

# RAINBOW TRAIL

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

August 2015 Volume 15, Issue 2

**"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"**



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(Wladyslaw Theodore), 1873-, artist

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**The United States World War One Centennial Commission** <http://worldwar1centennial.org/>  
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*The following Official Letters are from the personal papers of  
**FREDERICH GALLAUDET HAMMER**, Regimental Sergeant Major,  
HQ 84<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 42<sup>nd</sup> Division, WWI – With thanks to the family of Lt. Col.  
Fred G. Hammer who saved his memorabilia and recently donated  
These to the RDVF Millennium Chapter*

**21st Army Corps,  
170<sup>th</sup> Division  
Staff,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Bureau,  
No. 1517/3.**

**July 17, 1918**

**General BERNARD, Commanding par interim the  
170<sup>th</sup> Division –  
To the Commanding General of the 42<sup>nd</sup> U.S.  
Infantry Division**

The Commanding General of the 170<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division desires to express to the Commanding General of the 42<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Infantry Division his keen admiration for the courage and the bravery of which the American Battalions of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Brigade have given proof in the course of the hard fighting of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of July, 1918, as also for the effectiveness of the artillery fire of the 42<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Infantry Division.

In these two days the troops of the United States, by their tenacity, largely aided their French comrades in breaking the repeated assaults of the 7<sup>th</sup> Reserve Division, the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and the Dis-Mounted Cavalry Guard Division of the Germans; these latter two Divisions are among the best of Germany.

According to the orders captured on the German officers made prisoner, their Staff wished to take Chalons-sur-Marne on the evening of July 16, but it had reckoned without the valor of the American and French combatants who told them with machine gun, rifle and cannon shots that they would not pass.

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The Commanding General of the 170<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division is therefore particularly proud to observe that in mingling their blood gloriously on the Battlefield of CHAMPAGNE, the Americans and the French of today are continuing the magnificent (sic) traditions established a century and a half ago by WASHINGTON and LAFAYETTE; it is with this sentiment that he salutes the Noble FLAG of the UNITED STATES in thinking of the final VICTORY.

**BERNARD**

**[Seal of the “Mission Militaire Francaise – Pres L’Armee Americaine – L Officier De Liaison”]**

**G.A.R.  
État-Major  
3<sup>rd</sup> Bureau  
No. 4.190**

**Hq., August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1918**

### **GENERAL ORDER**

The second battle of the MARNE ends, like the first, in a victory. The CHATEAU-THIERRY “pocket” exists no more.

The VIth and Xth Armies, also the allied troops fighting at their side, have taken a glorious part in that battle.

Their swift and powerful entrance in the battle, on July 18, had, as a first result, to entirely break up the offensive of the enemy, and compelled him to retreat across the MARNE.

Since that time, owing to our strong attacks, and chased night and day, without stop, he has been forced to fall back across the VESLE, leaving in our hands 25,000 prisoners, 600 guns, 4,000 machine guns, 500 minenwerfer.

We owe these results to the energy and skill of the Chiefs, and to the extraordinary valor of the troops, who, for more than 15 days, had to march and fight without rest.

I am sending to the Commander of the Xth and VIth Armies, Generals MANGIN and DEGOUTTE, to the Commanders of British and American units, and to all the troops, the token of my admiration for their knowledge, their courage, their heroic tenacity.

They may all be proud of the work accomplished! It is great, because it has greatly contributed to secure the final victory for us, and to bring it much nearer.

Signed: **FAYOLLE**

**OFFICIAL:**

**The Chief of Staff:**

**Signed: PAQUETTE**



**[Seal of the “Mission Militaire Francaise – Pres L’Armée Americaine – L Officier De Liaison”]**

**Photo and bio of General Émile Fayolle - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile\\_Fayolle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Fayolle)**

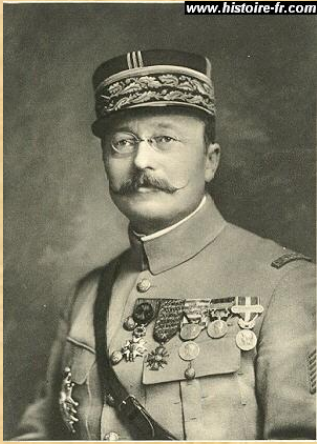


**Hardened veterans of Company B, 166th Infantry, (4th Ohio Infantry) 42d Division, entering La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, July 23, 1918.**

**Two days afterward the 42d Division relieved the 26th, and, extending its front, relieved a French division. “From this time until August 2,” says General Pershing, “it fought its way through the Forêt de Fère and across the Ourcq, advancing toward the Vesle until relieved by the 4th Division on August 3.”**

**Photo/caption is from U.S. Official Pictures of the World War p. 151**





**6<sup>th</sup> Army Chief of Staff 3<sup>rd</sup> Bureau No. 2.284/3  
P.C., 26<sup>th</sup> July 1918**

**NOTE.**

The Commanding General of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army brings to the notice of all troops of the Army the following resolution voted by the Mayors of the Arrondissement of MEAUX on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1918:

“The Mayors of the Arrondissement of MEAUX, meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1918, are happy to hail the splendid victory of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army, which, as at the time of the battle of the MARNE, saved their communes from the invasion which menaced them.

Convey to the valiant troops of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army the sincere expression of their gratitude and their admiration.”

**The President of the Congress of Mayors**

**Signed: G. RUGEL**

**Mayor of MEAUX**

**Deputy of SEINE-et-MARNE.**

The Commanding General of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army is happy to communicate these felicitations to the troops of his Army.

Signed: **General DEGOUTTE**

**[French 6<sup>th</sup> Army General Jean DEGOUTTE]**

Photo of General Degoutte is from [http://www.histoire-fr.com/troisieme\\_republique\\_premiere\\_guerre\\_mondiale\\_6.htm](http://www.histoire-fr.com/troisieme_republique_premiere_guerre_mondiale_6.htm)

**HEADQUARTERS, 42<sup>nd</sup> DIVISION  
American Expeditionary Forces,  
FRANCE**

**August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1918**

**TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 42<sup>ND</sup> DIVISION:**

A year has elapsed since the formation of your organization. It is, therefore, fitting to consider what you have accomplished as a combat division and what you should prepare to accomplish in the future.

Your first elements entered the trenches in Lorraine on February 21<sup>st</sup>. You served on that front for 110 days. You were the first American division to hold a divisional sector and when you left the sector June 21<sup>st</sup>, you had served continuously as a division in the trenches for a longer time than any other American division. Although you entered the sector without experience in actual warfare, you so conducted yourselves as to win the respect and affection of the French veterans with whom you fought. Under gas and bombardment, in raids, in patrols, in the heat of hand to hand combat and in the long dull hours of trench routine so trying to a soldier's spirit, you bore yourselves in a manner worthy of the traditions of our country.



You were withdrawn from Lorraine and moved immediately to the Champagne front where during the critical days from July 14<sup>th</sup> to July 18<sup>th</sup>, you had the honor of being the only American division to fight in General Gouraud's Army which so gloriously obeyed his order, "We will stand or die," and by its iron defense crushed the German assault and made possible the offensive of July 18<sup>th</sup> to the west of Reims.

From Champagne you were called to take part in exploiting the success north of the Marne. Fresh from the battle front before Chalons, you were thrown against the picked troops of Germany. For eight consecutive days, you attacked skillfully prepared positions. You captured great stores of arms and munitions. You forced the crossing of the Ourcq. You took Hill 212, Sergy, Meurcy Ferme and Seringes by assault. You drove the enemy, including an

Imperial Guard Division, before you for a depth of fifteen kilometers. When your infantry was relieved, it was in full pursuit of the retreating Germans, and your Artillery continued to progress and support another American Division in the advance to the Vesle.



**Photo of 26 July 2015 ceremony at the Rainbow Division Memorial in Fère-en-Tardenois at Croix Rouge Farm is sent by Dr. Monique Seefried, President, Board of Directors, of the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Foundation and a Commissioner, U.S. WWI Centennial Commission.**

For your services in Lorraine, your division was formally commended in General Orders by the French Army Corps under which you served. For your services in Champagne, your assembled officers received the personal thanks and commendation of General Gouraud himself. For your services on the Ourcq, your division was officially complimented in a letter from the Commanding General, 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps, of July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1918. To your success, all ranks and all services have contributed, and I desire to express to every man in the command my appreciation of his devoted and courageous effort.

However, our position places a burden of responsibility upon us which we must strive to bear steadily forward without faltering. To our comrades who have fallen, we owe the sacred obligation of maintaining the reputation which they died to establish. The influence of our performance on our allies and on our enemies cannot be over-estimated for we were one of the first divisions sent from our country to France to show the world that Americans can fight.

Hard battles and long campaigns lie before us. Only by ceaseless vigilance, and tireless preparation can we fit ourselves for them. I urge you, therefore, to approach the future with confidence but above all with firm determination that so far as it is in your power you will spare no effort whether in training or in combat to maintain the record of our division and the honor of our country.

**CHARLES T. MENOHER Major General, U.S.Army**

**Photo of General Menoher from Wikipedia.com**  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_T.\\_Menoher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_T._Menoher)



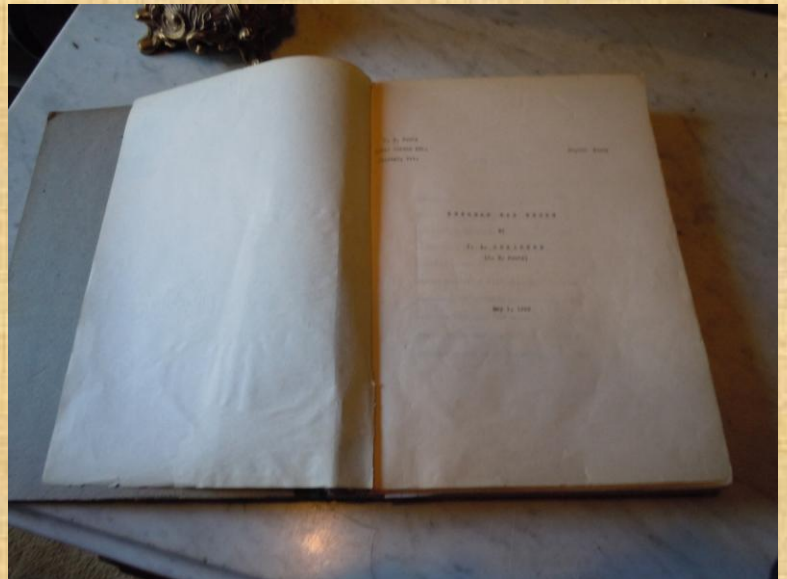
## **RAINBOW STORIES OF THE GREAT WAR**

### **“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 149<sup>th</sup> Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Illinois) Field Artillery. We have not identified T.A. Brainerd; however, C.E. Foutz is Chetney E. Foutz, Pvt., HQ 149<sup>th</sup> Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Illinois) Field Artillery. Typed on the title page of this manuscript is:  
C.E. Foutz 10915 Vernon Ave. Chicago, Ill.



