilliant operations of the war". This action was the Rainbow Division's last, and perhaps its best-fought, major battle of World War One.

For the next three weeks Pershing's A.E.F., with the 42<sup>nd</sup> in the vanguard, pursued a demoralized German army toward Sedan. Finally, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, both sides signed a general armistice. The war was over.



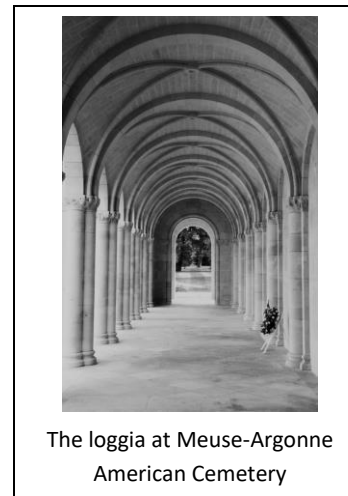
A grateful French couple thanks two Rainbow Division soldiers at war's end, Nov. 1918.

While the Rainbow Division would perform occupation duty in Germany for five months, no longer did these young Americans need to fight and die on France's battlefields. Victory, however, came at a high cost. Fully half the Division's authorized strength, 16,242 soldiers, were either killed, wounded, or missing during its 164 days spent in combat during World War One.

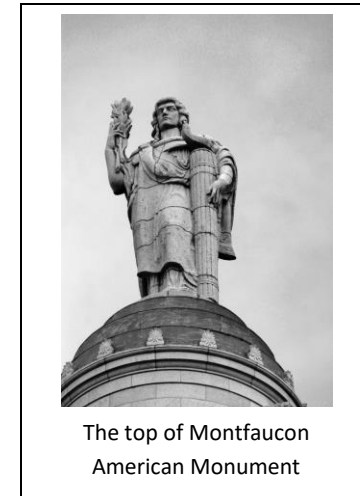
## The Meuse-Argonne and Victory – Sites

### Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial, Romagne-Sous-Montfaucon, France:

In this 130.5-acre park rest the largest number of American military dead in Europe, a total of 14,246. Most of those buried here lost their lives during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive of World War I, including 560 members of the Rainbow Division. <https://www.abmc.gov/>



The loggia at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery



The top of Montfaucon American Monument

### Montfaucon American Monument, Montfaucon-d'Argonne, France:

This impressive monument consists of a massive granite Doric column, surmounted by a statue symbolic of Liberty, which towers more than 200 feet above the ruins of a village wrecked by war. It commemorates American victory achieved during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive of September 26, 1918, to November 11, 1918. The monument was designed by renowned American architect John Russell Pope. <https://www.abmc.gov/>

### Côte de Châtillon Battlefield, Landres et Saint Georges, France:

On October 14-16, 1918, at a hill mass called Côte de Châtillon, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division successfully assaulted the most formidable part of an in-depth network of carefully prepared German defenses. The Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation and the MacArthur Memorial have sponsored an interpretive plaque to be dedicated here in July of 2018.

<http://croixrougefarm.org/history-42nd/>

## Chapter Seven – Biographical Sketches

The Rainbow Division was among the most celebrated American fighting units to come out of World War One. Collected here are short biographies of some of its more noteworthy soldiers.



**Maj. Gen. William A. Mann:** The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division's first commanding general, Maj. Gen. Mann's previous assignment was as Chief of the Militia Bureau (forerunner to today's National Guard Bureau). He took the division to France but failed a fitness-for-duty physical and was sent home. Mann died in 1934.

**Maj. Gen Charles T. Menoher:** Serving as Division Commander for most of the Rainbow's time in combat, Menoher (a West Point classmate of Gen. John Pershing) performed capably throughout the war. He briefly commanded IV Corps in 1918. Menoher retired in 1926, passing away four years later.



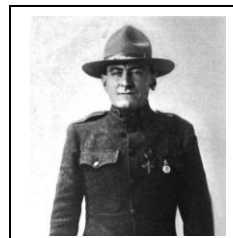
**Brig. Gen. Douglas MacArthur:** MacArthur's WWI exploits and those of the Rainbow Div. remain forever linked. In 18 months he went from the rank of Major to Brig. Gen. while earning two Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, and a record seven Silver Stars for courage under fire. MacArthur (1880-1964) remains one of America's most well-known (and controversial) public figures.

