

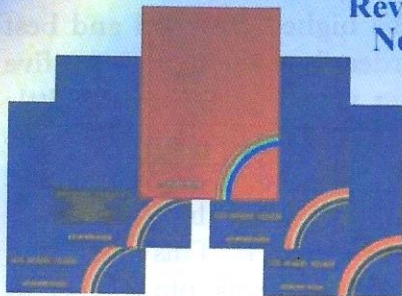
RAINBOW TRAIL

The Newsletter of the Millennium (Family) Chapter
Of The Rainbow Division Veterans
Memorial Foundation
June 2006 Volume 7, Issue 1



42ND RAINBOW DIVISION WWII

The History and the Men
Five Pictorial and
Review Books
November 1944



Camp Gruber
Oklahoma
INFORMATION
GATHERED BY THE
RAINBOW DIVISION
VETERANS
MEMORIAL
FOUNDATION

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THEIR PUBLICATION in 1944-45, these five books with separate indexes to photos are available on one CD, published by the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation (RDVMF).

The November 2, 1944 issue of *The Rainbow Reveille* reads: "RAINBOW BOOKS TO BE PRINTED" A pictorial and historical review of the Rainbow Division, in five volumes – one for each of three Infantry Regiments, the Field Artillery and Division Special Troops – has been contracted for, according to announcement from Division

Headquarters. Photographing of personnel will begin at once, the announcement states. The picture of every Rainbow officer and soldier will be included in at least one of the five volumes. In addition to the pictures of personnel, the books will each contain a photographic and historical record of the Rainbow Division. The contract for taking the pictures and the actual publication of the books has been awarded to the Army and Navy Publishing Company of Louisiana, a firm that has many years' experience in this type of publication. Price of the book will be \$5.00, and may be ordered merely by signing a Special Order Form to be provided by the publishers. On this form the soldier may designate the address of the person to whom the book, when completed, shall be sent, and may even authorize this person to pay for the book. The volume featuring Division Special Troops will also include the 42d Recon. Troop, the 122d Medics, and the 142d Engineer Bn. A schedule for the taking of the pictures is being worked out now and will be announced soon." [ed. the units in the book, 42D Division Troops, comprise the following: 42D Division Special Troops Headquarters; 42D Division Headquarters Company; 132D Signal Company; 742D Ordnance Company; 42D Quartermaster Company; 42D Division Band., 42D Division Military Police Platoon; 142D Combat Engineer Battalion; 122D Medical Battalion; 42D Division Reconnaissance Troop]

The dedication and hard work of two WWII Rainbow sons, members of the RDVMF through the Millennium Chapter, Tim Robertson (Lyle Robertson, 222-F); and Al Campbell, Jr. (Alfred J. Campbell, 232-Cannon Co.) has made this project possible. Sheryl Robertson, Tim's wife, has given freely of her time and expertise in helping to sort out problems. The project has been financed through the personal contribution and support of WWII Rainbow Division veteran, Arthur N. "Art" Lee, Jr., H1B-242. The five books used for scanning are from the collections of the Millennium Chapter and the Robertson family.

The cost per CD if purchased at the reunion in Kansas City, MO in July 2006, will be \$25.00. All mail orders will be \$30.00, to include shipping and handling. [NOTE that the cost per book on CD is the same as the original 1944 cost!!]. Checks or money orders, payable to RDVMF may be sent to Suellen R. McDaniel, Secretary, RDVMF Millennium Chapter, 1400 Knolls Drive, Newton, NC 28658-9452. The proceeds of these sales will benefit the RDVMF Scholarship Fund.



From THE PRICE OF OUR HERITAGE In Memory of the Heroic Dead of the 168th Infantry [the Old Third Iowa] By Winfred E. Robb, American Lithographing and Printing Co. Des Moines, Iowa, 1919, 423 pp [photo Chaplain Winfred E. Robb] p. 105: "When the regiment was relieved from the duty in Lorraine, we moved back to the land of the Moselle and entrained and started westward. After a twenty-four-hour railroad journey, we arrived in the valley of the Marne, and our regimental headquarters were located at St. Amend. Here we rested for five days, played ball, had concerts and bathed in the river. What a relief it was, after the four tiresome months in the trenches to be free again, but our freedom was of short duration. On June 27 we were transferred to the Fourth Army, commanded by General Gouraud, one of the highest honored and best loved generals in the French Army, and at once were ordered to make a thirty-five kilometer march toward the front. Early the next morning we dragged into the little

town of Courtsols where we rested until the night before the fourth of July. We were now in the famous Camp De Chalons country, on ground that has been made famous by past history. The Romans had made villages that bore names that carried one back to the days when Attila and Saracens had battled here. Here the French had conducted a great offensive in 1917 and this same country was taken by the Germans in 1914. This country is vividly described by Colonel Walter Wolf in his story of the Rainbow Division. He says, "It was into this sector we moved, the arid and outlandish part of Champagne, with not a vineyard, not a garden and not a field of wheat—known because of its meagreness as the 'lousy Champagne.' It was very white and very desolate, the scrubby trees were dwarfed and gnarled, and with their patchy foliage merely emphasized the blankness and glare of the scene. Heather-bounded chalk was everywhere, chalk reflected the heat and kept the cool of the ground within, made the road firm and readily afforded deep dugouts of great strength and resisting power. The only touch of color upon the width of these plains was the thick poppy field, then full blown." It was amidst this weird scene, over these dreary roads, that we marched on July 4 into the battered town of Suippes, and from there into Camp 3-5 and 4-5 and into the wooded position. Here we became a part of General Gouraud's Army of Defense; two divisions of French and our own Rainbow Division made up the troops that were assigned to this position, in which we were informed the Germans would throw the full power of their strength. Against us there were massed nine divisions of the boche, who were planning an offensive in which they expected to overwhelmingly defeat us, to drive through and capture the Marne River towns and force a quick conclusion of the war. When we moved into our camps all was quiet and still. Scarcely a gun was fired during the day and occasionally a lone airplane circled above our lines: otherwise in the daytime an observer would little have dreamed that a great battle was soon to be fought here. Our own boys who loafed during the day, as soon as the touch of darkness covered the land, worked with feverish haste digging trenches, swinging guns into position, bringing up ammunition, preparing for the greatest conflict in which it had ever been their privilege to play a part. From the night of July 8 until the night of the 14th, our boys were called to the alert position shortly before midnight and stood thus until just before dawn in the morning. We were taking no chances of a German surprise attack. [photo of unloading horses, "Courpoil, Champagne" from "California Rainbow Memories", 1925]



ROBB, WINFRED E.

*First Lieutenant (Chaplain), U.S. Army
168th Infantry Regiment, 42d Division, A.E.F.*

Date of Action: July 26 – August 2, 1918

Citation: The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Winfred E. Robb, First Lieutenant (Chaplain), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in action throughout the advance across the River Ourcq, northeast of Chateau-Thierry, France, July 26 to August 2, 1918. During the pursuit of the enemy by the 168th Infantry across the River Ourcq, (Chaplain) Robb distinguished himself by his bravery under fire. During all of this time, and particularly during the operations near Sergy, he showed the greatest coolness under severe artillery fire in attending and carrying the wounded and dying, and in every way ministering to the needs of the men of his regiment. General Orders No. 99, W.D., 1918 Home Town: Des Moines, IA [source: homeofheroes.com]

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT shared by Lori Hornback, granddaughter of Pvt Milton Townsend, Co. "B", 168th Infantry Regiment, 42D Rainbow Division, from Early, Iowa. [Milton returned home after the war; names mentioned that have been identified by Lori are: Ferde, Milton's younger brother, Ferdinand; Rosie, Milton's mother; Hazel, his sister; Esther, his sister; Henry Pudenz, his former boss; "Jennie", who is likely to have been Cpl. George D. Jensen, also a member of Co. "B", from Lake View, Iowa]



Some Whair in France, July 2-1918

Dear Father I thought I would try and write you a few lines to day as I have a little time. It has been so I could not write. How is every body by this time? I am getting along fine and dandy so is the rest of the boys exept Mertin Hair, he was woned and sent to the hospital. I havent seen him for a long time. How do you like working on the road by this time? I suppose it is prety hard work after not doing any thing for a cople years. How is Kelly coming with the pool hall now, has he got much bussiness now? I suppose it is pretty hot thair now. I know it is mighty warm here now. The wheat is redy to cut around here, thay have got the most of thair hay put up now. Thay shure have got some prety nice wheat fields over here, thay have got some binders here but thay are small ones. Are you been getting my entalments every month? What are you doing with them? Did you pay Tom what I owed him? What is he doing now, I have not herde frome him for a long time. Did you send that razor and watch? I didn't know if it went through or not, if you did I have not got it yet. What is Jim getting per day now, is he still working on the road yet? Is Charlie still in the garage yet? How is Evens coming with the Ford cars now? Who has he got working him? I supose you rember whair we

was a year ago the forth of the month. I shure do wish I was thair again this year but I guss I will have to celebrate it over here this year. While you are celebrating have a good time for me tell the rest of the kids hello and I will write as soon as I get time. I haven't herd from you for a little over a month. I got some mail the other night but none frome you nor the girls. I got a letter frome Ferde the other day and he said he was getting along good. He must not be getting my mail the way he writes. I write to him as often as I do to the rest of you. I would like to see him. Well dad I guess I will have to close for this time hoping to here frome you soon. Your loving son Milton
Priv Milton Townsend Co B 168 INF A.E.F. via N.Y.

Some Whair in France, July 7-1918 [inset of Merton Hair is from The Price of our Heritage by Winfred E. Robb, 1925 p. 98]

Dear Father I recived your letters on last night was glad to here from you I thought you had quit writing it has been so long since I herd from you how you all getting along by this time? I am feeling good and enjoying life. You wanted to know if I got the pen and [soap or book]. Yes I got them a month ago it sure came in mighty handy. I got you letter saying that you was going to send me another razor and watch. I don't want my good watch. Send the one that was in my trunk I sent home. The one I sent for I don't want my good one because I am afraid I will loose it, if I loose that one I wont be out much. Don't send any more things unless I write for it because I cant cary it around. I supose you herde about Mertin Hair, it was to bad about him. I seen it when it was done and was thair when he was taken care of. It was a bad won, it was his left arm his arm just about taken off thair I helped carry him to the amblants and bid him good by and expect to see him again. Jennie was thair to so I guss he wrote to Mrs. Hair and told her about it. The rest of the boys are getting along fine and dandy. How is Ferde making it by this time? I hope he can stay whair he is. Send me W. Allens add I would like to know how he is coming maybe I will stumble on to him some day. Whair is Peat at now, is he still back thair yet? You said that you herd Jennie had trench feet well he has not, his feet is just as good as mine, at

HAIR, MERTON V. 100260
Private Company B

Died June 20, 1918 at the hospital in Baccarat.

Buried in Baccarat Cemetery, Grave No. 120.

Private Hair was wounded by a high explosive shell at a reserve position in Lorraine, dying later in the hospital.

He was popular among his comrades. His platoon sergeant said: "I have lost the best man in B Company."

His platoon was cited on March 5th.

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hair, Early, Iowa.