### **Chapter Three (continued) – “SO THIS IS NAP’S OLD HANGOUT”**

A mounted drill had been ordered for the entire headquarters company on the following Saturday. Slim, among a few other telephone men who had not been attending the mounted drills, found he could not maneuver himself out of this one. He had been going to the stables early each morning for a horse he would saddle and ride out on the range to prepare his telephones before the batteries arrived for firing practice. He had become quite friendly with the stable sergeant and, since there was little demand for horses at this time, had been in the habit of picking his own nag. For this particular occasion, however, he found the nags to be used in accordance with an original assignment that left him without one and he was hurrying to see the stable sergeant with the hope that there was yet a possibility of getting out of this drill.

Walking into the stable sergeant’s office, he said, “well, I guess I’m out of luck.”

“What d’u mean, out of luck,” replied the stable sergeant, looking up from his papers.



"No horse. They're all assigned. That little roan I've been using belongs to Lieutenant Little and all the rest have been assigned."

"Oh, no they ain't. Those last ten horses in the end stable are all unassigned. Go down there and take your pick, Slim, any one of them."

"Saaay! I thought you were a friend of mine. I haven't been attending any of these drills so what the devil do I know about mounted drills anyway? You can fix it for me now by just saying there are not enough horses, but you turn me down cold."

"Well, you know what the captain said, Slim. This is probably the only mounted drill we'll have and he said every man had to be there. They even got the cooks, so you haven't a chance."

Slim walked away mumbling to himself. He had done considerable riding but riding according to the drill manual was something else again. He tried to remember the correct way to lead a horse out, to stand to horse, to mount and the hundred and one other things he had read in the drill manual, but most of these details had slipped his memory. He walked on down to where the other horses were. Men were busy now saddling their mounts and coaxing them to take the ice-cold bits in their mouths, neither of which the nags were particularly over anxious about.

As he came to the ten extra nags on the end, he eyed them as he passed along slowly. A cold shudder came over him as he looked at the first few; big bony carcasses that made him wonder how they had passed the physical examination; others, big draft horses that would have been a most hopeless mess as a single mount for a mounted drill such as the one to be staged this morning. Coming near the end, his eye quickly singled out one that had all the ear-marks of having been overlooked and he claimed it at once. This was an unexpected bit of luck, he thought, as he prepared to saddle and bridle it for himself.

A fine animal, very much alive, looked like an excellent rider and, all in all, Slim became pepped up to a point where he decided to put this bit of fancy drilling over in a big way. As he pulled the cinch strap tight the animal's head came around deftly with a bang as its teeth crashed together and just missed Slim's arm; again they crashed as Slim gave a final tug to the cinch. Now for the bridle. Slim had the devil's own time getting the nag's jaws open but after much scuffling and coaxing he succeeded. The animal's actions reassured Slim in his selection and, after leading it out of the stable, it was again his misfortune to have his dear captain call out a command for everybody to lead out to the drill field instead of ride out as some had already started to do.

In his excitement of trying to remember how to do this horsemanship business 'by the numbers' and that of finding unassigned what seemed to be a high class single mount, Slim had forgotten to exercise the usual precaution with a strange horse --- that of kicking down hard on one stirrup as if mounting, to see if the horse would stand for this. He brought his horse up in his proper position and was standing to horse in the front rank of some two hundred and fifty troopers lined up in company front. Hopelessly involved now with the drill manual, he was checking up on every detail as he stood at attention. Was he just far enough back of the horse's head? Was he holding the reins up close enough to the bits? Was his left hand down properly? Was his horse's head up high enough and a dozen other questions clouded his poor brain until he hardly realized he was holding a possible dynamic chunk of lightning in the form of horse-flesh beside him.

Now the command came down, "Prepare to mount"! Slim turned smartly. He was determined now to do this thing by the numbers and one, two, three was singing thru his brain as he snapped his hands back along the rein, grabbed them, along with a hunk of mane with his left hand at just the right distance in front of the saddle, caught the stirrup with his right and inserted his left foot quickly, then grasped the cantle of the saddle with his right hand, faced around and waited for the command to mount. In executing these movements the drill manual procedure was coming back to him quickly and, with confidence restored now, he was going to show 'em how this thing was done according to the rule book and show up these other amateurs. He waited there with all muscles tensed ready to spring as the captain rode by, inspecting.

Had he not been too much occupied with other thoughts at this time, he would have detected a dangerous sign while waiting. His nag was trembling quite perceptibly to any normal person, but Slim was anything but normal. Had he been normal, he would have gotten his right hand off the cantle of that saddle and onto the pommel with a death grip, gotten bawled out properly by the captain, took it, and saved himself some embarrassment later --- but he didn't. He was cocked and primed, ready to go --- and so was his nag.

Now, with the next command, Slim would draw himself up quickly to a standing position, change his right hand from the back to the front of the saddle, throw his right leg over and seat himself in the saddle, all in very fine military order and according to the rule book. But had he suspected trouble of any kind, he would have changed his right hand first and be thrown into the saddle with the trouble, all of which would have been so horribly unmilitary as to be entirely out of place on such an auspicious occasion.



The command came down, as it invariably would, "Mount!!"

And all hell busted loose with Slim and his nag. And between the two they proceeded to bust up completely what would otherwise have been a very pretty picture of a mounted troop sitting a horse in a double rank, company front formation.

With the command, Slim sprung to a standing position beside the saddle and at the same time his nag hunched up his back, cat fashion, so Slim found himself high in the air, his right hand loose and trying to grab something in front to hold to in order to get his right leg over. Actually, he appeared to be doing some new form of one-armed semaphore. Finally, he got a tight hold on the pommel of the saddle only to get his fingers too far under and suffer them to be pounded into a pulp during the next few minutes, since his nag was now doing everything but stand on its ear.

Now these nags, somewhat like ourselves, have the habit of wanting to mingle with the crowd when highly excited or scared, so Slim's nag went plunging into the nearest group. When they scattered, it did the same to the next group until the whole company were spurring their horses in every which direction to keep out of Slim's way. The ground, frozen as hard as rock and covered with ice in spots, only added to Slim's discomfort. Just as Slim, though he had set himself for the next jolt, his nag would come down on some ice with one hoof and slip, catching Slim off guard and nearly causing him to lose out altogether. But he'd manage to hold on and climb back into the saddle again.

Slim had gotten his right leg over finally but never succeeded in making the stirrup with it. His nag was doing some very advanced steps now along the lines of good old fashioned army bucking. The back work was particularly well developed and with each hunch Slim went into the air and back into the saddle with a jolt that snapped his head back until one wondered why his neck didn't break. His helmet bounced around on top of his head so as to just add the right touch to the picture.

To Slim this was a most disgusting situation; all of his plans to show the captain how this riding should be done had been blown up and, in fact, this idiotic nag seemed to be particularly fond of the captain's nag and showed it at every opportunity by plunging toward it. His nag had finally gotten a firm hold on the bits and Slim might just as well have thrown the reins away for all the good they did. Now it had gone into the final stage of an epileptic fit or something, and at each pause Slim loosed his hold just enough to get ready to sock with his heels but each time his nag did the unexpected and nearly finished him.

The whole business was getting kind of silly to Slim and he started kicking his nag to break the monotony --- and he succeeded, after a fashion. Catching him unawares, his nag bounced him back off the saddle, then kicked its hind heels high in the air sending Slim straight up about twenty feet above the ground. But this wasn't all. The final coup-de-mâitre came on Slim's return to old mother earth. His nag had decided on the usual victory thrust after feeling the release of Slim's weight and sent his heels up again with a terrific force. They caught Slim square in the chest on his way down and sent him flying back parallel with the ground about another twenty feet and deposited him on that frozen ground unceremoniously where he passed out to avoid further embarrassment.

His nag then stepped away victoriously but with a wide open hind quarter where he had slipped once and torn it open on a short stump sticking out of the ground. Slim was taken to the hospital where he came around some half hour later. Terribly sore, his pride suffered most but was accompanied by one broken and three fractured ribs. He had had three pencils in his blouse pocket before the fireworks started and, several days later in going thru his pockets, he discovered nine pieces of pencils, broken off as evenly and as clean as he could have done with a hatchet. When it came to downright fineness these nags could perform wonders.

Slim was laying on his cot at the hospital several days later when the stable sergeant walked in to see him.

"Hello, Slim," greeted the stable sergeant as he walked up to Slim holding out his hand.

"Hello poison," returned Slim, looking as sour as possible.

"Aw Slim, don't be sore about this."

"Oh, no. It was very funny, wasn't it? There's ten horses on the end, all unassigned. Take your pick. Yeaah! I'm off of you from now on."



“Aw now listen, Slim. I didn’t know anything about that horse. We just got that bunch from remount the day before. I couldn’t help it.”

Slim returned to duty a few days later, ready for something else but terribly shaky on approaching any of these nags again. He decided, as Godfry generously suggested, that as a horseman, he was a first class telephone man.

Things continued to happen around Coëtquidan to everybody in general and the telephone man in particular.



**[Harry S. Truman became 33<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States 1945-1953]**  
**Harry S. Truman Library and Museum Collection - photo: Captain Truman at Camp Coëtquidan in France, during World War I. Captain Harry S. Truman, Battery D 129<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, sitting on a horse. This photograph was taken at Camp Coëtquidan, Brittany, France in July 1918 by Arthur W. Wilson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Battery E, 129<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. Accession No. 58-421**  
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/photographs/view.php?id=1738>

It had warmed up some now and one bright afternoon found our men out on the range picking up telephone lines. The reel cart was jogging along an old road; the drum spinning around reeling up a half mile of telephone wire trailing along the road behind it; the drivers slouching along in their saddles were not paying much attention to things and Slim, sitting on the cart at the control wheel of the drum, was watching the wire winding; a monotonous procedure, but there was nothing else of special importance for the moment. Dip followed at a few paces feeding the wire onto the drum and a few other men were scattered back along the road. Back a little ways, someone riding a horse was about to turn onto the road with the wire and was noticed by Dip. He shouted to Slim.

