

RAINBOW TRAIL

The History Newsletter of the Millennium Legacy Association
(Rainbow Family) Of The 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division
August 2016 Volume 16, Issue 2
"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"



Title: George Washington "The Spirit Still Lives"

Date Created/Published: [1918]

Medium: 1 print (poster) : lithograph, color ; 81 x 54 cm.

Summary: Poster showing George Washington clasp hands with a minuteman and a modern-day soldier.

Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-8131
(color film copy transparency)

Call Number: POS - WWI - US, no. 294 (C size) [P&P]

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs
Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

**From Ohio In The Rainbow, Official
Story of the 166th Infantry, 42nd Division
In The World War by R.M. Cheseldine,
Ex-Captain 166th Infantry, F.J. Heer
Printing Company, 1924, 528 pages**

THE RAINBOW A Letter – 1918 R.M. Cheseldine

Did I ever mention to you the curious phenomenon that has caused quite a bit of talk among members of this Division since we've been in France? Did I ever

mention the peculiar fact, that everywhere this Division has gone a **Rainbow** has appeared in the sky? A soldier, like a ball player, is superstitious in many things, but above all, a soldier in war is a fatalist. Consequently, he does not make a good luck or bad luck omen apply to himself but rather to his outfit. He never lets himself feel that he is either going to have good luck or bad luck because his path is always mapped out for him, but good luck or bad luck may come to his outfit.

The **Rainbow** has been accepted by the Division as a Good Luck Omen. One day, during the early part of our voyage to France, a wonderful **Rainbow** appeared in the sky for a few moments and someone remarked, "Well, we're in for good luck this time." Nothing more was said about it until the day we landed. It had rained the day and night previous and was raining that morning. Just before we started ashore the clouds broke a bit and the sun came out and a small and rather indistinct **rainbow** appeared over the town of **St. Nazaire**. Then someone remembered the remark made out on the ocean and we said, "The Good Luck Omen again. She's small but that's because we're young – watch us grow."

It's strange to look back on, but the **Rainbow** appeared even on the darkest days whenever we reached a new station. Our emblem was borne on high everywhere. During our training period it was not noticed, but when we went into the **Luneville** area in Lorraine, a beautiful **Rainbow** appeared over the German lines and every man felt a thrill as he saw it. Good luck to the Outfit!

We spent a month there and made a quick jump down to **Baccarat**. Once more, the heavens displayed their banner and again we felt that our destiny had been guided.

Then we left and were hurried to the **Champagne** and we knew that our real test was coming. For days we worked on the defense for the coming German attack – everybody was a bit excited, wondering just what was going to happen. And then came rain and mud, summer showers and we felt a foreboding of trouble. Something was coming! It came, but not trouble – it was only our **Rainbow**. Red were the poppies, White were the daisies, and Blue were the cornflowers on the plains beneath, while arched high overhead was a glorious **Rainbow**. With the colors of the United States and our own banner so generously displayed by Nature's great color-bearer, how could the Bad Luck come? The Prussian Guard didn't even dent our line!

A hurried trip by train – long marches and then **The Marne**. Ahead tired divisions were doggedly driving the Boche back toward **The Vesle and the Aisne**. Tired divisions praying for relief. In we came, got our orders in the afternoon, and it began to rain.

Ordered to advance and pass through the lines of a French division, relieve it and attack the German line in the morning. A cold, dreary, desolate evening – a wet, miserable night. A march through trackless woods to find that ever-shifting French line before morning. We passed through, organized, paused for breath and then, the order to attack.



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An Account of the AEF Part VI

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Answering an Inquiry from

the WWII Rainbow Family of

PFC PEDRO R. CHAVEZ

Company B, 232nd Infantry

Killed in Action 15 March 1945

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1st Battalion, 232nd Infantry

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Louis Hubach, B/232

John H. Thompson, A/232

BOOK REVIEW

The Soldier, The Avatar and

The Holocaust by Ronni Sanlo

Morning came slowly through the mists. The fog hung heavy in the **valley of the Ourcq**. The sun was hidden by dull gray clouds. The hour for the attack approached. Suddenly came a rift in the clouds – the sun shot a feeble ray down through the valley below. It gained a bit of strength and the mists began to rise and as they mounted higher a **Rainbow** began to form. Slowly it took shape, its colors deepened, its arch lengthened until for a moment it stood forth in all its glory so that all might see and know. The Division attacked; again and again it attacked, and though many a lad “went west” from there, History will tell you that the Rainbow Division defeated the Prussian Guard.

Tired and war-weary we went back to rest. We barely stopped for a breath when our orders came to come toward **St. Mihiel**. Then came days and nights of horror. Days and nights of mud and rain, of bivouacs under the shelter of the dense **Bois de la Reine**. Then came the night of **September 11**, when we were ordered into the line at **Siecheprey** to “go over” at 5 a.m.. Never did it rain harder than that night. Never was the mud deeper in the roads. Never was a night blacker. Never did Nature seem more set against our success. But the troops got in position – the artillery began to crash and roar and men prayed and cursed which are about the same things under such conditions.

Came the first faint graying tinge of dawn. The rain continued but now it was more of a mist. Things began to take shape and the hour hands on watches marked a few moments until the zero hour.

Five o'clock! Over they went! Crash came the fall of the rolling barrage! Men forgot the rain in the breaking of the strain of waiting – forgot self even a moment later when the morning sun glinted through the mists and once more, unfurled the banner of the Division! From **Mount Sec** clear across the rolling plain over which the first American Army must make its way that day was a glorious **Rainbow**! Again will history tell you whether or not success met our efforts in that fight.

Another series of nerve and body torturing marches! Another series of wet days and nights! Another camp in the woods, the famous **Bois de Montfaucon in the Argonne**.

A few days of waiting – the order to go in on the left and attack! A night move into position – a night in wet foxholes! Morning and a brilliant sun shining in spite of a light rain and then a **Rainbow**!

The **Kremhilde Stellung**, as the line was called, was Germany's strongest and at one time we all felt that the famous Pot of Gold was in sight for it seemed as if the end of the Rainbow had come! The Hun put up a desperate defense to save **Buzancy, Stenay and Sedan** – but again history will tell you what befell those cities in **November 1918**. Twice more during the days of that struggle in the **Argonne** did the **Rainbow** appear and then the Division was stopped at the gates of **Sedan**!

PHOTO upper right - 166th Inf. (formerly 4th Ohio Inf.) on way to front. Champagne November 3, 1918. (U.S. Official Pictures of the World War p. 370)

PHOTO left – an example of the deep fortified trenches facing the 32nd “Red Arrow” Division along the Kriemhilde Stellung October 1918 (U.S. Army Signal Corps)



It has appeared just once since and again its coming was prophetic. We arrived on the banks of the **Rhine** late in the evening. The next day was beautiful but about noon a light rain began to fall despite the fact that the sun continued to shine. I had walked out a long breakwater that forms one side of a sort of lagoon and stood looking down the **Valley of the Rhine**, when suddenly a monster **Rainbow** began to form before my eyes. One end rested in the niche between the two mountains, where the Rhine made its way to the sea, the other stretching far across the valley was lost on the other side of the mountains across the Rhine! It was the most beautiful **Rainbow** I have ever seen! Hundreds of men saw it and each man sent up the cry, “Another **Rainbow**! The Rhine is ours! The old luck has brought us here and she's still with us!”

It seemed indeed true! The old Division has made a wonderful record in the past year. Without a pause for rest she has gone from one front to another delivering a mighty blow at each point before going to the next. Never has she

faltered, always she has gone ahead. And always have the heavens formed the background for nature's most beautiful painting – a **Rainbow**. The choice of a name for us was most fortunate, and it almost seems as if God himself has known – and has sent us cheer when things have seemed the darkest. The **Rainbow** will always have a deeper meaning for me in the future. When I see it I will always be reminded of those brave lads who, forgetting self and trusting in the care of the Great Commander, went “Over the top,” and made the supreme sacrifice so willingly, accepting their lot as Fate, but believing firmly in the Good Luck of the Rainbow! No harm could come to the “outfit”, even if a few did pass out, because the **Rainbow** was up!

It was because of lads like these that the **Rainbow** was always able to stay up. Maybe those boys who had gone on before the rest of us, in the first wave, if you will, were responsible for bringing out that glorious banner for us to see and to fight the harder for! Maybe those boys are God's Color Bearers, to whom He has given the Banner in trust! It's a rather comforting thing to know that those boys who loved the **Rainbow** so much here below have always in their keeping the most wonderful **Rainbow** of all!

--- R. M. C.



THE SESTERTIUS

COIN OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE A.D. 117-138

George Cramer, Sgt., Company K, 232nd Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division

My uncle, A.E. (August Edward) Cramer served with the American Expeditionary Force under General Pershing in World War I, 1917-1918. As he described it, while digging trenches he unearthed a clay pot that contained three Roman coins, one of which he gave to my dad, C.L., when he returned to the United States after the end of World War I. A second coin he gave to another brother, William C. Cramer.

Both C.L. and Bill served in the Navy. My dad was on the battleship USS Pennsylvania (flagship) loading powder bags in the gun turrets housing 14-inch guns. Bill served as coxswain on the battleship USS Florida. For Ed, the water was on the battlefields and in the flooded trenches of France. My dad drilled the small hole at the edge of the coin and used it as a watch fob. In later years, when my brother and I were in high school, the coin made frequent trips to Miss Jumps' Latin classes for "show and tell" because of its relevance to study of the language.



Obverse: Emperor Hadrian
Reverse: galley at sea with a steersman
and five oarsmen

Of interest is the response I received from The American Numismatic Society in New York to my earlier inquiry. It identifies details on both sides of the coin that are badly worn, or almost indistinguishable. The two letters appear below.

157 North Mozart Street
Palatine, Illinois 60067
May 30, 1986



THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

(FOUNDED 1858 • INCORPORATED 1865)

BROADWAY AT 155TH STREET

NEW YORK · N.Y. 10032

June 11, 1986

The American Numismatics Society
Broadway at 156th Street
New York, New York 10471

Gentlemen:

The purpose of my letter is to learn about a Roman coin which has been in our family since 1918. A relative found it in France while serving in the AEF. Dr. Nevling of the Field Museum of Natural History suggested that I contact you.

I have found a number of reference books which describe Roman coinage, but they do not include information on this particular coin, or its composition, age, design, significance of markings, monetary unit, or historical value.

I have enclosed one set of enlarged black and white photographs of the obverse and reverse sides of the coin and one set of colored photographs for your examination. I would very much appreciate any information you can provide. Also enclosed for your convenience is a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of the photographs when they have served your purpose.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

George Cramer

George Cramer

Encs.

Mr. George Cramer
157 North Mozart Street
Palatine, Illinois 60607

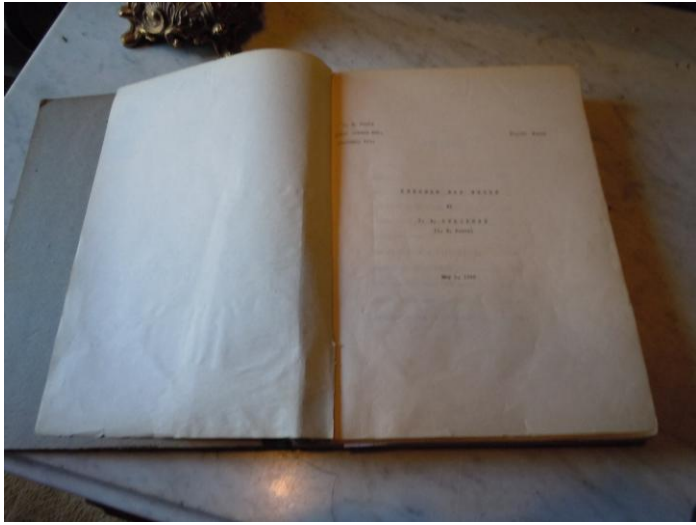
Dear Mr. Cramer,

I return herewith the photographs which accompanied your letter of May 30. The coin in your possession appears to be a sestertius of the emperor Hadrian, who ruled from A.D. 117-138. The obverse shows his head or bust laureate r., with the legend completely obliterated; the reverse shows a galley at sea with a steersman (whose legs are barely visible at the r. end of the ship) and five oarsmen. The legend, again obliterated, is probably FELICITATI AVG, "to the good fortune [or happiness] of Augustus"; in the reverse exergue one can barely make out COS III P P, which indicates that the coin was struck after Hadrian became consul for the third time (in 119) and the award of the honorific title PATER PATRIAE in 128. The coin is struck in orichalcum or brass, and represented 2½ asses (the as being the lowest unit in the monetary system) or one fourth of a denarius, the silver coin. It is a fairly common piece, and the coin is extremely worn; its association value probably outweighs its commercial value.