Private Hair was a graduate of Early High School.



least he is still with me yet. I don't see what thay want to tell such stuff for and get his mother discouraged for she is not well any and that will make he worce. Tell her he is getting along fine and I am with him see him (every) day. How do you like working on the road by this time? Hazel said that Jim had bought a place, when is he going to move in and take posen of it? Whair did you celebrate the forth, all the celebrating I got was listing to the big guns roar all day long. I have seen some shells as big as 4ft high and 16 in through. I guss one that size would jar our little town a little when it went off you would thing so if you herd one of them exploded once. Rifle shooting is nothing over here aside of the other guns around. Is

Arlow Allen a gunmen in the navey? Jennie got a letter stating that he was. What does Englers think of that? I supose Floid is a lot higher than that. Did you ever find out what he was going? I suppose he is the only one around thair that ever done any thing or seen any thing. I think if he was here he would get to see something. I got your letter with the two dollar bill in, it came in pretty handy. Did you get that letter I sent you with that one Frank note in? Let me know if you did or not. Ask the girls if they got them pictors I sent back to them. I had no place to carry them. Well I guss I will have to close for this time, hoping to here from you soon. Your loving son Milton
Priv Milton Townsend Co B 168 Inf A.E.F. via N.Y. [smaller photo captioned "Fig. 23—Evacuation Hospital No. 2. Baccarat, France, June 28, 1918"; found at <<http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwi/fieldoperations/ch5fig23.jpg>>]



Letterhead "American YMCA - On Active Service with the AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE"

August 7, 1918 Dear Father I thought I would try and drop you a few lines today as I have a little spare time. How is every body by this time? I am getting a long fine now. I was under the wether for a few days didnt amount to much. I supose you have herd about the battle we had a few days ago by this time. Jennie and Leao was woned not bad, I came through ok so far. How is Ferde coming by this time? I got a letter frome him and was shure glad to here frome him. I got your letters you wrote in July. I havent recived the razor and watch yet. Tell Wm. Roach I got the tag he made for me and I thank him very much for it. I got it a long time ago I aught to of wrote sooner but we have been moving around so much I just could not but I will write just as soon as I can and when ever I get a chanch. The way it has been we haven t been in one place very long at any time. How is Mrs Hair coming by this time? That shure was to bad but could not be helped. I saw him when he was woned it was a bad one it was in the left arm when he left me he was looking good and talked and smoked. I help carry him to the ambles and he bid Jennie and I good by. I thought he shure would come out of it fine but thing turned the other way. I didnt get a chanch to see Jennie before he left, he went while we was battling. I seen Leo when he was woned he wasn't bad. He got hit in one of his legs. I am the only one left from thair now. How do you like the roadwork by this time? How much are you getting per day? Is Jim still work with Martin yet? Hazel said thay bought a house have thay moved into it yet? How is Esther coming in the store by this time? She said she was getting eleven dollars per week. I think that is pretty good wages for a new begann. How dose she handle things, I supose she is pretty bashfull isn't she? I now I was when I first went into the garage. How is Henry Pudenz coming by this time? Tell him hello and I will write to him some time when I get time. Tell him I shure enjoyed using that razor untill some one stoled it. I th...[unreadable] like to be back in the garage working for him. I shure did get along fine with him. Well guss I will have to close for this time. Tell the rest of the folks how I am and I will write as soon as I can and I will write to you again as soon as I can. So Goodnight, from your son Milton Priv Milton Townsend Co B 168 Inf A.E.F. via N.Y.

From: OHIO IN THE RAINBOW Official Story of the 166th Infantry 42nd Division In The World War by R.M. Cheseldine, Ex-Captain 166th Infantry, The F.J. Heer Printing Co. Columbus, Ohio, 1924, pp. 528 [p. 150]

CHAPTER XII

THE FOURTH-FOURTEENTH AGAIN

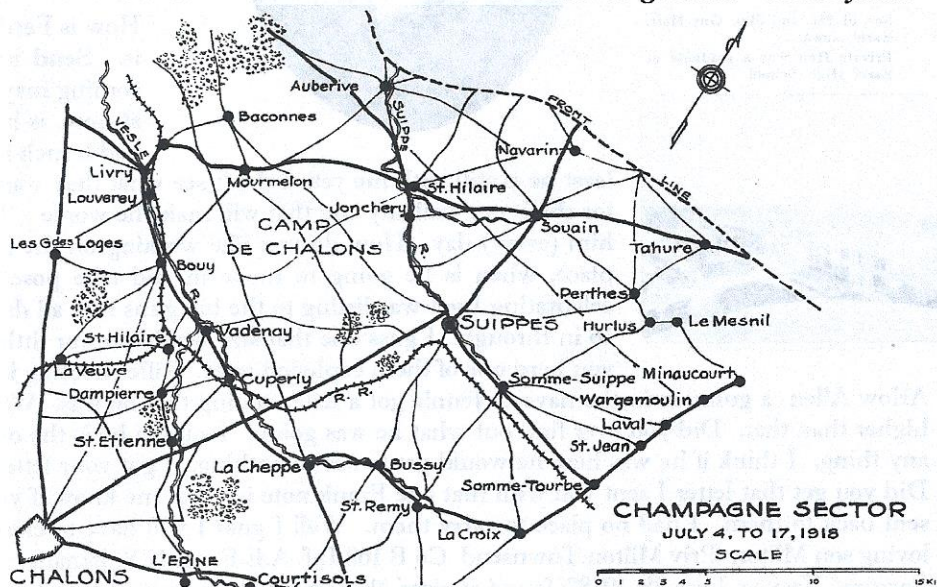
BEFORE A DRIVE

And then — one evening ere the march began,
I chanced to pause and gaze into the West,
And there was all the beauty of the World
Lying a-top the rain-bejewelled trees
In stripes of crimson, lavender and blue
And all the other colors known to man!

— Yanks 1918.

"BATTLE" from I Went To War by Wilbur Peterson, Btry "E", 151st Field Artillery, 42D Division, The Messenger Press, Marshall, Minn., 1938, 76 pp. [map from "California Rainbow Memories" ed. E.J. Sadler, 1925] "For ten days we wait, firing scarcely a shot. Waiting for the enemy's last offensive of the war—the attack that is to end the war. It is a nerve-wracking period, waiting for the other fellow to come after you—far worse than waiting to go after him. You know not when he is coming, nor just where or how hard he will strike. You only know that his attack will have one prime purpose, to put you, and thousands of others, out of existence. We are strongly entrenched, they tell us, though an open gunpit makes us doubt it. And we stand on historic ground—some years ago the Romans fought over it. And for every minute of the present war, more men have been killed and wounded here than at any other sector on the entire Western Front. That, too, is a consoling thought as we wait for attack. But why anyone, Romans or anybody else, should fight for this ground is beyond reason. Little grows except heather and a few scrub pine. The ground is chalk, barren, drab, and ugly. Because of its sparceness, it's called the 'lousy' Champagne—good for nothing, except for men to be killed. But it's good that way, as the thousands of shell holes too plainly attest. In battle the common soldier knows only what he can see. He knows not the plan, the

"Without the slightest degree of doubt the Champagne Defensive was the Rainbow's most important engagement because it was the battle that marked the turning point of the World War. It was the Gettysburg of 1918. The failure of the Kaiser's hosts to break the lines and take Chalons thereby pinching off Rheims and leaving to his leisurely decision the selection of the point from which he would march on Paris, placed Germany in a position most unfavorable and gave Marshal Foch the chance to strike his great counter offensive of July 18, 1918, at Chateau Thierry."



map, the aim, or the reason, or whether his side is winning or losing. It is only in the years that follow—if he lives—that he learns what it was all about. But this battle is worth some of that perspective that we later learned of, because it was a crucial day in the history of many nations. The enemy attacked east of Rheims, his immediate objectives Suippes and Chalons. He planned breakfast in Chalons the second morning of the attack. From there it was an easy sweep, back of the Allied line from Rheims to Chateau Thierry, into Paris—and Paris meant victory, the end of the war! On our side, our lone American division fights with the French. The sight of these veterans strengthens our morale, but just the same we're scared, and very scared. But it's do or die, and so we'll hold. From French general Gouraud comes excellent strategy. He abandons our own front lines, both first and second positions, leaving only sacrifice units to signal back when the gray hordes approach. The brunt of their attack will be on these lines, where they expect the hardest resistance. All of our '75s' are then laid on our own evacuated positions, and those who by some miracle escape there, will be at the mercy of machine guns and infantry on our third position. It is a masterly plan, if it works. From Gouraud shortly before the attack comes an exhortation seldom equaled in battle orders:

'To the French and American soldiers of the Fourth Army: We may be attacked at any moment.

"We are awake and on our guard. The bombardment will be terrible. You will stand it without weakness.

"The assault will be fierce, in a cloud of smoke, dust and gas.

"But your positions and your armament are formidable. In your breasts beat the brave and strong hearts of free men.

"None shall look to the rear; none shall yield a step. Each shall have but one thought—to kill, to kill aplenty, until they have had their fill.

"Therefore, your general says to you: You will break this assault and it will be a happy day."

Grimly we turn to the task, to kill and kill aplenty, and make it a happy day. Our only thought is to kill or be killed. We may look to and yearn for the rear, but to run in fear is not only death but disgrace as a coward as well.

A daring French patrol raids the enemy lines, brings back prisoners who reveal the exact time of the attack. On July 14, the French 'Fourth of July,' we are to win, or lose. Half an hour ahead of the enemy, our own heavy guns start their bombardment, hurling tons of killing steel on enemy troops coming up to their attack positions. The noise of the guns and shriek of departing shells is terrific. But compared to what lies ahead, this noise is nothing. Fifteen minutes after midnight, the enemy guns begin, and far as the eye can see the country quickly turns to fire—for breakfast in Chalons. For ten miles back of us, the earth rocks until dawn. It is a horrifying spectacle, the worst bombardment the Rainbow ever saw. The roar of departing and arriving shells deafens the ear—men yell at the top of their lungs and can't be heard. Shells whistle and shriek and roar. The earth becomes thousands of geysers of flame and smoke and dirt and debris. Ammunition dumps explode and flames soar hundreds of feet into the air. The night at times is light as day, and bombing airplanes and observation balloons are plainly visible. Not for a second does the bombardment let up. Scarcely a square rod on a front fifteen miles wide and at least ten miles deep is unhit. Above the roar of the guns and exploding shells, there is only one sound plainly heard—the agonizing shrieks of wounded men and horses. All about us, men and animals go down. We cling to what meagre shelter our shallow gunpit affords, but many are hit, many die, and as the bursting shells tear the earth some are buried alive. At dawn, the fulmination suddenly doubles in volume. It's the rolling barrage, as all guns take up maximum fire, and close behind it the waves of men in gray leap from their trenches. Up ahead, rockets are dimly seen in the dust and smoke. The enemy has entered our abandoned lines, and now it is our turn to kill and kill aplenty. Silent all night, our '75s' bark into action. The deadliest gun in the war, they take an unprecedented slaughter, and the attack breaks under the killing. But again it is renewed, and again and again—for ten hours. It seems no man can live under the terrific artillery fire we ourselves are undergoing, but each time we have but one thought, to kill and kill. And kill aplenty we do—for, though we know it not at the time, the day is ours. Only a few reach our second position, and they are quickly disposed of by the infantry. Forty-eight hours more the terrific artillery duel continues, but the infantry assaults are smashed—there is no breakfast in Chalons. For the offensive is broken, the attack fails, and the way is paved for the Allied victory soon to follow in the Second Battle of the Marne. For those who lived, there is no breakfast in Chalons. For the thousands who died, there is no breakfast anywhere, again.

