

RAINBOW TRAIL

The History Newsletter of the Millennium Legacy Association
(Rainbow Family) Of The 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division
August 2018 Volume 18, Issue 2
"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"

IMAGES from The Rainbow Tour – WWI Centennial July 2018 in France



Photo One – The 42nd Infantry Division Color Guard performs its duty at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial, Seringes-et-Nesles, France, during a ceremony held 25 July 2018 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of American combat actions in World War One. (Photos 1 and 3 by Pat Chaisson)

Photo Two – Mrs. Cathie Jarvis and her son, Craig, are joined by Members of the RDVF World War One Centennial Tour at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial, Seringes-et-Nesles, France. The Jarvis family came to honor the memory of their great uncle, Pvt. Emmett Bingham, who was killed in action on 28 July 1918 while serving With Company E, 165th Inf. Regt. 42nd "Rainbow" Division. (Photo courtesy of Cathie Jarvis)



Photo Three – The stars came out at a World War One remembrance ceremony held at Croix Rouge Farm, An important Rainbow Division battlefield and memorial outside Fère-en-Tardenois, France. Standing From left to right, BG Joseph Biehler (Deputy Commander, 42ID), MG(R) Joseph Taluto (RDVF Foundation Chairman), Maj Gen Anthony German (The Adjutant General – New York), and BG(R) Paul Genereux (RDVF Vice Chairman) met for this meaningful commemoration.



INDEX

Images from July 2018
Rainbow Tour - France

WWI Centennial
Commission
"BELLS OF PEACE"
A WWI Centennial
Remembrance of the
Armistice to be celebrated
nationwide on Sunday,
November 11, 2018

Rainbow Stories of
The Great War
An unpublished
manuscript of a member
of the 149th Regiment
Field Artillery (1st Illinois)
"Sherman Was Wrong"
Part X, "The MARNE"

The RAINBOW DIVISION
In World War II
Actions of Anti-Tank
Company, 242nd Infantry
Regiment January 9-12,
1945 Hatten-Rittershofen
FRANCE

RECOLLECTIONS
Of World War II
The Army Gets Along
On Its Stomach
By Louis E. Hubach
Co. B, 1st Bn, 232nd Inf

What We Do in Honor of
our WWI and WWII
Rainbow Division
veterans

MESSAGES
of appreciation to the
Millennium Legacy
Association from WWI
and WWII families

Dachau Survivor meets
Rainbow Liberator and
his family 73 years later

For a history of the WWI sculpture in the upper right photo please go to <croixrougefarm.org>

From Dr. Monique Seefried, WWI Centennial Commissioner: A magnificent 12-minute YouTube video of still images from the Oise-Aisne ceremony <https://youtu.be/jYNbbdBLjcg>



JULY 10, 2018

From the World War I Centennial News Podcast

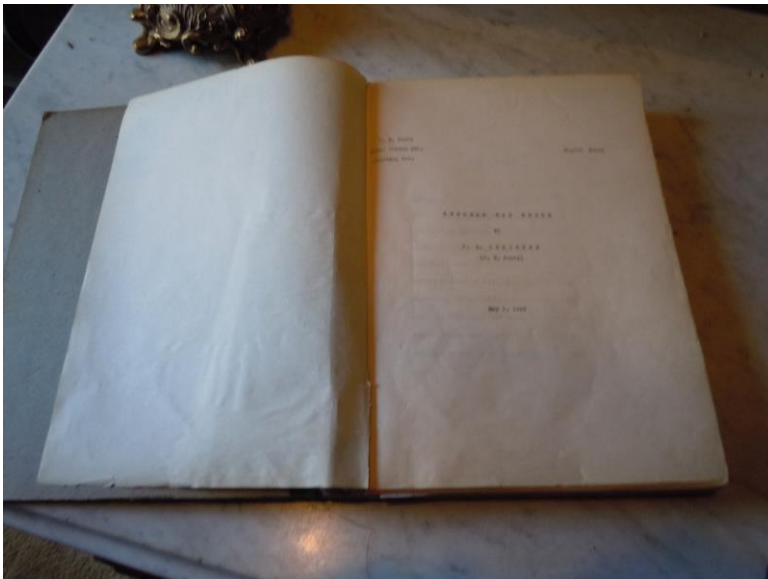
<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/>

An interview with Bells of Peace Program Coordinator Betsy Anderson

Bells of Peace, A World War I Remembrance is a collaborative program to bring the Centennial of the Armistice to communities and organizations across the nation, in a grassroots program to encourage the tolling of bells, and other commemorative activities, throughout the United States on Sunday, November 11, 2018 at 11 a.m. local time. Bells of Peace brings attention to the end of the fighting in World War I at the 11th Hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, a hundred years ago. In June 29th's WWI Centennial News Podcast, Episode 78, Program Coordinator Betsy Anderson spoke with host Theo Mayer about Bells of Peace, touching on the historical background and purpose of the initiative, as well as how people can participate. Read a transcript of this enlightening interview here –

https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/communicate/press-media/wwi-centennial-news/4742-podcast-article-betsy-anderson-interview.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

RAINBOW STORIES OF THE GREAT WAR



“SHERMAN WAS WRONG”

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

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, penciled 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.

Last paragraphs from February 2018 issue: It was a long hike back. At Chalons, a supply of Cognac and rum was taken on and the hike continued all through the night, back to Vitry-la-Ville. The men had filled their canteens with rum against the grueling latter part of those hikes and they made a very tired and worn-out looking outfit as the head of the column pulled into Vitry. I say, the head of the outfit because the tail end didn't arrive until more than an hour and a half later. It was no simple matter to keep up with the horses when the men were as tired as they were now and they became strung out for miles along the road. They didn't give a damn if they ever got there, as long as the rum held out.

They turned in for sleep as soon as they arrived and slept the clock around. As the little group of telephone men were setting up their pup tents when they got in, Godfrey's only comment was, "Boy! They sure rocked us around that time."

Thus, ended the lousy Champagne. They had done their first shocking and had gotten considerably shocked in return. Notwithstanding all American combat divisions in France being classified as shock troops, these men had not had their pride shaken any regarding this distinction. And now they were going to get some rest, or so they thought at least, and shock 'em some more, but they were to do their next shocking sooner than they expected.