Sincerely yours,

William E. Metcalf
William E. Metcalf
Chief Curator

RAINBOW STORIES OF THE GREAT WAR



“SHERMAN WAS WRONG”

(An Account of the A.E.F.) PART VI

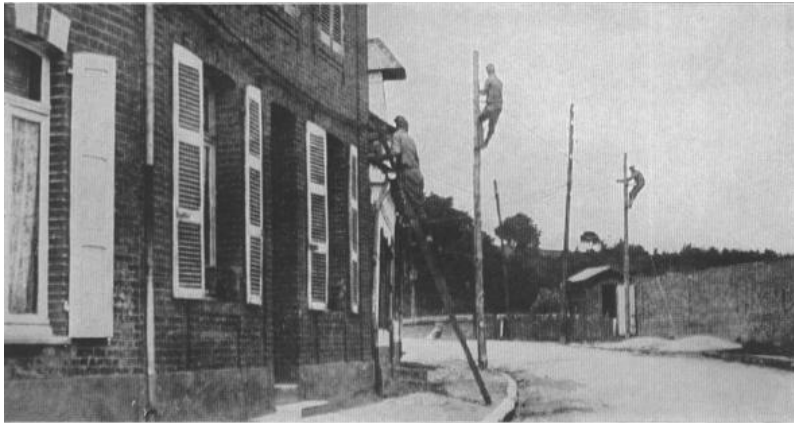
By T.A. Brainerd (C.E. Foutz), May 1, 1932

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.

[From February 2016] ... It was well into the morning before they had taken care of their nags and thawed out sufficiently to sleep. They had found Godfry's nag among the other horses when they went to unsaddle them. Chuck was cussed out roundly by each in turn and by the group as they went about putting their stuff away, but when he took his saddle bag near the fire and pulled the eggs out one by one, until every one had been laid neatly and unbroken in a row on the warm ground, they could do nothing more than stand there and stare in amazement. [Ed. “Chuck” is likely to refer to Pvt. Charles E. Chandler, Staunton, Illinois, HQ 149th Regiment Field Artillery]



(CONTINUED) Shortly after arriving at Coetquidan Chuck had been detailed along with some French linemen to construct some telephone lines on poles about the camp. The poles used by the French were hard, a very much harder wood than any these men had been accustomed to and necessitated the use of a pole climber quite different from the single spur type used at home. Semi-circular in shape, they were arranged with numerous short spurs pointing inward and a small pedal piece at one end to stand on. They were made of iron, quite heavy and strapped to the foot

with the hook arrangement to the inside. One had to walk with feet widely separated and climbing a pole was accomplished by hooking the device half way around the pole then tilting it until the spurs took hold.

American Signal Corps men of Headquarters, Second Army Corps, stringing telephone and telegraph cables through an ancient French village. <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/topic/preservation/dav/image1/pg95b.jpg>

After using a pair of these contraptions all day for the first time, the victim found himself unable to walk at all for the two days following and then only by patient effort could he become anyways near normal for the next few days. So as Chuck started to work with these climbers for the first time the Frogs all gathered around and made Chuck the goat. So it was with no little satisfaction that Chuck went out looking for his French linemen friends sometime later when he managed to get a pair of climbers of the type he had learned on. These devices appeared just as ridiculous to the Frenchmen as their climbers did to Chuck so, consequently, they swallowed hook, line and sinker when Chuck started to unravel his cunningly arranged plan for some well deserved revenge.

On finding the victims Chuck made a little peace offering of some cigarettes which they accepted quickly enough and then he showed them the climbers. They looked them over carefully, then handed them back to Chuck with the usual exclamation of “pas bon – pas bon”, which they knew Chuck understood by now. So to convince them, Chuck put the climbers on and fairly ran up and dropped down a pole several times as only the most expert could do. It looked quite simple even to these highly skeptical Frenchmen, so much so in fact that one of the group offered to try it.

After donning the climbers he walked over to the pole and struck a spur into it several times to sort of test it out. Apparently satisfied with this he started to climb, ever so slowly and with Chuck doing everything known to the sign language to coach him as best he could, he eventually reached the top. It had taken quite some time and a great deal of patience and effort so, being pretty well winded, with a quite audible sign of satisfaction he pulled himself up close to the pole to rest and almost instantly both spurs slipped from their hold and Mr. Frog came burning down the pole as though it had been well greased especially for him.

Now it was Chuck's turn to do a little fancy razzing and he took full advantage of it. The Frogs became highly indignant and it was only Chuck's giant-like proportions that discouraged them from anything more than just jabber away in a language Chuck knew little or nothing of.

Life at camp had changed again. The batteries had finished their practice-firing on the range and all units were again in Camp; surplus equipment was being put in storage; some new field equipment such as gas masks, side arm ammunition, etc., was being distributed and a certain tenseness had spread over the entire camp. Everything now pointed toward the outfits moving to the front. All regular school work and other training had been discontinued and during the day many orders were given to do this or that and then changed almost in the next breath – a sort of hectic mark-time waiting. While at night the recreation headquarters were filled with men writing to all their friends and relatives, and the cafes adjoining the camp were filled with noisy crowds of men making all sorts of bold prophecies as to how things were going to be done when they got to the front.

The officers were openly worried about the men's reaction to shell-fire. The men never gave it a thought except on occasions when they were broke and then it was only a 'what-the-hell' attitude. Unfortunately, these men were able to think for themselves. If a man's duty happened to be that of one of a gun crew, he knew all about that gun for the simple reason that he could read the mimeographed translations of French manuals furnished for this purpose and was traditionally enterprising and curious enough to do this whether he had to or not. There was no mystery about this. And as far as the front was concerned, he knew by now about all one could know without actual experience. He knew what his chances were from up-to-the-minute figures on all branches of the service so there were little or no speculative aspects left to worry him.

Contrary to misquoted records of National Guard accomplishments, these men worked when there was work to be done and played when there was time to do a little playing. They were not professional soldiers and for this reason despised the petty disciplinary activities outside the confines of being strictly military that inevitably develops as a result of unskilled officers. As a result of this they have been most severely criticized for lack of discipline and in the same breath most highly commended for accomplishments in the field. It was men of this class who have taken the leading part in all worth while wars. When they take the field and find themselves being trained with the same antiquated methods and equipment used by the regular army for ages and ages, they explode the myth of war college strategy and West Point maneuvers by going out, and within a few weeks, breaking every record the regulars had set up. Why? Simply because they can read and their grade or high school education has taught them the fundamentals with which they can quickly see thru what is given the professional not to be questioned.

And now, all but the unseasoned officers were worried. They failed completely to understand the type of fighting stock these men came from because they were choked up with story-book and antiquated European ideas of what an officer should be, and that men in ranks simply were not human beings. So they worried. But the men would not allow themselves to become excited; they held no personal grudge against the Germans and, to the horror of the Frogs and our own officers, showed it by fraternizing with German prisoners at every opportunity. In doing this the men were getting the low-down on this war business in their own way that others could not understand. So, again, all units were lectured by their officers in a serious endeavor to impress upon them the fact that there was a war on; it was being fought with guns and things; they were in it and a lot of other hooey the men took good naturedly and went on about their business of finding out more from those German prisoners working around their camps.

But the older officers, those who understood the philosophy and as well the psychology of these men, before whom the individual cases came up for judgment, would reprimand them for disobeying orders and

then ask them how they were getting along, and to ask that question was just like shaking hands. And the men proceeded to take these little incidents as a part of the war and continued to raise a little hell wholeheartedly when they considered the time opportune.

A little crazy it would seem, at times, even to some of the men themselves, but far be it from them to pass up such opportunities offered daily by these colorful surroundings to mix a little fun in with the more serious job of winning the war. So along toward the middle of February, off they went to the front --- not in any spirit of getting-it-over-with, but, rather, with the same keen sense of adventure and curiosity that caused them to volunteer their services at the start, except that it had been sharpened by much hurried training and preparation. TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR FEBRUARY 2017 ISSUE: **LUNEVILLE SECTOR**

OUR MISSION- FINDING, SHARING AND PRESERVING RAINBOW DIVISION HISTORY

Thank you all for your membership and support of our purpose and mission!! Most of you are familiar with our research adventures into Rainbow History and many of you have found personal information that helped your families to learn more about the combat experiences of your veterans both specifically and through an understanding of the larger role of the 42nd Division as it moved through Europe to victory in both World Wars.

Here is a recent request from the family of a WWII Soldier, **PFC. PEDRO R. CHAVEZ, Company B, 1st Battalion, 232nd Infantry Regiment**, who was killed in action. The detailed reply sought is exemplified by the generous permission of two Rainbow veterans who served in his Regiment who immediately responded to send their memoirs including the day and location in question, March 15, 1945 (date of death of PFC Chavez recorded as March 15, 1945 in the booklet, "42nd 'Rainbow' Division Battle Deaths, WWII/A listing of those Rainbowmen who made the Supreme Sacrifice", sponsored by the Rainbow Division Memorial Foundation 1995 and updated since that time (last printing June 2008).

On May 31, 2016 David Hutchinson, MSG, Retired, wrote to <rainbowvets.org> -

"I am a veteran of 24 years active duty, US Army. My wife Rachel, had a brother, Pedro R. Chavez, 38581191, who was KIA while serving with the 232 Infantry of the Rainbow Division on or about March 17, 1945. His body was shipped home and he was buried in Polvadera, New Mexico. His family, however, has never been informed of the circumstances of his death nor where he died. My investigation of the activities of the 232 at the time of his death tells me that he was in France somewhere along the Rhine. Any information that I could get pertinent to his location, company, assignment, etc. would help to provide closure for the Chavez family. Pedro's father died shortly after he did from a broken heart and his Mother, brothers, and sisters have lived all these past years with a hole in their lives as a result of knowing nothing about Pedro's death. God Bless all you soldiers for everything you have done to save this country."

And in response to the information we provided, he wrote, "Thank you very much for this information, it is so appreciated. All additional information will be cherished. Thank you, David Hutchinson, MSG, Retired
Photo of PFC Chavez is from the 232nd Infantry Regiment pictorial and review book, Camp Gruber, OK 1944;
his gravesite is honored on this web page:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Chavez&GSfn=Pedro&GSmn=R&GSbyrel=all&GSdy=1945&GSdyrel=in&GSst=34&GSnty=1956&GSentry=4&GSob=n&GRid=82806458&df=all&>



DON WILLIAMS Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 232nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd "Rainbow" Division wrote On 1 June 2016: Dear Suellen, We were camped on the west side of the valley in the woods. The village of Reipertswiller was just down the hill to the east about a quarter of a mile. We moved in there in early March 1945. B and C Companies were down in the valley in and around Reipertswiller and Saegemuehle. The villages had been mostly abandoned by the civilians, and the German patrols moved in one side of town at night and we moved in the other side. But the civilians had left some things we wanted like potatoes. We were in dugouts in the woods. They had dug holes in the ground and covered them with tree trunks and then put the dirt back on top to protect against shrapnel. The little road from the woods down to the villages was under German observation from Hill 301, but we would sneak down to the village and scrounge for food at night.

We found a stash of potatoes and brought them back for the cook to make french-fries. And about March 12 we found a cow that had been abandoned. We saw a chance to have some fresh steaks, so we put a rope on the cow and led it back up to our camp. We thought we would give it to the medics to butcher and pass out the meat. But before we could follow through with our plans, we were ordered to prepare to move out, so the poor cow got a reprieve.

On the night of March 14 our artillery opened up a barrage with all the 60mm, 81mm and 120mm mortars, plus the division and corps artillery as well. We had seen the 155mm guns right behind us firing for several days. The shells were so big you could actually see them as they left the guns and headed for targets miles away. We knew that the area in front of us was laced with mines so the idea was to saturate the area with artillery and explode as many of the mines as possible before going forward on the 15th.



A new replacement joined us around March 10 and was assigned to the AT Platoon headed by Lt. Duffy Stanley. The boy was named Dudley Davis. He was from Mississippi. He had been in the Army about 6 months, just long enough to get through 13 weeks of basic, and then was sent over to France. The general rule was, "Don't get too friendly with replacements because they probably won't last very long." It is strange that after two or three months of combat everyone becomes old, seasoned veterans. This boy was 18 years old, had always lived on a farm, never

finished grade school and could barely read and write, and maybe not at all. He wanted to send a letter to his mom, so I wrote it for him and turned it over to Lt. Crain, who had to approve all our mail and censor it.

Photo above is from the book, 42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division A Combat History of World War II, written and edited by Lt. Hugh C. Daly, 1946. It is captioned, "At the bottom of the hill is Reipertswiller, battered and smelling. Ahead, smoke from bursting artillery mars the country landscape."

The artillery barrage went on most of the night of the 14th and we knew we would be jumping off in the morning. At 6:00 AM on March 15 we started the attack that eventually broke through the Maginot and Siegfried Lines and across the Rhine into Germany. The first morning was very tough for B Company. They had to attack up the hills, through the woods and mine fields and right into the German defensive positions. But by noon most of their first objectives



*9- Saegemuehle, France 9-17-93
Hill 301 on left*

had been taken and the Germans were backing up. The AT Platoon followed the attack and was assigned to clear out any remaining mines and clear paths for armored vehicles. By 8:00 o'clock my new friend Dudley Davis, who never really knew why he was in France instead of home in Mississippi, was dead, killed by a land mine. I always wondered if his letter got to his mother before she got the news of his death.

Well, that's about how it was on March 15, 1945. I have no way of knowing of course, but Pedro Chavez could have been a victim of one of those land mines, too.