THE CHAMPAGNE HOUR by Theodore A. Johnson, Co. H, 232D Inf. Regt., Master of Ceremonies, West Palm Beach Reunion July 15, 1985, shared by his daughter, Julie Sturgeon, President, RDVMF Millennium Chapter. [photo of WWI Victory Medal with these battle clasps: "Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, Defensive Sector" on the WWI uniform of Milton M. Townsend, Co. "B", 168th Infantry Regiment, contributed by Lori Hornback, his granddaughter]

"This Is The Champagne Hour." So many times in those years since these elder statesmen of Rainbow, here at these head tables, came back from Europe, so many times have they heard that simple introduction. It was the beginning of a tradition that perhaps did more to build the mystic of Rainbow than any other single thing except the men of Rainbow themselves. Yet for nearly 60 years at every Reunion, held in those days so that the 14th of July always occurred as the last day of the Reunion; Rainbowers of WWI, later joined by men of WWII, assembled at a solemn and sacred ceremony that began exactly at a quarter to twelve following the Reunion Banquet. Many of you, like almost all of us of WWII who had joined Rainbow a good deal earlier, had really expected that Champagne Hour would be another chance to imbibe and at least be a toast to the men who had been left behind. Indeed it was and is far more than that. Its only relationship to champagne was the name of the Battle that stunned the last German offensive and turned the tide to the Allies. And such a battle it was! Each of those meetings was handled by a Master of Ceremonies of the Champagne Hour. The very first according to my records was the great Father Duffy, who conducted a Champagne Hour in Columbia, South Carolina in 1924. How fortunate it would have been to hear that noble cleric review the symbolism of the Champagne. Later, the Master of Ceremonies was taken over by Col. J. Monroe Johnson [117 Field Engineers], perhaps one of the most eloquent speakers in all America. And who, including those of us of World War II who came early enough to hear him, can ever forget how he closed each time as he paraphrased the Star Spangled Banner, "As long as we remain the home of the brave, we shall always be the land of the free".



If you ever heard the dramatic reenactment of the Battle given by the inimitable Ruby D. Garrett [117 Field Bn Signal Corps], you felt that you too had been in that dugout yourself. Governor Wilbur Brucker [166th Regiment], later to become Secretary of the Army, would remind us in his conclusion that "all of us have been willing to die for our country, but we who survive must now be willing to live for our country". Then there was that long reign of Al Hoyt [166th Regiment], superb Historian, who delineated the circumstances leading up to the Battle of Champagne, and the battle, and the results that followed; in one of the most eloquent historical documents on military warfare that was ever written. In later years Homer Gardner [168th Regiment] and I shared a common Champagne Hour and I can tell you that while I've done a lot of things in Rainbow and held high office of which I have been humbly proud, nothing thrilled me more than that I might be the Master of Ceremonies at Elmer Cook's [232nd Regiment] Philadelphia Reunion.

A few years have passed since the toll of the late night hour and the pain that the passing years sometimes gave to these gallant men of World War I let this grand tradition of Rainbow pass from our agenda. President Carr [122 Med Bn], in this Reunion where we particularly honor our beloved comrades of WWI, has asked that it be presented again. Let me then recite from the most significant passages of Al Hoyt's history:

"The German spring drive of 1918 had been very successful. Reinforced by 120 divisions released from the Russian front, the German armies were far superior numerically to those of the Allies. The Germans had driven a large salient into the French lines between Reims and Bellow Wood, and had reached Chateau Thierry on the Marne, only 40 miles from Paris, which permitted the German long range guns to fire directly into Paris."

The Allies were desperate. Their reserves were nearly all used, the Americans would not arrive in force, in time to help, and a further onslaught was inevitable, as the German goal was Paris, and the enemy, flushed with victory on every front, was not to be stopped short of his goal. The destiny of the world hung in balance. At this time, late June, the Rainbow joined the Fourth French Army in Champagne under General Henri Gouraud. The front of the Fourth French Army extended from the borders of the Reims eastward to the Argonne Forest, a distance of about 40 miles. Here was the Champagne – the arid and outlandish part of the Champagne, without a vineyard, a garden, or a field of wheat. Known because of its meagerness, as the “lousy Champagne”. It was very white and very desolate. Chalk was everywhere; chalk reflected the heat and kept the cool on the ground in, made the roads firm, and readily afforded deep dugouts of great strength and resisting power. The only touch of color on the widths of these plains was the thick poppy fields, then full-blown. The villages that had been were now heaps of stone, if even these vestiges remained. There was an occasional swell in the ground that afforded slight protection for the Infantry, but mostly it was just a barren plain, where the hot July winds stirred up the white, fine chalk dust, and blew it in the men’s faces as they tried to sleep. On this front in late June and July there was no fighting whatever. When the Germans’ advance was halted so rudely and effectively by the green American Third Division, which arrived by truck at the crucial hour to halt the march on Paris, the German High Command knew that no further advance could be made in this area at the moment. General Gouraud knew that the inevitable next assault must be against his front, and that it would be terrible in force. And so this wily, cunning, one armed “Hero of Gallipoly”, knowing that the eyes of the world were upon him, laid a trap, and on July 7, 1918 [Headquarters Fourth French Army] issued his now famous order:

“To the French and American soldiers of the Fourth Army:

We may be attacked at any moment.

You all know that a defensive battle was never engaged under more favorable conditions.

We are awake and on our guard.

We are powerfully reinforced with infantry and artillery.

You will fight on a terrain that you have transformed by your work and your perseverance into a redoubtable fortress. This invincible fortress and all its passages are well guarded.

The bombardment will be terrible. You will stand it without weakness.

The assault will be fierce, in a cloud of dust, smoke and gas.

But your positions and your armament are formidable.

In your breasts beat the brave and strong hearts of free men.

None shall look to the rear; none shall yield a step.

Each shall have but one thought; to kill, to kill many, until they have had enough.

Therefore, your General says to you: You will break this assault and it will be a happy day.”

[one of several translations from the French to be found in the history books of the Rainbow Division]

Strong words to strong men. Here are assembled the grizzled French veterans of the Marne and the Somme: of Verdun, Reims and of Soissons. Here are the veterans of four years of the fiercest fighting the world has ever seen. Here is the unsupported, no retreat, “Stand and Die”, Fourth Army through whose front from North to South runs the Nancy-Chalons highway – the gateway to Paris! And down this highway marches “America’s five-month old war baby.” – the Rainbow – guardian of the gate! The stage is now set for the world’s greatest show. The hellish music of the cannonade was about to begin. Late in the afternoon on July 14th (Bastille Day) when the Germans thought the French would all be drunk in celebration of their national holiday, some Alpine Chasseurs made a raid on the German lines near Reims and brought back prisoners, who stated that the bombardment would begin at midnight that night, and that the attack would be launched at 4:15 A.M. the next morning. Gouraud at once sprung the trap. His front lines withdrew a mile and a half. His artillery started at 11:45 P.M. before that of the Germans. This then was to be a battle, the likes of which the world had never seen!

Let Gouraud speak for a moment:

1930 le père DUFFY, le général GOURAUD, le général TIMLEY à NAVARIN
 1993 plaque témoignage de la part prise par la 42^e RAINBOW DIVISION à la bataille du 15.7 1918



Le président de la Fondation Soixante quinze ans d'amitié et de fraternité d'armes
 du Monument-Ouvrière de
 NAVARIN

NAVARIN le 29 Avril 1993

Le président de l'Association du
 Souvenir aux Morts des armées de
 Champagne

St. Gouraud

"12:10 A.M. July 15th The German front is on fire. More than two thousand German batteries begin to belch smoke and iron. Shells burst along the entire front, some of them falling in Chalons, about twenty miles to the rear. Villages are destroyed; trees are uprooted; trenches are smashed; paths, bridges and roads are blasted out of existence. Large-sized projectiles roar through the air. Terrific crashes are heard as they explode. Gas! Gas! And we put on our masks. Minenwerfers whistle down upon us. And so the carnage continues through the night.

"4.20 A.M. The enemy leaps from his trenches and begins the attack. Immediately rockets, pigeons and telephones signal the event. Onward

comes the gray-green horde, wave upon wave, through the deadly protective barrage until they reach the first objective, the French-American front lines of the day before, but where is the enemy? The trenches are deserted! What does it mean? And while they hesitate and wave after wave comes up, into their ranks the Allied light artillery, only now in range, pours a murderous fire that unnerves even the famous Prussian Guard. The pressure from behind increases, the lines again come forward, still under murderous artillery fire, across that empty mile and a half and when they finally reach the line of resistance, they dash themselves in vain against an unbreakable wall. Seven times they attack the front of the Rainbow infantry; seven times the French divisions are assaulted, but the wall remains impregnable. A human Gibraltar! Nothing can budge it! Incessantly, Allied artillery and Allied machine guns keep up their murderous fire, wreaking havoc in the enemy's ranks. The Friedenstrum has failed. Victory has changed sides. The Rainbow has closed the gate."

[photo from collection of Ted Johnson, shared by his family. From Left to Right front, Father Francis P. Duffy, 165th Regiment (New York), General Henri Gouraud and General Matthew A. Timley, 168th Regiment (Iowa).]

A resolution after World War I was passed in Congress that this magnificent Rainbow Division should be deactivated and never again brought back to active service. And yet when WWII broke out, Rainbowers relinquished that privilege, and agreed that the Division should indeed be reactivated. And so it was, on the 14th of July in 1943 the Rainbow Division Veterans of World War I passed over to a new generation their splendid colors, their magnificent history, and their noble name in trust to the men of WWII. The Division landed in France and found its first assignment in the area of Luneville which was the early sector of the Rainbow in WWI. Indeed Alsatian peasants in the countryside exclaimed, "The Rainbow has returned!", and there was exaltation. Having been placed in what was expected to be a quiet training front, here again Rainbow was called to stand or die, here again the Rainbow was defending against the last great German offensive aimed at splitting the American and British Armies in order to stall the war for the coming of the V-2 rockets and the rocket jet and possibly even a German atomic bomb. At the very least this last attack could obtain for better surrender terms than the unconditional surrender which was our stated objective. And here again at Gambenheim, Herrlisheim, Weyersheim, Sessenheim and Hatten and the Ohlungen Forest and all the others; Rainbow soldiers blunted that attack, and turned the German armies to retreat. Later we would pierce the Siegfried Line, cross the Rhine, capture those bastions of Nazism in Wurzburg, Schweinfurt and Nuremberg and head on to Munich. Just incidentally, on that road South toward the capital of Bavaria, stood a little innocuous village not different than a hundred towns and hills and holes that every man had been through on his way. But the name of this town was Dachau, site of the infamous concentration camp. And what the Rainbow

found and liberated there guaranteed for immortality that this war, and this Division in this war, had once more fulfilled its mission. The colors and the name and the fame of Rainbow had grown, not faded, under its new command.

And so it is, you marvelous men, you elder statesmen and ladies of Rainbow, who we so honor today; I stand erect for all of us and we salute you. And as a final tribute to that salute, I ask all of you to join in the singing of just one of the songs, because you also gave us all your songs and we carried them to our war with us as you carried them with you. So join me now as the pianist leads us in *"There's a Long, Long Trail A'Winding"*.

*"There's a long, long trail a'winding into the land of my dreams,
Where the nightingales are singing, and the soft moon beams.
There's a long, long, night of waiting until those dreams all come true.
Til the day when I'll be going down that long, long trail with you."
Thank you, and goodbye.*



*Rainbow Division veteran, Theodore A. "Ted" Johnson, 1924---2005, Master of Ceremonies, The Champagne Hour
[photo taken by WWII son Earnie Owen at the San Diego MidYear reunion in February 2002]*

CHAMPAGNE HOUR/MEMORIES OF THE RAINBOW REVEILLE

1932 March 1, 1932 Vol. II from The Rainbow Reveille No. 5

Tentative Program for the fourteenth Annual Reunion/Thursday, July 14th: [Los Angeles, CA] Evening

THE CHAMPAGNE HOUR, to be held in a Motion Picture Studio! Separate banquet for the ladies, but they will join us just prior to 11:00 o'clock to witness a most spectacular replica of the Battle in all its phases. Sound pictures will be taken.

