

RAINBOW TRAIL

The History Newsletter of the Millennium (Rainbow Family) Chapter
Of The Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation, Inc. (RDVF)

February 2015 Volume 15, Issue 1

"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"



The Rainbow Division in
The Great War
Photo right, Memorial
Sculpture, Croix Rouge Farm, Aisne, FR
<http://croixrougefarm.org/>

Title: [Battlefield with Two Soldiers and Child on Horizon]

Creator(s): [Benda, Wladyslaw T. \(Wladyslaw Theodore\), 1873-1948](#), artist

Date Created/Published: [between 1914 and 1918]

Medium: 1 drawing : charcoal.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and
Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

**The United States World War One
Centennial Commission**

<http://worldwar-1centennial.org/>

Follow our history and history-in-the-making!

From the January 2015 MacArthur Memorial e-newsletter:

"The Education Department has created a new YouTube series entitled artiFACTS. This series of short films will highlight the amazing artifacts and documents in the MacArthur Memorial's collection. These films are available on YouTube as well as the Memorial's website. Episode #1 features MacArthur's Purple Heart. Episode #2 provides a behind the scenes look at the Archives and a captured Japanese diary. Is there an artifact that you would like to see highlighted? Email Amanda Williams at amanda.williams@norfolk.gov."

To learn more, to receive the MacArthur Memorial news, updates and e-letters, to see this informative video and to view how the actual archives are stored, please go to this web page and sign up!

<http://www.macarthurmemoial.org/FormCenter/Subscriptions-4/Subscribe-to-The-MacArthur-Memoial-ENew-45>

A RAINBOW SOLDIER OF WORLD WAR I FREDERICH GALLAUDET HAMMER

With thanks to the family of Lt. Col. Fred G. Hammer who saved his memorabilia and recently donated this to the RDVF Millennium Chapter. These will eventually be assessioned to the MacArthur Memorial Museum, Norfolk VA. After WWI, SGM Hammer received a commission, serving in the Army Service Forces, Chemical Warfare Service, as intelligence officer, executive officer, intelligence branch, and chief, intelligence branch, office of the chief, chemical warfare service. He was authorized to wear the Army Commendation Ribbon. He was a member of the D.C. Chapter of the Rainbow Division Veterans Association until his death in 1971. He rests in Arlington National Cemetery, Sec: 8, Site: 243 LH



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Regimental Sergeant Major, HQ
84th Brigade, 42nd Division*

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Liberation of Dachau
Concentration Camp and
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of WWII, Daniel Mestas, 402nd
Field Artillery, Battery B*

A RAINBOW VIGNETTE of WWI - ONE JOYFUL NIGHT

By Frederick "Fred" Gallaudet Hammer, Bn Sgt. Maj. Adjutant General's Office, HQ 42nd Division WWI



Photo taken in Ahrweiler, Germany December 1918; Fred Hammer center, first row

Saturday, the 12th of October, 1918: a small, dirty, dimly-lit room in the shell-torn town of CHEPPY, France; the usual bunch in the office with the occasional visitors – there you have the settings.

The room in which we worked had formerly been a wine-shop, I should judge, from the bottles on the shelves, the arrangement of the place and its surroundings. When we moved in, the 1st Division was just ready to pull out, and although they had taken a hand in trying to make the place look decent, it still had that hungry-war-hungry look which all towns and houses left

standing in that part of France which has been in the boche's possession, have.

CHEPPY is a little town in the Argonne region, some 20 or 30 kilometers west of the Meuse River. It had been in the possession of the boche since 1915, and when they pulled out hurriedly this year the American shells following them, they left very little of the town for us to live in.

A long day was the 12th of October. We sat around idly until we found there was a Sales Commissary open, when we promptly appointed Gregory to go and get some things for us. The afternoon dragged by, with little jobs here and there to be done, and finally supper time came. Gregory and Darr went out for supper and brought mine back to me. Then we all sat around chewing the rag and smoking our cigars fresh from the commissary, and finally went back into a small, stuffy sort of a cave in the back of the building where we slept, and tried a couple of songs, to which the chief objected. So we gave up singing and came back to lounge around in our chairs.

Major Rumbough, Lieutenants Brewer and Sunstorm, Sergeant Major Gregory, Sergeant Major Darr and myself, together with an orderly were in the room when the cloudburst came. Lieutenant Colonel Murphy, G-3, came tearing in the room, a smile on his face, and said, "Well, boys, I have brought you all a Christmas present." He then paused while we looked around at each other with big question marks over our heads. He went on, "Germany has accepted Wilson's Peace proposition. All the German troops will be withdrawn from Allied territory as soon as that matter had been decided by a board to be appointed by the President to conduct it. And it comes from the German people – voted by a large majority of the Reichstag." Then pandemonium broke loose. Major Rumbough commenced to sing "Beautiful beautiful Greenland," and started to walk nervously up and down the floor. Darr said, "I don't believe it. It is too good to be true." Gregory and I started pounding the typewriters as fast as we could to hide our excitement. The Lieutenants said nothing, outside of repeating dumbly what the Colonel had said.

Then finally, we all recovered, and fell into a general discussion. The Colonel telephoned the news around to different ones, while Major Rumbough tried to help him out, but got so excited he got the message mixed up and had to repeat it several times before he got it straight. Everybody seemed to be trying to visualize how the home-town folks would receive him back.

ST. NAZAIRE – VAUCOULEURS – LA FUCHE – ROLAMPONT – LUNEVILLE – BACCARAT – CHATEL-sur-MOSELLE – ST. GERMAINE-La-VILLE – VADENAY FARM – LAFERTE-sous-JOUARRE – TRUGNY – BEUVARDES – BOURMONT – CHATENOIS – TOUL – ANSAUVILLE – ESSEY – BOIS de PANNES – BENOITE – VAUX-COUVENT – RECICOURT – BOIS de MONTFAUCON – CHEPPY – EXERMONT – CHAMPIGNEULLE – AUTRUCHE – GRANDES ARMOISES – MAISONCELLE – BUZANCY

From SGM (Lt. Col.) Hammer's papers:

FRENCH REPUBLIC Paris, April 9th, 1919

The Premier, Secretary of War, To the Commanding General, Forty Second Division:

Dear General:

At the moment when the Forty Second Division is about to leave the soil of France, I wish to express to you in the name of the Government of the (French) Republic our admiration for its wonderful achievements. Its memory will always remain alive among us.

The 42d Division has been in France since the month of November 1917. It began its schooling in war in the Vosges, first, regiment by regiment, and then as a whole unit. At the beginning of 1918 it was ready to face the great battle which was to put an end to the war.

It was in Champagne that it stood the shock of the foe side by side with the French troops. It was with these same troops that it took part in the great counter-attack that marked, at the end of July, the final retreating movement of the German Army. Your soldiers will assuredly not forget the hard attacks in the La Fere Forest and the struggle amid the ruins of the village of Sergy, which changed hands four times.

Your splendid unit took part in all the battles in which the American Army had rendered itself illustrious. The 42d Division participated in the offensive of St. Mihiel where it captured, by itself, more than a thousand prisoners. In October it was in the Argonne. In the first days of November, full of spirit, it pursued the enemy from the Argonne to the Meuse.

The name of Buzancy will remain its last trophy. At the end of the war it had reached the Meuse at Remilly.

All those names, I feel sure, will forever remain in the memory of your soldiers and in the annals of their families.

For us, as you are about to leave France, our thoughts go with respect and emotion to all the soldiers of the 42d Division, who have given their lives for the love of their Country and of Liberty. Just as, in the joy of Victory and with pride in their achievements, your troops are embarking for the beloved shores of their fatherland, we unite with you in a feeling of gratitude for the living and for the dead.

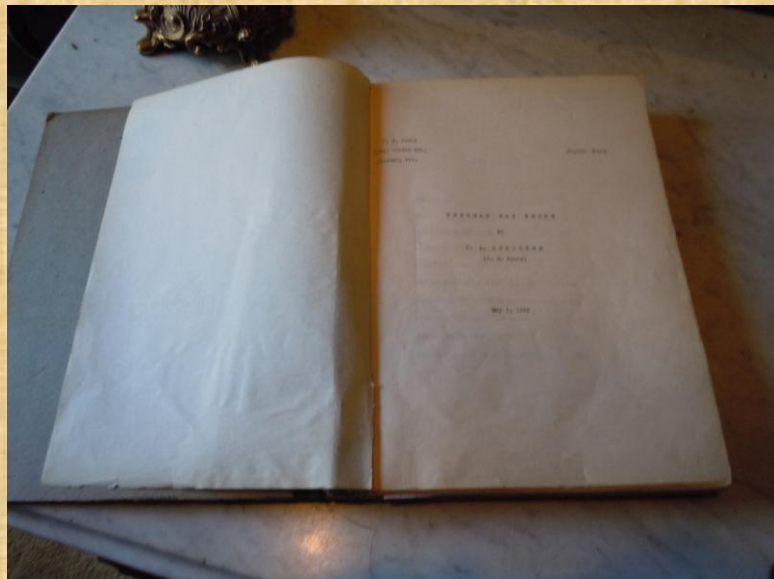
I beg you, dear General, to interpret my sentiments to all those who are under your command and to believe me yours very cordially,

(signed) CLEMENCEAU

Georges Benjamin Clemenceau served as Prime Minister of France from 1906 – 1909 and again from 1917 – 1920. Photo of Clemenceau “in his office” is found here – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Clemenceau



RAINBOW STORIES OF THE GREAT WAR



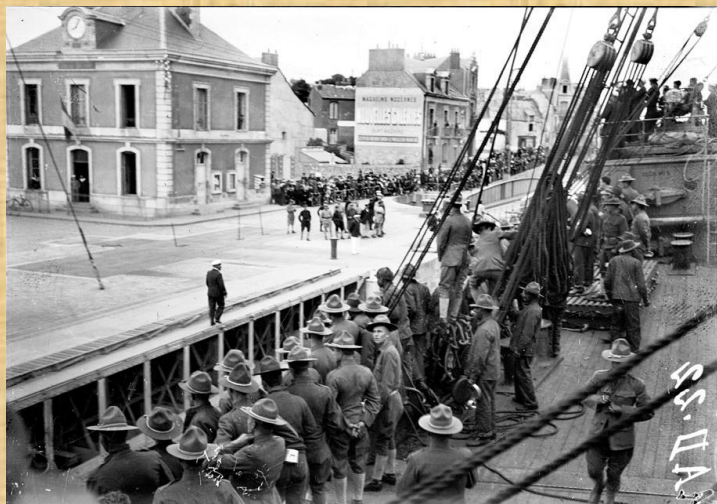
“SHERMAN WAS WRONG” (An Account of the A.E.F.) PART III By T.A. Brainerd (C.E. Foutz), May 1, 1932

Believed to never have been published, this personal manuscript is 90,000 words or 277 pages of double-spaced typing, pencilled corrections and yellowing pages secured in a cardboard binder held together with black tape.

The WWI Rainbow Unit has been identified as HQ 149th Regiment (1st Illinois) Field Artillery. We have not identified T.A. Brainerd; however, C.E. Foutz is Chetney E. Foutz, Pvt., HQ 149th Regiment (1st Illinois) Field Artillery. Typed on the title page of this manuscript is:

C.E. Foutz 10915 Vernon Ave. Chicago, Ill.