“Hey! Who’s that on that horse back there?”

“Don’t know,” said Slim, looking back.

“He’s sure to get caught by the wire if he comes up this road.”

“Well, let him get caught – teach ‘im to respect an insignificant little wire.”

The insignificant little wire, under the attractive green insulation, was made up of several strands of steel wire of a tremendous tensile strength, very deceiving. It was slithering along at a fast gait like an endless and very slender green snake, the end of which had the habit of whipping around things with a terrific jerk as it became untangled. The linemen, knowing this, always made it a point to give the end a wide berth.

Slim, calling back to Dip, said “Come on. Don’t look back. We’ll let on like we didn’t see him.”

The reel cart horses continued to jog along as the horseman turned onto the same road and came along after them, about a quarter of a mile away.

Suddenly, the spinning drum of the reel cart trembled as the end of the wire caught on something for an instant then let go. The pole of the reel cart swung sharply against the off horse causing all the horses to get excited and roused the drivers. All stopped and looked back along the road and there was the horseman, down, in the only mud puddle along that road for miles. One of the linemen nearest the rider was going to the rescue as the rider was picking himself up out of the mud.

“Well, there’s one baby that’ll know better the next time”, said Slim.

“Wonder who it is,” said Dip half to himself.

“Can’t make him out,” replied Slim, as the rider, having gotten back on his muddy horse, was coming along in their direction.

“Good Lord!” exclaimed Dip half humorously and half seriously. It’s Lieutenant Kapschullard [sic]. Now I suppose we are in for it; he can’t help knowing we did that on purpose.” [Ed. This reference is to 2d Lieutenant Charles C. Kapschull Battery B, 149<sup>th</sup> Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Illinois) Field Artillery, of Chicago, Illinois; in 1934 WWI veteran Kapschull served as American Legion Department of Illinois Commander – see list at <http://www.illegion.org/2011DepartmentConvention/2011%20Convention%20%20Book.pdf>



Some of the men were commenting on their good fortune, as this particular lieutenant was not well liked.

He rode up to the waiting reel cart, a mud bespattered spectacle and from all indications, highly indignant, with the inevitable “Who’s in charge here?!”

Dip, of course, was the victim, but also being the biggest liar in the outfit and something of a diplomat too, was more than capable of handling the present situation.

“Guess I am, sir,” he said, taking a few steps toward the lieutenant who sat on his horse and glared.

“What do you mean by this ridiculous conduct?” snapped the muddy lieutenant.

“Sorry, sir, we didn’t see you.”

“You couldn’t have helped seeing me. Don’t you know you might have broken my horse’s leg?”

“Yes, sir, but you see lieutenant, we’ve been stringing telephone lines around here for the last week and there haven’t been any officers around after the batteries stopped firing for the day and naturally we didn’t ---.”

“That’s enough of that,” snapped the lieutenant again. “You’re becoming impertinent. Who’s your commander?”

“Colonel Reilly, sir.” [Colonel- later Brigadier General- Henry J. Reilly, Commanding, 149<sup>th</sup> Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Illinois) Field Artillery; photo found in Camp Mills, Long Island, New York 1917 Roster of the Rainbow Division – digitized at <https://archive.org/details/rosterofrainbowdoojohnrich> ]

“Very well, I shall report this to your colonel. Carry on,” added the lieutenant as he rode on.

When the lieutenant had passed beyond hearing, the men began to comment among themselves.

“Boy! Wasn’t he a mess,” came from one of the drivers.

“Slim asked, “Think he’ll really say anything to the colonel, Dip?”

“No. He ain’t got nerve enough to. If he mentioned this to the colonel he’d get the worst trimming he ever got.”

It was just sundown when the work of picking up all the lines had been completed. The batteries, having finished their day’s practice several hours earlier, had by now returned to camp and were probably eating supper while our telephone detail still had a two-hour hike ahead of them. This business of coming out early and getting back late was beginning to make them feel they were getting a tough break.

After they had been some two hours on what they thought was the road back to camp, they discovered they were lost. They were tired out and the chill damp night was beginning to make them uncomfortable.

“Well, if this ain’t a hell-of-a-note!” exclaimed Slim, when they had again stopped at a crossroad to try to locate themselves.

“Which way now, Dip?” called the lead driver, drowsily.

Dip, having looked unsuccessfully for sign boards or other marks of identity, said, “Damn ‘f I know. I’ll admit, boy, I’m just completely lost. These roads are all new to me.”

“Can’t see any lights anywhere, either,” grumbled Marten half to himself. “How about giving the horses their head; they ought to know the way back.”

“Bughouse fables,” chirped in Godfry, as he, with the others on foot, found a place beside the road to set down and rest. “Don’t you know no one but an officer’s supposed to know anything in this man’s army? Tell Dip to show one of those dumb nags his map. That ought to fix it O.K.”





“Well, come on,” called the lead driver impatiently. “I ain’t going to set up here and freeze.”

“Well, go ahead,” called Dip out of the darkness. “Your guess is as good as anybody’s.”

“They must be hard up for officers when they can’t give us any to steer us around,” said Godfrey. “Here we’ve been stringing telephones for anybody that wants one and when the show is over they go off and leave us as though we were just part of the artillery range. Hey, Dip, let’s stay here all night.”

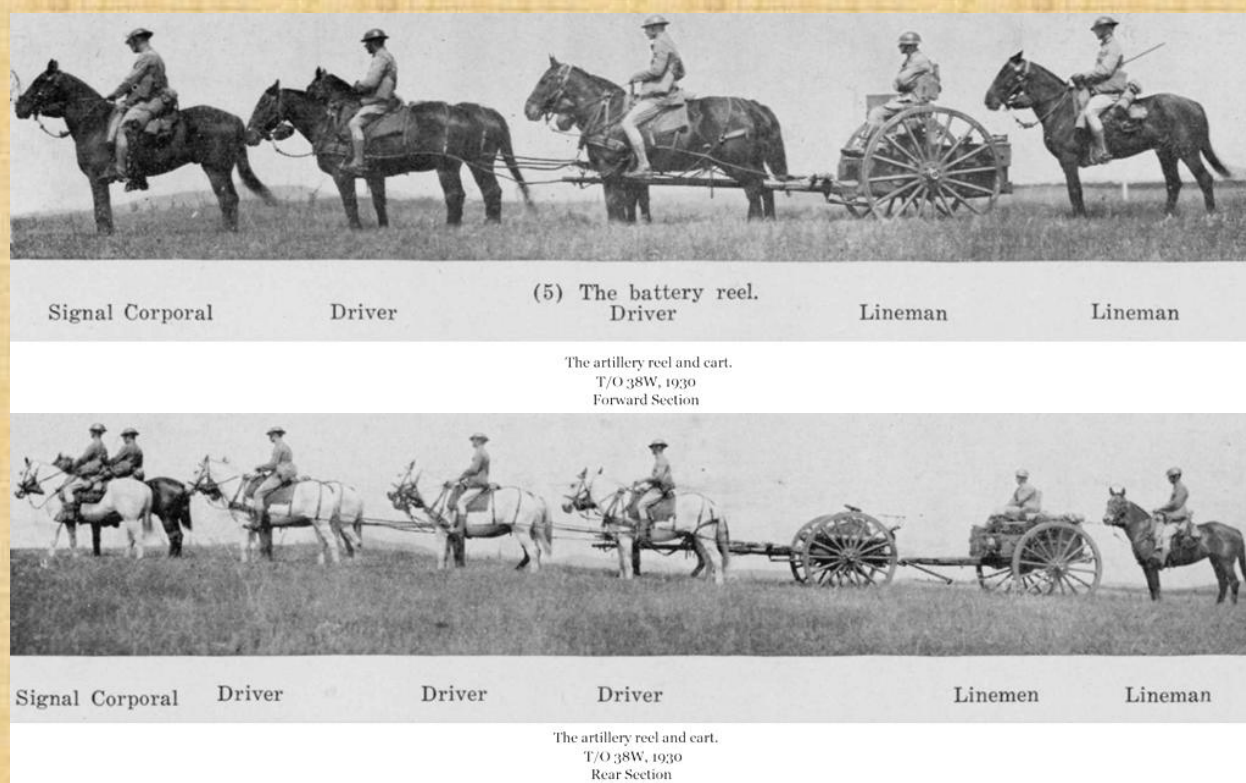
“Can’t,” replied Dip. “We haven’t any feed for the horses or nothing to eat for ourselves.”

“Let’s get movin’ then.”

“Alright, come on,” called Dip. “We might as well try this road. It seems to have been used recently.”

“I’ve been hungry so long I’m getting used to it,” said Marten as he stretched himself and fell in line behind the reel cart.

The detail moved along wearily. The clatter of the reel cart wheels on the stone road broke the stillness of the cold damp night. Their only hope now being to come on some landmark by which they could locate themselves.



Photos of the operation of a telephone reel cart is from [158thfieldartilleryassociation.com/?page\\_id=172](http://158thfieldartilleryassociation.com/?page_id=172) of the 158<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Association History – explanation of the duties of both forward and rear section linemen follows:

The four linemen assist in establishing and maintaining telephone circuits. Lineman 1 is wireman on battery reel 1; lineman 2 is wireman on battery reel 2. Instrument operator 1 assists the reconnaissance officer in survey operations, operates instruments and operates the signal lamp at the observation post. Instrument operator 2 delivers, sets up and operates the aiming circle at the post of the executive and operates the signal lamp thereat. The six telephone operators have duties as follows: Telephone operator 1 is operator for the battery commander on the command circuit. Telephone operator 2 is operator at the post of the executive. Telephone operator 3 is operator at the observation post on the conduct of fire circuit. Telephone operator 4 establishes the telephone central and operates the switchboard. Telephone operators 5 and 6 act as relief operators, assist in maintaining telephone circuits and act as messengers. Orderly 1 acts as horseholder for members of the BC Party and as a messenger; Orderlies 2 and 3 act as horseholders where required and as messengers. The wagoner drives the mountain wagon.