1934 July 14, 1934 Sixteenth Annual Reunion (Saturday July 14) DETROIT, Michigan

From Daily Program

10:30 a.m. Final Business Session---Grand Ballroom: Reports of Committees; Election of Officers; Selection of Next Reunion City: Installation.

1:30 p.m. Memorial Service at Cenotaph in Windsor, Canada, with Canadian Veterans host to visiting Rainbowers

7:30 p.m. CHAMPAGNE HOUR CELEBRATION EXTRAORDINARY

12.00 p.m. Dancing and Entertainment Until 3:00 a.m.

From The Rainbow Reveille, Sept.-Oct. 1934 Page Nine

CHAMPAGNE HOUR [Secretary of the Association] Sharon Cover promised us a Champagne Hour which would be impressive and different. The boy really made good. By way of building up a proper atmosphere for the supreme moment of our Reunion, there was shown selected portions of "All Quiet on the Western Front," purported to have been filmed in the Champagne region. The note of realism introduced may be inferred from the fact that more than one of our boys (still affected by shell-shock) found it necessary to leave the room. When Master of Ceremonies for the Champagne Hour, Colonel J. Monroe Johnson, took the floor he found an audience who in heart and mind had returned again to the critical moments which marked the onset of the Champagne drive. Once more Rainbow veterans found themselves under the spell of General Gouraud's order, "Stand or Die!!" As ever, a few moments of the Champagne Hour stood forth from the rest of the evening. Detroit had performed the feat, puzzling to an outsider, of introducing a sacrament into a feast.

1943 The Rainbow Reveille Tulsa, Okla., July 13,14, 1943

Reunion Program: CHAMPAGNE HOUR CEREMONY

1—Troops will be formed as before. Rainbow Division Veterans and their families will mingle with the soldiers, thus merging the old and the new into one body.

2—Unfurling of the Colors

3—The Champagne Hour in retrospect. Remarks by Lt. Gen. Matthew A. Tinley

4—Roll Call of the dead. The National Secretary, Rainbow Division Veterans

5—Address by Col. J. Monroe Johnson

6—Furling of the colors

September 1943 Rainbow Reveille Page Five

The Champagne Hour, Tulsa, Okla., July 14, 1943

As the hour of 11:45 p.m. approached Gen. Matt Tinley explained to the soldiers of the 42nd something of the significance this hour holds for us and the manner in which we celebrate it. Then the ever-increasing roll call of our comrades who have answered the last call since last we met together was read and Colonel Monroe Johnson took over. Deeply impressive and deeply moving as always, the setting heightened the emotional impact of the moment: the heart of every Rainbow man was stirred to its foundation. Stirred, too, were these new soldiers of our old Division. One could feel that they sensed that they were sharing a sacrament with us, one we are not wont to share with strangers.

And so our Reunion ended in its customary solemn silence, in the exemplification of our highest purpose, "...to keep alive the memory of our departed comrades."

Harold Rodier, Editor of The Rainbow Reveille

1944 June 1944 Rainbow Reveille Page Three

On the strong plea of a number of Executive Committee members that the Reunion in July be canceled because of the war emergency, I submitted the question to the entire Executive Committee which overwhelmingly voted that the Reunion in July be canceled. Inasmuch as the Committee has such authority in time of war, I have accordingly obeyed its mandate and the Reunion in July is canceled. The Executive Committee under the Constitution and By-Laws will attend to all problems arising therefrom.

To break tradition in the interest of National Welfare should be a proud boast of Rainbow in face of the personal disappointment, which comes to each of us through missing our usual July get-together.

With American troops and our allies again on the soil of France, Champagne Hour should have a particularly deep significance this year. Gatherings of Rainbow throughout the country will be held on July 14th, in the absence of a National Reunion, and each such gathering, and each Rainbower individually, will observe, as usual, a Champagne Hour at 11:45 p.m. with a special prayer that Providence will see us through to victory.

Rainbow has ever been proud of its observance of the best traditions of service to its country, and in losing its Reunion this July, it is gaining in its self-respect for cooperative patriotism in support of the war effort.

BOB RENO

Invest your Reunion funds in 5th War Loan Bonds

1947 September 1947 Rainbow Reveille: Reunion in Des Moines July 12, 13, 14, 1947

The Champagne Hour: Following a splendid banquet in a great hall filled to capacity, there was the address by General McLain, followed by several excellent vaudeville acts. Rainbow is thoroughly enjoying itself, is completely relaxed, oblivious of time. The clown guitar act takes its curtain call. The room is suddenly plunged into darkness. From out of the darkness comes the resonant voice of President Gardner: "Gentlemen, it is 11:45 p.m." Secretary Gibbons begins the last long roll call of Rainbow comrades departed the year. Monroe Johnson, only his face showing in the dim light, recalls the events of 29 years ago—

"Until we meet again." NUNC DIMITTIS The Rainbow Ghost

1949 July 12, 13, 14, 1949 New York City September 1949 Rainbow Reveille Page 4

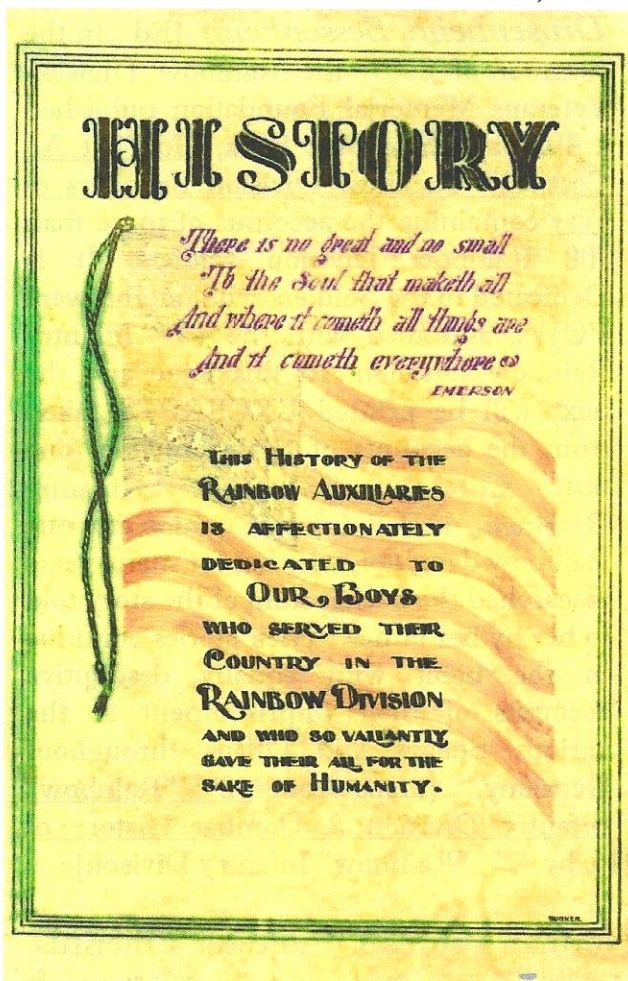
The Champagne Hour: "The time is now 11:45." The huge room is plunged into darkness. In silence and in deep humility, we hear the long, long roll of Comrades passed during the year, many of them so near and dear to us. The meaningful "I tell you there is not death" (Lucy Monroe). Monroe Johnson, faithful unto his pledge, recalls the events of long, long ago. It is done. We move quietly away and out.

Until we meet again---The Rainbow Ghost

FROM the 42nd Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation, Inc. and National Auxiliary information booklet which is available free of charge upon request through the <rainbowvets.org> web site, page 7:

"Preserving Rainbow traditions is an example for our children. Teaching the events that took place that began a 'tradition' is the responsibility of the men and women of the Rainbow."

FROM the HISTORY OF THE RAINBOW DIVISION VETERANS NATIONAL AUXILIARY, Excerpts from the Minutes of the July 1970 meeting at the National Reunion in Philadelphia, Pa.: "...The meeting continued with the reading of more committee reports. WELFARE report: Chairman Alma Pettersen was absent; read by Marlys Priebe of Iowa...

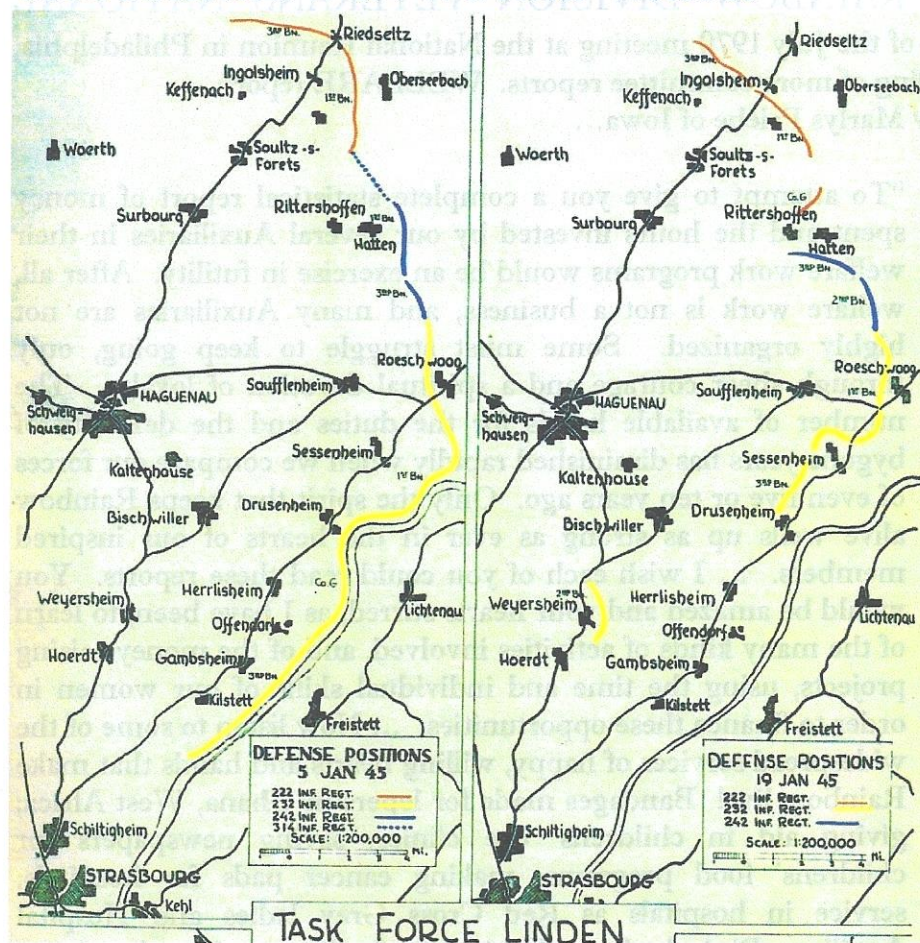


"To attempt to give you a complete statistical report of money spent and the hours invested by our several Auxiliaries in their welfare work programs would be an exercise in futility. After all, welfare work is not a business, and many Auxiliaries are not highly organized. Some must struggle to keep going, only through sheer courage and a spiritual devotion of loyalty. The number of available hands for the duties and the dexterity of bygone years has diminished rapidly when we compare our forces of even five or ten years ago. Only the spirit that keeps Rainbow alive wells up as strong as ever in the hearts of our inspired members. ... I wish each of you could read these reports. You would be amazed and your hearts stirred, as I have been, to learn of the many kinds of activities involved, and of the money raising projects, using the time and individual skills of our women in order to finance these opportunities. ... Now listen to some of the widespread services of happy, willing hearts and hands that make Rainbow live! Bandages made for lepers in Ghana, West Africa; giving aid in childrens' eye clinics; saving newspapers for childrens' food programs; making cancer pads for hospitals; service in hospitals as Red Cross Grey ladies and Hospital Auxiliary Pink Ladies; clothing to Indians and to hurricane disaster victims; working with Bible School; entertaining in veterans' hospitals. All this, in addition to aiding needy veterans; visiting the sick and the shut-ins; sending greeting and consolation cards; decorating graves; and holding memorial services. This is what it means to serve. This is God's Will in