Chapter Three - “SO THIS IS NAP’S OLD HANGOUT”



Others, less interested in the Frogs, were finding entertainment of a sort in buying “Shawkalaa” from the little row boats pulled up along side on the harbor side of the ship. They would tie their campaign hats to a long string and, placing some money, old cigar coupons or anything else of seeming value to the Frogs, inside, let them down the ship’s side slowly until, coming within reach of the enterprising little merchants below, they were grasped, contents taken out and a few bars of stuff they called chocolate returned in exchange, and released again for those above to pull up; each, in turn, doing a lot of wild and noisy speculating as to the merits of the deal after it had closed. Sometimes a man above would get six bars of chocolate for one crisp and reasonably new looking U.S. Cigar store coupon; another would get many a half-bar for

Most of the town of St. Nazaire came down to the docks that day to watch the ships unload. Ten great ships, all loaded with troops and supplies, filled all their available docks. Our British patrol had returned, perhaps, to bring in another convoy and the few remaining ships in port had been anchored in the harbor. Most of the afternoon was spent by our men, now dressed in their Sunday best, parading back and forth along the main deck shouting and waving to a similar parade of civilians along the deck below. They were getting their first lessons in French, while the civilians, in turn, were getting some well directed pointers in good old American slang.

<http://www.ecpad.fr/larrivee-des-troupes-americaines-a-saint-nazaire/>

L’arrivée des troupes américaines à Saint-Nazaire.



an old one dollar bill; another would let his hat about half way down when an unexpected arm would shoot out of a port hole near it and confiscate the money, and others lost hats and all.

It did not take long for each to discover that he was getting jipped by the other, and war was declared right then and there on that side of the ship, while those on the other side were parading their best Sunday manners for the benefit of all the French girls along the dock. When hostilities were reaching their peak on the harbor side, our men, occupying the heights, had the upper hand. Now fully organized, the man on deck would place some money in his hat and start to let it down overside. In doing so, he would maneuver along the rail until the Frog, unknowingly in his little row boat below, found himself directly under a hopper chute and, of course, at the proper time, a signal was given to a confederate below who dumped the hopper, usually containing dish water, coffee grounds, garbage, etc., and it all showered into the little river vendor's coffers. In return, we were learning something about a good old round cussing out --- in French. Sometimes the hat was too far down and was lost with the rest when the hopper was dumped. One of 'grand coup' on the part of the individual above and, having no idea of the volume it contained or how to shut it off, his confederate had found his way to the control mechanism and dumped it. The first charge almost instantly filled up one end of the little row boat below and put it under water. The owner started swimming away and instantly became the target for everything on deck in the line of life saving equipment except the life boats and rafts. No doubt these would have been thrown over too if they could have been unfastened.

Now there was hell t'pay, but no one in sight to pay it. After the water all around the little river vendors' boats below was covered with life-belts, these men walked leisurely to the other side of the ship and joined in the little innocent exchange of greetings going on there.

That night, some of the men got to go ashore; that is, as far as the dock below, to help unload the ship. Among them was our little group of telephone men with Dip in charge of one of the unloading details. For some reason or other the ship could not be brought directly against the dock, and left a gap of about eight feet of open water between. From this point the side of the ship towered straight up to the deck that seemed about five or six stories above the dock. All was rather well lighted. One man stood at the rail above transferring signals between the winch operator on deck and the men on the dock. The boom would swing around over the hatch to the hold below and let down a huge rope net. It was filled with supplies, hoisted up, swung out and over-side and let down to the dock below where it was swung farther back by hand, and let down on the dock proper to be unloaded.

All of this work got into a sort of cadence the men were thoroughly enjoying after having been confined aboard ship for over two weeks. The work was going along smoothly, almost too much so, and considerable headway was being made toward getting the ship unloaded. The supplies consisted mostly of large bags of sugar, a hundred or over coming down at each net-load, so it was about all fifteen or sixteen men could do to swing the net out to the proper place on the dock. Dip, standing back a little ways, would signal when to stop the downward travel of the net, with a whistle. He became so proficient at this that the men, standing at the edge of the dock reaching out to the net, could almost catch it and start pulling it away from the ship.

Occasionally, a net load would mis-carry, however, and come close to or dip slightly into the water. It would be quickly hoisted up again to the proper level and pulled away. Sometimes, a man being in too much of a hurry to grab the net, would be pulled over with it, and, by clinging to the net, would simply ride back up with it and no harm done; in fact, just the contrary, they were getting quite a kick out of it.

[Ed. "Godfrey" may refer to Pvt. Herbert N. Godfrey, HQ 149th Regiment Field Artillery (the same as our author, C.E. Foutz). His address listed in the 1917 Roster of the Rainbow Division at Camp Mills, L.I. NY was 78 Dartmouth Rd, London, England.]

Now, Godfrey, very quiet and unassuming, was being highly entertained at this stunt when Dip, hesitating an instant with the whistle, had let a particularly big load that Godfrey had made a lunge for, go ker-plunk clear under the water and, as far as we could tell, probably went clear to the bottom of the river. He signaled quickly and the net came tearing up out of the water below like some sea monster, and Godfrey holding fast to it as the water poured from him and the sacks of sugar.

Now, Godfrey knew Dip had done this purposely. The net was swung out and dropped and Godfrey climbed down slowly, coughing and dripping, to the dock. All were watching him and some offering sympathy while others offered to help him, but Godfrey, waving them all away, looked over to Dip with all the meanness and contempt he could command under the circumstances, turned, and without saying a word, walked slowly over to a pile of sugar bags, sat down abruptly, threw his hat on the dock and glared again at Dip. Then it started. For fully ten minutes Godfrey loosed a continuous stream of rapid fire profanity such as only he could produce. It had its usual historic origin, its eloquence, its fluency and continuity that made him the envy of the whole A.E.F. His sizzling pet phrases permeated the surrounding atmosphere, charging it with a tension that left everybody within its range spell bound. Dip was alternately freezing and burning while the others remained quietly enjoying this brilliant reaction to Godfrey's onslaught. It was anything but just an ordinary cussing and the air was filled with wild applause when Godfrey had finished.

Activities were quietly resumed. They were getting near the end of the ship's load now and, for no obvious reason, the man on deck shouted down "Officers' baggage!" as the next net swung out and started down. It came tearing down, but the men, also having heard the message from above, stood in the clear as it came sailing past and plunged into the water with a terrific splash.

Now, Dip, all this time was feigning something wrong with the whistle and, after he had managed to get the net hoisted again to the proper height, he walked over to a light, and turning the whistle over and over in his hands to examine it carefully, remarked, half humorously and half seriously, "Huh, eh Gad, this darn whistle is full of water again," while the net hung there with thousands of little streams of water coming from its load of those cute little officers' steamer trunks. As the net was unloaded the trunks were



thrown, one by one, into a pile on the dock and with each trunk went a stream of heart felt sympathies, though, perhaps not altogether serious. Needless to say there were no officers around and the men, feeling more or less that the officers were paid extra money to compensate for this sort of thing, threw themselves rather wholeheartedly into the spirit of the occasion.

[Napoleon] *Bonaparte at the Pont d'Arcole*, by Baron Antoine-Jean Gros, (ca. 1801), Musee du Louvre, Paris
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon>



"So this is Nap's old hangout," said Dip, as the troopers marched wearily thru the entrance to Camp Coetquidan where they were to receive some of the finer points in their training.

"Yep," replied Slim. "It's the same training camp Napoleon used to train his artillery years ago."

"Eh Gad, boy, she looks just like he left it too, if you ask me," said Dip after noticing some of the dilapidated looking old shacks as they passed.

"This is the darndest camp buildin'est outfit I ever got into." added Godfrey. "Every place we go we build a new camp. I suppose we'll have to rebuild the western front too, when we get there."

"Look at all the good experience you're gettin'. Next war we get into I'm goin' t' be a contractor and build 'em a nice comfortable place to have it. I'll give 'em hot and cold running water, glass enclosed shower baths, fine kitchens rigged up especially for cooking big steaks and....."

"Rave on, rave on!" interrupted Godfrey. "Somebody knock that guy in the head up there."

"That just reminds me," joined in Martin. "When do we eat? I'm gettin' fed up on all this walkin' an' my stomach thinks I've completely deserted it." ["Martin" is likely to refer to Pvt. Milford M. Martin, Murphysboro, Illinois, HQ 149th Regiment Field Artillery]

"Say! I thought this was a mounted outfit when I joined up." said Slim as he plugged along in the mud under an extra heavy pack.

"That's just another one of those crazy thoughts you have." Godfrey replied with a little irony.

"Well, fellas, here we are." Dip called out as the company stopped in front of a dirty looking rambling shack they called barracks number thirty-four.

Inside the barracks was dark and damp. The ordinary earth floor had been well covered with growing weeds that had now died out with the coming of cold weather. A few little windows with all glass broken out let in the only light that showed the rafters and underside of the roof covered with cob-webs and wasps' nests. The place had that damp cellar odor and was generally very repulsive. It did not take these two hundred and fifty men of headquarters company long, however, to clean the place out. Within a few days all the interior had been washed down and painted white. A cinder and sand floor had been laid; new windows put in; ventilators dug around the bottom of the entire building and the whole place made quite presentable. Up to this time and except on board ship, these men had been living in tents and they took to this new idea with much enthusiasm after the barracks were once cleaned up.

Here they received their field equipment, steel helmets, French seventy-fives, side arms, ammunition and finally, the much hated horses that had come over in a separate convoy. Within the next few weeks all units found themselves deeply involved in intensive and final training. Batteries went daily out on the artillery range where they practiced. All the auxiliary units were operating on the range the same as actual warfare and at night, after a hard day, they assembled in the various cafes surrounding the main camp and fought over the day's work with an ample supply of good old cognac.

A couple of weeks later found all the men comfortably settled in their new routine. An hour after the evening meal found only about a dozen of the hundred or more cots, lined up neatly along either side of the barracks, occupied, a few scattered candles provided the only light except the first-sergeants' lantern sitting on his table at the far end of the building where he was busy working on his books. The door banged at the opposite end as a man entered and came walking up the wide passageway between the ends of the cots. About midway of the building Slim was lying on his cot apparently deeply interested in a big red artillery manual; a candle stuck in the neck of a big bottle was burning at the head of his cot and from all indications he was set for the night. Suddenly the end of his cot was seized and up-ended depositing Slim and his book nicely on the ground, looking up he saw Godfrey standing over him, his face beaming with one of his rare smiles.

"Congratulations, Slim, O'le boy, O'le boy, O'le boy!"

"Saaay, what the hell's th' matter with you now?" grumbled Slim as he regained his feet.

"You're elected."

"Elected for what?"

"To take me out and get me most graciously, most effectively and most hopelessly plastered. That is the honor I've decided to bestow upon you." This with a little sort of bow, Godfrey finished by adding, "And tonight, O'le fellow, is to be the night."

This was totally unexpected from Godfrey. He had never taken a drink of anything stronger than water and it was only on the boat that he had learned to smoke. And here he was all charged up with the idea that he was going to do some more experimenting.



Slim, with as much of a scowl as he could muster with a man like Godfrey and still rubbing his hip, looked up and said, "You know, I've got a damn good notion to knock you clear through that wall over there."

Godfrey deliberately sat down beside Slim and, putting one arm around his shoulder, said, "Now Slim, listen. I'm really serious about this thing. I've been thinking it over for the past week and I'm not deciding on the spur of the moment. I could go out and get two of the worst soaks in this outfit who would gladly go with me tonight – you know that, but I've decided that no one but my very best friend will do. I want someone that I can trust, someone who will stick with me, Slim, so you've got to come along."