I am attaching a photo Carol took when we went back in 1993. It shows Hill 301. We rented a car in Paris and drove the exact route that the 1st Battalion followed from Strasbourg, France to Salzburg, Austria. When we got to Reipertswiller we went up the little road to the woods where our dugouts had been in 1945. The landscape had changed but the memories of those days never seem to fade. **DON**

We found this photo online of Saegemuehle and asked Don about it. <http://camping-vinschgau.info/>

06/01/2016 POSTSCRIPT FROM DON WILLIAMS – "I can't believe this little village has turned into a resort area!! Yes, the topology is the same as in 1945. The area is known as the Hardt Mountains. The hills are more like the Ozarks where I come from and a lot like NC. They are heavily wooded with little logging trails running through them. When we were there in 1993 we drove down trails just wide enough for our car.



LOUIS E. HUBACH Company B, 1st Battalion, 232nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division has shared his memoirs with the **CHAVEZ FAMILY** –

HIGHLIGHTS OF BAKER COMPANY (232ND INFANTRY) MARCH THROUGH GERMANY

[The editor’s addition of the medal citations are from the General Orders 42nd Division WWII, through the research findings of the Millennium (Chapter) Legacy Association for the past several years; photos taken at Camp Gruber in the fall of 1945.]

The following is an account of the travels of Baker Company on its way across the border between France and Germany, and from there 750 Kms. across Germany to within 60 Kms. of Czechoslovakia.

From the time that the whole Rainbow Division moved to the lines to relieve the battle weary 45th Division at the town of **Reipertswiller**, France until the cessation of hostilities, there was no time that the company did not give an excellent account of itself, even in the most minor of skirmishes. One of the most interesting, if not spectacular facts of the whole drive was that not once did the “Fightingest” company give as much as an inch of territory in the face of the enemy.

To quote a letter from the battalion commander to his devoted troops: “During our months of combat, you endured, without complaint, the bitter cold of winter in France, the rugged, almost impassable terrain of the **Hardt Mountains**, the deadly mines and withering fire of the **Siegfried Line**, and the murderous artillery, automatic fire and sniper fire in our advance through Germany.” There are no other words that can more eloquently express the type of combat to which the company was subjected.

The mission of the Rainbow, when it first pushed off, was to fill in a pocket formed by two flanking armies. Its initial drive was aimed at breaking the reversed **Maginot Line**, and then crashing through the powerful and well defended **Siegfried Line**. On the 15th of March 1945, Baker Company, the only company from the 232nd Infantry on line at the time, pushed off from its defensive position around **Reipertswiller**. The mission was to capture **Hills 301 and 355**, which proved to be the toughest bit of action met by the company.



The **BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER** to the **SILVER STAR** is awarded to **ALVAN B. SQUIRES**, 01 325 347, First Lieutenant, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action. On 16 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France, when his company was pinned down by intense enemy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire while attacking **Hill 301**, Lieutenant Squires left his position behind the 2d Platoon and in the face of enemy fire, charged up the hill shouting for his men to follow him. Inspired by his courageous leadership, in which he personally knocked out one of the enemy positions, the company advanced and took its objective. Entered military service from West Plains, Missouri.

After suffering numerous casualties on **Hill 301**, the company fought its way to the top of **Hill 355**, at which point it consolidated its positions and fought off a German counterattack. Although many were left on the hills, the company pushed on in keeping with the general offensive, which gradually grew in momentum until it assumed the proportion of a rout.

After such a difficult beginning, the company was amazed to note the ease with which the drive progressed. As it moved forward, it became increasingly apparent that the initial action was that of a holding force on the part of the enemy, for little resistance was encountered other than passive measures. The men were surprised to be informed, for instance, that one bridge had been mined with Teller-mines, and upon crossing and recrossing it, the mines had failed to detonate. Shortly thereafter, the battalion moved through the powerful **Siegfried Line** at **Petersbach**, Germany. An interesting note can be made of the fact that for the first of many times to come, the light machine guns of Baker Company’s Fourth Platoon were on a point, without rifle support, at the spearhead of the entire Division.

There are few men who made it, who can forget the ensuing hike from the town of **Rumbach**, Germany. It was on this march that the excellent work of the Tactical AAF’s Thunderbolts was witnessed. Shortly before the passage of the company through the territory, the enemy lost an entire vehicular column to these demons of the sky. I might comment here that never in my life have I seen such destruction, with the possible exception of Würzburg. There were dead Heinies, horses, and the entire column was wrecked beyond belief. Horses were still lying as they fell, as were their drivers still in their seats. The whole road was a mess of wreckage, bodies, and blood. Never was a sight more welcome than the masses of wreckage which were once part of the powerful German Army.

The company then moved forward with the battalion and bivouaced, while its ranks were swelled somewhat by a group of replacements. It was in this group that the veteran of the First World War and volunteer for the infantry, “Pop” Moore joined the outfit. During the stay in that particular locality, the other units of the outfit were moving forward to prepare a way across the mighty **Rhine River**. The crossing of the river itself was uneventful save for the importance of the act itself. Soon after the crossing, the company was joined by the armor of the 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion. In the times to come, Baker was to become quite fond of those care-free men and their beautiful destroyers. It was more than once that their powerful 90mm guns exterminated enemy pockets of resistance which endangered the onslaught of an attack. The evening of April 1st, the company was to witness the first demonstration of the fire

power it had to present in the form of its tank destroyers (TDs) as they proceeded to fire seven quick rounds into one of the log road blocks which were found in abundance along the way.

The next day, the battalion moved into an assembly area, and moved out in the evening on an all night hike which ended up on the banks of the **Mainz River at Würzburg**. That hike will live in the memories of those who were not walking in their sleep – for the pure misery of the thing. When breaks were called, men were so tired that they dared not sit down for fear of either their inability to rise and move on, or, because some of them actually fell asleep on their feet and did not realize that there was a break.

Since the ranks of the company had been badly depleted by casualties, four of the “fighting cooks” of the company joined the front line platoons. Armed with Thompson sub-machine guns and M-3s, they accompanied the troops on the march and into the ensuing battle. They doggedly stuck to the job throughout the entire battle of **Würzburg**, and only when they were needed at their regular jobs did they leave the line. The battle of **Würzburg** was memorable because of the conditions under which the men fought, the ferocity of resistance, and the complete state of ruin of the town. So great was their lack of sleep, that many men fell asleep while others were trying to clear out the resisting snipers. At one point, just across the river, there was a group of snipers, estimated to be four to six in number, which had hit some men, and in spite of bazooka, machine gun and rifle fire, refused to come out. After being tricked out of their hiding place by the second platoon, the snipers began to file out as prisoners. To the amazement of the company, they numbered around **43**. Small wonder that the advance was so delayed. The company, then, proceeded to clear out their assigned sector of the town.

Upon completion of the job, the company paused for a brief rest on the grass of a small park in the section which had been cleared by Charlie Company. Someone spotted three Heinies coming across the park, and jumped up to claim their capture. Suddenly, an enemy machine gun opened fire on the group. The ensuing fire fight showed B Company to be the master of the situation. It was in this skirmish that Sgt. Rhey Palmer of the LMG section, spotted a sniper in the window of a nearby building. He moved his A-6 to a place on the curb of the street and proceeded to seat himself on the curb with the gun at his side. He then sprayed the entire wall with deadly fire, chewing his gum – all done with a nonchalance amusing to watch.



The SILVER STAR is awarded to RHEY C. PALMER JR., 34 810 274, Sergeant, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 16 March 1945 near **Reipertswiller**, France. As machine gun squad leader, Sergeant Palmer distinguished himself by his outstanding courage when the platoon to which he was attached was held up by enemy mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire. Realizing that poor visibility and intense enemy fire made organized squad action impossible, Sergeant Palmer advanced alone with his machine gun and quickly put it into action. His maneuver was so effective that the enemy gun was silenced and the riflemen driven to cover, permitting our forces to take the position. Sergeant Palmer's cool and courageous action was instrumental in the continuous advance of his company. Entered military service from Greenville, Alabama.

On the morning of April 4th, during the **Würzburg** action, the battalion was billeted in one building, which was the Office of Labor – a massive structure of stone, embracing four floors. The first floor held Able Company; the second Charlie and Battalion Aid; the third had Baker and H1B; and the fourth was occupied by Dog Company. They bedded down in the building, the first bit of sleep in forty hours; everyone slept like a log. Early in the morning, the guard noticed a group of men pushing a jeep, from a row of parked jeeps, down the street. When they returned, the guard noticed that they were not G.I.s, and halted them. At that moment, one of the Germans threw a grenade through the door and wounded the guard. Another Kraut went to a pile of K Ration cases and started off with two of them. An A Company lieutenant shot and killed him. Meanwhile, the Kraut's companions sent a momentary chill down the backs of the occupants of the building with the following words, “D Company, Dog Company come out – you are surrounded – there is no help for you – come out Americans!” The answer was a hail of lead, dropping the speaker at the entrance to the building. Meanwhile a third member of the attacking force fired a Panzerfaust round. The surprised men recovered and began to pick out the enemy positions. An order was received to hold fire until the “heavies” of Dog Company opened up. The next moment was a sight to behold – a hail of tracers streaked the early morning sky as the whole building spat fire. Also the bazookas were brought to bear, and the super accurate artillery at Lt. Steeno's direction. One perfectly placed round succeeded in firing positions in the building. Not long after that, the firing ceased, and another situation had been met.



The SILVER STAR is awarded to RICHARD J. STEENO, o 545 732, 2d Lieutenant, Field Artillery, 232d Field Artillery Battalion, for gallantry in action on 6 April 1945, at **Würzburg**, Germany. Lieutenant Steeno was acting as Forward Observer with Company B, 232d Infantry on 6 April 1945 in **Würzburg**, Germany, when the building in which the Company was located was surrounded by the enemy. Using a 1/100,000 map, Lieutenant Steeno immediately called for protective artillery fire, the first round of which landed within ten yards of his position. To obtain better observation, Lieutenant Steeno moved to the roof of the building, from where, exposed to hostile machine gun

and small arms fire, he adjusted the fire of his Battalion on the enemy positions across to the street, completely destroying them and killing more than fifteen Germans. By his courageous action and skillful adjustment of fire, Lieutenant Steeno prevented numerous casualties among our troops and contributed materially to the capture of the City of **Würzburg**. Entered military service from Maple Heights, Ohio.

It must be mentioned that, in searching the extensive underground warehouses of **Würzburg** that tremendous stocks of sparkling pink and white Champagne from the finest cellars in the city were exploited. The characteristic “pop” of corks was heard for days afterward from the Champagne-laden “Destroyers”. Upon leaving **Würzburg**, the battalion advanced across fields to the town of **Rimpar**. We entered after dark, and little was known of the situation. Pfc Ken Casey, of Rochester, taking care of the company’s bedrolls, was startled to hear the familiar click of hobnailed boots going past him in the dark. He reported the fact to the C.P., where the C.O., Lt. Squires, told him to go back and get any enemy he saw. Armed with the most formidable weapon at hand, a flashlight, he proceeded into the street, as ordered. He found two of his pals nearby and the three started toward the sound – total armament, the flashlight and an empty Thompson. As Casey turned the light on the rear of the departing column, one of the fully armed group halted and returned to the trio. The German hailed his comrades – result 44 prisoners, taken without a shot.

The next morning, the company started out on another town walking spree. It proceeded for two days until the town of **Schraudenbach** was reached. The advance platoon was as surprised as their captives to find 167 Krauts comfortably billeted in the town – eating, sleeping and washing, as they were taken prisoner. The company mounted the TDs in the morning, and started on the approach to **Schweinfurt**. Stiff resistance was encountered as the outfit lost its first vehicle. A reconnaissance jeep was hit by a round from an enemy Halftrack, which was, in turn, destroyed by a round from the TDs 90mm gun. At this point, the ack ack defenders of **Schweinfurt** detected the advance and leveled their guns at the oncoming troops.

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to RICHARD J. SCANLON, 33 489 272, Sergeant, Field Artillery, Company C, 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, for heroic achievement in action on 10 April 1945, in **Schweinfurt**, Germany. While supporting the rifle troops in the attack of **Schweinfurt**, Sergeant Scanlon’s tank destroyer led the foremost elements in the assault. In the action his destroyer fired 52 rounds of 90mm ammunition at snipers, machine gun emplacements and road blocks. Despite the intensity of the enemy panzerfaust and small arms fire directed at his destroyer, he drove forward, spearheading the infantry attack, destroying several hostile installations, and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Entered military service from Ashland, Pennsylvania.

While the enemy retreated to the next town, more flak was encountered. As the TDs entered the town, **Bauerbach**, one fanatical defender fired his Panzerfaust at the first TD, setting fire to it, and killing himself. The men of the battalion were saddened by the injury to their pals, but were consoled by the fact that the only one killed was the Nazi. The next day, the entire regiment assembled and marched to flank **Schweinfurt**, and cut off any retreating defenders. After a long hike, and after darkness had fallen, the battalion approached two large fires on the side of a hill. These fires lit up the whole column. At that moment, a Spandau machine gun opened up, scattering the group. It was lucky that the gunner wasn’t too expert, for few casualties resulted in spite of the excellent field of fire. Due to this action, much time was lost in reorganizing, and only a couple of hours of sleep were available before the move to the hills overlooking **Schweinfurt**. In the morning, the battalion advanced up to the rear of the above-mentioned hill. Before it could cross the top and pass through the woods, a few snipers had to be taken care of. Then the column stopped while the artillery dueled with the Flak defenders. During the shelling, many rounds came in upon the waiting column – although few knew it, having fallen asleep in the ditches and not aware of the “incoming mail”. Following the TDs as they crashed through the woods, the company came upon the outlying houses, where it was to remain while other parts of the division cleared the town. Again, replacements were added before pushing on – April 13th.