action. We are reminded that "He who gives of himself with his alms, feeds three. ... himself, his hungering neighbor, and Thee". In submitting this report, I feel impelled to make this commentary: Today, from every side, the news of turmoil and war reaches us constantly, with a crescendo of noisy confrontations about whether or not wars are moral; whether they should be loyally supported or violently picketed. Yet here, in the sheaf of welfare reports from our Rainbow Auxiliaries, we find revealed an incredible product coming out of two big wars, namely, the nobility of serving with Love and Sacrifice. Here we find proof that former participants and supporters of those two horrible major conflicts, came home to establish Christian family living, ignoring the ugly scars; and in turn, giving of their limited time and alms with compassion and love for a brother or for a neighbor! We are not, as a people, left in life's gutters, wherein the fighting man reverts to the passionate primitive, but rather, refined in those crucibles for the amazing progress we have lived to see happen. Moreover, to show mercy, and to give help to the less fortunate. This is welfare! There is hope then, that by our example, and given time and the trials of listening and learning, yes, even through the torture of repetitive mistakes, our progeny and all younger generations may find even better ways of doing things to help one another. Everyone can accept a challenge to become involved in helping, thus keeping young and flexible in spirit. No matter how insignificant you think the task may be, remember, it takes drops of water to quench the parched land; and many grains of sand to make a beach. I present my compliments and sincere appreciation to each one of our Rainbow Auxiliary members who sent in evidence of keeping alive the Spirit of Rainbow!"

Marlys remarked: "Wasn't that a dandy?" We say: "It certainly was".

THE RAINBOW IN WORLD WAR II



HOLD AT ALL COST! January 5, 1945: *Kilstett, Gambsheim, Offendorf, Herrlisheim, Drusenheim, Sessenheim* [Ed. In the summer of 2004, the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation published a 492-page hardcover book, Hold At All Cost/42nd Rainbow Division Prisoners of War containing the accounts of more than 100 Rainbow Division soldiers. It is Dedicated to the Soldiers who fought, were POWs, and died with the 42nd Infantry Rainbow Division. In this issue and the next will be printed EXCERPTS taken from the accounts of twelve men of one unit, **Company "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment, 42D Rainbow Division** and one Rainbow daughter, who has for many years researched the background of the story told to her by her father. Their stories continue in the book with equally descriptive accounts of their imprisonment at the various Stalags and Oflag throughout Germany. [maps from 42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division A Combat History of

World War II, written and edited by Lt. Hugh C. Daly, copyright, 1946, by 42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division]

PART ONE: The Defense of Offendorf, Introduction by Norman Fruman, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota (5/30/2006): "As every WWII Rainbow veteran well remembers, the division's introduction to combat came via a massive surprise attack by seven Nazi divisions in Northern Alsace on January 5, 1945. The maps printed above record Strasbourg, Kilstett, Gambsheim, Offendorf, Herrlisheim, Drusenheim, and Sessenheim as under attack. Every town on this list (and several others) has been the subject of substantial coverage in books and articles about WW2, with one astonishing exception: the baptism of fire experienced by the green and undermanned Rainbow platoon responsible for the defense of Offendorf. How did this gap in the record occur? The answer is simple and revealing, and a tribute to the courage of the small band of rookies defending the town: they fought against a vastly superior force of elite German troops until they ran out of ammunition. **NO ONE ESCAPED OR RETREATED.** At the end of the day, all were either captured, dead, or wounded. There were none to tell the tale until decades later when some members of the Rainbow decided to collect memoirs of Rainbow prisoners in WW2. What follows deserves to be part of the Rainbow's heroic history."



2d Lt. Norman Fruman, Co. "G", 232nd Inf. Regt. [p. 168; photo November 1944]
Our unit arrived in Strasbourg after a long trip by truck from Marseilles, just as the Christmas season began. The general feeling had been that the war would not last much longer, that there would soon be a swift push across the Rhine and the exhausted and depleted German forces would be quickly annihilated. We had all the material and psychological factors on our side, but for reasons still being disputed, the American army stopped at the Rhine, giving the Germans a chance to entrench on the other side. So we waited. There seems to have been some sort of mysterious, informal agreement between the two armies in our sector that there would be no serious show of violence on either side during the unusually bitter winter and the approaching Christmas season.

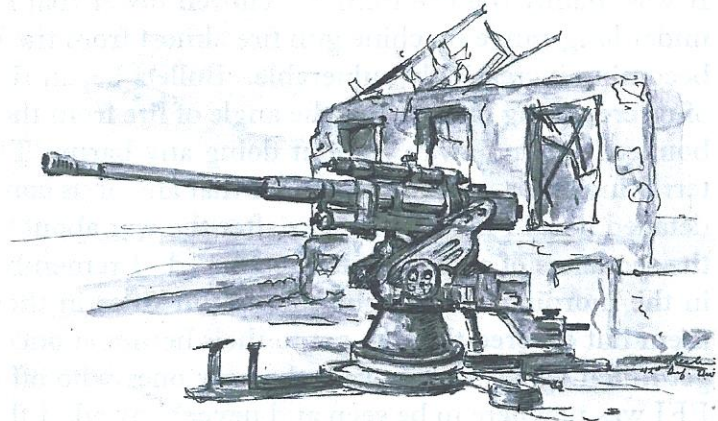
Our artillery could have leveled Kehl, just across the river, and theirs could have done the same to Strasbourg. Better to pass the time comfortably until spring and let the issue be decided then. Rumor had it that patrols from both sides used the same bridges to snoop around, and nobody shot at anybody else. Then came the shock of the Battle of the Bulge. It didn't seem possible that the Germans still had that kind of strength. The Rainbow was too far south to be directly involved, but we nevertheless suffered serious losses when our division was raided for men to replace the heavy casualties in the north. Still, the general feeling among us was that our lines would hold and that the far off fierce fighting might make things easier in the spring. Then came the alarming news, or rumor, that the whole army of which the Rainbow was a part was withdrawing to the Vosges river far to the rear, that Strasbourg was to be given up, and that our division was chosen to be the force covering the retreat. At the company and certainly the platoon level, we had almost no official information as to what the general military situation really was. We were stretched out half the length of Alsace as these actions were carried out, with G-Company, 2nd Battalion, 232nd Regiment, remaining in Strasbourg itself. Civilians from the city clogged the roads in a frantic attempt to get out of the way of a Nazi attack, which only they really believed was coming. We knew that if we were hit during the main withdrawal, we would have to fight to the last to protect the rear. But nothing happened, and it began to look as if things would remain quiet for the winter after all. Then the regiment was yanked out of Strasbourg and moved to sites further north along the Rhine. We were strung out wire thin, but that didn't seem particularly worrisome, since we had a series of comforting reports, or maybe just rumors, that there was no unusual activity across the river, and that a German attack in force was out of the question, especially as the great German offensive in the Bulge had been stalled. Still, when my platoon, the 2nd of G-Company, was dropped from a column of trucks on January 4 in Offendorf, a small town about 20 kilometers north of Strasbourg, I was extremely uneasy. Lt. Anderson, the company commander, told me my orders were to defend the town itself and keep patrols moving at least two kilometers north and south. This seemed an impossible assignment for an undermanned rifle platoon with a single machine gun section attached. I didn't even have a detailed map of the area, and Lt. Anderson would be some six kilometers to the north, with only uncertain radio communication between us. When I expressed my concerns, he advised me not to be anxious, to get the platoon comfortable, and to hold all other considerations till morning, when a daylight reconnaissance could be made. We had arrived in Offendorf near dusk and night came on far too quickly for me even to get a good idea of what the surrounding terrain looked like, or the layout of the village's ancient, winding streets. Oddly perhaps (though after 57 years one's memory plays strange tricks), I have no specific recollection of stationing any of my men in the old Maginot Line pillboxes along the Rhine, which would have been a sensible thing to do, and yet several veterans have reported spending the night in just that way. What I do recall vividly was the immediate problem of choosing a headquarters site and finding places for the men with me to sleep and to get them fed. Many of the locals were eager to talk with me. A man who identified himself as a member of the FFI (Free French of the Interior, an irregular resistance group) assured me that if an attack were to come, which he thought highly unlikely, he would have at least twenty armed men instantly available to fight with us. The owner of the town's major café, whom I will call Monsieur Le Patron, immediately offered his café as a headquarters and said there was a large room above the café where ten or twelve soldiers could sleep on the floor, including myself. He also knew of some private houses where others could be billeted, as German soldiers had been before they retreated. He was immensely helpful, as was my college French and German in dealing with him and others. Getting the men fed and settled for the night in scattered houses around the village was time consuming, since it fell to me to deal with the sometimes wary and unwilling home owners. I had turned 21 just one month before and I remember thinking how strange it was for someone who had never fired a rifle before entering the Army to now be the commanding officer of an infantry platoon defending an ancient village in Alsace and three or four miles of the Rhine river. It was snowing lightly as I headed for the café to call it a night. The streets were dark and quiet. Offendorf was a small farming town of mainly low, very old brick buildings, all centered around the village church which towered above the central cobbled square. The church, probably from the 14th or 15th century, stood close by the café. I had a sudden desire to see what the interior of the church looked like. Perhaps it was a hunch, a premonition, but I felt I had to see its interior. The snow was falling softly in the town square, and everything was so hushed and peaceful it seemed sacrilegious to be carrying a carbine and grenades into a house of worship. The massive church door gave way with a creak under pressure. I walked slowly down the center aisle towards the bank of candles flickering in the gloom near the altar. I looked about at the stone walls, surely several feet thick, and decided then and there that if it became necessary, the church would