"I've got a notion to call the top kick and have your head examined. If you think for one minute I'm going to initiate you into the old John Barleycorn fraternity, you're crazy. Now go on to bed before I get mad and pound some sense into that dumb skull of yours."

"Slim, listen. Just as sure as I'm sittin' here, I'm goin' out and look up Navarro and Robinson and we'll all probably land in the hoose-gow. So you might as well come along and keep me in good company at least."

[ed. "Navarro" and "Robinson" are likely to refer to these men – Pvt. Benito Navarro, Chicago, IL; and Pvt. Raymond W. Robinson, Harvey, IL – both men were members of HQ 149th Regiment Field Artillery, the same as our author, C.E. Foutz. Also, it seems more and more likely that "Slim" is himself the author as he recounts unwitnessed and private conversations between himself and Godfrey.]

"Where's Dip and the rest of the bunch?"

"I don't know. I've looked all over for them since supper and can't find any of 'em."

"Well, alright," Slim finally agreed.

As the two walked down the muddy street to the little settlement just outside the main entrance to the camp, Slim's thoughts were on the proper procedure to follow out. He could get a couple of smokeouts mixed for Godfrey and put him under the table right off. But this would probably leave Godfrey with the idea he had been deprived of some of the adventures of a more circuitous route and result in another attempt the next night. He finally decided to give him the works; do it up with all the preliminaries; build up slowly on a foundation rich with lasting qualities and round it off with a finale Godfrey would never forget. In fact, he even considered permanent records of some sort, possibly in the form of a scar, but his better judgement while still sober ruled this idea out.

With Slim's approval, Godfrey had selected one of the largest places at the far end of a half mile string of cafes, "La Chapeau Rouge," according to the sign over the door, and it was fixed up about half French and half American, the long bar along one side being the only thing about it that was American. They were doing a rushing business when Slim and Godfrey entered. Selecting a table over in one corner in preference to the bar, they found seats, and Slim ordered up a bottle of rum; thanks to Godfrey's interpreting, Slim found it to be a better quality than he had been getting.

After a few drinks had been leisurely consumed, Godfrey remarked, "Well, how come, Slim? Why ain't I under the table by now?"

"Well, you nitwit, did you suppose a few drinks would do that? Besides, that Frog thinks you're one of his tribe and is trotting out better stuff than he's been giving these other bozos. How d'you like it?"

"I don't know," replied Godfrey rather slowly as he twirled the little glass back and forth between his fingers. "It doesn't seem to have much of a flavor; it leaves a sort of brakish taste in my mouth and a very pleasing and tingling sort of feeling after I've swallowed it. I can feel the warmth of it a little, too. Altogether it's not bad. How much do we drink?"

"Oh, we'll kill this bottle then try some cognac. You'll like that; it's got a little more flavor."

A little later on Godfrey was beginning to get considerably warmed up. Dip and Martin had strolled in and now the party was complete. Godfrey, having spent most of the past week on stable duty, was just sufficiently steamed up now to vent his wrath at horse flesh, especially of the army caliber.

"Horses! Horses! Eh Gads, don't talk to me about horses!" exploded Godfrey scornfully. "The one big idea I can't get thru my head is why they teach us all about shooting and how to kill things and then make it a court-martial offense to shoot or even hurt one of those dumb nags. They're the only natural enemy we've got...and the feeling is mutual. Even an officer, in all the grandeur of his high place in this man's army and backed by the archives of the war college is reduced to just so much flesh and bones before one of those skates. Any one of those babies we've got down there can stand on one leg and kick with the other three and bite at the same time; and believe me, they can do it with a precision and lightning-like rapidity that would turn our gunners green with envy."

Someone advised Godfrey to stay out of their reach, as he downed the last of the rum, and he started out again.

"Reach! Say, if you're too far away they just kick anyway and that much harder, and off comes one of their shoes that never misses. They're regular cyclones of fury. There are only three things those nags care anything about, and to annihilate the personnel of the whole American army is all three of them. And fight, say, one of those beasts came after me this morning standing on his hind feet and striking away with his fore-paws just as good as any amateur boxer. All he needed was gloves. They like to play tag but we're always it. They're perpetually hungry and thirsty. Up to a few days ago I had always been puzzled over why nothing is ever mentioned about these brutes in history or in our high-powered training, but I see it all now. Anyone ever having had anything to do with those babies would see 'em in hell before he would give 'em any recognition. If I ever come out of this affair altogether, I'm goin' to spend the rest of my life someplace where they kill horses....how about another drink here!"

Godfrey had been rambling along with his little speech until his general excitement had brought him up on his feet and pounding the table with his fist, only to be brought up short when he discovered there was nothing to drink on the table and he needed to moisten his palate again. Cognac was immediately set around, one huge bottle before each individual, and Godfrey, still keyed up a few notches too high, poured a stiff drink and downed it all at one gulp. It stiffened him from top to bottom and screwed up his moon face until the rest of us started looking for an opening in the roof to let him out when he jumped. Instead, however, he managed to find his chair and sat down.

After shaking himself a couple times, he managed to say, "God, au mighty, what's that stuff?"

But the others were too busy enjoying his reactions to tell him what it was. The drinking proceeded a little more cautiously now as Godfrey continued to acquire more respect for the contents of the long necked bottles. Between drinks he continued his discourse on army horses. This one thought now dominated by far all others in his somewhat swirling head and it held promises.

After the second long necked bottle of cognac had been consumed, Slim stood up and mustering all his facilities as best he could, said, "Now Godfrey, we've reached the point where we must drink one final toast to the gods of fine liquors and beat it for the camp."

But to Godfrey it was just another voice in the bedlam of noises that were singing thru his ears. At intervals he would open his eyes wide and look up at Slim only to have his vision confused with a dozen Slims symmetrically placed in a whirling circle, then he would close them in an effort to shut out these crazy tricks his eyes were playing on him.

A round of Kirsch was ordered. Each poured a drink in the small glass that had been set before him, but Godfrey being only about one third there, filled the glass he had been drinking cognac from, a somewhat larger glass and one capable of holding a considerable charge of this dynamic liquid.

All were standing around the table now as best they could and Slim, raising his glass, said, "Well, here's a go, fellas," and all downed the shot of Kirsch. **["kirsch is a clear, colorless fruit brandy traditionally made from double distillation of morello cherries a dark-colored cultivar of the sour cherry." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirsch>]** To Godfrey, however, totally unsuspecting, this new drink had sprung loose everything within him; this had been nothing but liquid fire; it burnt its way from the start and kept burning as it entered his blood stream until he seemed to be on fire all over. It sobered him a little; he opened his mouth to let out a yell but none came out; then he discovered he couldn't breathe. He ran for the door and out into the street before he could decide that it was more important to put out the fire first. This brought him back into the bar looking for water where it was quickly provided and poor Godfrey remained for several minutes looking more like a wet rag than anything else.

It had been a terrible ordeal for Godfrey, but the job was particularly well done and it seemed to give Slim a certain amount of satisfaction with the result. Arm in arm, all four now returned to the barrack. The cold night air had revived Godfrey enough to develop a beautiful and stentorian crying jag, but it was also making him terribly sleepy so he would snap out of a drowsy spell for an instant and bawl himself back to sleep again.

On reaching the barrack door, they deposited him on the ground just inside where he went sound asleep immediately. Slim remained while Dip and Martin departed to prepare for the finale. After awhile, Godfrey awoke on hearing what he thought to be strange music. As he opened his eyes he saw walking slowing on either side, a row of grotesque faces over a row of burning candles. He felt himself being carried on something and as the picture cleared a little the strains of music became a little more connected with an air he seemed to know. All at once it came to him that it was Chopin's funeral dirge that sent terror thru him; it seemed to come from in front. The muffled sound of a drum was keeping that slow and monotonous cadence. Above and beyond, all was darkness. His head was whirling with thoughts that were all washed away in one sweep as he broke down again with his crying jag.

They had loaded him on a stretcher and dressed in their underwear with French gas masks over their faces, were marching him up and down the barracks room. Several members of the band had been found awake and had added their own efforts to this little affair. Godfrey was crying with the roar of a lion mingled with all the tender boo-hoos of a newly born babe while the musicians were doing fairly good work in accompanying him. After several times around the barracks, Godfrey was deposited on his own bunk where for the next fifteen minutes a sort of mock religious rite was performed most solemnly while Godfrey continued to bawl thru it all.

Finally, the masks were removed and all proceeded to jostle Godfrey for another five minutes. This sobered him enough to realize it was all a joke and he wound up far in the night alternately shouting a stream of his sizzling and uncomplimentary opinions at his offenders and announcing to the world in general that he wanted to kill a horse. Altogether it had been a hectic night and one Godfrey remembered only the early part of.

A few evenings later found our four telephone men, or perhaps four horsemen would fit the present activities better, seated around Slim's bunk hashing over the latest dope. Godfrey had the floor again:

"This whole business is getting kind o'nutty to me."

"Why?" asked Dip.

"Well, somehow or other I got an idiotic idea that I was to be a telephone man and the nearest I got to that was lugging a twenty pound telephone. Since I got off the boat I've been doing nothing but manicure those old nags and in between time cramming my poor brain with a lot of ohms and volts and high explosives and magnetos and range finders and aiming points and other junk I couldn't remember even if there ever was a chance of having any use for it. To me it's like reading a treatise on the exponents of American philosophy while watching a musical comedy show; no connection at all between the two. It's just a jumbled up mess. You try to take this thing seriously and they make you the laughing stock; then you try to get funny with a horse and get the hell kicked out of you; then someone says you're to take an examination on the B.C. telescope. They keep reminding us that there's a war on and now I'm beginning to doubt that. They get us all charged up about being one of the first divisions to land in France then stick us away up here in the country with a lot of wild nags that have never seen human beings before us; telephones you can't talk over and poles that God himself can't climb, and then throw in a few bewhiskered and bread tearing frogs in dirty old dilapidated blue uniforms to remind us we're not in Africa. Instead of the Germans they give us two wars to carry on, one with our officers and one with our horses and damn if they ain't giving us pretty good training at that. Boy, if you can make any sense out of this thing you ought to have a commission."

"Hay, hay, hay!" interrupted Dip, making a grab for Godfrey. "Who the devil wound you up tonight? You're just learnin' to soldier now."

"Solderin', huh! So that's what you call solderin'. Say, d'u see what they issued to us today? No? Well, they gave us a pair of spurs for climbing poles, American spurs for climbing French telephone poles. Just what you'd expect. The army's never wrong. What they need to climb these poles over here with is a plain old barn yard ladder like they have on the farm. I burned a pole five times this morning and I know. And we're going to use these things up at the front for stringing telephone lines...ain't that hot? I suppose we're going to climb up the sides of the trenches with these things. Picture us a month from now walking along a trench with a pair o'hooks slung over our shoulders. It's a cinch one of us is crazy but now I'm beginnin' to think both of us are. It's some

consolation to know the Germans will die laughing if they ever see us come up to do battle walking around at the front looking for poles to climb....boooh!"

French Army telephone communications in the field during World War I HD Stock Footage <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puZkULjd07A>

"Ah, Godfrey, you got this thing all wrong," said Slim. "There really is a war on, you know."

"Yeah! If you want to start a panic just step outside that door and fire a pistol. They'd call out the army and navy."

Godfrey was soaring the heights of one of his choice moody spells on this night and half the outfit had gathered around to enjoy it. Each time he paused for air the applause spurred him on until he had the whole barracks rollicking with laughter and the officer of the day entered and broke up the little gathering.