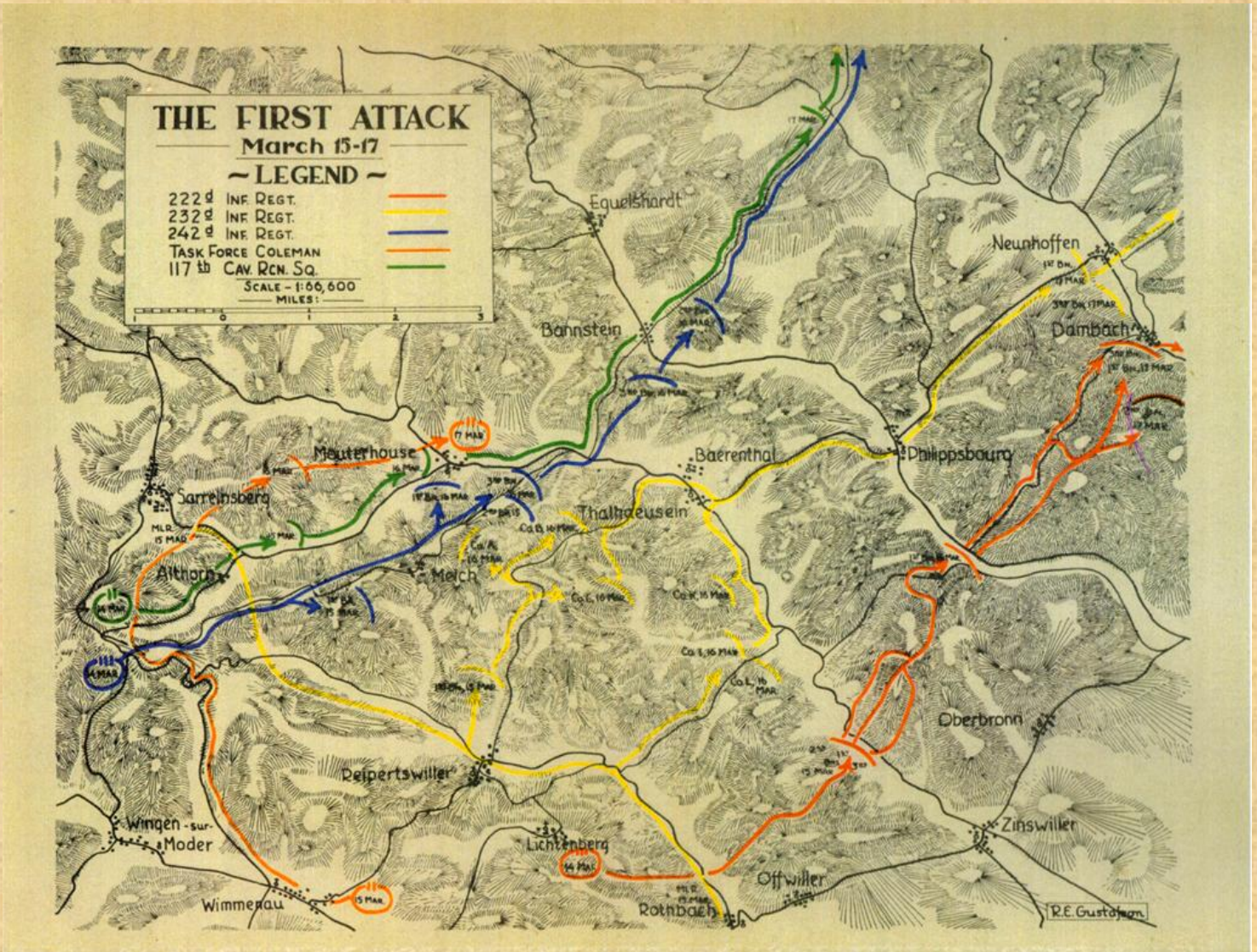
To Be Continued, February 2016 RAINBOW TRAIL



## THE RAINBOW DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II

MARCH 15, 1945

This date of March 15, 1945 has been chosen by the District of Columbia Chapter of the Rainbow Division Veterans as the most significant date for the commemoration of the heroic deeds of those members of the Rainbow Division who made the supreme sacrifice in the honorable fight for truth and freedom during World War II.



There are many dates in that war which mean many things to all of us – dates which we will never forget. However, **March 15, 1945** was the date that the entire Division first began offensive operations against the German War Machine. It was the date that the U.S. Seventh Army began its final drive to crush the detested Nazi Regime. That was the day the Rainbow Division began the long, difficult and heroic journey to later become known as the “Glory Road.” It was a day that tested the physical and moral fiber of every Rainbow Soldier. It was a day of trial, a day of proof, and a day of manhood. It was a day of death, and sorrow, and sadness. **March 15, 1945** was a day we were all glad to have behind us, but a day of which every Rainbow soldier can be justifiably proud.

It is to the memory of those heroes who fell in line of duty that memorable day, and to the memory of all the other Rainbow Soldiers who have given their lives for the principles upon which our glorious country is founded, and which this organization seeks to serve, that we, the living, dedicate our thoughts and pay our most sincere and humble respects on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of March every year.



## DAY OF TRIAL

**March 15, 1945** dawned bright and clear in contrast to the weather of a week before. By mid-morning, troopers would be shedding the heavy winter clothing that a few hours before seemed altogether inadequate against the bitter chill of the night. The weather would be one of the few factors in favor of the Rainbow Division that fateful day.

All along the front lines chilled soldiers huddled in their attack positions awaiting the order to move out, knowing for certain only that physical movement would restore their circulation and the warmth in their bodies. The rest of the day's coming events were a constant wonder and worry to them. True, they had an idea of what to expect because they had been making plans for days, and they were not new in the area, having faced the Germans across numerous draws and creeks in the Hardt Mountains for several weeks.

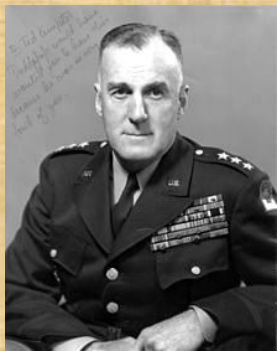
Thousands of individual lives, each like the carefully conceived plot of a novel, had reached their climaxes without dramatic fanfare. Today was outwardly no different than yesterday, or the day before. The difference was in the heart and mind of each Rainbow Soldier, and that difference didn't make itself felt until this day arrived with the coming of sunlight.

Then, that difference swept through the frozen forest like a sudden thunder shower and culminated in the same simple questions which thousands of heads asked thousands of hearts. Will I be adequate? Will I have the strength to meet the requirements of today? Will I survive this "Day of Trial" as a man with honor? Yet, the questions were not so simple, because they were complicated by the natural desire for physical survival, by problems and circumstances at home, by the esteem of buddies who were huddled left and right with their own searching thoughts.

Someone once said that a Soldier spends most of his time waiting for something; chow, pay, a shower, a bus to town, or a letter from home. There is probably some truth to that, because eventually he gets used to waiting – until he must find a way across the eternity of those last few minutes before the attack. It wasn't so bad for the leaders who moved around from man to man making last minute checks of ammunition, shoepacs, gloves, and the many other details incident to the attack. Their questions and remarks were a welcome interruption to private thoughts, although they would never know it from the answers they received.

Finally it came – the order to move out. Suddenly, the cold, quiet forest was alive with action as carefully synchronized watches triggered thousands of human beings into silent action. Individuals became squads, squads became platoons, platoons merged into companies, and the Rainbow Division moved across the line of departure at **6:45 A.M. on March 15, 1945** as a coordinated fighting machine which was later to be called "the crushing superiority of the enemy" by the Chief of Staff of the XIII S.S. Army Corps.

The U.S. Seventh Army mission in the Spring of 1945 was designed to carry U.S. troops through Hitler's vaunted West Wall to the western banks of the Rhine River. General Patch decided to attack with his three corps abreast, the XXI Corps on the left flank, the VI Corps on the right flank, and the XV Corps in the middle making the main effort.

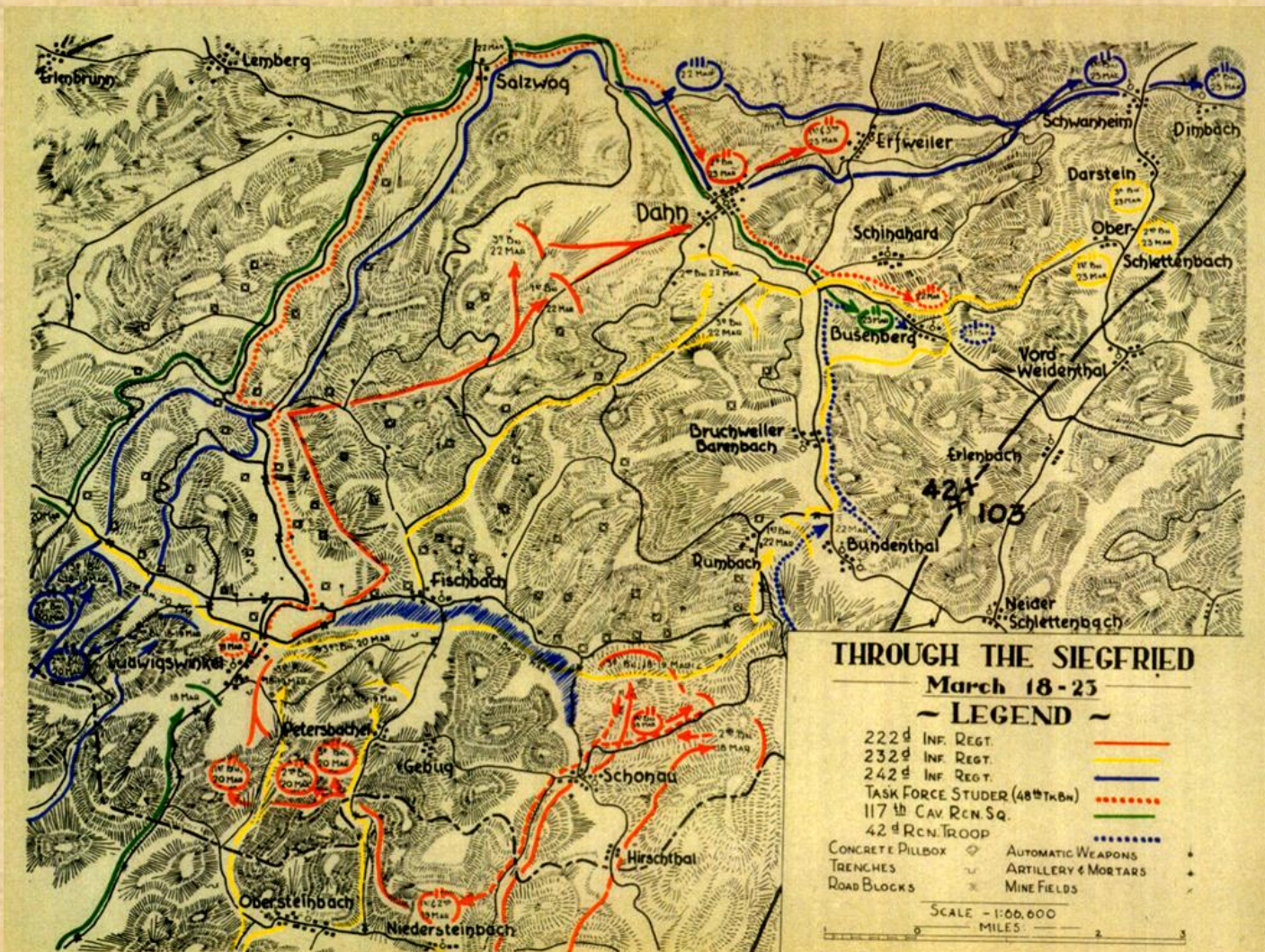


However, General Patch directed **Major General Edward H. Brooks, the VI Corps commander** to push forward on a broad front and attempt a penetration of the Wissembourg Gap, an easily traversible lowland between the forests of the Rhine Plain and the heavily forested Hardt Mountains to the west of the city. A penetration through this gap and a break through the West Wall at Bad Bergzabern, just to the north, would open the Rhine Plain to exploitation by armored forces and threaten to cut off the German First Army to the west.