(CONTINUED) – THEY CALL THIS DITCH “THE MARNE” Part X

[photo - line of infantry and supplies going forward at Sergy 7/28/1918]



“So, they call this ditch the Marne!” growled Godfry as the outfit crossed the bridge a few days later going into Chateau Thierry. It was night and the men, though tired of hiking and being kept in the dark as to what they were going to do or where they were going, had revived sufficiently to become their old selves again. They grumbled and they growled at every step, happy to know they were nearing the front again. A line of star shells stretching into the darkness to the left and right indicated their immediate proximity. Again, Godfry’s voice raised above the dull rumble, “For the last time, will somebody tell me where in the hell we’re going?”

“Back home!” shouted a voice down the line.

“Keep those nags movin’ or get off the road and let us pass!” bawled Godfry as the cart he was walking behind suddenly stopped and let him walk into it without any warning. In the darkness this happened quite often as the pace became very irregular, indicating the end of their journey. The men would skin their shins and bump their heads, then loose a volley of first-class cussing at the drivers.

The column had come to a full stop finally and the men immediately stepped off the road where they could sit down and rest. A high tenor voice down the road called, “Who won the war?”

Then a hundred voices chorused, “The Y.M.C.A.!”

“Who helped ‘em?” came the high-pitched voice again.

“The M.P.’s!” chorused the bunch.

And this sort of thing kept up. If it was not razzing some other outfit in this manner, it was singing some of their pet parodies to the popular songs. There was no end to this until they went into position where they became separated and had work to do. But there was a long delay here as the officers crouched over their maps with shielded flashlights trying to find out where they were and the telephone men had gathered around in small groups still discussing some of the events of the last fracas.

Godfry was talking – “And, oh boy! was Pappy Leprohon mad! Had his nags all lined up there behind Regimental Headquarters and when the show started, they reached clear back there and proceeded to shoot up his horse lines. The horses all broke loose and ran away and it took him two days to find what was left of them, and he stole the rest from the Frogs.”

“Did you see that battery of French 90’s pull up there in that little patch of woods two days before? Well sir, by God, if you ever saw a bunch of Frogs clear their pieces, you should have seen them about fifteen minutes after the Boche busted loose. The Boche opened up first thing on the woods and blew those guns clear out in the field, and then leveled off the whole patch of woods just for good measure. They should have had more sense anyway than to pick out a patch of woods to hide guns in,” said Chuck.

Then Godfry proceeded, “Boy, those long-range guns were really hot. Every time one of our balloons stuck her big bag up in the sunlight above the smoke, there would be just one shot from a whizz-bang and she’d be afire right now. They even knocked off an M.P. at a crossroad five kilometers back of us. Then some enterprising bozos run up one of those big railroad artillery pieces somewhere behind us and busted loose with just one shot, and the Boche started in on it with those whizz-bangs and moved gun, car and all clear out in the field, and what I mean is they didn’t use tracks or wheels to move it on, either. It was sure a mess. They reached back and set rocket and ammunition dumps off that even we didn’t know were there. And were they mad when they couldn’t locate our batteries! They just started in then to level off everything marked on their maps whether they could see it or not; they just went hog-wild when they did get started and they had guns there that all you had to do was elevate them a little and they’d been firing into the Mediterranean.”

Chuck had the floor again. “Well, by God, every shell they sent over landed right square on one of our telephone lines. I’d grab two ends and dive for a shell hole to splice ‘em together, then ring in with my phone and either find I was hooked up with some other lineman or else some Frog outfit. Then I’d grab another pair and dive for a shell hole,

then find Dip or one of the others dive in with the other end of the same piece I had. How in the hell they ever got any messages over is more than I can say.”

But the column had started to move again and the gossiping was cut short.

After a few nights of hectic maneuvering and a few days of hiding in various patches of woods, the guns were set up behind the ridge just south of Fère-en-Tardenois on the Ourcq river. Here, the Boche were setting trap after trap for our doughboys who promptly got caught in each one, and then just as promptly tore the trap up and went on. It seemed they simply just couldn't figure out what our men were going to do next. They ran the whole gamut of tricks and looked for more, so they resorted again to the old-fashioned trench tactics at this point which was just what these men wanted.



With the exception of the Lafayette Squadron, the much talked of American planes were conspicuous for their absence and the Boche, seemingly, had everything that would fly, working on this part of the line. But these men from the Lafayette Squadron were game from the word go, or perhaps I should say – crazy, as were the English. All you had to do was let 'em sight enemy planes and stuff was off. It didn't make any difference what the odds were. They mixed it fast and furious on sight and time and again stopped the whole show on the ground for minutes at a time as these men watched the dogfights in the air. Call it gallantry to the 'steenth degree or just plain scatter-brained, they had it, but were simply outnumbered about a hundred to one.

Photo – Lafayette Escadrille <https://www.pinterest.com/cassiefranks/lafayette-escadrille/>
For their history go to http://usaww1.com/Lafayette_Escadrille.php4

And our little telephone men were having their troubles. These Boche planes could spot a man working on telephone lines as far as they could see and they came down close to the ground and chased these linemen all over the place. It got to be such a ridiculous state of affairs, it became downright funny to the men themselves as they made a flying slide into a shell hole and turned to thumb their noses at the Boche pilots, as they went sailing past.

And so, we find our little group at last beginning to work up a pet peeve against the Boche; that is, the Boche pilots who were picking on them. The battalion switchboard was dug in in an open pit about a hundred yards behind the high road running along the ridge, and to the left of the batteries. These little open pits were open at the top for various reasons. It took less time to prepare them was one reason and another was due to the fact that a first-class case of dysentery was quite the thing since everybody now ate moldy bread. This type of dugout was something new we had sprung on the Frogs, who were supposed to know everything, and they were reluctantly beginning to appreciate our ingenuity, for these things did have advantages, you know. In addition to this little improvement we went even farther. They taught us how to wear the gas mask in the alert position. Well, we now developed this alert idea for other things. Everybody carried his own little roll of toilet paper in his hand all the time. That's another one the Frogs nearly died laughing at (so did we, at times) but they soon learned to appreciate its merit.



Major Redden was sitting on the ground near the switchboard receiving messages from the operator sitting in the little pit. With his roll of tissue in one hand, he was waving it toward the operator to strengthen the point of his argument as he dictated his messages, when one of the linemen came up.
(photo Major Curtis Redden, Regimental Staff, 149th Regt. Field Artillery)

“There's a battery of Frog anti's setting up their guns just off the high road in front of “F” Battery,” said the lineman.