As usual, Godfrey had to go to the stables for feeding the next morning, long before daylight. With a bucket of oats in each hand, he slumped along behind the heels of the long line of horses to the section he was to feed, but, of course, keeping out of their reach. At this time of morning these animals were at their very worst. Sensing something to eat, they pranced around as far as their halter ropes would let them and amid a bedlam of whines, squeals and snorts, they were kicking and biting everything within reach. All Godfrey had to do was pass in between two of them and empty the oats into the bin and walk out again, a simple task, perhaps, even in the dark, if the horses aren't the least bit hungry, but a mighty one with half starved army horses.

Of the very last consideration was that of seeing that all horses received a somewhat uniform amount of feed. Rather, Godfrey stood back a few moments to pick out a pair of the most quiet brutes, then, after a few minutes of cussing and shouting at the horses to get over, he made a flying leap past their heels and started shoving and poking his way to the front of the stalls. Here he dumped the buckets in a flash in the nearest bin and turned to make his exit. At the same time about six horses all dove for the one pile of oats and Godfrey's hopes sank. First, one of his tin buckets connected with one of the flying heels and went sailing out into the night, striking the frozen ground some distance away with a weird clanging and banging noise that made one's hair stand straight up. Then, a dull thud, as someone striking a muffled drum softly, and Godfrey was picking himself up from the same frozen ground not far from where the bucket had struck.

Quietly, he rubbed his hip for a few minutes then went groping around on the ground for something he seemed to have lost. Suddenly he stood up, with a club of considerable proportions in his hands, and, after measuring his range carefully, jumped in and there followed for the next few minutes a lightning session of fencing between several pairs of hoofs and Godfrey and his club, all to the accompaniment of his rapid-fire cussing.

Godfrey emerged, limping, to the food supply for the next group to feed. He was not alone enjoying these little delicacies, gracious no; a dozen others were doing the same and one really wasn't considered kicked unless he was knocked at least ten feet away.

Only one man ever mastered this situation. His name was Chandler, a little fellow about six foot four and weighing two hundred and fifty, all bone and muscle. [Ed. "**Chandler**" is likely to refer to Pvt. Charles E. Chandler, Staunton, Illinois, HQ 149th Regiment Field Artillery] He passed in at the end of the stable between the end partition and the first horse. After the usual preliminaries, and when in just the right position, the horse lunged to crowd him nice and flat against the partition. A little annoyed at this playfulness, Chandler nudged this nag in the flanks several times with his fist and mentioned casually the conventional "get over." But this nag seemed to have its own ideas about this and, perhaps, being one of those that had forsworn vengeance against the whole A.E.F. and now a little bleary-eyed at the sensing of horse food, kept lunging away at Chandler until he was beginning to grunt a little and with each grunt the end partition of the stable was seen to bulge a little. Chuck, for he said "here, sir" to the name of Charles, seeing that he was making no progress, became a little impatient. He turned side ways with his back against the partition and, managing to get both feet up against the horse's ribs, gave one tremendous shove, straightening out his legs as the stable end bulged almost to the breaking point. There followed the short neighing thru wildly dilated nostrils of these highly excited animals, a thunderous stamping of hoofs of the horses nearest to him and the net result was the two horses nearest Chandler clear down on their sides and hoofs flaying the air, and the next six or eight horses stampeding among themselves to get out of the way while Chuck stood there with his back to the partition grinning foolishly at this unexpected exhibition of his own playfulness. The next morning Chuck walked quietly up behind this first nag with the usual salutation, "get over!" and there followed for the next five minutes the wildest, noisiest, kickinest bunch of skates in the A.E.F. and, as he entered to deposit his oats, there wasn't a nag within reach. A man in a million, Chuck was the envy of all who knew him.

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[ed.'s caption: U.S. Army Field Artillery horses in training, earning their oats. From The Field Artillery Journal January-February 1920]

http://sill-www.army.mil/firesbulletin/archives/1920/JAN_FEB_1920/JAN_FEB_1920_FULL_EDITION.pdf

TO BE CONTINUED.

70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp 29 April 2015 *and film documentary in the making of Dachau Liberators' perspectives airing 2015 on the History Channel*

In production now, with interviews of Liberators and Survivors of the Dachau Concentration camp in the United States, this film director introduced himself to us in a letter last November...

"My name is Emanuel Rotstein and I am a 35 year old documentary producer and director from Munich. Since 2010 I have been heading the original production department at the HISTORY channel in the German speaking territory. The focus of my work lies in documentaries and factual series with a historical background. My productions include, among others, "The Legion-German war in Vietnam", "The Eleventh Day-The survivors of Munich 1972" and "The Teacher Who Defied Hitler". These films have been broadcast in Germany as well as internationally with great success and have received a variety of awards.

"In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, I am currently developing a documentary film on the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp. In this film I would like to tell the story from the perspective of the courageous GIs who freed thousands of captives, brought an end to the Nazi terror regime and helped to build a democratic society in Europe."

An article and photos of Rainbow Division veteran, Daniel Gillespie, H/222, has circulated around the world and a link was posted on the NEWS page of the Foundation's <rainbowvets.org> website:

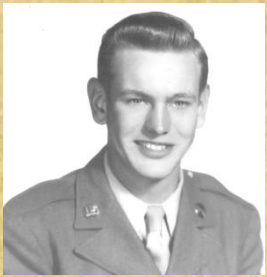
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/26/joshua-kaufman-holocaust-survivor_n_6527684.html

His meeting with Holocaust survivor and former Dachau inmate, Joshua Kaufman, is beautifully recorded and will be part of Emanuel Rotstein's film documentary planned to be shown in May 2015 on the History Channel.

Photo right by Frank Siering is printed here with his permission.

His original article, in German is found here:

<http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/holocaust/holocaust-ueberlebender-dankt-befreier-39381488.bild.html>



The SILVER STAR was awarded to DANIEL P. GILLESPIE, 39 566 236, Staff Sergeant (then Private First Class), Infantry, Company H, 222nd Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 24 January 1945, near Schweighausen, France. When the enemy penetrated our Moder River Line, Private Gillespie held his fire until the fanatically attacking force was within 50 yards of his machine gun emplacement. Opening fire with devastating accuracy, he forced the enemy to withdraw with a loss of many casualties. When the hostile force again attempted to attack his position by a flanking maneuver executed behind a river bank, Private Gillespie, unable to direct fire upon the advancing Germans, concentrated a terrific barrage upon the automatic weapons supporting the maneuver, silencing three of them. In the last of the fire fight, his machine gun ceased firing because of a mechanical failure. Realizing the need for the tactical information he had gained, he then withdrew to his command post where he passed on to higher headquarters the extent of the German break-through. Through his gallant actions, Private Gillespie contributed immeasurably to the successful defense of Alsace. Entered military service from Los Angeles, California.



Georgia Honors Six Liberators - Capitol ceremony commemorates international remembrance day

Two of the six men honored for their roles in liberating Nazi concentration camps between January and May 1945 are Rainbow Division veterans, Hilbert and Howard Margol, 392nd Field Artillery, 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division WWII who took part in the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp on 29 April 1945.

<http://atlantajewishtimes.com/2015/02/georgia-honors-6-liberators/>

[Ed. Hilbert Margol and his family will be attending the two events below.]

Special Invitations To 42ND "Rainbow" Division Liberators of Dachau Concentration Camp **--From a Letter to the RDVF from the city of Munich:**

On April 30, 2015 the City of Munich will celebrate the opening of its new Documentation Center of the History of National Socialism in Munich (NS-Dokumentationszentrum München). This new institution will serve both as a museum and as a place of learning, remembrance and education. The Documentation Center will address the city's National Socialist past and the ramifications of Nazi dictatorship. It will offer a permanent exhibition, a learning centre with media and research opportunities, special exhibitions, as well as a diverse educational and event programme.

The date of the opening ceremony was chosen to honour the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Munich from the Nazi terror regime by the US Army, and the Rainbow Division in particular. The City of Munich would like to invite Rainbow Division veterans who took part in the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp and Munich for the opening ceremony.

With best regards and greetings from Bavaria, Mit freundlichen Grüßen, **Dr. Jan Björn Potthast**

PR – Public relations / Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit NS-Dokumentationszentrum Briennerstr. 34 D-80333 München

--**The Dachau Memorial Office** has also made known their interest in encouraging all Liberators of the Dachau Concentration Camp on 29 April 1945 to attend, as their guests, the 70th Commemoration Ceremonies this year, information to be posted soon on their website. At this date, several WWII veterans of the 42nd Division and their families are planning to attend. Please watch this website for further date/time information <http://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/id-70th-anniversary-of-the-liberation-of-dachau-concentration-camp.html> Or for questions please contact Suellen McDaniel, JMAC1400@aol.com

The Story of a Rainbow Division Field Artilleryman WWII, SGT. Daniel Mestas

Researched and presented by Kathleen Hemard, daughter of Robert Hoskinson, G/232, from materials shared by the Mestas Family . Kathleen's research and dedication has made possible several other personal histories printed in RAINBOW TRAIL, most recently, the POW Journal , **"Survival"** of T/Sgt Glen C. Malitzke, G/242, printed in the August 2014 issue.



**Mestas Family
Photo**

DANNY MESTAS, SGT, FIELD ARTILLERY, BATTERY B, 402ND FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, WAS AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL, FROM 5 FEBRUARY 1945 TO 8 MAY 1945, INCLUSIVE, IN FRANCE AND GERMANY.

AFTER SEPARATING FROM THE ARMY ON 23 NOV 1945, HE CONTINUED TO SERVE. WHILE WORKING AS A MOBILE EQUIPMENT REPAIRER AT THE PUEBLO ARMY DEPOT, HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE SOUTH SIDE CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN G.I. FORUM. HE WAS COMMENDED FOR HIS ACTIVE ROLE IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS. HE FOCUSED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY AS A CUB MASTER, IN THE PTA, AND THE G.I. FORUM. HE WAS ALSO PRAISED FOR HIS COMPAIGNING TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE CRIPPLED CHILDRENS' SOCIETY¹

Sgt. Mestas' narrative is in bold print. Supplementary information is from the 42nd Combat History unless otherwise noted.



On December 7, 1940, Daniel Mestas enlisted in the Army at Fort Logan, Colorado. He was assigned to the 18th Field Artillery (Horse drawn) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. On July 28, 1941, he began the "Enlisted Specialists Battery Mechanics Course." He graduated on October 18, 1941.² During 1942, he continued training with the 18th FA, rising to the rank of Tech 5 by November.

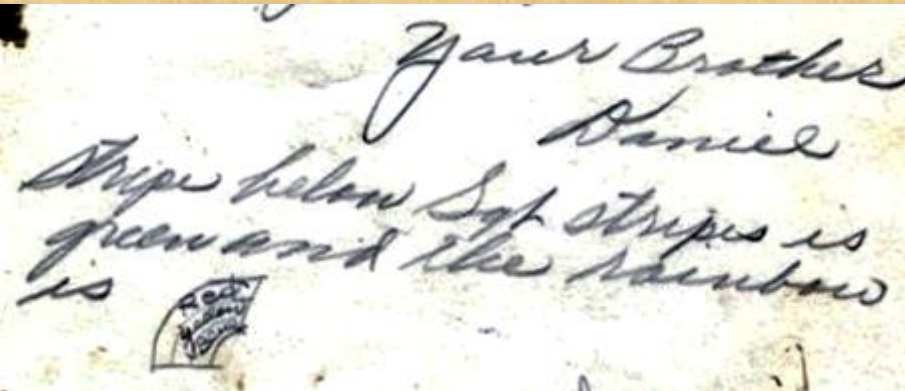
Danny Mestas, 18 Field Artillery, Fort Sill, Oklahoma

Age 20-21, circa 1940-41 Mestas Family Photo

At some point, he was assigned to the 402nd Field Artillery Battalion, 42nd Rainbow Division at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma.