General Brooks planned to attack with four infantry divisions – the 42<sup>nd</sup> (Rainbow), 103<sup>rd</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Algerian, respectively, from left to right. The Rainbow Division was directed to attack to the northeast, from positions along the Rothbach River deep in the Hardt Mountains, to clear the Bitche-Haguenau road; to assist the 103<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division on the right by taking the high ground to the west of Niederbronn; and to seize the high ground in the vicinity of Schonau. At this point, the Division was to swing to the northwest up the Lauter River Valley and cut the Pirmasens-Landau road.

On the face of it, this mission was a man-sized job, but when one looks at a map of the area, the full magnitude of the tasks assigned the Rainbow Division strikes like a punch in the nose. The zone of attack of the Rainbow Division was directly through the heart of the heavily forested Hardt Mountains. The rivers through the area ran parallel to and across the front of the Division, cutting the area into easily defended cross-compartments. Most of the surfaced roads followed the river valleys and offered the Rainbow Soldier little help. Those few roads and trails leading to the north were easily and heavily mined. The woods and rocks offered cover and concealment and the crests and crags provided commanding positions. In short, the terrain could not have been more ideal for the defense.





Maps are from <https://archive.org/details/42ndRainbowInfantryDivisionACombatHistoryOfWorldWarIi>

To view this and other WWII photos of the German West Wall, go to – <http://search.aol.com/aol/image?q=NARA+%2B+photos+%2B+Siegfried+Line+fo+rtifications>

At the end of this forested and mountainous corridor of death lay the Nazi West Wall, a fortified belt of minefields, tank obstacles, and mutually supporting pill boxes and gun emplacements. Covered with earth and overgrown with vegetation, the concrete pill boxes formed an almost impregnable belt 500 yards deep, with a secondary defensive zone to the rear.

Elements of two German infantry divisions sat astride the zone of attack of the Rainbow Division. As a matter of fact, after the war was over, it could be determined that the boundary between the XIII S.S. Army Corps and the LXXXX Army Corps of the German First Army ran right down the middle of the Rainbow zone. The superior fighting qualities of the Rainbow soldier were to make this fact quite significant before the action was over.



In his recollections of the battle in the Hardt mountains after the collapse of Germany, **General Major Helmut Kleikamp, commander of the 36 Volks Grenadier Division** which opposed the Rainbow Division on its right flank, said that his staff had estimated that the point of the enemy main attack would be against the Fischbach-Schonau sector. As a consequence, he placed his 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the area directly opposite the Rainbow's 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, the 3 to 1 advantage usually sought before assuming the offensive. Photo of General Major Kleikamp is found at <https://reibert.info/threads/36-pexotnaja-divizija.246363/>

On the left flank, the Rainbow Division was faced by elements of the 16<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division of the XIII S.S. Army Corps. This unit was weaker and had a longer front than the 36<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division on its left flank. These facts undoubtedly led the division commander to gamble on the excellent defensive features of the area, much to



his later regret. However, his reasons for his dispositions and his reaction to the ultimate fate of his unit will never be known, since he was killed in action before the month was out.

German plans called for a vigorous delaying action back to the West Wall, which was lightly garrisoned with housekeeping troops, and then a determined defense in that area by all troops available. Consequently, roads and trails to the north were heavily mined and defended from commanding heights.

**42<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander, Major General Harry J. Collins'** plans called for the attack to be made by the attached 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron on the left, the 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment in the center, and the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment on the right. The 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment was initially to be in reserve. The attack was to be a surprise without artillery support, but with artillery concentrations on call for likely targets. Attacking units were to take the high ground and flank the enemy fires laid on the roadblocks and minefields in the valleys. Thus the engineers would be able to clear these areas without interruption.



**Photo of MG Harry J. Collins is from the 42<sup>nd</sup> “Rainbow” Infantry Division World War II official combat history, by Lt. Hugh C. Daly, 1946.**

**General Collins checks defensive positions [the soldier immediately behind the General has been identified as Lawrence E. “Pete” Wagner, HQ Co, 42<sup>nd</sup> Division]**

enemy attack is not yet noticeable.”

The relief of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry by the 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March and the relief of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 242<sup>nd</sup> by the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Recon Squadron on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March was considered normal by the Germans when they detected it on 14 March. The daily war diary of the 16<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division recorded on that date that “Intention of

Meanwhile, preparations for the attack continued along with routine duties. Units not on the line conducted training problems and learned new techniques which time had not permitted at Camp Gruber. Division Field Order No. 3 was issued on 14 March and caused a flurry of activity at regimental headquarters. Line companies used troops and mules to carry supplies forward. Romeo Fagiolo, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, reports that at the end of the day he was so tired he didn't know whether he was a troop or a mule.

The aggressive patrolling of the Division continued up until the time of the attack and kept the Germans out of our lines. One patrol spent 3 days and 4 nights behind the German lines, bringing back information that was invaluable for the attack. Back at the rear echelon in Cirey, France, life went on as it had for centuries, as if no war existed. Dick Wayland, of Division Headquarters Company, tended bar at the Officers Club (term used in its broadest sense), and Roland LeMay made one of the longest patrols into friendly territory, back to Seventh Army Headquarters.

Defensive preparations by the Germans moved simultaneously with Rainbow activity. However, here the Rainbow Division had another advantage over the Germans; they knew when the attack would begin, and the Germans did not, despite the fact that in retrospect several German commanders and staff officers claim that they were not surprised. As a consequence, the night of 14-15 March was a routine night for the German soldiers. They were not alert to the danger that was to strike in the morning.

During the period from **midnight on the 14<sup>th</sup> to midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1945**, the operations journal of the Rainbow Division was to record 301 entries, more than 1 every 5 minutes. Headquarters personnel at all levels were keyed to fever pitch as they waited for reports of the action to filter onto the dimly lit operations maps where technicians represented the current situation with signs and symbols. Commanders and operations officers, somewhat like football coaches on the sidelines, made their decisions and issued their orders. There was a quiet, tired atmosphere of efficiency about the whole deadly panorama.

First reports arriving in the Division operations center ran at a slow pace and concerned the progress of final preparations for the attack and reports from the last few weary patrols which had been keeping the Germans off balance. At **40 minutes past midnight**, one patrol reported the location of a foxhole containing 2 Germans who were laughing and talking, little expecting the fate which the morning held in store for them. Reports of digging, log cutting, and flashlights behind the German lines were commonplace. By **1:30 A.M.** the 42<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance troops



had established firm contact with the 103<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division on the right flank. Preparations for the attack continued in logical order.

A report from the 232<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion of machine gunfire and smoke falling into their area at **3:00 A.M.** caused some anxious moments at the Division, until it was concluded that this was only a part of routine German harrassment. By **4:20 A.M.** Captain Carroll at Division had determined that all units were ready for the attack, except Task Force Downard which did not complete its preparations until 6:15. By **5:45 A.M.** the front lines were quiet in the zones of the Rainbow Division and the 103<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division to its right. The lull before the storm had settled over the Hardt mountains – and only the U.S. forces knew the weather report.

The storm broke precisely at **6:45 A.M. on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1945** when silent soldiers of the Rainbow crossed the line of departure into the German lines. Telephones at the Division operations center jangled continuously as reports began to arrive. VI Corps was advised at **7:05** that the Rainbow was on the move. The attack was a complete surprise to the Germans, as prisoners of war were later to reveal. German reaction to the attack was mixed. Some just thought that the Rainbow patrols were getting stronger and larger. Others did not detect the advance until Rainbow units were well on their way to gaining high ground. Some Germans fought desperately, others executed withdrawal plans with, or without orders. Some just quit and surrendered.

However, the bulk of the German forces rallied after a short period during which they tried to ascertain the precise nature of the threat against them, and then they fought with all the resources available to them. Enemy artillery fire began to fall in Reipertswiller and Lichtenberg at **7:40**, and attacking infantrymen began to receive small arms and machine gun fire. Mortar fire was sporadic. Mine fields seemed to be everywhere, and were initially the greatest deterrent to forward movement. At **8:00** General Collins called the 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry to learn the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was 300 yards into the German lines with no organized opposition facing them. Already that unit had 2 casualties. By **9:35**, L Company was in a mine field and in trouble. Nine men were lost and extra litter teams from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion were called up. All along the line Rainbow units continued to move forward, maintaining contact and holding their flanks up.

By now Rainbow soldiers were tired, but confident – some were even a little cocky. The sun had risen into the sky to lace the forest with dust-filled shafts of light. Winter clothing was being removed and tied to packs, socks were wet, and shoepacs had begun to chafe. **Then the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry came up to Hill 402.** It was immediately obvious the Germans did not plan to give it up without a fight – an assault would be necessary. Preparations were started at **9:32**. The German 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was well dug-in and ready for a fight. Major Walter J. Fellenz and his 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were going to accommodate them.