“What!” said the Major, jumping up.

The lineman repeated the message.

“Where's Godfry?” exploded the Major again.

“He's out on the infantry line, Major,” replied the operator.

Turning to the lineman, the Major said, “Come on! Let's see where they're going to set up that outfit.”

The two walked over a few hundred yards, to where a Frog outfit had pulled off the road a few feet with two anti-aircraft guns mounted on small auto-trucks and were setting them up for action. They weren't more than a hundred and fifty yards directly in front of "F" Battery and would be a dead giveaway for this and other batteries in the immediate vicinity. The Major didn't seem to appreciate this idea; in fact, it made him plenty sore and he barged his way along the road to where the Frogs were.

"Hi there. Who's in charge here?"

The Frogs just smiled and proceeded with their work.

"Hey there, you guys!" exploded the Major again; then, lapsing into his own French, asked "Avez-vous officier?"

Still the Frogs continued with their work, giving the Major only slight notice.

But the Major was not to be slighted so easily. He continued, "You fellows can't set these guns up here.....my batteries.....back this way. You're right in front of my guns; Boche can see you; go on! Allez! Tout de suite!"

There was no mistake about the last few words; they brought some of the Frogs to a halt. There seemed to be no officer with them and they all started to jabber away among themselves. Occasionally, one would loose a short burst of French toward the Major.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est? Qu'as-vous dites?"

But this was the usual result of the Major's efforts at a conversation with the Frogs, to have them spluttering away over his head and it did not add to his peace of mind. He continued, frantically waving his hand, with "Go on! Beat it! You can't leave that outfit here. Allez! Allez!"

And then he discovered the Frogs giving him a sort of horse laugh. They were all laughing and jabbering away among themselves and waving their arms in the air, mimicking his own gestures, when, suddenly, he discovered that in his excitement, he had forgotten the roll of Army tissue in his hand, which, by now, had come partly unrolled and was trailing around with each gesture. As he looked now at the roll in his hand and at the Frenchmen, his own sense of humor responded vigorously. So, with a guilty smile he turned and started away, saying, "Oh! What the hell's the use. I'll send Godfrey over when he gets in."

But as usual, whenever the interpreters were needed the most was always the time they couldn't be found. None of them showed up until evening. The Frog battery had blazed away for hours during the afternoon at enemy planes without coming within a mile of them, in spite of the air being so full of Boche planes it seemed difficult to shoot upwards at all without hitting one. They flew around and around taking in every detail of the activity on the ground below with their cameras and it was late afternoon before the air was free again. The Major, after exhausting all means of getting the Frog anti's moved out, paced back and forth past the battalion switchboard cussing them, when, on looking again in their direction, saw them pack up quietly and start moving down the road just as it was getting dark.



Anti-aircraft batteries, mobile outfits, were to the light field artillery what the latter was to the infantry, when it came to attracting enemy fire at inopportune times. Just when the artillery guns had been set up and their locations well concealed with camouflage, some of these anti's would dash boldly up alongside of them in the daylight and bust loose at anything they could see in the sky, and then clear out just before dark. Needless to say, their location was soon spotted by the Boche who would proceed methodically at night to wipe the spot clear off the face of the earth with their artillery and night raids by their bombing squadrons, while the artillerymen had to stay there and take it. Likewise, we were forever getting lost at night with horse drawn units and unceremoniously finding ourselves in the doughboys' front yard.

Photo - A French mobile anti-aircraft gun on the Western Front in 1918; Picture: REUTERS/Archive of Modern Conflict London <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10925556/In-pictures-Never-before-seen-photographs-from-World-War-One-frontline.html?frame=2954153>

If there is anything that sounds noisier than a horse or the wheels of an army carriage in the dead of night, it is nothing short of a thunder bolt or the bursting of a large shell, and so it was, that, on finding ourselves in such embarrassing circumstances, not to mention the polite remarks from the doughboys, that we turned about and got the

hell out of there as fast as we could; and too often this exit developed into something sounding more like a runaway ice wagon on a cobblestone road. It blasted the stillness of the night with sounds that brought the whole vicinity to a point where they were ready to lunge at anything that moved in the darkness. It started a series of star shells along that section of the front while the Boche artillery started in hammering away at the spot where the noise came from, and this time it would be the doughboys who had to stay there and take it.

And so, it was on this night about an hour later that the punishment began. Out of the darkness came the voice of the operator at the switchboard as he talked over the phone to other stations, following the movements of the enemy squadron: "They're coming in quite close now from a direction a little east of due north The surging sound of the motors makes them unmistakably enemy planes sounds like they're about four or five they're circling a little to our rear centering about section 818 X4 Y72 circling slowly and quite low not sure yet where their objective is probably along the high road just west of the crossroads where those Frog anti's were this afternoon still circling yes! Yes! they're hanging out their daylight a line right above the high road everything is as bright as day now all dark above the little parachutes holding the flares light is blinding can't see any of the planes above the lights some search lights behind us trying to pick them up but their beams are way too high yes! Yes! There they come they dumped their tail gates"

There followed a minute or two of the usual blinding flashes and a deepening roar as the large aerial bombs struck along the road; sudden gusts of air drove dust and debris before it and was followed by a shower of loose dirt and stones falling about the men, while large chunks of steel from the bursting bombs set up their own peculiar symphony as they flew through the air. Again, the planes circled and came back along the road, flying quite low for more accuracy, dropping these huge missiles squarely on the road below. Thousands of men in the immediate vicinity watched over the edges of their foxholes, this spectacular air raid; it was an excellent exhibition of night flying; accurate, brilliant, short, complete in every detail and executed with typical Boche machine-like maneuvering.

But it was just another air raid as far as the men on the ground were concerned; it was an almost nightly occurrence that held their every attention, exactly as that of a small boy watching a beautiful nocturnal display of fireworks, with thoughts of fear farthest from their minds. But they did not, however, like to have them quite so close to home, since two of "F" Battery guns had been blown out of their pits, along with much camouflage blown down and the men fell to repairing the damage as the sounds of the Boche motors were rapidly disappearing in the night.

The high road was now filled with holes of some forty to fifty feet wide and fifteen to twenty feet deep, at frequent intervals over a distance of perhaps three hundred yards. It was plainly a mess – around which a temporary road was hurriedly constructed the following morning and the war continued as though nothing had ever happened.