Mestas Family Photo and a "PS" from a letter Sgt. Mestas sent to his brother



LTC W. F. Ryan sent SGT Mestas a commendation stating "During the period 7 May 1944 to 3 June 1944 you were assigned to the 402nd Field Artillery Provisional Battery as a platoon sergeant. Your outstanding initiative and leadership during this period kept the morale and training of your platoon at a high level. It gives me great pleasure to commend you on this performance of duty in an outstanding manner.³

Taking our training as one of the many 105 mm Howitzer Sections in the Rainbow (42nd) Infantry Division– Division Artillery, at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, was quite a job.



Getting ready for coming overseas:

In December 1944, after all equipment had been taken care of, we packed our personal equipment and moved out of the barracks. It was a cold, windy day (which is nothing for Oklahoma weather).

Moving to MRS (Maintenance Repair Shop) No. 12, the 742d Ordnance Shop, we slept on the cold cement floor until early the following morning. Then taking a truck ride to Braggs railroad where we loaded on the train for the East Coast. Then some band played the Rainbow Song and Mountain Dew. Pretty soon we are on our way, arriving in Camp Kilmer, NJ on Christmas morning, 1944.

During our stay there it was pull and tug, except for the passes we got and made use of during our stay to New York City, to Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Early one morning we are again loading on a train. This time for keeps, to New York Harbor. We ferried to the New York side from New Jersey, across the Hudson to Pier 53, where a big gray ship with a number 711 painted on it (a Coast Guard vessel) waited for us. The USS General Gordon.

Before loading, while standing in ranks, lined up by number, on the dock, the Red Cross women came by with hot coffee and two Hershey bars.

Later, we went up the gangplank sounding off with our first name and middle initial, knowing that we are on the ship for some days.

Being put in the third deck even with the water line and going down the stairs wondering with a question in our mind how we could all fit in such a small place. Soon it was answered for us, by the unfolding cots which were four high. The man on the bottom being lucky because he did not have so far to fall.

All this time thinking that while on the ship it would be easy for us. But that was quickly solved.

The first Sergeant, notebook in hand, looking for the men for KP, and many other duties which followed. Since our Battalion got the job of feeding the men on the ship.

Everything going fine until the first day we hit rough water, then things began to happen mostly everywhere on the ship. Men couldn't get very far and had to use their helmets.

One instance I do recall in the mess hall during the day of rough weather. One fellow coming through the chow line, filling up his plate, getting up as far as the table.. next moment he was on the floor, passed out.

Since I was Mess Sergeant for one mess hall, that particular day I put a big GI can in the middle of the mess hall, but that didn't help much (poor helmets), too far for some fellows.

Then after four or five days with GI cans, helmet and cans of any size, the situation was under control.

Out on the ocean during the day we were allowed to go on deck. We could see only ships, destroyers around us and blue water .. always being reminded not to throw trash over board for fear of submarines.

Early in the evening the ship would be buttoned up which is the closing of hatches so no light could be seen at night.

On or around the eleventh day, we went through the Straits of Gibraltar early in the morning. We were allowed to go on deck, which we did but couldn't see much of the Rock or Spanish Morocco. Running along the coast of Africa now we are alone and you can see no destroyers around. Changing course to north around the 13th day, we arrive in Marseilles, France.



*Command Post 2 (CP2) Marseilles, France
December 1944*

While unloading off the ship, we then again load on trucks and are taken to CP2, a staging area. There we put up pup tents. Its supper time and we line up (chow lines) for hash being made in some big GI cans, taken care of by Italian men. They used big wooden paddles to stir it. Besides hash, some coffee, and a slice of bread.

Following day we have our kitchen set up, which was a little better. Living here for some weeks, we work unloading our equipment coming in other ships and

cleaning it up, getting it ready for combat, which we would move up front in a few days.

All this time at the staging area, the weather being pretty miserable. The wind blew the biggest part of the time. The mornings holding reveille were very cold.

Received PX rations once or twice and turning in our American coins and green backs for French money.

During the night we were allowed to visit a little room shack with a place to write and see a movie, the place being packed by GIs which the majority smoked and made it very smoky (the place called the Red Cross).

Our equipment and everything issued that we are to have is loaded on our prime movers along with different kinds of ammunition. So many rounds known as our basic ammo load. Early one morning we are on the road. All this time keeping an air guard on the look for enemy aircraft.

Going through places such as Lyon, Dijon and Epinal, France, only stopping for the nights, once in an air field. We finally reached the place where we were to stay a few days, in an old farmhouse. One night somebody is shooting up some flare which had us worried, since yet we didn't know what action was.

The Division Artillery, Medical, and Finance complements met up with the Division at 0001 on 6 February 1944.

From here we moved up toward Wingen France. On the road, we have a battery of AAA boys attached to us – Battery C, 431 AAA. From then on, always some battery of 431 Battalion was with us until V day.

SECOND SECTION

Being in Wingen, France where we relieved the 45th Division.

On February 14th, the Division received orders to move into the front lines and relieve the 45th Infantry Division in an area near Wimmenau and Wingen, northwest of Haguenau.

Everything was pretty quiet. I had my gun crew in two squads of which we had a squad on the gun all 24 hours.

Since we had the base piece we actually did more firing in the battery. We understood that our firing was mostly on machine guns or mortars being spotted. Once it was a chow line.

Mostly during the night we fired during certain times so many rounds in so many hours, which we were told that we were firing to cover a patrol being sent out from the infantry.

Moving into the area, the Division began a program of patrols and raids to determine enemy strength, disposition and identification. It was discovered the enemy was from the 11th Regiment, 6th SS Mountain Division.

On February 16th, the 402nd Field Artillery Battalion became a supporting unit to the 222nd Infantry.

Supporting the patrols were the Division Artillery and elements of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion, which would open fire over the patrols.

From Feb 18 to 28, the infantry carried out 139 reconnaissance and combat patrols.

In addition to front line activity, the Division also conducted training programs while it was in defensive positions in the mountains. They were also learning how to make themselves as comfortable as possible even though men were living in dugouts and foxholes. Most companies served a hot breakfast and supper. All clothing became community property and shower units and clothing exchange centers were established.

The weather was improving although there was plenty of rain and mud, it was getting warmer.

The men began to complain about the constant patrolling, smashing into the German line and then withdrawing.

The Germans had changed their forces opposing the Rainbow. On the night of Feb 27, Germans laid down a heavy concentration of artillery and mortar fire and under the elements of the 6th Mountain Division were withdrawn and replaced by the 221st Volksgrenadier Regiment. In this brief period this unit had been in the line it had come to respect the Rainbow and fear its patrols and raids.

A prisoner said "The artillery was so bad that we would rather retreat than fire upon your men when we saw them coming. It got so bad that we were afraid to fire, for if a machine gun opened up you would locate the position and blast it with your terrible artillery."

"Is your Division a part of Roosevelt's SS?" asked one German captured. The remark was passed along and men kidded each other about being in the Rainbow SS.

On March 3rd, the 48th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division received orders to attach one light and 1 medium tank company to the 42nd Infantry Division in Wingen. Companies "B" and "D" reported immediately.⁴

From March 5th through the 12th, there was tank/infantry training and maintenance of weapons. The tankers from the 48th were taught to work with infantry. The infantry were instructed in the operation of tanks in support and assault.⁴

On March 10, the 242nd infantry was ordered to replace the 222nd infantry on the line. It was completed on March 12th.

On March 12th at 0930, orders were received to halt all movements until further notice.

On March 13th, the division received instructions that the 7th Army would advance on the 15th. The original mission in the first assault was to capture the high ground in the vicinity of Schonau and to uncover the Siegfried line.

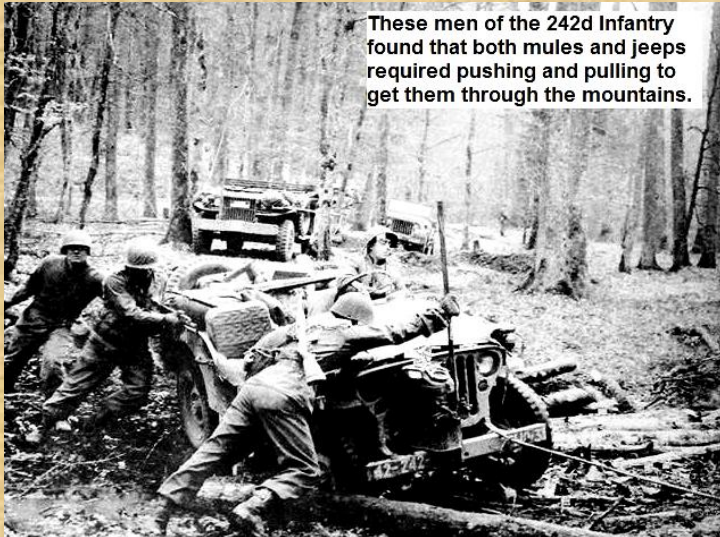
During the period of the 13th and 14th, the 48th Tank Battalion Commander was called to the 42nd Command Post on several occasions to receive a general briefing on a future operation that was highly secret at the time.⁴

Early on the morning of the 14th, FO No. 3 42nd Infantry Division was delivered to the 48th Tank Battalion. The battalion CO called in his staff to reveal its contents. The general situation and where the 48th Tank Battalion fit in was this - the mission of 6th Corp was to uncover and breach the Siegfried Line, destroy the enemy in Z and capture high ground east and northeast of Pirmasens. The mission of the 42nd was to attack on axis Lichtenberg Schonau to capture high ground vicinity of Schonau and uncover the Siegfried Line. The mission of the 48th Tank Battalion was to send 1 platoon from Company B to support the 222nd Infantry and 1 platoon was to support the 242nd Infantry.⁴

Company C was given the mission of reconnoitering routes forward behind the advancing front line units and to be prepared to support the attack on division orders.⁴

At 1810, the battalion moved their CP to Wingen.⁴

On March 14, 1945, the day before the big drive started in the evening we chief of sections were called into the Battery Commander's office for a squaring session – or as we call it, the hot poop for the following day.



My boys were never told that evening of the drive next morning, more or less, they guessed pretty well. Since we prepared ammunition for Senorita III, which is our 105 Howitzer.

Following morning we had breakfast quite early and at 6:45 the same morning we put down a barrage.

On the morning of the 15th, under a terrific bombardment of artillery and supporting aircraft, the famed 42d "Rainbow Division" supported by the little known 48th "Mtn Bn"

jumped off to what would go down in history as the "Big Push" against the much talked about Siegfried Line. Two regiments abreast with one in reserve at the crack of dawn began routing the enemy from the dense forests of the Hardt Mountain Range. Although the enemy was taken unaware at this unexpected attack, fought relentlessly with S-K (probably 17 cm Schwere Kanone) and mortar fire to stem the onrush of doughfeet. Our tanks, although not actually in contact with the enemy followed closely on the heels of the Infantry prepared to assault if necessary.⁴

Photo right - 17 cm German Schwere Kanone (Internet)



B Company with 2 platoons in the drive and one in reserve, moved to the vicinity of Bannstein, their first mission, there to take up defensive positions for the night. C company also with 2 platoons supporting and one in reserve moved to vicinity of Phillipsbourg and Moulehausen.⁴

From then on everyone knew the drive was on. Later that evening we moved up, got in position on a high knoll just in front of some dough feet that were also moving up the next day.