The role assigned to the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry didn't keep them out of the fight either. By **10:30** the regiment had 19 prisoners and B Company had suffered almost a platoon of casualties. A platoon from A Company was rushed to their aid and the battle for the ridges continued unabated.

Dazed and shaken German prisoners were beginning to arrive in increasing numbers by mid-morning. The unexpected volume and accuracy of the Rainbow artillery was a most convincing factor according to the interrogations. The timetable established by the German commanders for their delaying action was moving too fast. S.S. Lt. Col. Albert Ekkehard, the XIII S.S. Army Corps Chief of Staff, stated after the war that, "In the sectors of all three divisions, critical situations developed, which led to deep penetrations and caused heavy losses – up to 40 per cent." Ekkehard also confirmed the losses of terrain to the 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry that continued to mount as the day wore on – losses that time and again destroyed contact between the two German Army corps.

The bomb safety line was moved forward by Division at **11:10**, signalling to all units that the Rainbow was not going to be stopped. However, all was not going to be easy, either. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was still having trouble with Hill 402 in the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry area, and B Company of the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry wasn't out of trouble yet. In the meantime, the prisoners who had been captured earlier had been interrogated and began to give some idea of the enemy situation. Most claimed to have been surprised by the attack. Some had heard rumors of a withdrawal, but none had received any orders to that effect. Practically all of them had been ordered to stand and fight. There was no question but what large forces were dug in and ready to fight in front of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry's B Company.

Consequently, initial efforts to take Hill 402 were stopped by the Germans, who even felt strong enough to counter attack. At **1:30 P.M.** the tired and overheated troopers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion commenced an assault of the German positions. The attack was used as cover for the movement of Lt. Col. Edward F. Niblock's 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion around the hill to the east. Rainbow Division Headquarters waited anxiously for news from this quarter – but the news was slow in



coming. Communication with the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry forward command post had been cut a half hour before the assault started.

It had now become quite obvious that Hill 402 was the key to the German defenses of the area, and that the enemy intended to hold it at all costs. This became even more apparent at **2:30 P.M.** when the 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry reported they were moving easier than they had all day, and that they expected to capture Melch in a half hour. The decision to by-pass the hill and turn the defenders out of their position was timely.

In speaking of the 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's performance, General Major Helmut Kleikamp, Commanding General of the 36<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division, said, "...Fierce battles ensued for the possession of every foot of ground, and both sides fought with great bravery. Crisis piled upon crisis, every one a threat that the enemy might break through to the north."

Taking the high ground and avoiding the mined valleys with their deadly roadblocks wasn't the only Rainbow surprise for the enemy. Lt. Col. Robert G. Sherrard, the Rainbow G-3, advised Colonel Davis at VI Corps Headquarters that Rainbow units started maneuvers to by-pass enemy strong points, around **2:50 P.M.**, and that plans were being made to continue the attack at night. These plans would further upset the German timetable, and allow them none of the rest which they so badly needed.

The 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry continued to exploit its opportunity. By **4:45**, Rainbow troops controlled Petite Marteau and others were on the high ground above Baerenthal, still moving fast. A half hour later, infantry was able to place direct fire on the Baerenthal-Zinswiller road, and for all practical purposes that transportation artery was cut. On the other flank, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry had entered the race to the north and moved to a point about 400 yards north-east of Hill 402. The German position was soon to become untenable.

Not to be outdone by the attacking regiments, the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry still had its B Company in the fight. Although often times surrounded on Hill 335, and under almost continuous German counterattack, B Company was digging in to stay at 6:40 P.M. Its score of machine guns knocked out and prisoners taken continued to mount.

Lt. Colonel Edwin Rusteberg, the Rainbow G-2 learned from the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at **8:50 P.M.** that the forts around Bitche, to the left of the Rainbow zone, had been captured and that the Germans in that area were in a general withdrawal to the West Wall to the North. The enemy was to have no rest. At **9:45 P.M.** General Collins' directive, to infiltrate as many men as possible to the day's objective, was sent out to the 222<sup>nd</sup> and 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiments.

By **11:00 P.M.** fairly reliable reports had reached Division that the Baerenthal-Zinswiller road had been cut by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry. The attacking units had outrun their wire communications, and radios simply didn't function in the dense woods and difficult mountains. Efforts were being made to establish communications through use of messengers, but the unfriendly darkness of the chill night made it most difficult. The fog of battle would not clear before morning.

However, if there was doubt about the precise details of the military situation, there was no doubt about the personal situation. Thousands of bone-weary, hungry, and chilled Rainbow Soldiers knew the answers to the questions that had gnawed at them earlier that day. Many had paid dearly to learn those answers. All of them had earned their own self respect, as well as that peculiar respect which only comrades who have served together in battle can have for each other.

The results of the Rainbow Division's action on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1945 weren't to become apparent until after the war was over and the score could be totaled with returns from the enemy side. General Major Wolf-Rudeger Hauser, the Chief of Staff of the First German Army, summarized it very nicely when he said, "From 15 March until 19 March the enemy launched attacks with his far superior forces and succeeded in creating a deep breach in the area of the XIII S.S. Army Corps and the LXXXX Army Corps, particularly in the former, resulting in withdrawal of the front line back to the West Wall. .... In view of this situation, which became worse every moment, the Army as well as the Army Group realized that an immediate withdrawal – sector by sector – to the prepared Rhine bridge-heads was necessary to save the remaining, already weakened, fighting power of formations."

History also records the fact that the 16<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division was so badly shattered that the larger of the two halves into which it was split had to be attached to the 36<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division in order to evacuate it to the Rhine bridgeheads. Also, after the action to penetrate the West Wall was over, the XIII S.S. Army Corps, of which the 16<sup>th</sup> Volks Grenadier Division had been a part, survived only as a headquarters.



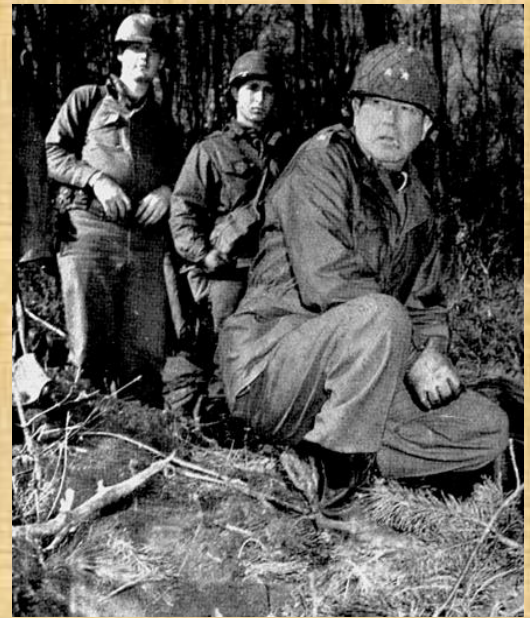
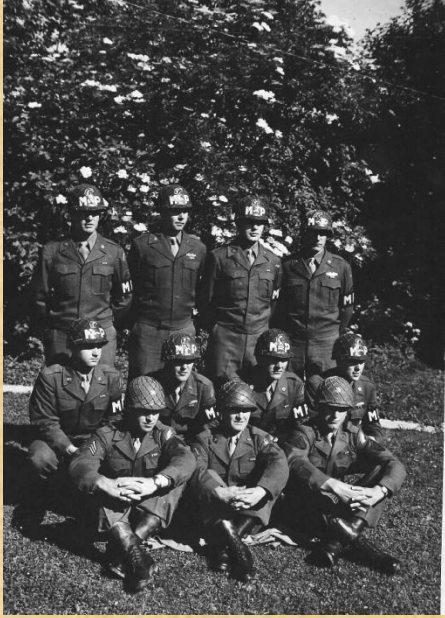
Despite the almost impossible obstacles presented by the harsh terrain and the fanatical enemy, a Rainbow Soldier was the first man in the U.S. VI Corps to cross the German border – thus, the Rainbow Division began the “Glory Road” – proud, bloodied, but unbeaten.

**From Larry Wagner, son of Lawrence E. Wagner, MP, HQ 42<sup>nd</sup> Division** – Here are some pictures that might interest you. I found them in some of my Dad’s belongings after his passing. I thought it would be nice to share them with the others of the Rainbow Family.

**(Left)** June 1945 -From top Row, L-R (standing) Lightcap, Parkhurst, Keeling, Bolz, (kneeling)Wagner, Johnson, Laposha, Roney, (sitting) Foster, Howell, Hightower

**(Center)** Joe and Wag. One of the General’s captured cars, a German Horch. Taken at our house in Kitzbuhel July ‘45

**(Right)** cropped photo from the official WWII Combat History of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division, showing MG Harry J. Collins, T/4 Lawrence Wagner just behind the General.



## HONOR FLIGHT—WORLD WAR II VETERAN

On Friday, May 1, 2015, I, Raymond Deming, 232 Cannon Co., joined 89 other World War II veterans at San Diego's Lindbergh Field to embark on a US Airways Charter flight to Washington, D.C. This trip is called a WW II Tour of Honor during which we would view our memorial plus the other special memorials/monuments on the Mall. I was met at the airport by my assigned Guardian, Paul Granger, a Vietnam War veteran, who along with his Team Leader wife, Leslie, pay their own costs to volunteer for we area veterans. We left for our adventure at 8:00 a.m.



**Photo – Ray with Paul and Leslie Granger**

On board we were entertained, fed, treated like precious cargo, and fed again. Wife, Barbara, had secretly contacted family to write notes of appreciation and, along with dozens of letters from school children from San Diego County (and one school in Arizona), the Mail Call was touching, patriotic, and left many of us with a few tears. I appreciated knowing that in some schools today, WW II is still studied.

**Photo – Ray with Mail Call on plane**



Arriving at Baltimore/Washington International Airport at 4:00 (EST), the plane filled with old warriors was honored with a water cannon salute. Our bus, escorted by a motorcycle Honor Guard of veteran riders, arrived at the Hilton in ten minutes. There we received our Honor Flight T-shirts with a request to wear them everywhere in D.C., and were assigned our roommates. I lucked out with Mario, a Marine veteran of the Pacific Theater.

Barb says when I called her after dinner that night she could hear the excitement in my voice—and we hadn't even seen anything yet. Guardian Paul told her, he thought I would have trouble going to sleep as I was on a high of excitement—



and he was exhausted. The comradeship with others who had fought in that era, the tales we shared, and the laughter was a great beginning.