At **Schweinfurt**, the company assumed the duties of a task force, to follow the flank of another division. It rode trucks back through **Würzburg**, recalling memories, and proceeded to the town of **Weigenheim**, where the second, third and fourth platoons took positions on the hills. This was one of the few times the company had to sleep under the stars during its march through Germany. The following day, Baker resumed its approach, moving out by trucks and TDs. The most interesting occurrence of the day was watching the TDs get themselves out of the mud when they attempted to cross a stream, since the wooden bridges were not strong enough for them. Moving into **Lenkersheim**, the company found billets, and was told to stay inside as the Colonel was looking for us. In this town, Baker stayed until the morning of the 17th. Then, it was moved out so early that the cooks volunteered to serve hot cakes on the march. Three cheers for the cooks! On the 17th, B entered **Gönnersdorf**, where it found 155s emplaced, and no room in the houses, so it moved into a barn. The 155s do sound good, but when one tries to sleep, they are rather annoying. The next morning, continuing the march, Able and Charlie joined the rest of the battalion from their duties as security in **Schweinfurt**, at the famous ball bearing works. That evening, after several minor skirmishes, the men of Baker entered **Leichendorf**, where they stayed, for two days in comparative luxury, while the other regiments of the division took **Fürth**, a suburb of **Nuremberg**. Boarding trucks on April 21st, the battalion proceeded to the beginning of its last European action – on to **Munich** – and traveled through the lines of the second and third

battalions, riding to a point not far from **Wassermunganau**, where incoming artillery forced everyone from their vehicles. Charlie cut to the left, and Baker continued on down the right side of the road in skirmish line. The weather then turned and the rains came, making the trudge across newly plowed fields difficult and miserable. When the first enemy shots were fired, the men were only halfway across the field to the wood-line where the enemy were emplaced. Here, the valiant TDs came to the rescue, firing first their 50 MGs and then their 90mm. The first 90 sent a Kraut body thirty feet in the air. Then, the artillery opened fire and racked the wood-line. The company continued the advance, only to be fired upon, again, but this time by fewer of the enemy. A few minutes later, they took off, on bicycles, following their SS comrades through and out of the next town. Thus, in **Wassermunganau**, the company stopped to dry itself while the engineers rebuilt a blown bridge.

The following day will live in the memories of the men of the battalion as the day of the long, tiresome march through heavy enemy resistance, both in small arms and artillery fire. We went over long, steep hills and newly plowed fields. The battalion was ordered to push 15 miles further, even if it meant marching all night. The Battalion was given credit for this action by General Collins. On this march, as the company approached **Dittenheim**, located on the reverse slope of a hill, the rumble of a heavy vehicle was heard. It was discovered that our company was facing a Mark IV tank. Before a bazooka could be brought to bear, and while Lt. Squires charged with his carbine, the tank was destroyed by its own crew. Through the excellent leadership of Lt. Squires, who constantly urged the company forward, the Heinies were unable to maneuver their tank and were forced to destroy it. Past the town, the battalion was momentarily stopped by an artillery barrage, but, charging forward, it remained in front of the incoming rounds, and suffered few casualties. It might be noted that through this whole march, not one member of B Company fell out, and the Regimental Chaplain was heard to cry, as the company trudged forward, "Come on, Baker!"

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to WILLIAM J. RIDDICK, 37 631 750, Private First Class, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 17 April 1945 near **Dittenheim**, Germany. When another rifleman was wounded, Private Riddick made his way to him under intense sniper fire. After administering first aid, Private Riddick dragged and carried the wounded man to cover where adequate medical care could be given. His prompt and courageous action saved a fellow soldier from possible death or capture. Entered military service from St. Louis, Missouri.

Towards evening, as the company progressed across fields, it noticed a Kraut wagon-train trying to escape to the woods which were 800 to 1000 yards to the right. The TDs were brought to bear on the wagons, and the first round knocked them out of action. At almost double time, the company advanced and entered a town, where it noticed another large group of wagons trying to escape. Dog Company chose them as its targets, and laid down a heavy barrage of mortar fire. This town also received a few well-aimed rounds from our own Cannon Company, which brought a common comment from the men, "Here they go again!". In spite of their tired condition, the men were eager to advance and capture a vital bridge intact. The day ended with billets in **Dittenheim**, thus completing the most tiring day of the whole march through Germany. The next morning, the drive to **Dockingen** began.



The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to ALVAN B. SQUIRES, 01 326 347, First Lieutenant, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 23 April 1945 near **Dockingen**, Germany. While Companies B and C were attacking the town of **Dockingen**, intense small arms and automatic fire disorganized the attacking elements. Lieutenant Squires refused to take cover, but traveled along the front rallying and encouraging his men. He then personally led them in the attack, completely over-throwing the enemy positions. Lieutenant Squires' courage and outstanding leadership under fire contributed materially to the successful completion of the operation. Entered military service from West Plains, Missouri.

During the day, the First Battalion climbed a hill to high ground which commanded the whole area; then passed through a town in which C Company had a brief skirmish with S.S. troupers. We saw a little girl of about seven lying in the street. An SS had shot her as she ran out in the street announcing that the Americans were coming. It was in this town that an unwary jeep was crushed flat when a TD backed away from a close round. A counter battery of our own silenced the Germans, and the battalion moved forward. A brief rest was given about a mile out of town, where we had K rations. In the afternoon, as the battalion was crossing a wide, open field, the enemy laid down a heavy concentration of artillery fire which forced everyone to sprint for shelter. The company entered and advanced up a draw. When some elements were still in the open, the enemy fired on our men. In a short time, our unprotected men had taken cover at the base of a small hill, and just in time! An enemy machine gun laid fire in the draw from where the men had just come. To the left and to the right were woods. B Company was in the woods to the right; some of them were in the open. Then the enemy began zeroing in with artillery. It landed to the right, left, front, and rear but miraculously, only one man was slightly wounded. Finally, the attack was resumed, despite the fact that it was now past nine o'clock and fast growing dark. We attacked down another long draw; Charlie on the left, and Baker on the

right. By this time, it was after eleven. Little did anyone realize, at the time, that the German MLR along the **Danube** was being assaulted frontally. When the companies were halfway through the draw, six enemy machine guns, with supporting burp guns and rifles opened fire. Our troops advanced so rapidly and so savagely that the German positions were overcome. One captured German officer said his men were amazed to find that the attackers were Americans, because they were never known to advance at night, running and yelling (tactics more akin to the Red Army.) As Sgt. Rivas, of the third platoon, came upon two wounded men, in the thick of the fight, he stopped to see if they were GIs or not. They weren't. He left with a new P-38 and a watch, while bullets sang inches away. So **Dockingen** was reached. During the night, Heinies were riding motor bikes through the streets. When the men woke, the next morning, they found the Heinies gone and Regimental Headquarters set up.

That night, the Second Battalion crossed the **Danube**, and the following morning, pressed their attack on the opposite bank. The Third Battalion joined the Second, and then, on the 26th, the First Battalion crossed and, pressing forward, reached a woods where the night was spent. Early in the morning, Baker crossed a canal and assaulted **Feldheim**, expecting heavy resistance. Instead, white flags appeared at every house. No shots were fired, although more than a dozen 120mm mortars were discovered at the rear of the town. They were set to fire in our direction, and there were countless stores of ammunition in specially dug and camouflaged positions, indicating that a hot reception had been planned. Plans were changed when the Air Force discovered their positions. Now, the regiment followed on the heels of the other two regiments, being attached to the 20th Armored. On the 28th, we left **Feldheim** for **Seisenbach**, ten miles distant. After that, came **Puschlagen** on the 29th, and **Langweid** (northeast of **Munich**) on the 30th. From **Langweid**, on the 1st of May, some members of the company went to see the horrors of **Dachau**. This was while the company moved through **Munich** to **Gartenstadt**. That night, a heavy snow storm struck. At daybreak, all was white and at noon, the cooks made ice cream from the heavy snows. On May 2nd we were billeted in **Sorneding**. On the 3rd, we marched to **Gersdorf**. On the following day, Service Company trucks brought us to **Haiming**, where a gang of hungry GIs were disappointed by the lack of food due to a stuck-in-the-mud kitchen. Early in the morning, the men of the First Battalion discovered that they were in reserve. We left on artillery vehicles, and found billets around midnight. However, we reboarded the trucks and rode for an endless time. The sound of airplane motors were heard and everyone was off the trucks in a flash. In the rush for cover, a captain, who happened to be in a GIs way, was knocked into a manure pile. The captain's words were unrepeatable.

The trucks took the men to the point where all disembarked to press the attack on the town of **Itzing**. To reach the town, one had to cross an open field, go past a stream, and partway up a hill. Not many steps were taken before the snipers opened fire from the opposite woods. Slugs flew right and left, but no one was hit. This was due to the rapid, zigzag advance. No one allowed himself to be pinned down. After the company reached safety, inside the houses, and after the TDs were brought up, the firing began in earnest. Somehow, the artillery party became separated from us. We called on the 60mm mortars to fire on the snipers. In order to do this, one had to send the rounds through a two foot opening in the trees above. Although there was practically no mass clearance, Sgt. Tellvik rose to the occasion. Spotting the opening, he placed his mortar on a window-sill. Warning everyone of a possible tree burst, he stood inside the window to fire the rounds. Ammunition was scarce so every round counted. The first round whisked the ends of the branches as it sped through to its mark. The second was a hair off, and after the explosion, in which no one was hurt, Sgt. Tellvik reported, "We've got mass clearance now!" "Chief" Miles, the Indian member of the weapons platoon, was acting as observer in an attic window next to the hole in the tree. He gave a slight expression of surprise, and, as shrapnel rained on the roof, muttered a solemn, "Ugh".

After the night at **Buchdorf**, we left **Haiming** behind on the 5th, and stayed in **Hausmanning** until the 13th. **Then, the company moved out of Germany and into the Austrian Alps to a small town named Scheffau.** Here, we enjoyed the benefits of mountain resort life.

Much had been accomplished in the comparatively short time the company had been on line, and many who were once on the company roster are no longer here. To those who have endured the fatigue and pain of their own and their buddy's wounds, and who have been next to a dead comrade, those weeks have turned the course of their lives. Also, we wish to pay tribute and give grateful thanks to our gallant medics, to whom so many owe so much. History and a grateful people salute those who have fallen by the wayside.



The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to DONALD G. MCCRACKEN, 16 177 499, Private First Class, Medical Department, **Medical Detachment**, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action, on 15 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France. During the attack on **Hill 301** near **Reipertswiller**, the rifle platoon to which Private McCracken was attached as aid man was receiving intense mortar, machine gun, and rifle fire that caused numerous casualties. Private McCracken ran out under the increasingly intense fire and began to render first aid to the more seriously wounded. While giving first aid, he was wounded himself in the thigh by mortar fragments, but he continued to work despite his pain. He refused evacuation until all other casualties had been removed from the battle field. Private McCracken's outstanding courage and selfless determination undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his wounded comrades. Entered military service from Detroit, Michigan.

ADDENDUM and HILL 301 - "I have no written account of what happened before we hit **Reipertswiller**, so here goes: We boarded a converted Victory ship, the afternoon of January 1st as an advance party. We had a rough crossing, and the results were anything but pleasant. After landing at **LeHavre** on the 16th, we proceeded to the "Repple Depple" (Replacement Depot) at **Neufchateau**, France. We spent a few days there, making sure we had all the equipment needed, then took a train to **Theon**, another R-D. There, we got our rifles and were assigned to divisions. Leaving by truck, I found the **Division Replacement Company at Cirey**. We were there while the Division was moving back from the lines, due to heavy losses. I was glad I had missed that action! We moved, by truck, from **Cirey to Sorneville**, where we stayed almost three weeks with an old French couple. It was between **Nancy and Luneville**. From there, we moved to the hell hole of **Reipertswiller**, where the 45th Division had lost its pants in the December offensive. We found, after V-E Day, that their division had lost a whole battalion in trying to retake **Hill 301**. This, we didn't know when we took off.

We were dug in and around **Reipertswiller** almost a month. Our Battalion front had two companies parallel and one in reserve. All positions were dugouts of the best shrapnel-protecting type. From there, we attacked on the morning of March 15th.