be our center of defense. The church and the sleeping village seemed like something out of a sentimental Christmas card. It was probably close to midnight when I finally sacked out on the floor of the café where several of my men were already asleep. I lay down in my overcoat over my combat jacket to keep warm. The next thing I knew I was being shaken violently by Monsieur Le Patron. The FFI man was kneeling beside him, an expression of extreme alarm on his face. "The Boche are crossing the river!" Le Patron shouted. "Quick, get up!" Groggily I got to my feet and glanced at my watch. It was a little past 3 a.m. "Are you sure?" I asked. The FFI man said he'd just been told that many boats were crossing the Rhine. At that I ran outside and sprinted down the dark and silent street to where I knew the radio operator and his jeep were. I told him to get me in touch with Lt. Anderson immediately. The snow had stopped but it was bitterly cold. In a matter of moments Lt. Anderson was on the line. "Crossing the Rhine?" he yelled. "In force? How's that possible? We have no reports of any activity along the river. All's quiet. Maybe somebody let go a burst of machine-gun fire and got everybody excited. Are you sure? Did you see it with your own eyes?" I hadn't. Nor had any of the men in the Maginot Line pillboxes or on patrol reported back to me with any such information. Not a single shot had been fired. Was it all a false alarm? How could Germans be crossing the Rhine without being observed by our patrols? And what about Headquarter's intelligence? Surely they would know if anything of the kind was happening. Anderson advised me to get some sleep and keep him posted if there were any changes. He'd let me know instantly if he got any report of German boats in the river. I thought the matter over and concluded that the FFI report was just another one of the many wild rumors that fears among the local civilians were generating almost hourly. Dead tired, I went back to sleep on the café floor... Then somebody was screaming in my ear, "Jerries! Jerries!" I jumped up and saw the platoon sergeant, Charles Moore, shaking the men who were still sleeping and kicking at those who didn't respond. I ripped off my fieldcoat and lieutenant's bars (which I put into a pocket of my combat jacket), grabbed my carbine, and dashed out the door, with maybe a dozen of my men close behind. It was not long after sunrise. We raced along the cobbled streets toward the edge of town closest to the Rhine, from which the Germans would be coming. As yet we had not heard a shot or a shout from any of the civilians, though I did see a few running to get indoors. At the end of the street I suddenly saw a large body of Germans coming toward us from the edge of the woods, which lay some 500 yards from Offendorf to the east, towards the Rhine. The Germans apparently didn't see us. They advanced at a walking pace, surprisingly close together for combat veterans. Obviously, they weren't expecting resistance in the town. Their intelligence must have told them that the American army had withdrawn entirely. I had only a few moments to establish a defense. I hurried the men I had, two at a time, into the tallest houses that commanded major streets, from which they could act as snipers to hold up the German advance. They had orders not to shoot until they had targets clearly in their sights. In just a few minutes our impromptu defense was organized. I ran back to town, intending to telephone Lt. Anderson immediately, but the radio operator and his jeep had already hightailed it out of town. The men who had been billeted for the night in various houses were now gathered at the café. I led them as quickly as possible to positions that had good lines of fire along routes the advancing Germans were likely to take. I and two or three others then dashed up to the bell tower of the church, which could be reached only by a narrow flight of circular, stone stairs completely hidden from the nave below. The walls were indeed three or four feet thick. From the tower we had a panoramic view of the vast, snow-covered countryside. The advancing Germans had only a clump of leafless trees here and there for cover. I ordered my men to take aim but not to fire until I did. The following moments were indescribably tense. The enemy came closer...and closer. The most terrible kind of combat was about to begin, defending a town against a vastly greater force. When the Germans had advanced to where I was absolutely sure of my shot, I fired. Nothing really prepares you for the experience of having a human being in your rifle sights, slowly squeezing the trigger, feeling the recoil of the stock as your target staggers and collapses. Our opening volley brought down several of the enemy. We'd caught them at dead range, in open fields without a stick or stone for cover, and with fresh snow to frame their uniforms. Those who hadn't been hit fled back to the woods in the far distance, dragging one of their wounded with them. An immediate assault by the Germans now seemed unlikely, since they had no idea how strong we were. We, however, knew that unless we were quickly reinforced, which I fully expected to happen, it would be only a matter of time before the Jerries got into the town. We didn't have nearly enough men to defend the entire perimeter. But the Germans didn't know that. I thought that if we could keep them at a distance for a few hours, we'd be reinforced. Wouldn't whole squadrons of our fighter planes soon be roaring overhead to blast hell out of the German troops already on the Alsacian side of the Rhine and to sink anything they had in the river? The

German attack was surely the reckless last gasp of a defeated army and its demented Führer, Adolf Hitler. So I thought. But before an hour had passed it was obvious that the attack was a big one, with big objectives, and if the Germans broke through the thin crust of the American line strung out in Alsace along the Rhine, they might well go all the way to the Vosges before meeting any effective resistance on the ground. Where the hell were our fighter planes? It soon became clear that the main German forces were bypassing Offendorf, leaving behind only enough troops to take the town. Some of the men who'd been on patrol or out at the pillboxes were able to pull back and join me in town. With them I was able to close a few gaps along the perimeter, but not nearly enough. It was mainly the fire from the church tower that kept the Germans out of town until around noon. We were under long-range machine gun fire almost from the beginning, and mortar fire soon after. The church tower was becoming increasingly vulnerable. Bullets began ricocheting off the bells and threatening to kill or wound those of us crouching below. But the angle of fire from the ground was such that the ricochets, at least at the beginning, bounced up and away without doing any harm. The sharp clang of the struck bells right above our heads was terrifying and a constant reminder that any of us could be hit at any moment. Although I am drawing upon some detailed notes I made five years after the war about that terrible day of January 5, 1945, I find that my memory of the sequence of some events is confused. I remember two boys, 12 or 13 years old, running into the church early in the morning and begging me to put rifles in their hands so that they could kill the filthy Boche. I thanked them but ordered them to get to their homes at once and crawl into a safe place because the fighting was going to get much worse. They were the only ones who offered to fight. All the other townsfolk kept out of sight. The FFI was nowhere to be seen and never showed. I think it was shortly after I'd bolted a K-ration, the first food I'd had all day, probably around noon, when I was collared by an old man who had braved the lead in the streets to get to me. I was visiting Sergeant Moore, who was in charge of a small group controlling the main road from a Rathouse (city hall) window. The old man burst in upon us hysterically and screamed into my face in French, "It's all over! The town is surrounded! Why don't you surrender?" It was the first time all day I'd heard that word. It was as if the word had been stricken from the dictionary. I don't think the idea was even remotely conscious in me. "Why don't you surrender?" he screamed again. "The Boche are already in the town. Do you want to get everybody killed?!" I ordered him to get out at once and started pushing him toward the door. "Madman!" he shouted. "You are not doing any good! They will kill you all! The town is on fire! Surrender and save yourselves!" He then ran screaming from the place. I looked at Sergeant Moore and he at me, and then I looked at the others. All of them were staring at me fixedly. We were surely all thinking the same thing. The old man was right. From that point on it was only a matter of killing and being killed, or wounded, with a town full of civilians caught in the middle. Finally I said something like, "There's no reason to panic, men. We're sure to be reinforced, and the old man is wrong about the Jerries being in town, so let's keep them out." I then dashed out myself, and ran around to all the points where I'd placed riflemen. Apparently I was right. No one had actually seen a German soldier breach our makeshift defense. Sometime in the early afternoon, I led a few men to the southern edge of Offendorf to head off a large cluster of Germans that had been spotted advancing from the woods. Several houses near the church had been hit by mortar fire. One was burning. The streets were empty, the windows tightly shuttered, the townsfolk no doubt huddled under beds or in cellars. As soon as the Germans saw us they hit the ground, as did we, and there was a heavy burst of fire on both sides, after which there was an eerie quiet. The Germans weren't going to expose themselves in an open snow-covered field, so they lay prone and waited, probably for mortar fire to zero in on our positions, and perhaps also for tanks, which I hadn't yet seen. Suddenly a flight of P-47s appeared, three or four, swooping in low over the town buildings and opening up with a horrendous burst of fire toward the German troops scattered and prone in the vast, white field. The Germans, very well trained and long experienced, put up a huge counter fire, including tracer bullets, and our P-47s, after that one pass, zoomed away and out of sight, never to return. After that there was a brief lull, broken by the sudden and unexpected appearance of a squad or two of reinforcements, about a hundred yards behind us, doubtless sent by Lt. Anderson. That was a tremendous boost to our spirits, but almost at once we saw that they were engaged in a fire fight with a German force we could not see. The exchange of fire was brief and our reinforcements quickly retreated and were soon gone. An instant later a mortar shell landed to our rear and then another dangerously close in front of us. They had us bracketed! The next shell would surely land in our midst! I gave the order and we sprinted back to the town. It would take the literary gifts of a Tolstoy to convey the confusion, doubts, and fears of defending a totally unfamiliar medieval village with a badly outnumbered group of combat rookies against veteran troops of the most seasoned army in the world. Whatever we as individuals

thought or felt, as a group we continued to fight tenaciously, inflicting sufficient casualties to keep the Germans advancing cautiously, very cautiously, through the narrow, winding streets where, as far as they knew, a sniper might be waiting anywhere. Few people realize that victory or defeat in combat depends again and again on the combined performance of individual platoons, and within those platoons the decisions, when necessary, of individual soldiers. During the long day's fighting, so far as I knew, not a single member of the 2nd platoon of G-Company surrendered, despite the hopelessness of our situation. Houses were aflame and there were casualties in the streets, including civilians. One by one or in groups of two or three, the men, including some from the patrols and pillboxes, fell back to the church, some out of ammunition.

German 88 shells were crashing off the thick walls, almost deafening us, and making the whole building shake. I went to the tower again and saw Germans closing in from several directions to the cobbled square below. A mortar shell exploded nearby as I watched. Bullets were now clanging off the bells in a ceaseless stream. It was a miracle that nobody had as yet been hit by a ricochet. No sooner did I leave than a direct hit by an 88 demolished the tower. I ran down to the nave, which was still intact, though most of the windows were shattered. I ordered a few men to take up positions in the choir behind the main altar and others to guard the side doors. I and the BAR man lay down in the center aisle and waited, our weapons pointed at the massive front doors we had bolted shut. They were made of wood, and I remember wishing that Offendorf had been a rich town, rich enough to have built the doors of bronze. We waited...and waited, for a seeming eternity, wondering whether we were living our final seconds...And then a terrific explosion tore the two front doors from their hinges and sent them hurtling back at us in splinters. The BAR man and I emptied our magazines at the smoke and dust-filled shaft of light, firing blindly. Then there was silence. The dust settled enough for us to see the late afternoon light streaming through where the doors had been, but nothing else. Suddenly one of the men to my right stood up, raised his arms and started toward the blasted entrance, shouting, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I surrender! Don't shoot!" There was not a sound in the square. The soldier, Stanley Kubas, reached the threshold and looked around, his arms still above his head. "I surrender!" he yelled again. "Don't—" There was a burst of rifle fire. Kubas's knees buckled and he pitched forward. At that there was a wild dash for the momentary safety of the platform at the first landing of the stone stairway leading up to the ruined tower. The nave couldn't be defended. All the Germans had to do was lob grenades through the smashed windows to kill us all. Three or four men, possibly those who had been in the tower, had been huddled on the platform and had seen the murder of Kubas. They reacted with the indescribable horror we all felt. The Germans were not taking prisoners. There had been atrocities along the front, including a massacre of American prisoners at a place called Malmedy. We were going to die! The men were staring imploringly at me, but no one said anything. We could hear the Germans clomping about in the nave below and then one of them shouted up to us in thick English, "We won't hurt you! Surrender or we will blow up the church." "For God's sake," one of the men said, "Let's take a chance!" I was standing at the head of the stairs when as if with one surge everyone dropped his weapon and scrambled down to where the enraged Germans, rifles at the ready, were waiting for us. "Shooting the whole day! Shooting! Shooting!" one of them yelled in German. "Out! Out! Out into the street! Quick! Quick!" Civilians were dashing about in the rubble and burning streets. One of them shouted, "Kill the Americans!" Nazi flags had suddenly appeared and were fluttering from many windows. The Germans roughed us up, slamming us hard with their rifle butts as they pushed us into an empty store across the square where they demanded our wallets, watches, and rings. After they'd stripped us of anything of value, they shoved us outside and ordered us to start marching down the main road which we had held under fire from the church. Abruptly we heard the shout "Halt!" and we were lined up against the high blank wall of a tall house. A machine gun was set up and pointed at us. A few civilians watched intently. One of the men dropped to his knees, crossed himself, and began to pray. A corporal squatted behind the machine gun and put his finger on the trigger. More men fell to their knees and prayed. We waited. A German officer then came up to me and said, smiling, "We won't shoot you in front of civilians." We