Photo - The second battle of the Marne 15 July – 6 August 1918

<http://www.oldpicz.com/second-battle-of-the-marne/>





This photo of **PVT Martin August Treptow, Co. M, 168th Regiment (3rd Iowa), 42nd "Rainbow" Division** is from his find-a-grave.com webpage.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/43854300/martin-august-treptow>

PVT Treptow was killed in action on 29 July 1918 at Chateau Thierry during the advance on Hill 212.

photos right with comment below are from Bert Caloud, superintendent, Oise-Aisne American Cemetery

a. "This is Cemetery 621 Sergy, later renamed to 565. Treptow was buried here Row E Marker 109. [his remains were later shipped home to Bloomer, Wisconsin]

b. I'm pretty sure this is on Hill 212 and that is Sergy and its church in the picture and on the other side of that ridge behind it is Meurcy Farm and Oise-Aisne."

From the March 1981 edition of
The Rainbow REVEILLE –
Martin Treptow Remembered

During his Inaugural Address, President Ronald Reagan, recalling the sacrifices made by American military personnel, pointed across the Potomac

River to the sloping hills of Arlington National Cemetery with its row upon row of simple white markers.

"Each of those markers is a monument to the kind of hero I spoke of earlier. Their lives ended in places called Belleau Wood, the Argonne, Omaha Beach, Salerno and halfway round the world on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Pork Chop Hill, the Chosin Reservoir, and in a hundred rice paddies and jungles in a place called Vietnam.

"Under such a marker lies a young man – Martin Treptow – who left his job in a small-town barber shop in 1917 to go to France with the famed Rainbow Division.

"There, on the Western Front, he was killed trying to carry a message between battalions under heavy artillery fire. We are told that on his body was found a diary.

On the flyleaf under the heading "My Pledge," he had written these words:

"...America must win this war. Therefore I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone."



P. 361 The Story of the 168th Infantry Vol I
(John Taber 1925] remembers PVT Treptow,

"Shot down by a spray of bullets just as he reached his platoon commander with a message, Private Martin A. Treptow of Company M left behind him another message that was as effective against the enemy as a score of machine guns. In a little blood-stained book found in his breast pocket, he had painstakingly copied [his pledge]. This was his creed, and he had followed it faithfully, like the good soldier he was, to the end."

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=%2fNtHPhtq&id=6EF4B63B48403F68E33E77634820F917ED8D10EE&thid=OIP.NtHPhtq2j1B9qgp6exxHQHaEw&mediaurl=http%3a%2f%2fwww.cparama.com%2fforum%2fcartes2013b%2f1375534715-img088.jpg&exph=658&expw=1024&q=1918+image+ferre-en-tardenois+france&simid=608038797500547412&selectedIndex=0&ajaxhist=0>

Just down the hill in Fère-en-Tardenois, the infantry were having tough going; they'd get into the town only to be driven out; they'd take a hill position only to be driven off of it, time after time. Again, they would fight desperately for hours to take a position and finally reached it only to find themselves in the center of a spot covered by such concentrated enemy fire they would have to withdraw quickly to keep from losing all their men. All the while the light field artillery manipulated their solid wall of fire ahead of the infantry, trying to cut a way through for them and hold off counterattacks of Boche infantry. This kept up for days until finally the infantry got through the town and routed the Boche, and again the big push was on as all units started out to keep in support of the doughboys.

The infantry was advancing slowly up the hill beyond the town as our telephone men started down the hill into the town. Boche artillery, being directed from the heights above, were keeping up a terrific bombardment of the whole vicinity, trying to slow up the advancing troops to allow themselves time for a more orderly retreat. Dip had been jogging along on foot beside the leading reel cart when he discovered the bridge shot away in front of them. Looking around, he decided on a ford he thought he could make and started shouting at the drivers.

"Now listen, you guys! Take this road off to the right; to that ford there, by that little clump of trees. You can make it if you take a run at it. Now you fellas on the lead teams – if you ever got those nags out of the way, keep them going once you hit the water." And with a wave of his arm he shouted, "Let's go!!!"

Now this ford was down a steep incline to the water, about fifty feet across, water waist deep and a steep incline up the other side. It had been used as a ford some time before but not recently and, at best, there was just a bare chance of getting these heavily loaded reel carts through it. The men started down, spurring their nags as hard as they could while the horses were lunging into the traces getting the reel carts under good headway. Everything went nicely going down the hill, as is usually the case, and the lead team, breaking the way for the heavy swing and pole teams behind them, made two lunges into the water and stopped dead still also, as is usually the case – the other two teams and the reel cart all piled up on top of them in the middle of the stream, one beautifully tangled up mess of horses and harness and a perfectly good reel cart, now jack-knifed on top.

These reel carts were noted for their ease of tipping over; or, as in this case, when in the center of crossing a deep ditch having the cart buckle and up-end on top of the reel in front.

"Dismounted men, front and center!! Dismounted men, front and center!! bawled Dip as he came running up. "Come on, come on, grab hold over there, you fellas. Here, Chuck, come on, grab a hold here."

With this, the dismounted men had come running up and into the water where they proceeded to untangle this mess. This they succeeded in doing after awhile and they pulled out on the other side. Other units in the meantime had succeeded in finding a better ford. As the reel cart moved on up the slope with the horses tugging in the traces against the uphill drag, the dismounted men struggled alongside on foot. Godfry, water-soaked and covered with mud, was keeping abreast of the lead team and its driver who was bearing the brunt of Godfry's panting remarks:

"Why didn't you stay back there and drown yourself?"

"Who the hell ever told you that you could drive a team anyway, much less a lead team..... Call yourself a driver, huh? Baahh! You ought to be back in supply company driving a team of mules."

"Say! Why don't you dry up?!"

"Yeah! Why don't you learn to drive those old skates? Whenever you get in a tight place just always figure on some sap like you with a pair of lousy nags being there to gum up the whole works."

"Yeah! I ought to be smart like you so I could become a plug pusher. You call yourself a telephone man, huh? Well, you ought to be in the infantry."

"Is that so?" exploded Godfry between his panting. "Well, if we never get out of this mess we'll have the horses and drivers to thank for it."

"Yeah! Well, how'd you like to come up here and drive awhile?"