I had been a bit reluctant to put in an application. My best traveling companion (Barb) couldn't go with me and I dragged my feet. But when a friend told me how amazing the Honor Flight experience had been, she encouraged me to submit my application. She pointed out that, if I was chosen, it was truly an honor, one that WW II veterans certainly richly deserve. It took about a year to get on the Flight; two flights only are made per year.



Up early on Saturday, May 2, we had a delicious breakfast and loaded the bus at 7:00, first stop the World War II Memorial and group photo. What a sight! Hey, fellow veterans, we waited a long, long time for this memorial and it is amazing. It's a semi-circular memorial at the opposite end of the Reflecting Pool from the Lincoln Memorial. The low wall facing the pool is called the



Freedom Wall. Here, there are 4,000 gold stars commemorating the more than 400,000 Americans who gave their lives in WW II. And, of course we all had to find Kilroy. **Photo left – Ray finding Kilroy** The Lincoln Memorial is also impressive. Old Abe himself is a huge figure, sitting with eyes taking in all that happens before him. But I don't think I was quite prepared for the emotions brought on when viewing the bronze statues of Vietnam War soldiers...and



the wall with all the items/flowers left in tribute. That memorial seems to go on and on, filled with the names of fallen soldiers. And the Korean Memorial gave me chills. The figures in parkas, light gray in color, made the viewer feel like they were moving along in the bitter cold with them.



At noon, we boarded the bus again for a trip across the Potomac to Arlington National Cemetery and the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. On board we were served a box lunch—delicious, and enough to feed two old warriors like me—or one young Rainbow soldier.

RESPECTFUL SILENCE IS OBSERVED. This was our "order of the moment," but no one had to be reminded that we were on sacred ground. The rows-upon-rows of crosses across the gently sloping land and the muted sound of steps of the uniformed guards at the Tomb would have hushed anyone. There was a continued respectful silence as we headed to our next stop.



I've seen pictures of the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima. Sacrifices by Marines in a war far removed from my battlefields, was made real when I viewed their memorial. Off again to the Air Force Memorial and then to the U. S. Navy Yard Museum. I have always enjoyed museums and have been to ones all over the U.S. I found this one to be exceptionally well done.

The farewell dinner at the Hilton was lively and bittersweet. This day had been long and filled with both awe and deep emotion. Now we were at the end of our trip. For all of my first reluctance to make this journey, for the energy it took for this 90-year old veteran to see everything in a short time, I was so grateful for this opportunity. A part of me didn't want it to end.

After an early breakfast on Sunday, May 3, we boarded the plane for our flight home. We were all tired but still sharing special insights of the wonderful trip. (I certainly couldn't let it go; I spoke for weeks about it afterwards, shared pictures, and handed out applications for others to apply for the local Honor Flight experience.)



And who could have been prepared for the Baggage Area of the Terminal. As we rode down the escalator lined with the white uniforms of naval personnel from a vessel that calls San Diego home, we saw a sea of faces before us. Eight hundred people. Cheering, flags waving, smiling fellow citizens. Hugs, kisses, leis. Patriotic music. It was overwhelming to think that all of these people had given up their Sunday afternoon to welcome home veterans of a war that we had a part in winning 70 years ago! And there was my Barbara, dressed in red, white, and blue, smiling and teary-eyed at our tremendous welcome, throwing her arms around me.

We World War II veterans received the welcome home we had never received back then.

So, my message to you, readers, is this: If you have fathers, husbands, sons, or friends who have served in our wars, find the nearest Honor Flight organization (at [honorflight.org](http://honorflight.org)) and fill out an application. It costs the veteran nothing...except for souvenirs. We old warriors are dying off pretty fast so they are now also taking applications for veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

I had never been to Washington, D.C. and, though I only had glimpses of the central buildings of our government and the city itself, I must say this: "I've been to capital cities all over the world but nothing prepared me for our country's capital...beautiful city, just amazing."



Photos were taken by Ray Deming and Paul Granger.

## **April 12, 2015 message received at <[rainbowvets.org](http://rainbowvets.org)>**

Hello,

My name is Jessi Quillen, my husband, friend and I are about to take a trip to France and Germany to recreate the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp during the 70th anniversary. We have researched the 42nd Rainbow Division and are very inspired by their mission. We will first land in Marseille and follow their path through France and Germany and end at Dachau. One part of our trip will be to walk the approximate 60 miles death march that the Dachau prisoners were forced to march just prior to the liberation.

During our march we want to spend some time reflecting and writing letters to the members and family descendents of the 42nd Rainbow division. These letters will contain our gratitude and personal feelings on the events of WWII. We look forward to being able to share our experiences and gratitude with the veterans and their families. We are not related to veterans in the 42nd Division or to Holocaust survivors but one of us is a Veteran of the Afghanistan war and my husband's father was in the Air Force during the Vietnam war.

### **TO ALL THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE 42ND RAINBOW DIVISION OF WW2,**

Myself and two coworkers won a DreamGrant from our work that allowed us to travel to Europe so that we could follow the 42nd Rainbow Division's route through Europe during its WW2 campaign.



Being a veteran myself this was truly a great honor and privilege that I was about to undertake. I served in the US Army with the 101st Division in D. Co. 2/187 and both of my grandfathers served during WW2. There was a lot to take in during our trip, but in the back of my mind I kept imagining what it must have been like to be fighting here in this vast countryside. I know all wars are the same and all wars are different so my experience varies greatly from the men and women who served during this time in our history.



A truly humbling experience that stands out in my mind during our trip was seeing Dachau. The three of us walked a Death March POWs had to do from Munich to Tegernsee, Germany. And although it wasn't the same because we weren't malnourished or prisoners it was an experience I will never forget. After some 68 miles we visited Dachau and had the experience of what true horrors were conducted at Dachau. It made me angry and sad all at the same time that people could commit such atrocities against their fellow man.

I can't possibly imagine what it was like when the 42nd liberated the camp and rescued all the survivors. There were many things that really touched me on this trip and opened my eyes to new experiences and cultures and it's something I don't take lightly. I can't express my respect and admiration enough for all the men and women who fought during WW2 and all the other soldiers who continue to serve today.

**Sincerely,  
Daniel Cornelius**

**Dear Rainbow Division,**

I am writing to thank you for the legendary acts of service that the Rainbow Division performed during World War II. My wife Jessi, and a friend, Daniel Cornelius, and I recently returned from a trip to Europe to commemorate the mission of the Rainbow Division in World War II and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp.

We arrived in Marseille, France on April 18<sup>th</sup> to begin our journey through France and Germany and visit some of the important sites of World War II. On our first full day in Marseille, we visited the cathedral Notre-Dame de la Garde. While there, a thief busted out the window of our rented Peugeot and stole all of our belongings, including my passport, credit card, driver's license, clothes, phone, camera chargers, and backpack. The total value of the theft was over \$3,000. Our friend Daniel wavered on whether to continue our journey, but after some discussion, it was decided that we would all go on together.

After a couple of days in Marseille, we made our way north and visited the beaches of Normandy where the United States was so instrumental in the soon to come liberation of Europe from Nazi tyranny. We saw the craters from the shelling and the collapsed Nazi armament stations. As I looked out at the sea, I tried to imagine the fear that would have been felt on both sides. Surely the Germans knew that defeat was coming, but they stayed and fought, making the casualties that much heavier for America and her allies. I wondered how many tears were shed in Iowa, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New York, and all over America for the sons and brothers lost on that day. I wondered if those who fought for freedom on that day had any idea that sheep would one day graze on the hills where the Nazis mounted their guns, and children would play in the craters where bombs fell.

After Normandy, we traveled to Munich where we approached but did not enter the Dachau Concentration Camp. Our aim was to walk the 70 mile forced death march by the Dachau prisoners to Tegernsee in southern Germany. During our three day journey, we saw beautiful countryside and enjoyed the peace of birds chirping as we walked. I got enormous blisters on my feet but found the journey pleasant all the same. How unusual that such a beautiful place must have been so terrible to those that marched in the cold. I hoped that maybe the Jews who survived the march were able to find some joy in such beautiful country after being locked up, tortured, and nearly worked to death.

Upon arrival in Tegernsee, we immediately boarded a train back to Dachau to finally visit the concentration camp where so much evil took place. As we visited the memorial, we saw and learned of the horror that was everyday life for the interned. I cried more than once as I visited the exhibits detailing their torture. I cried again as I read about and saw footage detailing the final liberation of the camp by soldiers from the United States of America.

At one point, I stopped to reflect. How insignificant were my blistered feet. How insignificant was the theft of my phone. The Jews and others at Dachau were robbed of their families, their dignity, and their hope. Too many American



families were robbed of their sons and brothers by the Nazi war machine. How much am I in debt to those who fought for the freedom that I enjoy today? Perhaps I will never know because I have never lived in a world where Americans didn't fight to preserve the freedom of their grandchildren.



This was ultimately what this trip was all about, to remember, to commemorate, and to thank. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I don't know that I will ever fully understand what it was like for those that saw and felt the horrors of World War II, but I do know that I understand what America stands for and what she has always stood for. America stands for freedom and her freedom is a beacon of light in dark world. May she ever be that beacon and may we forever thank the greatest Americans, the American soldiers.

**Thank you forever for your honorable service and sacrifice.  
Jared Quillen**

**Dear veterans of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division WWII,**

In April of this year we boarded a plane to Marseille, France to begin our journey of following your path through Europe in 1944. Our purpose was to commemorate your bravery and accomplishment of freeing those prisoners who had survived the terrible and unimaginable treatment within the Dachau Concentration camp.

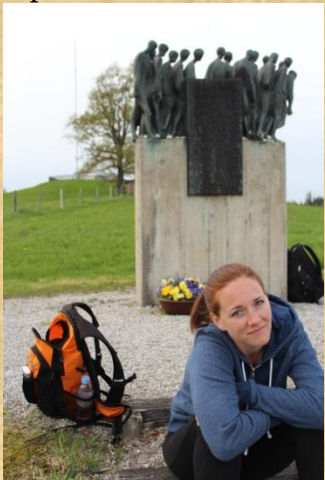
We entered Marseille and stayed for several days, then traveled to Paris. We made a detour to Normandy to pay our respects for the brave men who fought to take the beaches there. From Normandy we drove to Strasbourg and stopped in Stuttgart. In Stuttgart we spent one evening with our friend's daughter who is 11, searching the town for Stolpersteines, mini gold plaques that were placed in the sidewalk in front of homes or businesses where the person identified was taken from their home by the Nazi's. As we were rubbing paper with pencils over the Stolpersteines a woman stopped and asked if we'd like to know more about the woman who was taken from the yellow and red building that stood in front of the stone. She worked at what was now a primary school but used to be the home of a young woman with disabilities. She was taken from her home one day, placed in a camp for the disabled, and later killed with the other disabled children there. The woman telling the story was noticeably disturbed and saddened by the history, she told us how she and the other teachers tell the children about the history of the house and who used to live there to make sure the children understand. That was an eye opening experience and I'm thankful she stopped to tell us the story.