**Lt. Col. William J. Donovan:** A fiery and intrepid combat commander, "Wild Bill" Donovan ably led the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. 165<sup>th</sup> (New York) Inf. before becoming Regimental Chief of Staff. For his heroism in the Meuse-Argonne, Donovan received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1923. He passed away in 1959.



**Chaplain Francis P. Duffy:** The most decorated chaplain ever to serve in the U.S. Army, Canadian-born Father Duffy left his Roman Catholic parish in New York City to join the 165<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt. and minister to their spiritual needs. His decorations included the Distinguished Service Cross and Distinguished Service Medal. Duffy died in 1932.

**Sgt. Michael A. Donaldson:** A member of Co. I, 165<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt., Donaldson received the Congressional Medal of Honor for rescuing six wounded comrades while under heavy enemy fire at Landres-Et-St. George, France, on October 14, 1918. Donaldson passed away in 1970.



**Sgt. Richard W. O'Neill:** O'Neill received award of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions along the Ourcq River in July of 1918 while a member of Co. D, 165<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt. O'Neill rendered valuable reports on enemy positions despite being wounded several times. He lived to age 84 before passing away in 1982.

**Sgt. Alfred Joyce Kilmer:** A well-known American poet, Kilmer composed "Trees" along with other works before joining the 165<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt. as an intelligence sergeant. He perished in combat on July 29, 1918 and is buried at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.



**Cpl. Sidney E. Manning:** A native of Flomaton, Ala., Manning served with Co. M, 167<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for defeating an enemy assault along the Ourcq River on July 28, 1918. Manning died in 1960.

**Pvt. Thomas C. Neibaur:** While serving with Co. M, 167<sup>th</sup> Inf. Rgt., Pvt. Neibaur (1898-1942) received the Congressional Medal of Honor for intrepidity along the Côte de Châtillon on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1918.



## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In 1919, the Rainbow Division's colors were retired. Nearly a quarter-century later, those flags were returned to active service when the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division reactivated at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1943. The unit returned to Europe as part of the U.S. Seventh Army, participating in the Ardennes-Alsace, Rhineland and Central Europe campaigns of World War II. During 106 days spent in combat, 553 Rainbowmen were killed in action and 2,243 more listed as missing or wounded.



"Rainbowmen" of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division on patrol, France, 1945.

After the U.S. emerged victorious from World War Two in 1945, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division remained as a National Guard formation within the United States Army. It underwent many reorganizations during the Cold War.

Guard soldiers of the Rainbow Division were among the first to respond to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

As Task Force LIBERTY, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Inf. Div. deployed in 2005 for Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. The unit helped create a safe, secure environment throughout North-Central Iraq, enabling a successful transition to civilian authority. TF LIBERTY lost 92 members in Iraq.

The Rainbow Division is currently headquartered in Troy, NY.

The record of the Rainbow Division in World War One is one of great valor. It also carries a legacy of sacrifice almost unimaginable to those who walk in their footsteps one century later. It is our hope that you will pause briefly in your travels to consider the freedoms those young men bought with their lives on the battlefields of France in 1918. Never Forget!



Following the end of World War One, the officers of the Rainbow Division formed a fraternal organization known as the Rainbow Division Veterans Association. Its first president was Col. Benson W. Hough, commander of the 166<sup>th</sup> (Ohio) Inf. Rgt. Organizers established the second week of July as the date for annual meetings – to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of the Champagne, which began on July 14, 1918, and was the turning point in the war on the western front.

The Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation, Inc. was formed in 1971 to preserve existing 42<sup>nd</sup> Division memorials and establish new memorials. In 2012 the Foundation's Trustees established an education scholarship program. The Foundation's first project was to fund an outdoor amphitheater near Muskogee, Oklahoma, in honor of Camp Gruber where the reactivated World War II 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division trained before going overseas.

On July 19, 2003, the Association and the Foundation merged to form the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation (RDVF). This charitable, non-profit organization remains dedicated to commemorating the deeds, sacrifices and traditions of those who served with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. The RDVF maintains and establishes memorials, communicates its shared history, and funds scholarship programs for deserving soldiers or the descendants of RDVF members.

In addition to its memorial and educational missions, the RDVF helps connect currently-serving members of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division with their rich legacy of service. During World War II, Rainbow veterans donated their First World War unit patches to newly-activated 42<sup>nd</sup> Inf. Div. troops. Sixty years later, RDVF chapters sent books and care packages to a new generation of Rainbow soldiers serving in Iraq.

The RDVF and its affiliates continue their mission through the generosity of their soldiers, their descendants and supporters.