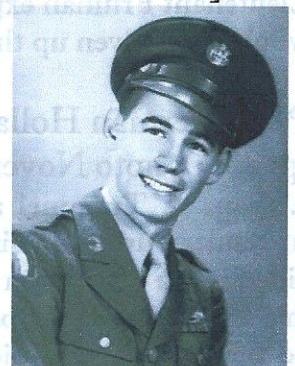
EVERY FRONTLINE DOUGHFOOT HAS A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR THE DEADLY ACCURACY OF THE HATED GERMAN 88. THIS ONE WAS FOUND ABANDONED AFTER THE FIGHTING AROUND SHIRNHEIN, FRANCE - JANUARY 1945.

were marched out of town in the direction of the Rhine in the gathering darkness, arms over our heads, our fingers stinging in the bitter cold. We left the road and marched across open fields until we came to a large farmhouse. A civilian greeted the column with a Nazi salute. In front of a large barn nearby a small group of prisoners from G-Company was seated in the snow. Two wounded men lay groaning in wooden carts. I asked for a doctor, and was told that one would come when available. Then we were pushed into a barn and the doors slammed shut. We were warned that if anyone tried to escape, everyone would be shot at once. It was dark and very cold inside, with only a thin layer of straw on the ground. The men were asking me questions from all sides, none of which I could answer. We did what we could to make the wounded comfortable, which wasn't much. Some men had eaten nothing all day. Others needed a lavatory desperately but none was available. It was a terrible night, interrupted by the agonizing groans of the wounded. Sometime after midnight, a man, probably the owner of the farm, awoke anyone asleep to demand money, watches or rings, which we no longer had. He delivered horrible threats as to what would happen if we were hiding anything of value. I asked for a doctor again, but none ever came. We were awakened early the next morning, again given nothing to eat or drink, and then marched to the Rhine where we were ferried across the swiftly flowing river. Once on the German side, our guards ceased to be combat troops but two old men and a young boy. We marched in the ankle-deep snow for hours, taking turns dragging the wounded in the carts. We stopped once in a village where our guards were given something hot to drink and slices of black bread and margarine by local women. But nothing for us. Instead we were cursed. "Amerikanische Luftgangster! Chicago Terroristen!" We marched, staggering now and then, and finally came to our first destination, an interrogation point where again we were given nothing to eat or drink. When I complained to the officer who questioned me about our having been lined up against a wall and made to feel we were about to be shot, he merely shrugged and said, "It is standard procedure to keep prisoners as frightened as possible until we are finished questioning them." As an officer I was quickly separated from the enlisted men, none of whom I ever saw or heard from again, with the exception of Sergeant Charles E. Moore, now deceased, with whom I exchanged still precious letters in 1957. At the interrogation point I met a number of Rainbow officers who had arrived earlier that day, or the day before. The next day we began the journey that was to expose us to hardships, dangers, and challenges that for many of us, together with our combat memories, became the defining experiences of our lives. But that is another story.

PFC Billy Lee Humphreys, Co. "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment [p. 240; photo October 1945]

At sunset on January 4, 1945, Company "G" 232 moved from the larger city of Strasbourg to Offendorf, a smaller French town 20 miles to the north. The Allied forces had decided to shuffle the line and sacrifice Strasbourg if needed. The French, on the other hand, did not care to lose such a beautiful city and made the decision to defend it themselves. As the night grew cold, we made our way with no lights in military vehicles known as army ducks. Bedding down around 10 p.m., one squad took position outside of Offendorf in a pillbox for guard duty. At 4 a.m. members of the Free French Army alerted our

lieutenant that German soldiers were crossing the Rhine into France. Taking up a tactical position in an old church, I checked my gear in preparation for combat. Being the radio man for my platoon I carried a small field radio, a submachine gun with 15 magazines and about 15 grenades. Unfortunately, during the night move one of my musette bags with the radio batteries came up missing. Using the church's bell tower as an observation deck, we watched the German troops advance. The eight-foot by three-foot windows on all four sides of the tower were covered with slates to keep the weather away from the bell; however it didn't stop the bullets from flying through. Every time they began firing at us, we would have to listen to the bullets ring the bell.



Though the Germans had infantry and artillery, they had no tanks. They came at us in a straight line through the snow with their rifles held at port arms. Whenever their line would begin to sag or show gaps where we had

hit men they would send up a flare, stop and straighten the line and then come forward again. Eventually they surrounded Offendorf on three sides. With no operational battery, I was able to discover that the only telephone in the town was located five blocks from our position in a local tavern. The only problem was it was towards the Germans. Skirting and sneaking among the buildings, I made my way to the tavern and was able to contact an operator. After several attempts, she was able to locate someone at our company headquarters. Running back and forth three separate times, I was able to use the telephone to call in our coordinates for artillery support. The final call brought aerial support. A flight of six P-47s each equipped with .50 caliber machine guns circled east over the Rhine and then back to strafe the German line and sometimes us in the process. After lunch, the Germans rolled in an 88 millimeter multiple use artillery piece on a four-wheel trailer. Taking over an hour to set up, they pointed it straight at our position. From a mile away we could see the puff of smoke and then hear the shrill whistle of the shell speeding towards us. But in our church of refuge, our salvation came from the 100-year-old-trees surrounding us. The leafless trees would prematurely create aerial burst without touching the building. Frustrated, the Germans decided to drop 80 millimeter mortar rounds. Silent while in the air, they dropped mortars for over an hour. Clay tiles would slide off the rooftops as they rained down from our church and neighboring buildings. The only casualty was a civilian woman in a nearby house who was hit in the jaw by shrapnel. As the winter sun started to set, we found ourselves with no more ammunition. Lieutenant Norman Fruman called several of us together to decide on our next course of action. With 29 men and no more ammunition, it was decided that we should surrender. As the enemy moved into the streets around the church, a German soldier kicked in the church door and called for our surrender. In the confusion of the moment, our only casualty came as a young boy from Chicago stood abruptly between the church pews. In the dark with his hands above his head he was shot and killed. As we surrendered, I had to discard my heavy, wool overcoat because my pockets were filled with grenades and there was no sane way of telling the Germans I had them. With a foot of snow on the ground, it was a shame to lose that coat, but you can't throw a grenade farther than a German could shoot a gun. Having been in Europe for only less than a month, I was now a prisoner of war. We were led out of the church and across the street where we were searched from head to toe. As we were searched, the Germans helped themselves to our wallets, watches, and jewelry. Quickly thinking, I took off my watch and placed it under my knit wool cap. As I was searched, a German soldier demanded my gold high school ring. Not understanding German, but understanding the bayonet that he pulled out of his scabbard, I quickly gave it to him. After the search, the German CO demanded to know where the rest of our men were in the town. After Lieutenant Fruman explained that there were no more, the German officer informed us that in thirty minutes he would have given up the attack till the next morning if we had not run out of ammunition."

PVT Herman Holland, Co. "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment
[p. 239; photo November 1944]

"...Sam T. Trammel and I, "holding hands", walked down stairs in the church house to surrender our group since Sgt. Rucker was pinned down. We saw Stanley Kubas shot and killed just a few feet in front of Sam and me, and I promised myself if I ever got home again that I would visit his parents in Chicago and let them know just how brave he was and how he died. But I never did, and I hate that so much."



PFC Raymond C. Essig, Co. "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment

[p. 108; photo November 1944] The most disturbing situations I have been subjected to are the experiences I had as a German POW during the later months of WWII. The entire episode was traumatic, frightful, uncertain, difficult and unforgettable. During the Battle of the Bulge there was an associated German offensive in the Alsace-Lorraine region called Operation Nordwind. The 42nd Rainbow Division Infantry Regiments had been assigned to a combat zone along the Rhine River in and around Strasbourg, France, from early December 1944. The Division's heavy weapons units were still stateside. We encountered very little action until January 5, 1945 when Operation Nordwind began. The defense of

Strasbourg was assigned to the Free French Army and our regiment was evacuated from the city and dispersed along a 25-mile stretch just to the north. One rifle squad and a 30-caliber machine-gun squad from our



company were positioned near the eastern edge of the village of Offendorf just before dusk on January 4th. I was first gunner of the machine-gun squad and my second gunner and four riflemen occupied a small pillbox 10 or 12-foot in diameter on the eastern edge of the village. As dawn was breaking the next morning, our lieutenant sent orders to retreat to a church near the center of the village. The church bell tower had provided a good view of the surrounding countryside and the lookout was able to see, through the morning mist, an overwhelmingly large German force approaching our tiny bunker. We learned later the Germans had crossed the Rhine during the night and at 7:45 on the morning of January 5th launched an attack against the towns of Gambenheim, Offendorf, Herrlisheim and Kilstett with an infantry regiment and two battalions of SS troopers. Supporting the force were 20 self-propelled guns and tanks, 81 mm and 120mm mortars, self-propelled 75mm anti-tank guns and 75mm field howitzers and artillery. This concentrated force was attacking infantry companies so widely dispersed that they were occupying fronts normally assigned to battalions or even larger units. More important, those companies had no artillery support and initially no tanks or tank destroyers. It was riflemen against armor and self-propelled guns. From the church we exchanged rifle and machine-gun fire most of the day, but at mid-afternoon, the Germans directed two or three tank-mounted 88 shells at the church and shortly thereafter, their infantry broke into the main section of the church and shot several of our riflemen. I was alone guarding the side anteroom containing the stairwell to the bell tower. Hearing burp gun bursts, I looked to my rear toward an open door to the pew section of the church and saw two or three of my comrades shot, with their arms raised high. It was like watching a movie until I awakened to the reality of the situation. I was not able to see the source of the firing and not wishing to peek around the corner to try to evaluate an unknown scenario, I chose to run up the stairs to join the riflemen in the bell tower. After another 88 shell hit the tower, we were instructed by either our sergeant or the lieutenant to surrender. One of the riflemen spoke German and hollered down from a hidden area of the stairwell. We were able to surrender without further casualties. Having seen the actual shooting of some of the riflemen on the first floor and perhaps being more frightened than the other teenagers in our group, I was the last to come down from the bell tower. Had I known what lay ahead, I would not have been so compliant."

PFC Thomas Lynch, Company "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment [p. 282; photo November 1944]

"At daylight January 5, 1945, a battalion of Germans swarmed into Offendorf [France], a little village located approximately 11 miles north of Strasbourg, France. We were caught off-guard. It seemed like our commanding officer didn't know how to meet the enemy. He should have set up a defense instead of running around looking for the enemy, whom had already set up snipers. We were surrounded before we knew it. My squad was isolated from the platoon when our commanding officer was wounded and a sergeant who was alongside of me was killed. I was the commanding officer's point man. I shot one of the members of the German machine gun crew that was crossing the street about 50 yards distant from me. I ran across the street into a courtyard with shots just missing me. When I looked back around a corner, a bullet meant for my head ripped off my helmet. A second German machine gun crew was making their way to my rear. I fired several clips of ammunition at that crew but they had greater firepower. A man with a carbine rifle joined me. Finally, we withdrew into a barn where a farmer showed us a way of escape; however, a German machine gun crew who were setting up their weapon blocked that route. The courtyard was finally filled with German soldiers hollering for us to come out of the barn. After a little deliberation, we came out into the courtyard and surrendered. I could not believe what was happening to me after all the training I had and felt resentment against my officers. We could have withdrawn to the open in the rear before the Germans set up their snipers and machine guns and regrouped when we were hopelessly outnumbered. I knew the war would not last much longer and I wanted to escape at the first opportunity. Our captors were cordial and showed no animosity. Their aid man rendered first aid to our wounded but, with limited medical supplies, he couldn't help much. He didn't have any morphine or other medicine. A group of us were rounded up and taken across the Rhine River. That night we slept in a cellar. We walked all day the following day until we reached some boxcars. They packed us in the boxcars like we were sardines. We rode at night and remained parked in railroad yards during the day. I remember going through Stuttgart. I kept a log of names of towns we passed through, planning to use it as my route of escape should I get the opportunity. The list was taken from me at our first shakedown inspection in Luckenwalde. We were fed only once a day with bread and cheese during the four days and nights we were in the boxcars. During the course of the boxcar trip, we stopped only once a day for toilet purposes."