The following day we took a train to Munich and a bus to the doors of the Dachau Concentration camp. We did not go in however, but turned south to begin our approximate 70 mile walk, the same walk as a large number of prisoners of the Dachau concentration camp were forced to march only days before the camp's liberation. The walk was the most memorable part of the entire trip. We walked 17 miles the first day, 28 the second day, 15 the third day and around 10 the last day. The walking wore on us and left lasting injuries. On the second day I came to a point where I could not walk any further. I took my shoes off to rest and by the time I had to put them back on again I could not fit my feet in my shoes because of the swelling. Blisters, shin splints, swelling feet, hip and knee pain were all things that we experienced from the constant walking. I was amazed at the toll it took on our bodies, we are young, fit and able and

we had trouble finishing some days. I had a lot of time to reflect on what kinds of conditions the prisoners were in and how they must have felt. I was astonished that so many who were starved, beaten and weak had the will to survive and continue marching.

During our march we came across statues commemorating the death march and each time we reached one we stopped and rested by the statues. We were so happy to see wreaths, candles and flowers at each monument showing that people still remember.

After making it to Tegernsee we boarded a train back to Munich. After resting a day we





travelled to Dachau to tour the concentration camp. Words cannot describe the feelings I had as I entered the gate reading, "Work will set you free". We all wanted to visit the camp; however, after walking the 70 miles of the death march I had a different feeling about the camp. The longer I was there the more sad I was and the feeling of wanting to leave grew stronger and stronger. As we walked from building to building all I wanted to do was walk out of the camp all together and never come back. I would repeat these words in my head "I want to leave and I am so thankful that I can". I could come and go as I pleased because of the freedom that I have. The freedom that was not free. I am incredibly thankful to you, the veterans of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow Division. Thank you for your bravery, thank you for your courage, and thank you for your willingness to grant the future generations the freedom we have today. Lastly, thank you for being our inspiration. The feelings and experiences from this trip will last a lifetime. We truly wish we could have met some of you during the 70 year anniversary, but we tried our best to commemorate you while we followed your path to liberation.

**Thank you again, for everything,  
Jessi Quillen**

The photos of the wreaths laid in remembrance at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Daniel Cornelius, Jared Quillen and Jessica Quillen are from Jessi.

To share the personal experiences by Rainbow Division veterans and family members at the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp, told in their own words, please visit our official Website, <rainbowvets.org> to view the July 2015 issue of REVEILLE in the NEWS and PRESS ROOM section.

### **Paul C. Watler: News from the grave filled out my father's role in WWII** **By Paul C. Watler**



I received the letter six weeks after my father, Dorcy Watler, a decorated U.S. Army infantry veteran of World War II, passed away last year at age 91.

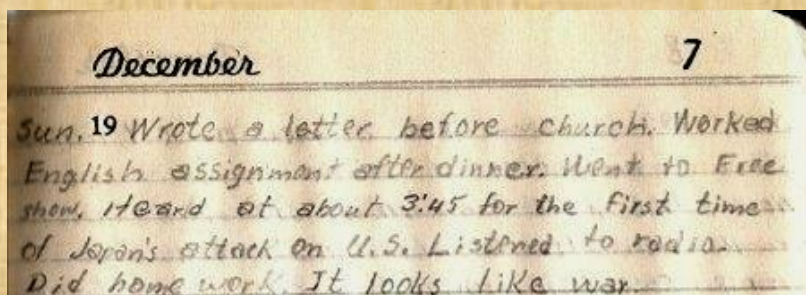
"This is news from the grave," I told my brothers in sharing it.

It turns out there was even more to Dad's wartime story than we knew — exploits he never bragged about that had been lost to the years, adventures that informed the love for art, architecture and great works that he later imparted to his sons.

Of course, what we already knew of Dad's war experience was plenty to make him our hero.

Left – Lt. Dorcy Watler in 1944.  
Right – A page from Watler's diary on December 7, 1941. He

was a freshman at Texas A&M and two months shy of turning 19. He heard news of Pearl Harbor on the radio and wrote, "It looks like war."



Along with the men of his platoon of the 232nd Infantry Regiment of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division, my father sailed aboard a troop transport to Marseille, France, docking on Dec. 8, 1944. The trans-Atlantic voyage, with 1,000 other troops, took nearly two weeks.

In Marseille, he boarded a train for a two-day trek north-by-northeast through the Rhône River valley across war-torn France. He traveled in an unheated boxcar during the first days of Europe's coldest winter in memory. The "40x8" designation of the boxcar conveyed that it was transport for either eight head of cattle or 40 men. The soldiers took turns standing or lying on the straw-strewn, wood-slat floor because there was not room for all to sit or recline at the same time.

The troop train delivered Dad and his comrades to Morhange, France, not far from where the Battle of the Bulge was raging. On Christmas Eve night, his platoon took a front-line position in the small Alsatian town of Gambenheim. They relieved a company that had faced a contingent of Nazi soldiers just across the Rhine River border between France and Germany. As he marched with his men to the front line, local villagers sang "Silent Night" in German in the town's small church.



My father was 22 at the time. He had been called to active duty in the Army in spring 1943 after less than two years at Texas A&M, where he studied architecture and joined the ROTC Corps of Cadets.



He arrived in France as a newly commissioned second lieutenant — a so-called “90-day wonder” graduate of officer candidate school. He led his platoon for more than three months in combat from the Alsace-Lorraine into Germany.

**Watler (left) is shown in February 1945 in France after his unit had pulled back from several weeks on the front lines.**

On Easter Sunday, 1945 — April Fools’ Day — he was wounded in combat in the little village of Breitenbrunn, Germany. A German-fired rocket-propelled grenade struck a truck carrying men of his platoon as they entered the village late in the afternoon. Although wounded by shrapnel in the upper thighs, my father refused medical attention until his more seriously wounded men were rescued and evacuated. The actions earned him the Bronze Star for valor and a Purple Heart. Despite the awards for gallantry, he always said he was proudest of the Combat Infantryman Badge he earned after 30 days’ service in battle.

He was recuperating in a hospital in France when the war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945. After returning to duty to serve in the postwar occupation, he eventually was billeted with his unit in a medieval castle in Bruck, Austria.

My father had related the oral history of his war experience to me numerous times in bits and pieces over the years in response to my questions. As a youngster, having a father who not only served in World War II but also shed blood while saving his men in combat was like having a character from Greek mythology as the flesh-and-blood head of our household.

The rest of his war story, as delivered in that letter, came to us after a dinner I attended in Washington, D.C.

I was seated at a table with Robert Edsel of Dallas. We chatted, and I reminded him that my late law partner had been counsel to his oil-and-gas exploration company for many years. I told him about my father, and he was interested in hearing about Dad’s Army service in Europe.

Soon after my return to Dallas, a package arrived from Robert with inscribed copies of two best-sellers he had written, including *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*.

Grateful for his thoughtfulness, I made an online contribution to the Monuments Men Foundation of Dallas in honor of Lt. Dorcy Watler.

Days later, a package arrived from the foundation. I opened it to discover much more meaningful content than a formulaic thank-you note. The foundation, interested in knowing the personal history of the World War II veteran I was honoring, searched its own archives. Incredibly, that search produced records that my father worked with the Monuments Men in August 1945.

#### **Lt. Dorcy Watler, Austria**

While at Fischhorn Castle in Austria, he worked with an officer dispatched from Supreme Allied Headquarters in Paris. The mission of that Monuments Men officer was to inventory a trove of artwork stashed in the chapel of the ancient castle — treasures that had been looted by the Nazis from the Polish National Art Collection.

Many of the Monuments Men had backgrounds in art curation and architecture. Whether by coincidence or design, the Monuments Men officer cataloging the Nazi loot in Bruck was assisted by a young infantry officer whose architecture studies at Texas A&M were interrupted by the war.

Now, nearly 70 years later, in my hands was a copy of a preliminary inventory from Fischhorn Castle bearing the distinctive signature of Lt. Watler.





Although my father was not a member of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section of the U.S. military, he had assisted the section's mission of recovering and restoring the cultural history of Western Europe. His exploits have now earned him posthumous recognition by the Monuments Men Foundation as a "First Hand Participant." My father, my hero in life, stood even taller to me after death.



**Watler, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day, wears the same uniform with insignia as in a 1946 photo taken in Austria.**

After the war, dad returned to civilian life, earned his degree from Texas A&M, met and married my beautiful mother and raised a family of three sons. He practiced architecture for 39 years, imparting to me and my brothers, among many other profound life lessons, a love for art, architecture and the great works of Western civilization.

But it was news from the grave that revealed to me and my brothers his small but noteworthy role in preserving that heritage for me, our family and generations to come.

***Paul C. Watler is a Dallas attorney and partner in the law firm Jackson Walker LLP.  
Follow him on Twitter at @pwatler.***



**RAINBOW DIVISION VETERAN IS GRAND MARSHALL IN 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY, 2015 PARADE, HENDERSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
Cliff Gettys served in 42nd Division Field Artillery Headquarters in WWII**

**NEWS AND PHOTOS ARE FROM Dorothy Donelson, daughter of WWII Rainbow Division veteran William Kallaher, Co. A, 222<sup>nd</sup> Inf. Regt. and his wife, Delores.**

Staff Sergeant Cliff Gettys is a resident of our community, Cummings Cove, located in Hendersonville, NC. Cliff served as the Grand Marshall of our community's Fourth of July

celebration and parade. He was honored for his service and for being one of the first residents and longest active member of our community, which was celebrating its 30 year anniversary. Cliff was also honored by City Councilman, Jeff Miller (***Mr. Miller is seen riding with Mr. Gettys in photo above***). Jeff is the founder of Honor Air, which organizes veterans' group trips to Washington DC to visit the war memorials. Mr. Gettys was part of one of the groups that Jeff sponsored. As part of the tribute to Cliff, the community presented Cliff with the book, 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry "Rainbow" Division History World War II.



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