But there was no danger of Godfry volunteering as a driver. As they moved on up the slope a continuous harassing of enemy fire kept falling around them and to be up on one of those nags could give one that eeriness of suddenly

finding himself standing in a crowd on Broadway on a bright afternoon without any clothes on; nothing could quite produce such an exposed sensation.

A few days later found them in position again back of the Vesle river where it passed by the town of Bazoches, a quiet little hamlet nestling snugly in the Vesle valley. The ground sloped gently back from the river on either side to the crest nearly a half mile away and between the river and crest was nothing but barren soil, so thoroughly cleared of any obstruction that would offer cover, that one could be seen a half mile away on a clear night if he be foolish enough to show himself out on that slope. And as usual, it was here that the Boche had planned to trap our outfit and hammer us from the heights on their side of the river. The doughboys, consequently, were having their little difficulties while we tried to give them the proper support with the big chunks of iron and things.

[From Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bazoches-sur-Vesles>] Bazoches-sur-Vesle was the site of intense combat between American and German troops during the Vesle campaign of the First World War, in July-August 1918]

Bazoches-sur-Vesles

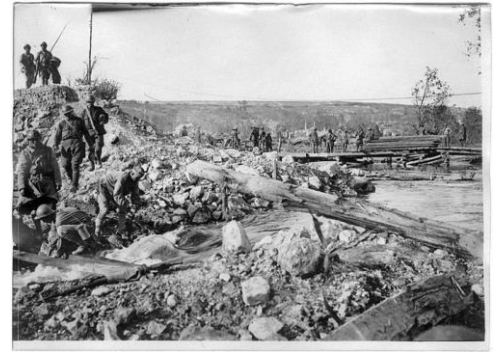
Country	France
Region	Hautes-de-France
Department	Aisne
Arrondissement	Soissons
Canton	Fère-en-Tardenois
Intercommuality	Val de L'Aisne



Left - 1914-1945 War Memorial
Bazoches-sur-Vesles

Below – images from 1917

<https://www.commune-mairie.fr/photos-premiere-guerre-mondiale/bazoches-sur-vesles-02054/>



Godfry was sitting near the battalion switchboard dugout long about the middle of the afternoon when Dip walked up with two men, strangers to Godfry.

“Godfry,” said Dip, “Shake hands with Bashman and Dosier, replacements just over from Alabammy; been in France four days.”

The men exchanged greetings and Dip continued, “I want you to take them out with you on the next line that goes out of commission; show them all about the work so they can work alone after a few days.”

“OK, Dip,” replied Godfry. Then, to the new men, said, “Here, put your stuff here; this will be your headquarters part of the time anyway. Sit down and take it easy for awhile.

The new men busied themselves for the next few minutes putting their stuff away while Godfry sat idly by looking them over. Both were strapping, big Hillbillies, one standing about six-foot-two and the other about two inches taller. Both were very slow and easy going, taking all this new business in a matter of fact way that Godfry appreciated. They finished finally and sat down beside Godfry.

“Well, how d’you like it up here?” asked Godfry.

“Guess it’s alright ‘nough” replied Bashman, the taller of the two.

“Just been over here a few days, huh?”

“Yeah. Come ovah on the Rochambeau. They asked for volunteers for telephone work and we put in our names and heah we are.”

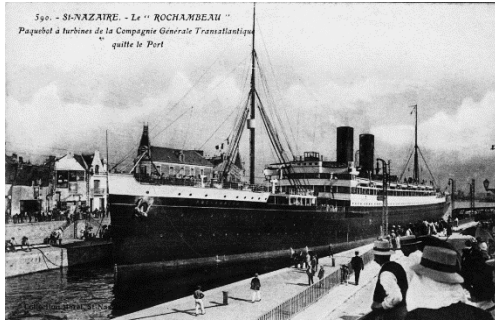


Photo - The SS Rochambeau was a French transatlantic ocean liner. Between 1915 and 1918, she was part of a regular service between Bordeaux and New York City.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Rochambeau

“Where d’we eat around heah?” asked Dosier.

“Eat right here when we get it. They bring it up in cans after dark,” replied Godfry indifferently.

“What foah?”

“Oh, they have a habit of shooting at things like smoke around here so our kitchens have to stay farther back.”

“Yeah!” said Bashman, more attentively.

“Yeah, but you don’t need to worry about anything. This telephone work’s a cinch.”

“Well, I’m shore glad to heah that. They had us scairt a little back there.”

“Naw, nothing to it. Come on over here now and I’ll give you the layout.” Said Godfry, leading them around to the front of the dugout where they could see the wires trailing out in all directions along the top of the ground.

“Now, this is a battalion switchboard, just like a little telephone central. That line goes to “A” Battery, this one to “B” and this one to “C”. These two go to the other battalion switchboard; these to regimental, this one to our radio station, these two to the infantry liaison headquarters and these three go to observation posts,” and Godfry continued then to go over the whole layout with these men.

Coming, finally, to the more advanced part of his instructions, he continued, “Now you can always tell whether a shell is going to pass over your head and hit behind you or to the right or left or fall short, by the sound it makes going through the air. The higher pitched it is, the faster the shell is traveling; the lower it sounds, the slower it is moving and this indicates a big shell. We call ‘em ash-cans because they’re about that size. When you hear ‘em coming and they sound like they’re goin’ to hit fairly close, just jump in a ditch or shell hole or trench and lay down flat ‘till the shells burst and the pieces fly over, then go ahead about your work. But there is one thing to look out for When you hear a shell coming that sounds as if it were coming directly at you, duck and get out of the way fast. These babies don’t whine when they’re going to hit within a few feet of you; they just make a sound like a sudden gust of air or as if you can actually hear the shell pushing the air out of its way as it comes. They give the least warning and you’ve got to be all action when you get it.”

Godfry continued giving them all the more important pointers until their food came up just at dusk. They ate heartily and shortly after, the observation post line went out and the three men prepared for their first taste of this work. Their confidence was high and the food did much to make them feel a little cocky; in fact, too much so to suit Godfry who started scheming around now for some way to take this out of them.

This line to the O.P. led over to a road, followed it for about a half kilometer along comparatively high ground then dipped down into a valley for about the same distance. It came out on the other side into a small village. The early evening was quite clear and rather cool after the afternoon sun had passed over. Godfry, leading out, had reached down and picked up the slender green telephone line allowing it to slide through his cupped hand as he started along in a brisk walk. At times he lapsed into a sort of dog trot as he hurried along, the others following at a short distance, doing the same.