PFC Beryl L. Roberts, Company "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment [p. 416; photo November 1944]
 "I was captured January 5, 1945 in Offendorf, France. There were 22 men from my company in the small town of Offendorf. We were scouting patrols reporting the push the Germans were making crossing the Rhine River in the vicinity of Offendorf. After making my report, that at Offendorf the Germans were bringing everything they had in Germany across the Rhine River, we were ordered to stay put and told help would be sent to us. We were attacked at eight o'clock in the morning. We fought a hell of a bloody battle, holding that town for eight hours. Seventeen men, just green kids, were sent to help us stop the German attack. As those men crossed the open field at the north end of Offendorf, the Germans mowed them down like flies. They were all killed. I don't know what outfit they were from, as they never got close enough to us for us to find out. I saw my buddies go down one by one throughout the town. There was a large stone church, with walls four feet thick and a bell tower. The few of us that were left made a run for the church. The Germans were hiding in the church waiting for us to enter. After the four or five of us that were left entered the sanctuary, the Germans opened fire on us, killing all but myself. I managed to escape to the bell tower where they, eventually, knocked me out with a potato masher grenade. When I came to, the Germans were dragging me down the stairs by my heels. Thank God, they took me prisoner rather than killing me. I think I was the last one left out of our group of 22 men. I was removed from the church and locked in a barn until the next morning when I was taken away from there and put with other prisoners from other outfits."



PFC Wayne H. Heuer, Company "G", 232nd Infantry Regiment [P. 228; written by his daughter, Robin Rogers]: "Like so many veterans, my dad didn't like to talk about the war, so I don't have a lot of details. In searching out more of his story, it has come to light that he was mistaken about some details. The following is the story he told me and information that has been pieced together with the help of other Rainbow veterans...From the time he arrived home from the war, until his death, my dad believed he was in Colmar, France at the time of his capture on January 5, 1945. He always said he was in the bell tower of a church and it was being hit with 88 mm shells. He and the others in the church surrendered when they were running out of ammo. I've had the kind help of several other Company G veterans in my search for his story, and it now seems likely he was actually in Offendorf, France, where other members of Company G were, in fact, captured in

a church tower. He was wounded when an 88 hit the tower and flying debris hit him. He said the last thing he remembered at the time was seeing the wall coming at him. He was knocked out and when he came around, he had a broken jaw and other facial wounds. My dad said the Germans marched them around for quite some time, moving from camp to camp. His first mail home was sent from Stalag V-A, near Ludwigsburg, and post-marked January 17, 1945. At some point, they rode on the infamous '40 and 8s.' The rest of the time they marched in the cold, with little food. The next mail home was postmarked January 25, 1945 from Stalag IV-B, near Muhlberg, Germany, and there he remained until the camp was liberated by the Russians at the end of April. He said it was at this camp that a British doctor took care of his jaw." [Robin continues her research of the history of this POW camp and the men who were prisoners of war there and is in touch with American and British veterans and their descendants who have this history in common; Robin may be contacted at <robinlr24@hotmail.com>]

WWII Combat sketches of "Offendorf" and the "German 88" by Rainbow artist Col. T.R. MacKechnie are used with his permission. In a letter dated 13 Jan 06, Col. MacKechnie wrote: "As junior aide to Harry Collins I had time to sneak out up front and sketch when the General was otherwise occupied." His photo is from the Special Staff Section of the pictorial and review books for the 42D Division November 1944, Camp Gruber, OK. Copies of his other sketches will be printed in forthcoming issues of Rainbow Trail.



To order the 492-page hardcover book, Hold At All Cost/42nd Rainbow Division Prisoners Of War, Please send checks or money orders for \$25.00/book, payable to **RDVMF**, to Suellen R. McDaniel, Secretary/Editor, RDVMF Millennium Chapter, 1400 Knolls Drive, Newton, NC 28658-9452.
 e-mail: JMAC1400@aol.com (828) 464-1466 Cost includes S&H.

THE RAINBOW IN AUSTRIA

FISHING FESTIVAL *A Letter from Edwin Rusteberg, H1B-242D Infantry Regiment and General Staff Corps, Headquarters, 42D Infantry Division, to his children, Suellen McDaniel and Bill Rusteberg, written in the late 1980's added to his many recollections and our family history. The protagonist in the following story has been identified by Lt. Col. Robert G. Sherrard, G-4, General Staff, 42D Division, a longtime family friend of the chaplain, as Chaplain Lisle Bartholomew, whose 1945 column in The Rainbow Reveille is printed here just below this anecdote:*

"In the summer of 1946, at the first opening of the Salzburg Festival after WWII, the US Occupational Forces located there were flooded with VIP requests for accommodations, transportation and tickets for the event.

Although the Austrian authorities were able to provide entertainment required at the Festspielhaus, the Denazification policy of the Four Powers had depleted their ability to provide all of the support services required for outside visitors.

As a result of this, the US Zone Command located there created a special visitors bureau for the event. A fine Texas Aggie Officer was placed at the head of this bureau and was given the means to make the necessary arrangements for each VIP request. We called him "Figaro" in honor of one of the characters in a Festival Opera.

One day, "Figaro" received a request from a General Officer in Germany asking for accommodations, but desiring theatre tickets only for his lady. The General stated that he cared little for such events and would prefer to go fishing instead.

"Figaro" made the necessary arrangements for the General's lady and then, knowing that the local Army chaplain was a good fisherman, asked him to provide the General with a Jeep, driver and a good local Austrian fishing guide.

After the General was well settled in his VIP Suite at the Schloss Klessheim, and his Lady had departed for the Opera, the Austrian guide, Jeep and driver, reported to him as scheduled. The guide, in customary Lederhosen and Alpine hat, spoke no English, but greeted his guest profusely in German and then escorted him to a nice Austrian mountain stream which abounded with trout.

After settling down on the banks of the stream, the guide baited the General's hook whenever it was required and unhooked each fish as it was pulled in. The General, being most appreciative of the guide's assistance, carried on a conversation with him the best he could in broken German, and fed him cookies, candy bars, sandwiches and cigarettes throughout the day.

As the day ended and the General was escorted to his accommodations, as he stepped out of his jeep, he said:

"Danke Viel Mals!!!" to his guide in thanks for the day's outing, and handed him a handful of Austrian Shillings.

The guide, saluting sharply, replied:

"You're welcome, Sir!!! I am the American Zone Command Chaplain!!!"

FROM The Rainbow Reveille, Friday, 10 August 1945: The Chaplain Says: By Chaplain Lisle Bartholomew [photo from 1944 Camp Gruber, OK Pictorial and Review books, Special Staff Section]

"Although two hundred years had passed since at the turn of the millennium the entire world trembling awaited its doom, every time a century came to a close mankind once more lived through that pang of terror. The end of a century! The very words were fraught with

forebodings; a day of eternity was banging the door behind it. Not even a day, for were not people wont to sing: 'A thousand years shall pass before Thine eyes, even as yesterday!' A thousand years, mind you; what then did a century amount to? NO more than an hour. But even an hour has its importance. An hour that goes by, never to return. An hour gone that brings closer the day of reckoning." These words are from the introductory paragraph of the book "Blessed Are The Meek" by Zofia Kossak. Though we are not at the end of a century we are at the beginning of a new way of life. The time in which this story is staged was so similar to days which lie ahead. In the midst of ignorance, poverty, suffering disease, misunderstanding and war, a light was necessary. The lights of culture were almost non-extant, hatred and greed was the rule of the day. The individual was counted as nothing. Into the scene came St. Francis of Assisi, honored by men because he practiced humility as



LISLE BARTHOLOMEW
Major
Division Chaplain

our Lord was wont to do. By sheer force of personality and dedication he changed the hearts of the mighty. "Blessed are the Meek" is a novel based on St. Francis' life and it is a book that everyone will want to read. It is a story of adventurous living and is well worth your time. Adventurous days lie ahead for us. The opportunity is presented for a proud nation and its peoples to practice their belief in the eternal Goodness of our Father. This applies to all peoples whether they be Protestants, Catholic or Jew. We are given the chances to prove our "bigness". The dead of this war challenge the living, saying, "I was big enough to die; are you big enough to live so that men will not have to die again in a war to preserve goodness, truth and justice for all people?" In this country we have been given to administer, all the ideals and aspirations of free men have been destroyed by the Nazi. The influence of Nazism is not yet dead nor will it be as long as greed, hatred, bickering and recrimination is allowed to flourish. Just as strong a force for good as the evil of Nazism must be fanned into life in order to win the peace. To make such a substitution of good for evil, the people performing the task must remember that they first must fit themselves and lead others on, not drive them as Hitler's gang did. Hitler appealed to the material side of men; we must appeal to their spiritual side. The realization must come to us that we are just as much disciples and servants to our Lord and His ideals as were the apostles of old. The task of rebuilding a better world needs stout hands, hearts, and bodies dedicated to humility. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."

Do you recognize these men of Company "E", 242nd Infantry Regiment?

>Beverly Glosser, Rainbow daughter of Kenneth H. Johnson (photo Left) would like to know more about her father's service in Rainbow during and also after the war in post-war Austria, where her father served for close to a year.

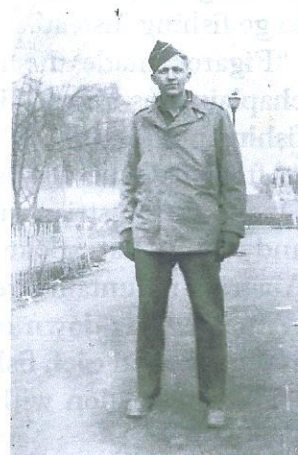
This photo was taken in Leogang, Austria.

e-mail: b.glosser@att.net

>John Pape, Rainbow son of Richard C. "Dick" Pape (photo Right) is also interested in hearing from anyone who may have information about his father, who served in the Rainbow during the war and also in postwar Austria. This photo was taken in Nantes, France Jan-Feb 1945.

e-mail: johnpape@netzero.com (626) 445-2741

Can you help identify the men in this October 1945 photo of American Soldiers playing football in Hofgastein, Austria?



232nd Infantry Regiment men in this photo who have been identified from names written on the back are Anthony C. Marchegiano, H2B-232 (bottom row, 1st on left); Harvey T. Underhill Jr., H1B-232 (bottom row last on right) and William C. Griebel, 232-Cannon, (bottom row third from left). Names listed are: Johnson, Beduar, White, Lake, Lutz, Linden, Marchegiano, Carlson, Griebel, Douglas, Brown, Refling, Underhill with this note: "Here's the team. I can tell you all the names when I get home and match names with the folder sent. Underhill was in my radio section at First Bn. JWC"

Many thanks again to all of you for supporting our chapter and for your interest we are deeply grateful!

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