Our objective was **Hill 335**. To reach it, we had to take **Hill 301**. That hill extended directly from the rear of the houses in the town. We started at 0800. Our mortar squad was headed by Sgt. Rosensweig with Stan Tellvik as gunner, me as assistant gunner and George Balz, Joe Marshall, Thaden Hill, and Hector Hernandez serving as ammunition bearers. However, we all carried 10 rounds, each one 2.73 Lbs. We advanced up the hill about 150 yards when all hell broke loose. We had been spotted by Jerry, even with the heavy cloud of white phosphorous smoke laid down by our artillery. We hit the ground amid a rain of small arms and automatic fire. The enemy then zeroed in with 88s, mortars, etc. Then, we hit the mine fields – they were even worse! The third platoon was hit the hardest, coming out with only six of the original platoon. They started with around 28 or so. I was sent down to the town again, with one of the first casualties, the 3rd platoon runner, who was hit in the legs. It was a break for me; we had already been on the hill for 3 hours. Shortly after, I saw George helping Joe Marshall down. Marshall was hit in the arms and legs. I was ordered; George's trip was voluntary.



The SILVER STAR is awarded to IRWIN W. KRAMBECK, 6 245 306, Staff Sergeant, Field Artillery, Battery A, 232d Field Artillery Battalion, for gallantry in action on 15 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France. While serving as a Forward Observer with Company B, 232d Infantry, during the attack north of **Reipertswiller**, Sergeant Krambeck and a corporal from his Forward Observer Section were ordered to lay wire over exceedingly difficult, rugged terrain in order to maintain important communications between Company B and the Artillery Liaison Section. Because of these difficulties Sergeant Krambeck and the corporal were unable to advance as rapidly as the Infantry but, in spite of the danger from German mine fields and the imminence of contact with the enemy, continued to lay the line until the supply of wire was exhausted. Moving to regain contact with their company, they entered an enemy mine field. While moving through the field, Sergeant Krambeck stepped on a mine, the explosion from which blew off his foot. As the corporal attempted to come to his aid, he also stepped on a mine blowing off his own foot. With no assistance available, Sergeant Krambeck and the corporal crawled several hundred yards through the field to safety, encouraging each other as they struggled along. The outstanding fortitude demonstrated by Sergeant Krambeck is worthy of the highest praise. Entered military service from Seattle, Washington.



The SILVER STAR is awarded to FAY J. KELLY, 39 466 816, Technician Fifth Grade, Field Artillery, Battery A, 232d Field Artillery Battalion, for gallantry in action on 15 March 1945 near **Reipertswiller**, France. While serving as a member of a Forward Observer Section with Company B, 232d Infantry, during the attack north of **Reipertswiller**, Corporal Kelly and the Sergeant in charge of the section were ordered to lay wire over exceedingly difficult, rugged terrain in order to maintain important communications between Company B and the Artillery Liaison Section. Because of these difficulties, Corporal Kelly and the Sergeant were unable to advance as rapidly as the Infantry but, in spite of the danger from German mine fields and the imminence of contact with the enemy, continued to lay the line until the supply of wire was exhausted. Moving to regain contact with their company they entered an enemy mine field. While moving through the field, the Sergeant stepped on a mine, the explosion from which blew off his foot. Disregarding the danger to himself, Corporal Kelly went to him and attempted to administer first aid. While doing so, he also stepped on a mine, blowing off his foot. With no assistance available, Corporal Kelly and the sergeant crawled several hundred yards through the field to safety, encouraging each other as they struggled along. The courageous act of Corporal Kelly in going to the aid of his Sergeant at the risk of his own life and the outstanding fortitude demonstrated by him are worthy of the highest praise. Entered military service from Spokane, Washington.



The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to GEORGE P. BALZ, 35 227 691, Private First Class, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement , on 15 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France. Disregarding heavy enemy fire, Private Balz stopped in an exposed position to render first aid to a wounded soldier and move him to safety. Later he guided medical aid men and litter bearers down heavily mined slopes and assisted in the evacuation of several casualties under fire. By his courage and determination, Private Balz saved several fellow soldiers from possible death or capture. Entered military service from Toledo, Ohio.

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to THADDEN HILL JR., 44 040 015, Private First Class, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 15 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France. As ammunition bearer for a 60mm mortar squad during the attack through the Hardt Mountains, Private Hill constantly exposed himself to enemy fire while carrying ammunition to his gun. During periods when his squad did not need his services as ammunition bearer, he voluntarily fought as a rifleman, thereby strengthening his company's effectiveness in combat. His courageous action and devotion to duty contributed greatly to the successful accomplishments of his company. Entered military service from New Port, Tennessee.

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to LOUIS E. HUBACH, 15 399 642, Private First Class, Infantry, Company B, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action, on 15 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France. As assistant gunner in a mortar squad, Private Hubach advanced through heavy artillery and mortar fire to the assistance of a seriously wounded man and carried him to a covered position. Later that same day he led a number of aid men and litter bearers through a heavily mined area to another group of seriously wounded men. Private Hubach's courage and heroic efforts played a major role in saving several lives. Entered military service from Cleveland, Ohio.

The company kept up their push up the hill; the area I was in was constantly raked by mortars and 88s. It is still a mystery why I was not hit. After helping the medics up the hill, after the gobs of guys still lying where they were hit. In one area of about 10 yards in diameter, there were 7 casualties from mines. The mines were of two types; one big enough to blow off a leg, the other designed for foot amputation. I helped to carry the two worst wounded from that area. We had an awful time without any regular litters, but made it. We felt we had to get them back. It wasn't until I took the second guy that I found out the area was mined. It was another miracle I wasn't hurt. One of the guys I had come overseas with was killed instantly when he set the tripod of his BAR on a small mine. He was lying directly by the mine. None of the scene was very pretty. We worked the entire day on those boys while the company proceeded up the hill, and then on to **Hill 335**, repelling a fierce counterattack. George and I tried twice to return to the gang, but each time we stuck our heads around a corner of a building, a barrage would come in, so we waited for another chance. We started up a trail with some men taking water and rations to the company. When three were injured and one killed by a mine in the path, we returned with the casualties. Being thoroughly unnerved by the happenings of the day, we decided to stay there until morning.

We returned to the company the next morning, with a train of pack mules. I led one for the first time. From there, we pushed on. The company had suffered 52 casualties during those hours. **L.E.H.**



The W.W.II Journal of John Hiram Thompson

COMPANY A, 1ST BATTALION, 232ND INFANTRY TIMELINE FROM SERGEANT JOHN HIRAM THOMPSON



In June 2003 Susan L. Cullumber, daughter of John H. Thompson prepared her father's WWII Rainbow experiences in a book, "The W.W. II Experiences of John Hiram Thompson."

In her Editor's Note she wrote:

"I received my dad's diary in 1999. I knew that he had fought in WWII, but never knew to what extent. I remember seeing the Rainbow Map framed on the wall in his room when I was a child, but I never thought to ask him what it was or what his experiences were like. As an adult I took more interest in the history of my family and once I learned that he had a diary from the war, I knew I had to read it. While reading through it, I started to realized what he had sacrificed and all he had endured. I became very interested in learning as much as I could about his experiences and about WWII. I then decided to type up the diary and give it to him as a Christmas present. As I started to type it, I knew I wanted to learn more about what had happened and started to do some research into it. I interviewed my dad and wrote to others in the 232nd Regiment to find out what they remembered of my father or of their experiences in the war. I received 14 responses!

These were a tremendous help in understanding what had happened during that time.

I want to thank all who responded and provided me with their personal experiences, which especially include those individuals listed on the previous page. Most of all I want to thank my dad for sharing this life-time experience with me. In completing this project, I have learned so much about my dad and the men who fought in the "Rainbow" and what they sacrificed for this country.

I hope to continue to learn more about their experiences and to share them with others in the future."

On 26 June 2016 Sue emailed an attachment, printed below, "a timeline that I just found from my dad's service in the Rainbow. It is similar to the diary but a little more info. that wasn't in there as well. Suellen, please share with anyone you'd like or in the newsletter." **Thank you, Sue!**

New York to Marseilles - U.S.S. Bienville

November 25 to December 8, 1944

Not much of interest. Little dizzy first few days out. Had a few classes now and then.

Read quite a few books - seven.

December 8 - December 19

Lived in tents - it was very cold at first. Had a scare from a German plane so moved and dug slit trenches. Had about three hours of a new basic battle drill everyday. Got into **Marseilles** on Sunday. On the whole life wasn't too bad.

December 19 - December 21

Rode on a train to **Bensdorf**. Saw them shoveling horse manure off cars we rode in as we drove up. By the end of the trip we had a pretty good stove rigged up. At every stop we'd pick up anything we could find to make it a little more comfortable.

December 21 - December 23

Lived in a German Cavalry school. Pretty easy life. Was at **Morhange**.

December 23

Ride from **Morhange to Strasbourg** was almost the limit of human endurance. Twenty men with full equipment loaded on 2 1/2's. Very cold and terribly crowded. Got in **Strasbourg** and stayed the night at a grammar school. Lieutenant told us we were going to the front the next day.

December 24 - December 25

Loaded on "Ducks" and went to **Kilstett**. 2nd Platoon went out to the pillboxes. Stayed out two nights pulling a five-hour guard. Lived in an iron affair which was just like an icebox. Christmas didn't have much for us. Had a fair supper for it.

December 26

Came in on the 26th and stayed in an old tavern. Pretty nice people.

December 27

Had a rough day of KP. Fellow on with me didn't do much. Stood two hours of guard at night.

December 28

Loaded on "Ducks" and went back to **Strasbourg** and stayed at a German military school.

December 29

We moved back. Stood CP guard that night and had the next day off. Went out on a contact patrol the next night but didn't meet the other patrol.

December 31

Went out to pillboxes. Could see Jerry pillboxes on the other side of the **Rhine**. Tried to sleep outdoors that night but it snowed. Had to stay out anyway. Blankets were frozen to the ground. Colder than the devil.

January 1, 1945

Moved in. Had 21 letters. Moved out to man a machine gun on the FPL that night.

Wasn't so bad. On one and off three.

January 2

We packed up and started out for **Reichstett**. Trucks picked us up and took us on in after a while. Shaw, Jaquez and I stayed at a very nice home. People's sons were in the German army. Man carved things for a living. Big soft bed to sleep in.

January 3

Loaded up on "Ducks" and moved up to **Drusenheim**. Stayed in a tavern pulling two hours of road-block guard.

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to SIMEON K. LIEBER, 01 043 702, Captain (then First Lieutenant), Infantry, Company A, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action, from 5 January 1945 to 16 January 1945, inclusive, in **Drusenheim**, France. When his company was defending **Drusenheim** against a superior enemy

force, Lieutenant Lieber, company executive officer, rode a leading tank into the town and from his position on the vehicle located targets and directed fire which destroyed a number of enemy guns. On other occasions during the battle for the town, Lieutenant Lieber took ammunition into the town and served as liaison officer with higher headquarters. His courage and devotion to duty contributed effectively to the defense of the town and the crossing of the **Moder River** which followed. Entered military service from Auburn, Massachusetts.

January 4

Moved out to man two pillboxes. Ours was locked but we opened it after a while. Next day it all started. We moved out and took up positions next to town. Just after dark a few of us loaded up to provide left flank security for Andy's squad. Next day a German patrol came up and tried to give us a hard time. Wiped them out eventually. One was wounded and stayed out there moaning all night.

January 7 or 8

It got sort of hot so we moved out to the edge of town. Jerry saw us all in one house so started in on us with artillery and did a pretty good job. Got Shaw and Andy and a few others. We moved out pronto. Went back to our old position and stayed in houses up and down the line.

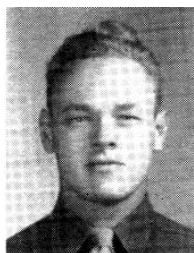
At first I was with Price and Wood and stood six hours of guard at night. Changed it a little later on and Heim, Willis and I got together.... We took it easy, milked the cows and really had an easy time of it. German artillery always had us worried though. They threw a couple in pretty close one night and we hit the cellar pronto.

January 15

Loaded up on 1 1/2's and moved up to **Soufflenheim**. Stayed at some sort of Catholic school. Didn't sleep worth a damn.

January 16

Put on belts and rifles and took off on foot for **Sessenheim** to support an attack. Moved in houses and stood around for a while and then moved back and reorganized. At 4:00 (16:00) we started an attack. Went into the woods and found it was pretty clear. Right flank ran into a few Krauts. Killed a couple. Purpose was to blow up a bridge but we didn't accomplish it. Went back and dug in along a railroad. Next morning the Krauts attacked. Burp gun across tracks from us. Made a hell of a racket but didn't do anything. Krauts moved into a house down the tracks away. A few of us moved into pillboxes on the other side of the tracks. We had communications with the mortars so we had them toss white phosphorous into the house. Drove three of them out. Moved out and dug in again.

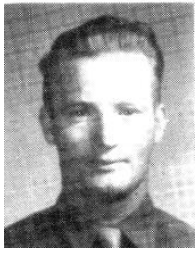


The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to JOHN H. THOMPSON, 36 672 546, Sergeant (then Private First Class), Infantry, Company A, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 17 January 1945 near **Sessenheim**, France. During the withdrawal from **Sessenheim**, France, Private Thompson and several men remained behind under heavy enemy fire to aid a wounded soldier. Improvising a litter from a blanket, he aided in carrying the man over three thousand yards of open terrain constantly exposed to intense mortar and artillery fire. By his courage and disregard for personal safety, Private Thompson materially contributed to saving the injured man's life. Entered military service from Gurnee, Illinois.