On March 17th, although little activity was noted during the day and the novelty of the push had worn off, the usual sweating out continued at Headquarters always waiting for some word or message from higher headquarters as to the situation. The two tank companies being literally split up among the various Regiments of the 42nd.⁴

On March 18th, the Division again began its attack at 0500 with the infantry climbing their way up the mountains and along ridges. They crossed the Saarbach River to capture the bridges.

On March 19th, an attack was launched. Despite enemy resistance, the Rainbow Division maintained the bridgehead. (*Bridgehead is defined as a military position established by advance troops on the enemy's side to afford protection for the main attacking force.*)

LMR (Land Mobile Radio) was not very far in front of us. Everything went well until dark, when you could see machine gun tracers falling into a small town to our left which there were some krauts in. I could hear our shells from our big guns going over head.

Leaving from there I believe we put our guns in position from two to three times a day, giving the 242nd Infantry close support.

In Philippsbourg, France, just before going in position, Senorita turned over, which put her out of action for two days. That night the rumor that 600 Krauts were on the loose came out, so our battery caught hell. One of the times the guns kept barking all night and the men in the battery didn't sleep. My section was helping the other three squads.



My Gun Stormed During Combat the morning after the snow. You can see part of the tent we sleep in every night when we didn't fire and we fired every night. Slept very little at that time. Somewhere in Germany. (Mestas family photo)

The following day we moved up and at the new position, I found a new howitzer there waiting for us. So my section goes to work in cleaning it up. Before long it was in position and giving the Krauts hell with the other three.

Since the battery position wasn't far from the Siegfried Line, that evening we had a ring side seat watching the air corps giving the Heines bullets and bombs.

The order to attack pillboxes in the Siegfried Line was issued on March 20th. Assembly areas were around Ludwigswinkel and across the Saarbach River.

On March 21st, close support aircraft, P47s, dive bombed and strafed the fortification and followed by a half hour artillery preparation. Men crouched and sat in fox holes and watched the planes and artillery pour their fire into the Siegfried line and prayed that the bombing and the shelling would at least stun the Germans so they would put up little fight. Artillery shells had little effect on the forts but the bombs put cracks in them and the men inside probably felt every minute would be their last.

Two platoons of the 48th Tank Battalion's Company C continued to fire on enemy activity and were joined by the 3rd platoon, later to fire on pill boxes and installations in preparation for the assault by the 222nd Infantry Regiment at 1915.⁴

Following a half-hour artillery preparation, the 242nd Infantry attacked across the Saarbach River on March 22nd.

While the "Rainbow" was cleaning out the last corner of Alsace, the 48th was in close support as the doughboys pushed through the rugged terrain of the Hardt Mountains.⁴

By 1045, the regiment had advanced to Hill 542 and entered the second defense of the Siegfried Line. Finding them unoccupied, they moved the attack to the northeast and east to take the high ground north of Dahn.

At 1515, orders were received at the Bn C.P. for the 48th to assemble a task force consisting of two companies of medium tanks and two companies of infantry, mounted on the tanks, to assemble in the vicinity of Ludwigswinkel, Germany, just south of the Siegfried Line. The 42nd had broken through the line of pillboxes (thin at that particular point because of the mountainous terrain) during the previous 24 hours aided by P-47 fighter-bombers, artillery, and devastating direct fire from the 48th Tanks. The plan was to exploit and break through, take the towns of Salswoog, Dahn, Busenberg, and contact friendly troops advancing in the 10rd Division section on the right.⁴

At 1630 the column was under way, passing through the front lines of the 42nd and breaking loose. The column raced to Salswoog, swung east and headed toward Dahn. On the road, already littered with elements of the disorganized German Army, an artillery piece was destroyed and some sporadic resistance met and over-powered by fire from the tanks and tank-mounted infantry. At this point the first group of a continuous flow of prisoners was captured and started to the rear under guard.⁴

This was the day the 42nd Division Artillery came to fore. Enemy troops and vehicles jammed the roads. Horse drawn enemy artillery tried to escape. Planes of the Division artillery air section, flew overhead to locate targets and direct fire. Throughout that day and night the guns of the artillery fired on the Germans.

A brief visit by Major General Collins, C.G., 42nd Infantry Division was paid the Battalion C.O., Major Cavin, and he was commended for his brilliant execution of the orders that accomplished the annihilation of the enemy. With both

Company Commanders and platoon leaders doing a superb job of leadership, another link in the chain of cooperation with adjacent troops was accomplished and one step nearer to the wars end.⁴

Further up the line the next day we by-passed a Jerry column all knocked out of action. Horses, men, and wagons all over. At this time our battalion was up with the dough feet. I believe the place was Dahn, Germany.

While at Dahn, the battery had a certain area for checking Krauts and equipment. While our section had a sector assigned to check over, where we put in a good days work.

Early one morning we heard a lot of shooting behind our position where the 242nd Cannon Company was. Results – a German major was trying to get back to the front lines when a sentinel challenged him and the major didn't halt. Now he is under ground with a wooden stick as a cross over his grave.

Being in Dahn a short while one evening we got orders to be ready to move the following day. That night it was raining so we moved into an old lumber mill which was better than a pup tent.

While the Rainbow Division was clearing out the area around Dahn and Siegfried Line, units of the Third Army created and expanded bridgeheads across the Rhine.

The next mission was to pass through the bridgehead to the Rain River then drive eastward to Wurzburg.

Came the time to move the doughboys of 242nd piled into our trucks with the cannoneers, so we were on our way across the Rhine. Going through some small town, our truck got a rock in the hind duals so we stopped for awhile. By the time we started again the battalion column was nowhere in sight. So our section by ourselves hit the road of which we had the names of towns up until one town after crossing the Rhine.

On the last day of March, Easter Sunday, the 222nd and 232nd Infantry were loaded into trucks and began moving across the Rhine and into position near the Main River.

Being on the road we got to Worms, Germany, crossed the Rhine River and kept going thinking that someone from the battery would be ahead and stop us. Having no one stop us, it got dark and we still were on the move without the battalion. About 2200 hours that night, we ran into a convoy which couldn't move hardly either way. Some were going up front others going to the rear. Here we stopped and waited until Major Carter happens to come by and from him we find out that the battalion is way back in the rear. There we wait until battalion comes by. Good thing for the traffic jam or else we probably would be going yet.

Just ahead of the advancing doughboys, the artillery pours shells into the center of the city and the area



The crossing was made over a pontoon bridge that stretched across the Rhine only a few yards from the wrecked permanent structure in the heart of the city of Worms.

Going into position the following day near Wurzburg, Germany, it was raining and we were all wet as ducks. Again we poured shells in the town all night.

On April 2nd, the regiments moved into position for the assault in Wurzburg. The enemy was retreating across the Main River that wound back and forth through the division's path to Wurzburg.

The 12th Armored Division moved to within a few miles of the city. The entire 222nd Infantry was attached to that unit to drive ahead quickly, capture Wurzburg, and then move on to Schweinfurt.

The rest of the Rainbow continued eastward in its zone, crossing and recrossing the Main River, north of Wurzburg. If the 12th Armored and the 222nd Infantry had difficulty assaulting Wurzburg, the 232nd Infantry would cross north of the city to divert the Germans from the planned attack. The 242nd would cross near the Retzbach and launch an assault from the rear.

On the night of April 2, the 222nd and 12th Armored reached the Main River, opposite of Wurzburg, and found the 3 bridges across the river were blown. The men had the choice of trying to continue its assault or to wait until the engineers brought assault boats and then attack. It was decided not to wait.

Before dawn on April 3, a group of 2nd Battalion Rangers and a staff sergeant found a row boat along the river. Part of the platoon got in and rowed across. The boat was rowed back and another group crossed. No shots were fired but the rangers took 29 Germans out of two strong points.

With two boatloads of Rangers across, the 2nd Battalion had a small bridgehead. Engineer assault boats ferried the battalion across the river.

The first assault boat, with 11 infantrymen and 3 engineers, was midstream when Germans opened fire on it with rifles and 20 mm antiaircraft artillery, but weren't able to fire accurately. They continued firing on the boats throughout the day but a flood wall along the river bank protected the first troops to enter the city.

By 9:00, 2 squads crossed the river and gained an area about 200 yards deep between 2 Wurzburg Bridges. To counterattack, Germans sent 2 tanks but a bazooka man knocked out one tank and the other stopped. Company E was able to cross and the bridgehead was enlarged. By 1530, it was 6 blocks wide and 7 blocks deep. At the river, engineers constructed a ferry and were bringing jeeps with radio equipment across the river.

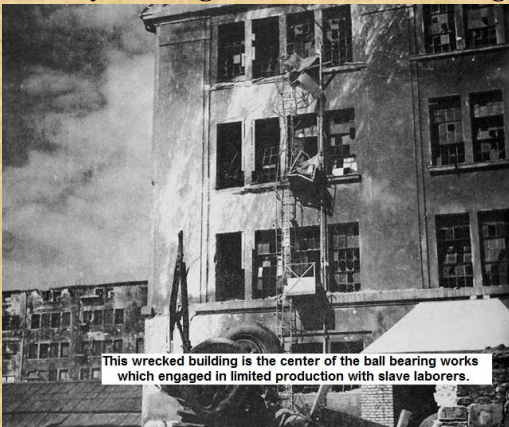
The 242nd moved to the Main River, about 10 miles north of Wurzburg and patrolled that area. Before dawn, the Bailey bridge was complete enough to allow foot troops to cross. With regiments prepared to attack, the plan was to clear the northern and southern part of the city.

At dawn on April 4th, the attacks began. They faced bitter resistance. City firemen and police joined in the defense of the city. Nearly every house and building had snipers and panzerfausts were lobbed like mortars. Citizens used underground tunnels to come up behind the men and attack them.

Supported by excellent artillery fire, the infantry advanced. By nightfall, the infantry cleared 55 blocks, bringing 2 regiments to a main railroad line that circled the city. When they met a line of enemy in foxholes, the regiments stopped their attack for the night.

During the night the enemy tried to infiltrate the division lines and return into the city through the tunnels but were discovered and wiped out.

At 5:15 on the 5th, the Nazis launched a counterattack from the north with about 200 men to destroy the Bailey bridge. The infantry met the attack and stopped it. They cleared the northern and eastern parts of the city. The 242nd entered the city and began a search of buildings, tunnels and areas to by-pass the resistance.



The battle for Wurzburg was over and the division moved north along the Main River towards Schweinfurt.

Next day the First Soldier manages a quart of champagne for each man.