The Boche were plying the vicinity with harassing fire. The droning of the shells was punctuated at intervals with muffled sounds of shell bursts that broke the stillness of the oncoming night. A sort of heaviness seemed to hang over everything as the trio of telephone men trotted along on their nocturnal errand. As they came onto the road they turned sharply to the left, following the wire along the road. Occasionally a rough spot felt on the wire caused them to pause and examine it; finding perhaps a piece of dirt that flicked off easily or maybe a place where the insulation was nicked, they covered it with insulation tape quickly and went on. Still, no place where the wire was broken, which they must eventually come to and find the other end, and make the splice and test out which would finish the job at hand.

Coming to the point where the road dipped sharply into the valley, Godfry's penetrating gaze quickly detected a light fog that lay in the valley. Instinctively, he stopped and sniffed the air. To himself, he thought, "Ah nuts! Tear gas Hmmm. I can make it though Save my breath Give these birds a good dose of it Won't hurt 'em, take a fall out of 'em, anyway."

The others came up now but Godfry had started quietly and without saying anything, but slowly now he proceeded on down the road into the mist that, to a novice, could be nothing other than a thin fog laying in the valley. He hoped the others would not suspect it otherwise. Breathing as slowly as possible, he proceeded. The thin cool vapor settling all around him, he could not see the others but kept them within sounding distance. The tingling of the gas began to irritate his nose and eyes but he was used to it and could hold off for some little time without sneezing or coughing, if careful not to tax his breathing.



They had not penetrated the gas very far until Bashman and Dosier were heard sneezing. Bashman was trying to say something about catching cold but each few words taxed him to a point where they were interrupted by more sneezing. Dosier, too, was trying to say something but mumbled so between sneezing as to be unintelligible. Godfry now could hardly keep from laughing; he was getting a big kick out of them but to start laughing would quickly put him in the same predicament. His eyes and nose were running profusely, but he gritted his teeth and held himself against the maddening desire to sneeze and clear his head. He kept treading steadily along the road, still following the wire with one hand and holding the other over his nose and eyes.

Photo - Repairing field telephone lines

<http://www.pbs.org/ktca/americanphotography/features/popups/fieldlines.html>

Bashman and Dosier were now stumbling along amid fits of sneezing that whipped their frames so viciously their helmets kept falling off; they were obsessed too, with an over-developed sense of duty toward the little green wire they were trying to follow. They were afraid they might be court-martialed if they lost it in the darkness; they were equally certain they would never find their way out of this suddenly mysterious state of affairs if they lost it and were so possessed with following the wire and trying to fight off this awful sneezing that they found themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Every little while, they'd lose the wire and bump into each other as they groped around in the darkness trying to find it. Both were bawling now like babies from the effects of the gas. Godfry dropped back, shoved the wire in their hands and commanded them as sternly as he could, to come on. Again, they would stagger along, hunched over against the effects of the gas for twenty-five or thirty paces, then lose the wire again. They couldn't talk anymore from loss of strength but just pawed around each other until they found it, and then struggled along a little further.

Coming up into the clear air again on the other side, Godfry started breathing slowly and regularly, a little deeper each time until his head was quite clear again. He knew from experience not to do this too fast on coming into the clear air; it prevented that burning sensation that would otherwise remain in his nose for an hour or so. Finally, Bashman and Dosier caught up and Godfry getting behind them, pushed them on up the hill against a possibility of the gas moving up to them where he knew, once they sat down to catch their breath, they would remain for fifteen or twenty minutes, at least.

Getting them safely beyond the reach of the gas, he gave them a shove and said, "Alright, you guys. Sit down and rest awhile."

There followed a few minutes of severe sneezing and coughing as these novices freed themselves of the gas. Their discomfort subsided gradually as they sat there on the side of the hill in the clear night air again. Neither tried to talk; in fact, they couldn't if they did try, but just wept and smeared their wet handkerchiefs over their faces. Godfry, to smother his laughter, kept his own handkerchief against his face as he sat there watching them.

A certain amount of this gas was an excellent remedy for head colds or to clear up any sluggishness in the breathing system. Men used to breathe it in deeply, purposely, quite often to clear up such ailments. Too much of it could put a man out of commission for a time but was not fatal. In a case of this kind, however, gas masks were supposed to be worn, but most men preferred this tear gas to the gas mask and wouldn't suffer the discomfort of the mask unless forced to from an overdose.

The men were alright after a few minutes and, with the exception of a little soreness in their bodies from coughing, were none the worse off for their experience.

“What’s the matter with you birds?” said Godfry, half humorously.

“Man o’ man!” sniff sniff sniff “I don’t know what the devil came over me,” said Bashman.

“Well! You guys’ll learn if you last long enough,” said Godfry.

“What d’you mean?” blurted out Dosier.

“Well, the next time you get a whiff of that stuff you can put on your gas masks and go ahead,” said Godfry. “That was just a little tear gas, that’s all! You’ll know from now on to be very, very careful when you see anything that looks like fog, especially if it’s got a yellowish tint to it in daylight or smells the least bit like mustard or garlic in the darkness.”

“Man! You crazy? Don’t mess around with me like that anymore,” said Bashman slowly.

“Aw, that’s alright. It won’t hurt you any and besides, it’s good experience for you,” replied Godfry, passing it off. “There’s a few things to remember about gas: if you feel your lungs stop on you and you can’t breathe in or out, that’s phosgene gas; get your mask on without trying to take another breath the instant you feel that – you can’t see it or smell it. Mustard, garlic and tear gas all look like fog except mustard, which is a little yellowish; you know what tear gas is now, but mustard or garlic, boy, get your mask on right now, the instant you smell it,” continued Godfry with his advice as they sat there in the darkness. He finished with, “Well, come on. Let’s get goin’.”