January 18

The 18th of January is the worst day I have ever spent. The morning was rather uneventful but at 13:00 it started. Machine guns were out of ammo and K Co. withdrew leaving us holding the bag. We took off plenty fast. Went behind a road and after awhile opened up on them even though we couldn't see them. Taylor (platoon guide) had us move across the road to dig in. Artillery opened up and gave us merry Hell so we took off again. By the time I knew what the score was there were only six of us left in the woods with a casualty on our hands (Rayburn). We improvised a stretcher and started off - four men carrying and two providing protection. Artillery opened up on us and we hit the dirt. When it lifted we found nobody was hurt so took off again. Jeep finally came and got Rayburn. We got into the CP and counted noses - 12 men left out of our platoon. Needed some men out to the left of some machine guns so out we went and dug in again under fire. Artillery got Lombardo in the tail so we now had 11 men. Lt. Coyne came up just as we finished our trench and told us we were taking off. Marched out to some field and they told us to dig in again. It was raining and the frost was too

deep to ever get a hole dug so we just said to Hell with it. Found a muddy hole and four of us crawled into it.



The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to GEORGE SOTAK, 33 370 322, Private First Class, Infantry, Company A, 232nd Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in action on 18 January 1945, near **Sessenheim**, France. During the fierce fighting around **Sessenheim**, France, Private Sotak was captured by the enemy and then lined up and shot with other American prisoners. Feigning death among his massacred comrades until darkness fell, he painfully crawled throughout most of the night, finally reaching friendly lines where he passed on invaluable information of enemy positions and strength. Private Sotak's heroic action reflects great credit upon himself and upholds the finest traditions of the United States Army. Entered military service from Tomaqua, Pennsylvania. [editor: see January 2015 issue of REVEILLE for more on this incident]

January 19

At six we moved out and marched into **Schirrhein**. Just got my, or rather was, getting my gun cleaned when the Lt. came up and told us to get ready to go back to **Soufflenheim** again. Stayed at the same place as before for the night.

January 20

On the 20th we rode over to **Rountzenheim** to provide security but it got hot that night so we marched back to **Soufflenheim**. Lt. Coyne came up with a big smile on his face and told us we were going to a town so far back it wasn't even on the map. We then marched to **Haguenau**. I thought we'd never get there - that forest seemed endless. We pulled in about 3:00 and stayed at some school. Next day we loaded up and rode back to **Bossendorf** (on the map by the way). Old fellow wanted us to stay in the barn, but we talked him into his dining room floor. Saw all the old boys from Regt. Hq. Co. there and had a lot of fun talking over old times. While there I was transferred to heavy weapons as ammo bearer.

January 25

On the 25th we marched over to **Uhlwiller** which was back up on the lines. Dug in a machine gun that night and got in about 12:30. Snowed like the devil.

January 26

Pulled out and marched to **Ettendorf**. Had a little trouble finding quarters but at last we found a place to stay. Six of us in one bed but we managed it.

January 27

Loaded up again and rode to **Sorneville** where I am now writing this. Hope to have a little rest back here but just heard a rumor we're going to have to set up positions tonight. If we do I'm going to blow my stack - we're fifty miles from the front. Before I stop, I'll put in a few points of interest. **Kilstett** got hot and, as I hear, fell to the Jerriers but it's back in our hands now. The 2nd Bn. of the 314 of the 79th, who received us at **Drusenheim**, were completely wiped out. Lastly, there were but two men in this platoon when I entered it. Jerry caught them in a house and gave them hell. Also A Company will not take any captives. Jerry captured some of our men and lined 10 of them against the wall and shot them.

January 27-February 17

Sorneville lasted until the 17th of February. We had a very good rest and there's no denying it. Our CP was in a tavern owned by Pierre and Marie Gobert who were really swell to us. I slept over in another house with Lloyd Thompson from Detroit. Always got a big kick out of him. He was always saying something like, "Just think, we're veterans now," or something like that. Had a scare one night when a fighter crashed into a bomber two miles away. I thought the Jerries were coming in on us. We went down in the cellar, turn out the lights, etc., etc. Things finally cleared though. Now and then we would guard the kitchen and at about 9:00 P.M. we'd send a patrol out and the guard would open up the kitchen and we'd get all the food we wanted. Albert would bake us a pie now and then. We had a few problems now and then but they weren't bad. Went way out and had a Battalion problem which didn't materialize. We found a lot of wrecked German equipment out there and also a very dead Jerry with no shoes on. Had a few marches of about 8 miles and that's all of interest.

February 17

On the 17th we loaded up outside of town and took off for the front. We drove through the forest again which was very beautiful. It was pretty enjoyable ride all in all. After

awhile we reached the **Hardt Mountains** and unloaded. We marched around for awhile passing a few boys from the 45th who we were relieving. We left the mortars a ways back and went on up to the Company CP to wait for darkness. When it got dark we started down the path going in **Reipertswiller**. We got on the brink of a very steep hill - we were traveling on the hill and reached the brink and there was the town. The 42's were throwing white phosphorous into it as we descended the hill. We set up our machine guns facing the other side of town. The town was divided by a valley - we were on one side and the Jerries on the other. Just back of their side was **Hill 301**. We stayed up there four days. Guard was a nightmare - cows were running up and down the street, there was a pig loose, chickens all over the place and worst of all the cats. They'd come under the window and let out a screech and start fights and stuff like that. Now and then the phosphorous would start a good fire on the other side of town. After a few days they brought the mortars and fired 17 rounds on a house we thought was a CP. They didn't even hit the darned thing. We've been kidding those boys ever since. However, that drew 88 fire and our house nearly got hit. I was usually down at the other end of town looting when an 88 opened up on us so I was lucky in that respect. However, I don't remember anyone getting hit by them. By the way, everybody looted. One day as I was standing guard Colonel Custer came in looking for some salt and pepper shakers.

After four days we went back in battalion reserve. The mortars stayed up far enough to fire though. Really had to laugh, they pulled another boner. They had to fire flares one night and the assistant gunner forgot to pull the pins. We could hear Weimer over the phone, "D-d-d-d-d-did you pull the pins?" He always stuttered when he got excited. We set up our guard at day and 1 1/2 at night so it wasn't bad at all. We had very nice dugouts. On the second day, or rather the first (we moved up during the night), I went down in town to look for a stove. I went over in the place we were and looked around. A Lieutenant came out and chewed me out for being in town. I got pretty sore. (That Lieutenant is now our company commander - or at least he was until yesterday when Captain Lieber came back). However, I got my stove. I put it on a cart and started out down the road. About half way there the cart broke down so I said to hell with it. However when I got back up the hill there was a good strong wagon so Humberg and I went down and got the stove and hauled it on up. After a little work we got it installed. I then made the first of my daily trips to the village for wood. I always used a baby buggy to fool the Krauts if they happened to be watching. The stove worked like a charm, really threw out the heat. We stayed four days there too (the object was to be up 8 and back four).

We moved out to the left flank quite a ways out of town. There were a few buildings way out next to the woods where the Krauts were (usually we had an open field separating us). Anyhow they wanted us to set up out there so we did. I never saw such a place in all the time I had been up. Dead cows, horses, etc. all over the place. Right under the window where we had our gun set up was a dead Kraut (there were some cats who would go out and crawl over him at night). In a house nearby was a coffin with a dead civilian in it. Next day somebody wised up and ordered us out back across where we belonged.

We set up a few ready made positions but next day we had to dig another.

I had a good one dug for three men when a replacement came in making the hole not big enough. However we got along OK. After a while Kirk went on pass to Paris so I was moved down to the other position which was better. The thing that burned me up was that we had inspection up there and everyday we had to turn in a worksheet showing how much work we did for that particular day. Now and then a group of Krauts would come across the field and surrender. One night the artillery and mortars laid down a fifteen minute barrage followed by leaflets. the air corps also bombed strafed the lines. That brought a few of them in.

Going into town after rations wasn't much fun. Orders came down that every fox hole had to be connected with a trench - some of them went right down the middle of the path. We had to go in after dark so frequently we'd fall in the ditch. With a 50 pound box of C rations on our shoulders it wasn't much fun. After eight days in front we were moved back in reserve into the nice warm dugouts. Same life as before. One night as I was coming off guard I fell in the garbage dump, though. The dugouts were back in some trees - great big tall firs and it was moonless besides - couldn't see a thing. Even in the day it

was pretty dim back there. We had to put up cables to guide us at night. One day we turned in our shoe packs for combat boots. Winter wasn't quite over yet so that gave us some idea as to what was coming.

On a tree next to the gun position Delk carved his initials and his girl's and I did the same. Some day I hope to go back and see if they are still there.

The TD's were back there too and one of the fellows wanted my .45. He offered me a British revolver and \$15 for it. He must have thought I came from the country. After four days we went back into town. Our squad got a different position this time at a house to the right of the one we had before. We got set up and lived mostly like we did the time before. The way we got into that house, though, was rather unique - backed in over a hay mow, through a hole in the wall, down a stairs and to the room on the left. The last day we were there Drawdy and I tried to put Delk down in the cellar. He got mad and resigned as squad leader. The job fell on me. Guard was sort of rough. We had a batch of turnips down cellar and the cows would come in at night and eat them. Really made a lot of racket.

March 14

On March 14th about 22:00 Kirk came in and told us the 7th Army was going to attack the next day. I had to go up the hill after rations. No moon and a very hard path to follow. I don't know how I ever made it but I did. Had a devil of a time getting the fellows up for the rations when I got them. I was pretty sore. About 4:00 they brought down A 5s for our A 4s (A 4s wouldn't be worth two whoops in hell on the attack). In the meantime we went over to the other side of town. "A" Co. was in reserve to start out with. "B" and "C" took **301** and the hill behind it. We were to take the hill on the right. Just as we got to the other side of town and were all crowded up. Jerry threw some shells at us. They must have had a good observer. We got in a cellar and stayed there for a while. "Colonel Heim", a pregnant bitch, came up and bid us farewell. We wanted to take her along but the situation didn't allow it. Now and then we'd see Jerries coming down the road yelling, "Comrade" and also our own wounded. After a while we got the "Go" signal and crossed the valley getting our feet wet in the stream. We climbed **301** which was very steep and advanced along the top of it for a ways. We had a lot of trouble with our ammo. There weren't enough cans for it and the rounds would keep falling out of the belts. We picked up a few cans later on though. After advancing a few hundred yards we stopped and spread out for the attack we were to make. We laid around for about an hour or so.

Right now I will make a few comments on the terrain. It was wooded and I don't think there was a tree in the whole surrounding territory that wasn't hit by shrapnel. The odor of phosphorous was everywhere. At times it seemed almost choking in effect. We attacked around noon. Almost as soon as we started some snipers opened up on us pinning us down. I was over with the 2nd platoon on the left flank. An officer came running up yelling for us to attack. It was around this time that Dyson in the other squad got hit in the arm. After a little while we finally got started up the hill. On the attack up the hill Andrew Jaquay got killed. He was a good boy and it was tough seeing him go. We finally got up to the top. After a while I was assigned to a squad and we went back to clean up. We found those snipers - two lads about 16 years old with bullets through their heads. Back up the hill we went.



The BRONZE STAR MEDAL (**POSTHUMOUS**) is awarded to ANDREW A. JAQUAY, 13 000 912, Staff Sergeant, Infantry, Company A, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 15 March 1945, near **Reipertswiller**, France. When his squad was pinned down by intense machine gun fire in their attack on **Hill 301 near Reipertswiller**, France, Sergeant Jaquay advanced alone to neutralize the enemy position. Braving the deadly fire, he routed the enemy with grenades and fire from his rifle, but as he turned to signal his squad to advance he was fatally wounded by an enemy sniper. By his exceptional courage and aggressive determination in the face of superior odds, Sergeant Jaquay enabled his platoon to continue their attack on the strongly held enemy positions.

Name and address of nearest relative: Mrs. Anna Jaquay, 58 Mount Wood Road, Wheeling, West Virginia. Entered military service from Wheeling, West Virginia.

They ran in some trouble over to the right and one fellow got hit in the arm.

A lieutenant came up and said, "Gosh Joe did they get you? Well, I'm going over and get him right now." He went over with another fellow. Snipers opened up killing the other fellow and

wounding the lieutenant in the arm. He came back cussing a blue streak. About 17:00 we had to go over and search out another hill. We got about to the bottom of the hill when we found some Krauts dug in along the road. We flushed them out, took them back a ways and shot them. It was getting dark and we couldn't have sent them back. I didn't think much of all this hill climbing - one man had to carry a 30 pound machine gun up and down them while the others had to carry ammo. It was plenty rough physically. We climbed another hill, found nothing on top, came back down and back up our own getting there just when the stars came out. We found a hole up there and put our guns up. The places were full of phosphorous though and had a very eerie glow. We tried to scoop it out and got it all over our hands. We had to abandon the project because the glowing might have given our position away.