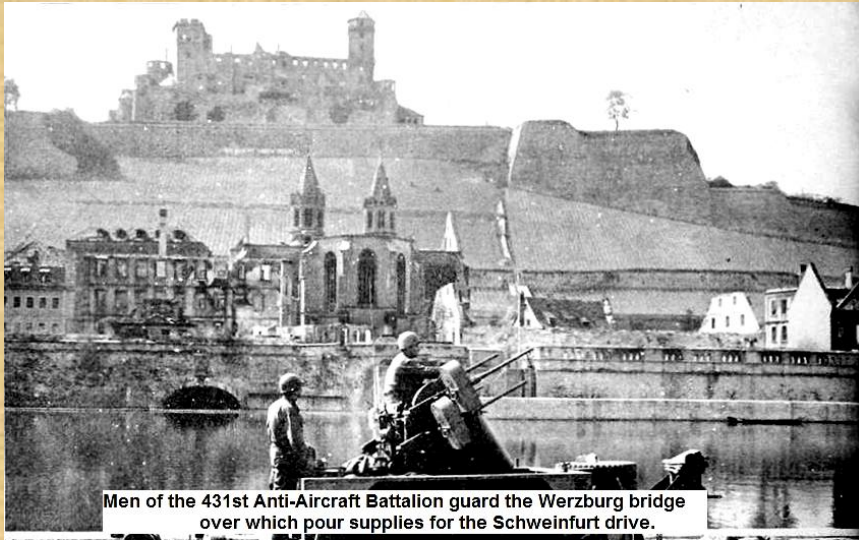
As the Rainbow left Wurzburg, most jeeps and trucks had a case or at least a bottle of champagne.



The buildings still smoldering, this old woman trudges through Schweinfurt in search of food. Many persons never left the city.

Wurzburg was noted for a Military School for the German noncommissioned officers. The town is leveled down to the ground by the air corps and artillery barrages.

After taking Wurzburg and on the move to Schweinfurt, a ball bearing factory city, biggest in the world. We lost 60 bombers there a year or so before.



Men of the 431st Anti-Aircraft Battalion guard the Werzburg bridge over which pour supplies for the Schweinfurt drive.

Stopping along the road, a LT in a jeep came by and stopped by the section asking if we wanted something to drink. Of course we said “yes.” He gave us cognac. He was a swell Joe.

On April 6th, the Rainbow moved out of Wurzburg and started north to Schweinfurt. On the 7th, the 12th Armored Division was put under the control of the Rainbow Division.

After again going into position out of some town, later in the evening. All the men were sitting around a fire, we had yet to dig foxholes. I was undecided whether to dig or not. I started to dig my hole and telling the boys they had better dig also. Pete

Cellini, a boy from Chester, PA answered he didn’t need one. A short while later the Jerries started throwing some rounds at us, which mostly went into the town, several being high bursts, too high. Believe me the fellows had a fox hole dug in no time.

The chief obstacle in taking the city was the ring of 88 mm guns defending it. The 232nd captured the high ground north of the city and the 222nd advanced 10 miles on the right.

In Schweinfurt, the SS commander issued orders to the 5,000 defenders to fight to the last man, then he and his staff left.

By April 10, the division fought through the outer defenses and decided to encircle the city. The 232nd marched 10 miles at night, with no roads, so it could seize the high ground north of Schweinfurt.

Air power was called in to smash the German artillery defenses. Medium bombers provided the close support. The bombers flew 3 raids on the city and a total of 192 planes dropped bomb loads on the defenses. When the 88 mm fired on the planes, our artillery opened fire on them.

In addition to counter battery fire, the 42nd artillery also poured shells on roads leading out of the city to prevent enemy troops from leaving.

“Your artillery fire was terrible,” said a member of a HQ staff who fled the city but was later captured. “I was a member of a corps intelligence section and with the corps intelligence officer. I tried to leave the city during the day on a motorcycle. We tried to leave in short dashes along the road, thinking that you would not fire at us, but your liaison planes saw us and directed artillery fire. Finally we stopped and waited until darkness. Then we managed to escape. It was possible for one or two men to escape that way by dashing from place to place, but it was suicide for a column of men to try to march down the road.”

On April 10, patrols from the 242nd moved across the plain in front of Schweinfurt and discovered a way into the city. The plan was to strike and capture the upper half of Schweinfurt. The 242nd was to take the center of the town, the 222nd was to move in from the south and the 12th Armored was positioned in the eastern part of the city.

The 242nd began the attack. As they reached the city, they met resistance from German anti-tank guns but the guns were destroyed by fire from bazookas and tank destroyers. There was some opposition before entering the city with fire from burp guns and a few 88 mm guns. Mortar fire forced the enemy to withdraw and the battalion entered the city.

Once inside, the battalion met little resistance and sent troops to the river to capture the bridge. Within blocks of the bridge, there was a roar and puff of smoke over the river. The enemy destroyed the bridge, cutting off their own hope of escape.

As the Rainbow entered the city, they saw it was virtually destroyed by bombings and artillery fire. The ball bearing factories were still being operated by slave laborers. As the infantry captured the factories, Polish and Russian women workers came out and hugged and kissed them.

Infantrymen begin a house-to-house search of the city for snipers. Note the bomb crater in the foreground made the day before.



Since leaving Wurzburg, the Rainbow Division had captured 6,680 German prisoners, cleared 100 square miles and captured 50 towns and villages.

After the taking of Schweinfurt we heard that the President had died. It was a great shock to every one of us.

On April 13, as the 222nd and 242nd infantry were cleaning up Schweinfurt and the 232nd was assembling north of the city, when the men heard about of the death of FDR.

We were on the move this time to Nurnberg. Setting up outside of Furth, a small town on the outskirts of Nurnberg. In the evening I again decide to cut the section in two equal squads, making it easier for them, changing over at midnight.

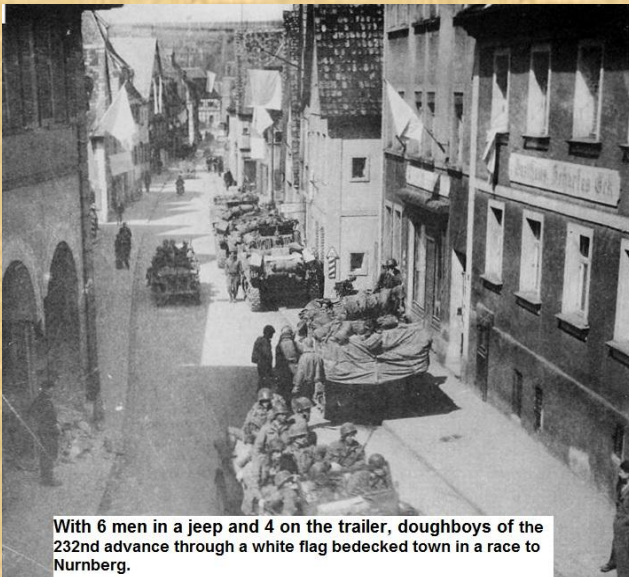
The Rainbow was directed to turn southeast and attack Furth, the western third of the Nazi city of Nurnberg.

To capture Furth and Nurnberg, a five division attack was planned. The 3rd ID was to attack from the north, the 45th ID from the east, the 4th ID and 12th Armored from the south. The Rainbow was to attack quickly from the west before the Germans could respond.

On April 16, the division and 12th Armored attacked the town of Neustadt, a strongpoint in the defense of Nurnberg. They were able to surround the city, causing the enemy to surrender or flee. That same day, the division advanced 6 miles past Neustadt.

Higher headquarters changed the plan of attack on Nurnberg. Instead of heading directly into the city, the 12th Armored and 4th ID were to move south and head for the Danube River and Munich. The 232nd was to move south of the city and cut off the Nurnberg-Munich road. The 232nd and 242nd were to make the assault on Furth.

At 0400 on the 17th, the 222nd attacked and met little resistance. They advanced to the Regnitz River, north of Furth. They established a bridgehead and captured a large airfield north of the city. Patrols were sent out to probe enemy defenses of Furth.



With 6 men in a jeep and 4 on the trailer, doughboys of the 232nd advance through a white flag bedecked town in a race to Nurnberg.

The 232nd met little resistance until it neared Furth, where it received mortar and small arms fire. The 242nd advanced to the Regnitz, west of Furth.

The 222nd Battalion moved south and west; the 232nd moved out to cut off all southern escape routes. The 242nd moved east.

The city was crowded with refugees and a population of over 150,000. The 7,500 German troops planned to stage a defense at the approaches to the city with small arms and automatic weapons then withdraw to Nurnberg.

Roads were blocked with derailed street cars, logs and scrap steel and iron. All bridges were blown. The Germans had been ordered to withdraw after midnight on the 19th then retreat to Nurnberg.

The Rainbow had counted on an attack on the 19th but they advanced faster than anticipated. On the morning of the 18th, the division struck.

About 9:30 at night we lay down a barrage on Nurnberg. Corps Artillery was firing with us. From where we were firing you could hear the shells from the 8 inch 155 Howitzer and 155 rifles which were behind us. I have never seen anything like it. The night being dark as hell and shells pouring in the town from all over. Homes, buildings, everything going up in the air. You could sure tell the white phosphorous shells.

My driver, James Whaley, from Birmingham, Alabama, should be well in practice from loading the gun that night. Before that I believe he had never touched a shell. Now he can tell you the type of ammunition and loading from experience during the firing. Also during the firing a Jerry plane, which we call Bedcheck Charlie, came by very low. All during the drive he made it miserable, coming out every night. Nothing we could do about it. The AA boys had orders not to shoot during the night so as not to give our position away.

Supported by artillery fire which had been pouring into the western area of the city during the night, the 2nd Battalion, 222nd infantry crossed the Regnitz River along the northern outskirts of the city and entered Furth.

Elements of the 222nd entered the northwestern portion of the city. Despite Germans battling to stop their advance, they pushed ahead and cleared buildings. By midnight, they occupied 6 square blocks of the city,



In the morning I got my section a new boy, Lester Lanham, from Georgia. He was an infantry replacement and very happy at getting into the artillery. During the day, Lester was broke in right by a Brooklyn, NY, boy, Ralph DeLuise. They went out and captured some chickens for the section. I believe we deserved them for a change. After leaving Nurnberg early in the evening, we were all happy because that night Bedcheck Charlie came back and strafed that position.

Front row: John Qual, Danny Mestas, Dale Ryan, (Gunner) CPL Casey

Back row: Fowler, Ralph DeLouise, Pete Cellini (Mestas Family Photo)

The 242nd reached the Regnitz River and entered Furth. The 222nd advanced and early in the morning the Furth Burgermeister surrendered.

The 222nd and 242nd moved into the city to round up prisoners. Five thousand surrendered. Citizens greeted the Rainbow men and tore down all road blocks and turned in all guns as directed. They had previously cheered Hitler and were now cheering the armies who destroyed him.

The Rainbow Division received orders to advance to the south to seize and hold crossings of the Danube River and be prepared to advance further.

The route led directly toward the famed German “Redoubt” Alpine retreat. SS organized a rear guard action to defend the area.

From April 21st – 23rd, the 232nd and 242nd advanced 40 miles. They were also given the mission of crossing the Danube and Lech Rivers near Donauworth.

On the morning of April 25th, an assault on Donauworth was launched. The attack began at 0700, catching the Germans by surprise. When the tank column reached the road parallel to the river, they found Germans on the far side of the Danube fleeing across an open plain.