They continued, following the telephone line around the outskirts of the town and on towards the observation post that marked its end. Godfry, having long since accepted this sort of work as his daily routine, took it in a very matter-of-fact way that puzzled somewhat these newcomers to the front. Breaking in rookies at this business was nothing new to him; they all held the same anxiety as to what it was like up here, how much longer it would last, what they would get to eat and the same old line of questions that was old stuff to Godfry. But perhaps most noticeable for its absence was the fact these men never raised the question as to their chances of getting out of this thing alive. This, too, seemed to be accepted in a matter-of-fact sort of understanding that would not be helped any by asking questions. Each replacement knew he was replacing a man who had not merely quit or gone on a vacation, and knowing this, he simply didn’t give it another thought. But there were a thousand and one things they were anxious about, all of which out of curiosity mostly, centered about the activities at the front, what it was like to see combat troops in action and just what part of this action they were going to fit into; and now, Bashman and Dosier had just had their first taste of what could happen to them without their having a chance to fight back, which, in itself had just the right stabilizing effect they needed to do their best work; more would help, of course, and this particular night held all the earmarks of being able to supply an ample share.

A little later they passed gun positions where the muzzles of 75’s could be seen sticking out of the pits that were covered with camouflaging. They wondered why they weren’t firing but were too busy trying to keep up with Godfry to ask questions. The country became more barren and rougher. Every so often they stumbled into shell holes and scrambled out quickly. They suspected Godfry of leading them unnecessarily close to these holes but shell bursts, coming closer now, were not allowing their thoughts much leeway. Large caliber shells droned lazily over their heads on their way to the rear areas; 77’s popped off to the right and left of them with an occasional 88 whipping in fast, closer at hand. They saw Godfry apparently fall into a shell hole now and then and they smiled and joked between themselves at his awkwardness. Later, they discovered that each time he seemed to fall into one of these shell holes, a shell would whizz in close and burst, and Godfry popped out at just the proper time following these bursts and continued. Now they knew what was the matter with Godfry, he was afraid, and as this happened again a minute later they guffawed and called out, “What’s the matter, Godfry, ‘fraid?”

Godfry had quickly dropped into a shell hole as an 88 fizzed in and popped close at hand. He hadn’t missed this remark, however, from his helpers and looked up to find them standing up on the edge of the shell hole where he crouched, and becoming very indignant, shouted, “Why, you dumb idiotic saps! Where in the hell d’you think you are, at some Sunday school picnic?”

“Aw, now Godfry, we were just kiddin’ a little.”

“Well, what the devil d’you think those things are you hear poppin’ in the ground around here, and those things whistling through the air?” shouted Godfry in disgust.

“Why, that’s just dirt flyin’ from where those shells explode,” replied Bashman innocently.

“Get down! Get down here, quick!” shouted Godfry. The other two, alarmed a little now, jumped into the shell hole quickly; a 77 whined in close with its diabolical crescendo punctuated at the end by its loud explosion as it burst. There followed the usual flutter of pieces, then Godfry said, “I should have left you saps standing up there only I haven’t time to be dragging you back to a first-aid station. You guys are just a couple of wise guys! Think those are just pieces of dirt, aye? Well, listen, you have heads, those are pieces of iron as big as your fist that’ll go clear through you if they hit you.”

The timing of the whole incident could not have been arranged more effectively. It left the novices on the verge of becoming panicky and it was only the reassuring calmness of Godfry’s presence that prevented it. He continued scathingly to bawl them out. “I told you guys to get anywhere below the surface of the ground when a shell comes close; if you can’t do that, just lay down flat on your belly until the pieces have passed over. I don’t care a damn as far as you guys are concerned, but I’ve got to have help on this line and I’m getting’ tired of breakin’ in new guys all the time.”

Neither Bashman or Dosier said anything now as they stumbled along after Godfry again. More cautious now, they watched Godfry and every time he would jump for a hole they would follow. They learned quickly. As they continued following the wire, they noticed men in trenches nearby or came upon little groups sitting on the edge of the trench talking among themselves in subdued voices. Now they were being challenged occasionally as they followed the little green telephone wire through openings in barbed wire and across hurriedly prepared trenches, until they finally came to where a shell fragment had cut the telephone line in two.

Godfry directed them into a nearby shell hole where they were to wait for the one end of the line while he groped around in the dark for the other end. Returning shortly with the other end, he said, “Now, take your knife and skin the insulation off those ends back about two inches.”

Bashman started in on this while Dosier took the end Godfry had and started to prepare it. Bashman finished and held the two ends, one in each hand, ready to make the splice when suddenly his muscles became tense and, doubling up into a knot, he began groaning. Godfry reached over quickly and knocked the wire out of Bashman’s hand, letting him drop back against the side of the shell hole, limp and with a cold sweat on his face. He regained his senses quickly and said, “My God! What was that?!”

Godfry replied, “It’s alright, boy. You just happened to have hold of the bare ends of that wire when someone tried to ring over it. You’ll learn don’t hold those bare ends any longer than you have to and never hold both of them at once. Those dough-headed plug-pushers can tell when someone’s hooked onto a line and they take extreme delight in spinning those magnetos. Don’t forget, they’re 6-bar magnetos and can give you a terrific wallop. OK now? Alright, hook up this test set.”

Bashmen, handling the ends of the wire very delicately, connected on the two clips from Godfry’s field telephone. Godfry gave the crank a quick twist and listened.

“R2, R2, R2,” came a voice over the wire.

“Lineman! Godfry! Who is it?” called Godfry into his hand set quietly.

“Slim, Godfry. Where are you?”

“Never mind where I am, stup! What’s the idea buzzing away on this line? You knew it was open.”

“I’ve got half a dozen messages to get through to O.P. Why?”

“Well, don’t get so ambitious. You had one of these greenhorns caught on there and he came near passin’ out.” Turning to Dosier, Godfry continued, “Here, hook these on your end.” After this was done, he rang again.

“OP-2, OP-2, OP-2,” came the other voice over the wire as Godfry listened in.

“Godfry, out on the line,” replied Godfry into his hand set.

“S-s-say! W-w-where th’hell’ve you guys been?” came the voice over the wire again. “This is Foss, Godfry.”

This operator at the observation post was a young fellow well known for grinding his teeth in his sleep and stuttering over the phone. As Godfry always said, ‘as soon as the War Department learned of these qualifications, they made him a telephone operator – of all the men in the A.E.F.’ It was always his delight to get this man and another who was tongue-tied, into a conversation over the phone.

“Go on, you ain’t dry behind the ears yet,” growled Godfry into his phone, adding, “Here’s your line through to R-2. Now go ahead, stutter your lousy head off.”