By the way, when we were setting up our guns one of the fellows fully loaded his, and set the gun down so that the trigger was on a twig. It let out a burst and we all hit the dirt - we didn't know what was happening. We soon found the trouble though. We had no blankets and it was pretty cold. Our raincoats were the only thing we could use but we did manage to get a little sleep. Next morning we didn't do much of anything but clean up the guns a little. I spoke to Duren [editor: PFC Jack Duren] for the last time that morning. (He was the squad leader of the other squad. He saved a fellow during an artillery barrage - good boy.)

That noon we went back up the other hill we had searched out the night before and dug in. We really dug a beautiful position - logs on top with dirt over that and pine needles to lie on and everything.

About 14:00 I went down after water and met the mortars coming up.

I learned that we were behind our own artillery so had to catch up. After I got back we started out. We covered quite a bit of distance that day. Coming down the first hill climbed, a fellow's rifle got caught in the brush and went off putting a bullet through Duren's head. He never knew what hit him. The burying party never did find his body.

[**editor's note** – PFC Duren's body was returned home to Thomasville, GA in 1949. His tribute is found here,

We went on until dark and held up for a while. Our objective was the top of a hill and we were at the bottom. Getting up that hill was something I'll not soon forget. Small pine trees were planted very close together making it very hard to get up. We couldn't use light so we could not consult a map to get our bearings. However Lieut. Coppenrath got us up there just from memory. We dug in and got about two hours sleep. Then we shoved off again. It was still dark and we had to hang on to the man in front of us to get anywhere. We got down to the road and went down about a mile and held up. Got our raincoats out and managed to get about another hour's sleep. When we woke up we found that the rest of the company had pulled out forgetting us. We took off pretty fast and caught up with them. We went on into a town and went up in a barn.

Up to this time we had had hardly any food since the attack started except for about a K ration and a couple of D ration bars. We were plenty hungry. After a while they brought us out some K rations. About 5:00 P.M. we started out again. Everything was going down the road - battalions, regiments, and every damned thing you could think of. I saw Old Sock, my mess Sgt. back in Regiment Hg., in a truck. In another town a little farther on I ran across Coffman and a few of the other boys. We went down the road quite a ways and went into some woods. We dug in and set up the guns. After a while they brought bed rolls up to us. We thought we were going to get a good night's sleep. After about three hours of the best sleep I think I ever had, they woke us up.

We tossed the blankets on a truck and started out.

We got in a town after while and took the weapons off the carrier. 1st Battalion, we learned, was going to get in behind the lines of the enemy. Just before daylight we started and went for quite a while and climbed a hill and dug in. That afternoon we came down and found everything in the road just as before - trucks, tanks, etc. It was in that area that the **Siegfried Line** was. We went quite a ways and then up a hill and dug in. Just as we threw the last shovelful of dirt out we moved back on the road. As we moved down the road I noticed a sign which read, "You are now entering Germany - by courtesy of some cavalry outfit." As I remember it, we spearheaded the drive, in fact I'm sure of it. The 232nd was the first regiment of the 42nd in Germany. However, I'm not claiming any credit because we

were in reserve. The first town we were in was **Ludwigswinkel**, I think. We dug in outside of town along a road and slept in a house down the road away. Next day we moved back in town along the side of the hill. The balloon gradually got together and we learned that we were going up through **Fischbach** to wipe out some pill boxes on the other side of the town. They brought up mules for us and everything. I don't know what happened but we never did make the attack.

We stayed in town that night and got a good night's sleep. Only had to pull one hour and a half of guard. I stood with a Mexican named Poncho. He was really a screw ball - really gave me a laugh. Next morning we loaded on trucks and went back into **Alsace** a ways. The 222nd and 232nd were going to trade places from what I could see. I met Bob Swanson, my old AST back there. We had quite a bull session. We stayed there about an hour or two and then got back on the trucks and rode some more. After a while we got off and started walking again. We entered Germany again at **Schonau**. They put us way up on a hill with a road to cover. There was a good path all the way up. The view from where we were was very beautiful. They had a railing up on a rock where people could come and enjoy it. Way off up the valley there was an old castle carved out of rock and the village was right below. The Krauts and a P 8 behind us so we were between them and town. Now and then they would throw a round over into the town. And once in a while the shell wouldn't quite make it and get us. We weren't very well pleased with that. We stayed up there a couple of days and then came down in town where the Company assembled. We then went up a hill going cross country to **Rumbach**.

We climbed down the hill and got on a road and for some reason started double-timing. We went like that for a couple of hundred yards and just as we were stopping Delk yelled, "Drawdy, take this can of ammo." It was so pitiful we had to laugh. We went on and after awhile got into town. After a lot of monkeying around we got set up. We had a good house with beds for all of us machine gunners when they moved us out and the mortar section in. We finally got set up and settled down. We found a basement full of preserves and ate to our heart's content. When I was on guard I got some mattresses so we didn't have it too bad.

Next morning we got back on the road and waited to move out. One of the fellows found some drums and after awhile some Jerry prisoners came down the road. A medic name Schwartz, who's a good drummer, started beating out a march step. One of the prisoners actually changed step to be in time with the music. None of them were pleased to have to march in step. We moved out and marched quite a ways. All along the road that we went on were dead horses, dead Krauts and all kinds of equipment. That was the work of the Air Corps and it sure helped us a lot. After a while we stopped and sat round for a while. Then they moved us on a hill and we dug in a position. That night Delk and I went on into town and found all kinds of wine. We filled up every jar we could find with it and went on back up the hill with it. Delk fell asleep on guard that night and stood 20 minutes of my hour. My birthday was around then so we had to celebrate. While we were there PX rations came together with some steak. We really had a feed that night.

After a few days we moved on a little ways and put up tents, the first time since CP2 back at Marseilles. We stayed there until April 1st. We trained a little, got a shower, had church services etc. While there we had quite a laugh. The Captain had us all together giving us some information. Just as we were quieting down a fellow shows a picture to Ronny (the medic who was with us when we hauled Rayburn out of the wood). Everybody couldn't see what was coming off. He let out an "E-E-E-E-E-E-E-take it away." Ronny's quite a character. Every time he sees me he says to me, "You are undoubtedly the most ugly person I have ever had the misfortune to meet."

April 1

As I said, on April 1st we moved out on trucks. Blue, one of the cooks, rode a motorcycle and crashed and broke his leg. We crossed the **Rhine** somewhere around **Worms**. The only other thing that really impressed me on the trip was seeing a dog get run over by an ambulance. It looked sort of like Rip and I hated to see it.

We pulled into town this side of **Stadtprozelten** about 4:00 in the morning. Kicked the people out of the house we wanted and got a couple hours sleep. Got a chance to wash up the next day and heat up our K rations. At 13:00 we started on a cleaning out mission. We cleaned out **Stadtprozelten**, **Dorfprozelten** and a few other towns. Night time

found us one town short of our mission. We had a little sniper trouble - one opened up on us and we gave him machine gun, mortar and TD fire - blasted the hell out of the building he was in.

Regiment phoned and told Colonel Custer to take the next town. Colonel Custer told them to go to hell. He'd found out that there were three tanks and a company of Jerries in the next town. We found a house and smashed the door down. We had to keep half the men up at a time so the machine guns would stand and the mortars. We found a few odds and ends to eat. There was a dead hog in the basement but we didn't eat that. Next morning we went into the next town. A squad of Krauts on our right got us pinned down. We were in the middle of a flat field but the PO jeep finally came up and directed artillery fire in on them. We spent the rest of the day clearing out some woods and went on into town and got billeted. Got a pretty good night's sleep that night. Next morning we walked over to the next town and waited for trucks. It started raining and we got in the barn. Old farmer brought us out some apples. Trucks finally came and took us across the **Mainz River** out to a hill side. Bed rolls and rations came and we pitched tents and had a good time. We thought we were going to get a good night's sleep. About 19:00 we had to take our tents down and throw blankets on the trucks.

We marched all that night through rain and reached Würzburg that morning.

The engineers had just finished a bridge across the river when we got there. We crossed and started out for our mission which was clearing the street on the left of the advance. On a high cliff on the other side was a castle which we had machine guns and a cannon in. Just below it on the bank was an inscription, "Heil Hitler" (later we changed that to "42nd Rainbow Division"). There was one place along the way that every time you crossed the open spaces a sniper would shoot at you. It took quite a while to get past that. We got up our street OK and then started down another. The street led into a square with a museum on the other side facing this particular street. When we got pretty well down the street a machine gun opened up from the museum. To the left was a street and to the right was some sort of Nazi shrine. We made to these for cover. We stayed there for quite a while. After a while we got some fire on the machine gun and thought we got it wiped out. We got out in the middle of the street to start out again when the damned thing opened up on us. I think that's the closest shave I ever had. Bullets were flying all over. It got three fellows who were standing by me including Kirk. One fellow got it awfully bad in the chest. It took three hours before we could evacuate the wounded. We finally outflanked the gun and wiped it out. I was now section leader since Kirk was kaputt. We went back and down another street and finally ended up in a big school that was in pretty good shape (**Würzburg** was smashed all to hell). We put the whole battalion in that building. There was all kinds of electrical equipment in there - a regular power house. It must have been some sort of University. We found quite a bit of canned food in there.

Eventually we went to bed. At 5:00 in the morning we were very rudely awakened by a terrific explosion and shortly after someone shouting, "Give up, you are surrounded - no help can come to you." Panic immediately set in. Everybody made for the door (the whole platoon was in a small room). We finally got upstairs where the danger wasn't so great. We came down after while and set up the machine guns. I opened up after awhile and spread a hedge that was out in front. Four dead Krauts were found over there later. I don't know whether I was responsible for them or not.

Going back, I'll elaborate a little more. The Krauts had sneaked up with Panzerfausts (a sort of Bazooka) and opened up on the building. The first hit was in the room the CP was in and wounded Captain Lieber. The second hit the room where the medics were (our room was between the two). Hamburg and a few others were also wounded with the panzerfaust. Then this Kraut came over yelling and ran right in the building but some guy plugged him as he came in. Another tried to get some rations we had piled up. Lt. Simateris plugged him. Another actually came up and pushed one of our jeeps down the road although I think we later got it back. There was a park across from the school so we put some very offensive artillery fire in on them and burned down a building near by. After a while things cooled down and the battalion continued the attack. We stayed behind to guard the building (4th platoon). Mail was given out and I got a box from home. Delk and I had quite a feast. Monkeyed around the rest of the day looting the building for food. That night we moved up to where the rest of the company was. It was some sort of an apartment building. We got the guns set up after awhile and finally

got some sleep. Next morning we looted the place and I found a stamp album with some beautiful sets in it. I spent the rest of the morning emptying the book. In the afternoon we started out again attacking. We ran into some trouble up on top of a hill. There was a road sunk about six feet on out across the field and there was about a company of Germans in it. They killed one of our men, Carnes Shy. He was my bunk mate back at Gruber and a darned swell fellow. One good thing, though, he never knew what hit him. We put some mortar fire on them and after while brought up the TD's. That got them out plenty fast. We ran into same trouble a little later and dealt with it in the same manner. After while we reached our objective, the middle of an open field and were told to dig in. We were cold, wet (it was raining) and miserable but Colonel Custer, against the order of the Regiment, moved us into town about 1:00 in the morning and we got billeted. Next day we marched until about 1:00 and got billeted good and early. For once we got a good deal and stayed all night and got plenty to eat.

Next day we started out and hiked up a hill and along the top of it for quite a ways. We started to come down in an open field on the other side when some mortar fire started dropping around us. 2nd Bn. thought we were a bunch of Jerries and put fire on us. Colonel Custer was with us and got them over the phone and chewed them out good and proper. We ran into a creek at the bottom of the hill and had to cross it on a fallen tree. Had to laugh. Healy fell in. We kept going cross country and after a while started going down a road. 154 Jerry prisoners passed us and that helped the morale a lot. We went through the town that was ahead and went down the road to the left and got in some woods and stayed for the night. Had blankets so it wasn't so bad.

Next day "A" Company was the attacking element so we loaded on TD's and jeeps and took off. We got stuck a few times but made it OK. We monkeyed around, searched out a town, went down one road and came back in town and out another road. After while we got off and before we knew what was happening they were calling for mach guns and mortars. We went over and up a bank and there was a jeep on fire. Lt. Coppenrath had been killed. A swell officer, who was, up to that time, our company commander.



The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to GEORGE R. COPPENRATH, 01 049 449, First Lieutenant, Infantry, Company A, 232nd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 5 April 1945, at **Würzburg**, Germany. When two panzerfausts were fired into the Company Command Post wounding the Company Commander and another officer, Lieutenant Coppenrath immediately ordered the Command Post to be evacuated. In the face of intense grenade, machine gun, and small arms fire coming from the attacking enemy forces, he made repeated trips to secure ammunition stored in the building in order to distribute it to elements of the company. Although stunned by a grenade, he continued until the task was accomplished. Lieutenant Coppenrath's outstanding courage and leadership was instrumental in repulsing the determined enemy attack.

Entered military service from Clinton, Massachusetts.