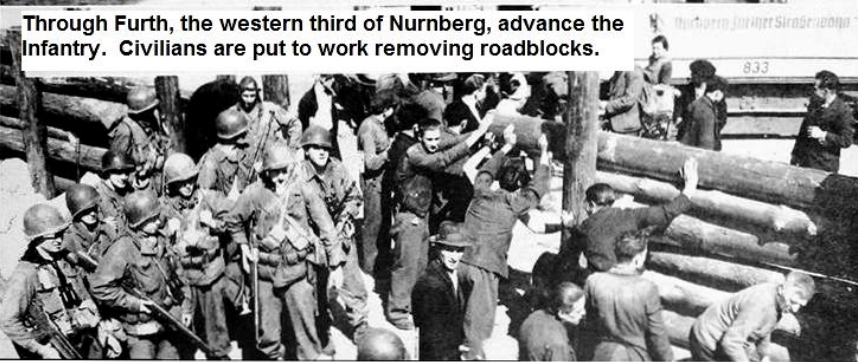
As they approached the city, Nazis set off a series of blasts that destroyed the bridge. When the fight was over, the city was captured, along with 17 prisoners. By nightfall, the 242nd reached Donauworth.

Despite heavy opposition, the Rainbow was the first to reach the Danube. And immediately began to cross it and drive to Munich. With artillery firing across the river, the 242nd began crossing at 0045 on April 26.

Each area where the 242nd Infantry made its crossing, the 232nd made a bridgehead. The attack began at 0300. At daylight the Germans started shelling the crossing sites but ferries were constructed and vehicles taken across. The battalions pushed south for 2 miles then turned and raced for the Lech River, 4 miles away.

Working under a smoke screen, engineers of the 109th Engineer Battalion began construction of a treadway bridge across the river.

The infantry had reached the Lech River and found all the bridges destroyed. The river was too swift to use assault boats and the Germans were resisting on the other side. The 232nd discovered a bridge that had dropped but could be made passable for foot troops if assault boats were placed in the 2 sections that were under water.



Under enemy fire, the 142nd Engineers moved out on the bridge and began repairs. Several were wounded but the others stayed at their posts and finished the job before midnight. Troops began crossing the river.

When the Battalion met resistance, they moved south. They crossed the river, headed east and captured Rain. During the day, the engineers constructed a treadway bridge and the rest of the Division moved across.

Now we were moving towards Munich, riding on the superhighway for a short distance. We crossed the Main River and on towards the Danube, where we find the Krauts had blown the bridge.

Staying overnight there, we again had a ring side seat as Bedcheck Charlie came over early in the evening. This time the AA boys had orders to shoot at night if the planes came over low. He came over for his last time as all the anti-aircraft opened up on him. He came down not far from us.

The Division headed south for Munich. On the right was the autobahn leading into the city and on the left was the 45th I.D. The boundary led through the infamous Dachau Concentration Camp.



After setting up close to the river and digging our foxholes, we got the order to dig our guns in also. We did. Not being in position long at the Danube, the Jerries started dropping shells on our engineers which weren't very far from our position building a bridge across the river. I guess the Jerries didn't have much observation because their shells were bursting high.

On April 28th, Rainbow units continued to advance. Blown bridges and cratered roads made it impossible for the armor to race ahead as planned.

At 0635 on April 29, the 222nd Infantry Motorized and 242nd drove behind the armor headed for Munich and cleaned up enemy resistance.

At 1300, a small group of officers and men from the 222nd Battalion entered Dachau and were met by a Geneva Red Cross Representative. The 222nd worked to restore order and help the Holocaust survivors.

The Rainbow continued to advance. After clearing Dachau of the enemy, the 222nd pushed forward and elements crossed the Amper River and, by nightfall, entered the outskirts of Munich.

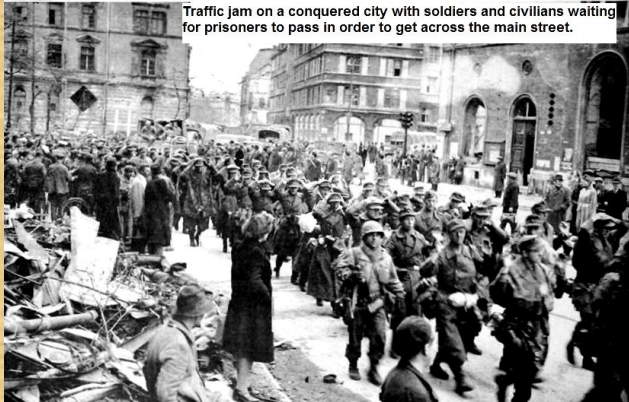
The 242nd racing down the autobahn, advanced to the Amper River, moving 30 miles during the day.

On April 30, the Rainbow met up with the 20th Armored Division and the advance was built across the Amper River for the Armor to continue.

We went over the Danube the following day and into Munich. It was May 1st and snowing. From then on we didn't do any more shooting. We followed along and went into position in case somebody needed fire.

Later getting news that the Germans in Italy and northern Germany had surrendered we had an idea the war would soon be over.

Munich was a wild city when the first Rainbow men entered. A quarter of the population of 800,000 were slave laborers who greeted the American as liberators.



Workers and freed Allied POWs headed for wine cellars and food warehouses. The German soldiers joined the looting. Groups of German soldiers roamed or marched in formation looking for a place to surrender. Citizens were hanging white flags out their windows.

The Rainbow moved through the city to restore some order. With this accomplished, the infantrymen pushed ahead and continued the drive to the east and the border of Austria.



Rainbow crossed the Inn River and moved ahead. On the 4th, elements of the Rainbow reached the Austrian border. Orders were received to move into assembly areas along the border.

Staff Sgt. Danny Mestas and (left) Sgt. Martinez with boys in Austria (Mestas family photo)

Moving into Oberbrunn, a small town in Germany, we gave our guns and trucks a cleaning job. Also posted some road guards and getting the news of the unconditional surrender of the Germans.



On 6 May, the division's HQ was in Palling, Germany. They remained in the Austrian vicinity of Palling until May 14th. During that time they had the opportunity to rest, clean up and maintain equipment.

It felt very good having air superiority. We didn't have very much trouble with airplanes during any time. Once going into position two jet propelled planes came by and I guess they didn't expect us there because they went right by and later coming back. This time we were ready and all scattered out. All the machine guns opened up but it was no luck. Later we learned the planes were trying to get our pontoon bridge across the Rhine.

(L- R: Danny Mestas, Tom Murphy, John Qual (front), Louis Mancuso, somewhere in Austria – Mestas family photo)

The Germans surrendered on May 7th. It was formally announced by the Chaplains of the division on May 8th.

May 12th was designated "R-Day" by the War Department for the beginning of full redeployment and readjustment. The Adjusted Service Rating (ASR) Score was a numerical rating based on length of Service, Overseas Service, Combat Service and Parenthood. Each unit was to complete the ASR Card for each individual assigned.⁶ Within 7 days after receipt of the Critical Score, HQ was to categorize all units.

CATEGORIES:

- I:** Retained for continued service in current command
- II:** Redeployed from Europe to the Pacific
- III:** Reorganized and redesignated then fall under I or II
- IV:** Inactivated

On May 10th, the Army issued instructions that defined the Army's sector and ordered the regrouping of units for occupation. ⁷

On May 14th, the Rainbow moved south into the Austrian Tyrol and collected the thousands of German soldiers who had fled into the area. Not being there long, we again picked up some dough feet; this time taking them to Mittersill, Austria. Our battalion came to Deggendorf and started pulling road blocks and guard on Jerry equipment which they didn't get to use.

At the end of the Readjustment Period, Category II units were to begin a Redeployment Training Period. Readjustments were never ending and it was time-consuming. Time was lacking to complete the job before movement orders were sent units on its way. After a unit was readjusted, it would be awarded another battle star and readjustment had to be accomplished all over again. ⁶

On May 23, a training program was designed to prepare the division for its expected redeployment to the Pacific. Four days later, the program was instituted to complete the required 8 weeks' redeployment training.

Since, we haven't stayed in one town very long. Going from Deggendorf to Oberaudorf, a small town some twenty miles apart. Again some guard duties. All this time sweating it out what we are to be, occupational troops or what.



Now in Kufstein, Austria, guarding several thousands of the Displaced Persons, which is quite a sight. People of different nationalities struggling along in the world.

My gun section. Mestas, Myers, Johnston, Mancuso, Ryan, Debick, Mark Steiner, Fisher, Lindsay, Shade, Elliott. I received this picture Saturday, August 25, 1945 (Mestas family photo)

We know now that our division is an occupation troop for some time here and in Category II.

1945, including 363,000 occupation troops. The 1st, 3rd, 9th, 42nd and 78th Infantry Divisions and the 1st & 4th Armored Divisions were designated as the occupation forces. ⁷

On May 8, there were over 2,320,000 displaced persons in the part of Germany under American control. Repatriation of displaced persons was of high priority and major importance. ⁷

In June 1945, plans were established for camps for stateless and nonrepatriatable persons. Special considerations were asked for persecutees, including Jewish displaced persons. ⁷

News of the Japanese surrender was received on 14 August. VJ Day, September 2nd, changed everything. Direct redeployments to the Pacific were to stop. ⁵

By August 27, the war with Japan was over and the Rainbow was assigned as a permanent part of the occupation force in Austria.

The War Department announced an increase in the rate it must ship its strength back to the U.S and directed over 400,000 in September and an average of 322,000 in each of the following 4 months. ⁷

In the beginning of October, it was hoped that men with scores of 80 and above should be shipped and those with 70 and above in November. ⁷

When the Queen Elizabeth and Aquitania had to be returned to England, it wasn't possible to clear up the backlog of men with score of 80 points. The target was moved to mid-November. ⁷

According to the Enlisted Record and Report of Separation Honorable Discharge, DD 214, on September 2nd, SGT Mestas' ASR Score was 80. He departed the European Theater on November 4th and arrived in the United States on November 16th.

In 1946, General Henry Collins, Commander of the 42d Infantry Division gave "A Year in Progress" speech to sum up the accomplishments achieved by the Rainbow during that time:

"Most of us see only the job we perform day after day as a roadblock guard, train guards, interpreter, driver, clerk, cook or switchboard operator. It is hard to see the "big picture" and how our particular job fits into the whole. Few of us are aware of the difficulties of restoring order to a conquered country which is not self-sustaining. Few of us know how the confusion was made worse by the fact that Austria is the crossroads of Europe.

The greatest problem existing was the problem of Displaced Persons or DPs. It is estimated that 10 million people were uprooted from their homes by the European conflict. Millions were slaves shanghaied by the Nazis.

How many DPs were there? It was hard to make a count because they kept swarming in from the hills and farms faster than they were repatriated. On 19 July 45, there were 381,599 DPs on record in the U.S. Zone. This grew to 401,346 in August.

In the period from May 1945 to March 1946, the number of large camps dropped from 121 to 80. In spite of these obstacles, 306,506 PWs were either evacuated or discharged by 15 March 1946." ⁹

REFERENCES:

- ¹ Newspaper article
- ² Field Artillery School Enlisted Specialists Battery Mechanics Course
"Certificate of Proficiency" F.A.S., Fort Sill, Okla. (9-4-150) 23743
- ³ Memo from LTC W. F. Ryan
- ⁴ 48th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division Monthly Report
- ⁵ Occupation Forces in Europe Series, Office of the Chief Historian
European Command Frankfurt-AM-Main
- ⁶ Standard Operational Procedures No. 60, Readjustment of Personnel
After Defeat of Germany 15 May 1945
- ⁷ The First Year of Occupation, Special Text 41-10-63, The Provost
Marshal General's School, Military Government Department
- ⁸ The Rehabilitation of Austria 1945-1947, Volume III, Prepared by the
United States Allied Commission Austria
- ⁹ 42nd Rainbow Division Veterans Assn.

NOTE: The full scan of the original book, 42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division/A Combat History of World War II, published in 1946 may be read and/or downloaded from the Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library
<http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p4013coll8/id/3158>

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