[The Rainbow Battle Deaths booklet lists 1LT Coppenrath as killed in action on 04/09/45]

Lt. Simateris took over now. We moved into some woods and advanced through them to the edge of a town and on into town. We sat around for a while and then loaded the TD's and jeeps again and took off to take the next town. We ran into a road block. (Jerry made a lot of road blocks but they never did any good. To make them effective they should be covered with an anti-tank gun and perhaps a machine gun but the Jerries didn't ever cover them.) The TD's busted it with their 90's. On the edge of town a panzerfaust wrecked the first TD and some machine guns opened up on our right. About every jeep in the column had a machine gun and we were really putting down some fire. Evans and I drove on into town and saw that the boys in the first TD (now in a house) were in pretty bad shape. One had his arm completely blown off. We went back and got some medics. The TD was burning like hell with an occasional explosion when a shell would go off. After a while we got things organized and started searching out the town. All of a sudden white phosphorous started to rain in on us. Our own Anti-tank Company was doing that or rather Cannon Company. Anti-tanks only fire three types of shells, two kinds of AP and one kind of HB for troops. We finally got that straightened out although it started a hell of a fire and burned a few houses down. Civilians were running all over the place trying to get their belongings out. We finally got set up and got a little sleep.

Next morning we started out on quite a hike over roads, through woods, back on

roads, etc. We were supposed to billet at our destination but the 3rd Division had come and taken everything (three Divisions - the 3rd, the 42nd and the 45th were going to take **Schweinfurt**). We sat around on the side of the road for a while while the Colonel tried to straighten things out. It was decided to move on and take the next town. Just before we got into town a Kraut opened up on us with a burp gun. There we were, jeeps crowded together and the troops in column of two's. We climbed under the jeeps and every other damned thing. The 1st Sgt. crawled under one and said, "Spread out. What do you want to do, Draw Fire?" It was pitch black and nobody could see anything. In a little while we went up on the hill and dug in. Drawdy, Delk and I were just getting to sleep when we were told to move out into town. We went down in there and monkeyed around and finally got billeted. We got two hours of sleep.

Next morning we went on up the road. 242nd was taking the town and we were filling in the ring around town. We searched whatever Krauts came back our way. We did that all day and ended up on the edge of the woods next to **Schweinfurt**. We dug in and got a good night's sleep. Next day we stayed there and had a church service and that's about all. Late in the afternoon trucks came and took us into town. Because A and C companies of the 232nd were the hardest hit of the division, we were chosen to guard the ball-bearing plant at **Schweinfurt** which was a pretty soft job. We had good billets to stay in and life was pretty good. Bill Loblaw came and saw me - sure was good to see him. Delk found some orange extract so we went down to a brewery and got some ice and some sugar off the cooks and made a big pitcher of it. It wasn't so good but it was cold. Anyhow I drank too much of it and got sick. About 1:00 in the morning I vomited all over my clothes which I had off. About this time some rabbits out near one of the guard posts woke up and started making a racket. The guard thought it was a Kraut and opened fire. The 1st Sgt. found out what was happening and ran all over the place waking us up say, "Alert yourselves! There's some Jerries around here." The guard was doubled and I had to set up a machine gun. As my clothes weren't fit to be worn I was running around in my shorts. The 1st Sgt. bawled me out but I was so sick I didn't give a damn. That was my worst night there. We found some motor bikes and had a lot of fun with them. Had a victrola with a few records as well.

We stayed there until about April 15th. We loaded on trucks and rode all day - went back through Würzburg and on toward Nürnberg. They unloaded us in the evening and we went out aways and dug in. We had all kinds of units there - AT, Cannon and all that. We got up about 4:30, got our rations and some hot coffee and marched until about noon. We ended up at a small village and set up a defense around it. There was a Jerry searchlight and sound detector apparatus near there so I went over and took a look at it. Got on a sound detector and turned a couple of cranks and it went around like a merrygo-round. I had a lot of fun with that. We sat around and after a while a couple of 88's came buzzing in. I was taking mail up to the other guy at the time so couldn't see exactly what was happening. It knocked down some plaster and cut Globberman up a little. That was our only casualty although he came right back. It wrecked a little equipment including a bazooka. Lt. Simateris called me up to the CP and bawled me out for leaving the men all bunched up.

That night we just barely got our supper and moved out to another town on up. we were filling the last gap around Nürnberg. We dug in on either side of that AT gun and got some sleep. Next day we got a lamb off a sheep herder and butchered it and had mutton with baked potatoes around it. Pretty good. Didn't do much for the rest of the day. Stood the same post that night although they took the AT gun out. Got up early the next morning and walked to the next town back. Got some billets and stayed there all day. In the afternoon they picked three tall fellows for a parade through **Nürnberg**. One of them borrowed my pack. The parade didn't materialize and the fellow just left my pack in the other room. Since I didn't hear about the parade being called off I walked off without it leaving all those stamps. Another thing was the book, Don Quixote, which I had been reading off and on since I left the states. All in all I was pretty sore to lose it. Next day we got on trucks. I was in a boat myself and shoved off. We went quite a ways and got off and started walking. It started to rain (this was April 20th). My raincoat was in my pack. After we started to get sort of wet some Krauts opened up on us killing one lieutenant and two Russians whom we picked up and who wanted to go with us. After a while we got that straightened out and moved on. By now the wind and rain had reached a very high pitch and we were sacked and very cold. After while we came to a

town. I forget the name but I remember it started with Wasser, the German word for water. [editor – **Wassermungenau**, where the Regimental Command Post was established on April 21]. It was very appropriate.

The bridge was out so it was an all night job for the engineers. The TD's crossed through the water. After a while we got set up. Jerry threw a couple of time bursts in (hardly ever used point detonation - wrecked too many of their own houses). They had some good home-baked bread that was still warm from the oven in the house I was in. It didn't last long. We got dried and managed four hours sleep.

Next morning we found that the company had already pulled out and taken the next town. Things were really in a mess there. 3rd Bn. had pulled in and slept in it with out searching it out. Twenty Krauts were in one barn. They could have got them if they had searched it out but as it was they only got two. Martin guided us on up to that town and we messed around for a while. We ended up in the barn the Krauts had been in. I went in and took a look at the bodies. One had died a pretty hard death - he was cut across the legs and had bled to death. Blood was all over his legs. What got me was the civilians out there looting him. One had blood all over his hands. We got them out of there. After while we started out again and searched out a woods and advanced into another town.

There we saw the body of a seven year old girl who had been shot by the SS because she clapped her hands when we were coming. An old grandmother was shot for a similar reason. We stayed around in town for a while and then shoved off again. In a little while it started to snow. We walked for quite a while in that. After a while we saw a Kraut running away off in the distance. He turned out to be an artillery observer because a few minutes later some shells came in pretty close. We pulled back, reorganized and went around into another town. Stayed there for a while and again we pulled out and went into a woods. Going out on the other side we saw a big barn on fire. We passed that and went on. We saw a horseman going into town and let him go. He turned around though and started to go back so we opened up with machine guns, rifles and all that. Don't know whether we killed him or not but he fell off of the horse anyway. We went on and took the next town.

At this time an enemy convoy was noted moving down the road a ways off. Set the TD's on them and opened up with every machine gun we could find. After it turned dark we went on and took the next town (A Co.) to fulfill our objective which was securing a bridge. We did it and got it intact. The Krauts had all kinds of dynamite under it. Anyhow we searched out the next town and managed to get a little sleep. As usual, we took off the next morning, went two towns up and sat around a while. Later we went on two more towns and got billeted. Evans and I went back to see about the transportation which was supposed to take us on further. We found that they had already pulled out. We went back and about 9:00 that evening we went across the valley. Started up the road on the other side. It then snowed some more. (We had funny weather back there. One minute it would be snowing and the next the sun would be shining and then it would snow again.) We walked a ways and finally came to our (one of our) objectives, a small village. They started throwing artillery at us. We saw some of them moving so out came the machine guns again. We also had a 37 on a recon that we used. We drove them out and went on in. for the 1st time I'd ever seen them do it they put artillery in the town and it was really heavy stuff - about 150. They zeroed in on a road junction where the TD's were. One of them got excited and ran over our FO jeep. It inflicted a few casualties - Lt. Thompson got hit and Lt. Coyne (who had been sick) passed out from over exertion.

We finally pulled out and went on. We reached our next objective. B and C companies were supposed to take it but they didn't because of heavy resistance so we bunched down. A Co. got a few houses. Guess B and C didn't like the idea of staying out so they went in and took the town at about midnight. We moved on in. We were assigned to 2nd Platoon. Next morning I got another package from home so had another feast. We were told to go out and load on the trucks. We went out and got on top of a truckload of 105 shells and stayed out there for four hours without budging an inch. They finally decided we weren't going and let us go inside. An hour later we came out again and sat around some more. We could have got quite a bit of sleep that night but we didn't get any and we were pretty mad. We finally pulled out about 5:00 and went on to the small town. We got off, stood around and finally started off down the road. After

while we went off into some woods and about 2:00 started through an open field for a small town near there. Sniper about a mile a way opened up. He came sort of close so we had to run. We made the town and after a while went on out of it and up on a bank. We gathered together on the edge of some woods and went on into the next town for the night.

Next morning we got up and went over on the bank of the Danube. Things were sort of crowded so we didn't get across until about 2:00 in the afternoon. Went on into some woods and bunked down for the night. Next morning we took off and crossed a canal on a blown-up bridge and went on into a town where we stayed all morning. That afternoon we moved down the road to another house with a beautiful grand piano in it. I think some big musician had lived there. All kinds of trucks were coming up, the land was fairly flat ahead so we could see to a good advantage. They shoved off and at 2:00 A.M. we started on a twelve mile march. It took us quite a while to get there. On the way Reg. Hq. passed us in jeeps and Coffman threw us a bottle of wine.

When we got to our objective I just hit the sack and slept until we moved on to the next town where the Division was. We put up a big guard for them that night and next day got on trucks and drove down near **Munich**. We got a billet and stayed there a whole day and moved up to the edge of town that night passing **Dachau**.

We got a nice house and fiddled around until darkness when Division called us because they needed a guard so we went over there and got to sleep about 12:00.

Stood some guard and later that day moved through **Munich** to the other side of town where the machine gunners got a whole house to themselves. We got a bath there too. Next day we moved out after dark and went to another town quite a ways away. Next morning a lot of prisoners came through and that afternoon a German plane came over which was knocked out by the A.A.A. I found a saxophone there which I took with me giving it to a band member at **Pauling**. We went from there to a town up near the mountains where we stayed for another night. Next day we moved to **Pauling** where we stayed quite a while. One day I bought a Walther and traded it for a Luger.

After we left we went to Oberndorf (Austria) and from there to Feldkirchen (Austria)



Feldkirchen, Austria

Photo found here:

https://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Europe/Austria/Bundesland_Vorarlberg/Feldkirchen-330690/General_Tips-Feldkirch-TG-C-1.html

The Soldier, the Avatar, and the Holocaust: **WWII Germany, Jan.-May, 1945** By Ronni Sanlo



Seventeen year-old Beth, a talented if not strange computer nerd and secret avatar designer, hears anti-holocaust statements from her history teacher. She decides to send her avatar back to January, 1945, to accompany her nineteen year-old great-grandfather Sandy through the last five months of WWII in Europe. Beth and her sister have heard many of his stories over the years but now Beth wants, no, needs, to see them unfold with her own eyes. As a manga cosplayer, Beth dresses in her Beth America outfit and pushes the button. She meets Sandy on the ship as he sails with his 42nd Rainbow Division to Marseilles, France.

Sandy thinks he's lost his mind when four-inch Beth appears in his jacket pocket and introduces herself as his great-granddaughter. Sandy figures war will do that to one's mind but he hasn't seen combat yet. Must be the seasickness. But, he thinks, if Beth's real, at least he doesn't die. He just got married to Lois back home in Ohio and has no children yet.

During their travels, Beth discovers the reasons why young U.S. soldiers went to war and how war affected them. She meets up with other avatars as they engage German teenage girls who suffered at the hands of soldiers, including German soldiers, when they entered their town in battle. And she watches with intense, painful horror as Sandy and his Recon buddies enter the gate of Dachau concentration camp.

Beth sees the Holocaust with her own eyes. She knows without a doubt that it happened and feels compelled to make sure other young people in the U.S. are aware of the truth. Beth transforms from being an angry student who is trying to prove an inept teacher wrong into a young woman intent on teaching others.

The Soldier, the Avatar, and the Holocaust: WWII Germany, Jan.-May, 1945 is based on the letters my father, Sanford "Sandy" Lebman wrote to my mother Lois from the battlefield in 1945, as well as on research at the National Military Archives, the U.S. Army 42nd Rainbow Division archives, and visits to Dachau Concentration camp near Munich, Germany. The purpose of the book is to show a new generation of readers the reality of the Holocaust so that it's not forgotten.

Dr. Ronni Sanlo will have signed copies of the book at the Rainbow Reunion in Albany, NY in September. The book will be available on Amazon and Kindle on September 20, 2016. Autographed copies may be ordered at www.ronnisanlo.com. Ronni may be contacted at ronni@ronnisanlo.com.

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Rainbow Descendants page on <rainbowvets.org> website.
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This page as well as <rainbowvets.org> reaches Rainbow researchers who answer and direct inquiries

Photo on Page One, upper right is Sculpture at Croix Rouge Farm, France by James Butler, RA
<http://croixrougefarm.org/foundation/>