The connection was made between the two ends of the line and Godfry listened in for a few seconds to see that everything was alright. Snapping his clips free of the line, he told his helpers to go ahead and tie up the splices with rags, since they had long ago run out of the insulating tape used for this purpose.

Instead of following the telephone line back as they were supposed to do and listen in on it at regular intervals to see if everything was alright, they cut across along a shorter route. This brought them past a rocket and ammunition dump the Boche had undoubtedly discovered and were trying their best to hit. Proceeding cautiously between shell bursts, these men were making very slow progress and were beginning to regret ever having come this way. They were quite close to the dump when Godfry called them into a nearby trench for a consultation and when in the middle of this, trying to decide whether or not it was safe to try to pass it, a stray shell hit right in the middle of the dump. There followed a half hour of the most ear-splitting detonations of exploding large caliber shells amid a myriad of brilliant rockets of all colors that blazed forth into the darkness of the night, lighting up the surrounding country nearby as light as day. The noise was too great to permit conversation between these men. Godfry, sitting on the bottom of the trench with his back against the dirt side, took advantage of this situation to light up a cigarette and rest while the others, wild-eyed and awe-stricken, stood there watching the brilliant display overhead.

The rumbling sounds surged up and down as alternate groups of munitions were set off by the ensuing fire. Shells of all kinds; incendiary, gas, high explosive, shrapnel, smoke and others were in that dump, until it seemed there would be no end to it. But as the end did begin to show up, the men started shouting to each other between the scattered explosions that marked its finish. The novices were thrilled at this perhaps more than anything they had ever seen and it was not until the next day that they fully realized how they could have remained so close, yet in comparative safety.

But to Godfry, it was just another ammunition dump going off and at most, simply meant another delay of half or three-quarters of an hour in getting back. They returned, however, between two and three o’clock in the morning, and with the novices knowing considerably more about this business than they had when they left, the evening before. Telephone men were made overnight in this way instead of the long training others had gone through. It was a short and very effective means of instruction; much more fascinating than anything they could have anticipated or even hoped for.

A few days later found a group of the telephone men lounging around the battalion switchboard dugout. It was late afternoon of a hot day. They had been trying to sleep in their little foxholes and what with the cooties and ants and worms and flies, and with the occasional pot shots the Boche would take, they finally gave it up as a bad job and gathered about the headquarters to gossip.

“I thought we were supposed to pull out of this dump,” said Godfry.

Slim, at the switchboard, said, “Naw. Our doughboys were relieved two days ago and now we got to stay here in support of the 4th Division.”

“How come?” asked several of those sitting around.

“Well, the other night old Hank called the colonel of the 4th Division artillery outfit and asked him if he was all set to take over our work. The old boy got a little high-hat about it and wanted to know if we were crazy or just a little off. Said we should know that he couldn’t set his guns in the dark, so we had to stay, and the next morning we got orders to stay in support of that lousy outfit for several days.”

“Well, if that ain’t hot,” said Chuck. “That’s the regular army for you.”

“Boy! We’re not goin’ to get any relief until this thing’s over.”

“Yes, we are,” added Dip. “We’re going to get some rest as soon as this outfit gets over their scare. I think it’s their first time in the lines or something Anyway, we’ve got to stick around for awhile.”

Well, boy, I ain’t never been so tired,” said Godfry. “But you know about how much rest we’ll get back of the lines. We’ll have all our officers around again and first we’ll have to manicure the nags; then wash the mud off the reel-carts then they’ll have a thousand and one other things for us to do Probably have us doing foot drill again.”

“How’s the 1st battalion bunch makin’ out?” asked Chuck.

Dip answered, “they’re right on top of the crest back of Bazoché. Their switchboard is set up in a deep culvert under the road and the guns hid in a little patch of woods. They’re in the forward position to cover the infantry if they ever get across the river, but they can’t fire now without exposing their positions and just have to lay there and take it until the general advance gets underway.”

“What’s holdin’ them up?” asked Chuck.

“Their doughboys can’t get across the river,” said Godfry. “Every night a bunch of engineers go up and lay a pontoon bridge across and just as soon as they finish it the Boche artillery blows the damn thing all to pieces. They’ve been doing that same thing now for three nights. It’s getting’ to be a habit with those fellows. They’re getting’ as bad as we are. We think we’re fooling the Boche by laying our telephone lines at night, then get them all shot up at sunrise.”

“Well, don’t forget tonight, fellas,” said Dip. “We’ve got to relay that line to first battalion. They’re sending up a reel-cart soon as it gets dark enough.”

“Yeah, as if we could forget it,” replied Godfry. “This will be another nightmare trying to get over those lines at night with a lot of dumb drivers and nags to get all messed up with.”

“Well, you want to lay it with hand reels?” asked Dip.

“Hell, no!” Godfry replied without any hesitation. “But why relay it?”

“Say! That line’s got more patches in it than some of these French telephone lines, and besides, I want it away from that road.”

“Yeah! Well, when you get through with those idiotic maps of yours in the dark there won’t be a man in the A.E.F. that will ever be able to find the damn thing,” Godfry replied sourly.

The idle grumbling continued until the chow cart arrived. After they had eaten their supper everything became entirely different. They were all eager for the night’s work, as they sat around singing and joking, waiting for the reel cart to show up.

Suddenly one of the men gasped, “My God! Look what’s comin’ across from the road.”

All hands turned to look and saw the reel-cart they had been waiting for, and what an outfit! Hitched to the reel-cart was a single pair of the muliest-looking Army mules in the A.E.F., with one driver riding the near mule.

Godfry, taking in the outfit at one good look, started slapping his hands against the sides of his head, yelling, “Wheeeee I knew this whole outfit would go nuts, and now its started. Instead of six nags we get a couple o’lousy jack-asses Bet ten francs the driver’s plastered.”

The group walked out slowly to meet it as they speculated as to why mules had been sent in place of horses and only one team at that. The mules came struttin’ up to the group and stopped, when, all of the men chorused, “Where in the hell d’you get that outfit?”

It was too much even for the driver, knowing how he must appear to these men on the ground, as he sat atop his huge mount. Grinning down at the rest, he simply gave up, saying, “Ain’t this the damdest outfit you ever saw?”

“What’s the idea?” asked Dip, stepping up to the head of the near mule.

“Well, you know they’ve been talking about trying out a team of mules for stringin’ your wire, and here she is.”

“Will they be able to pull it?” asked Dip again.

“Pull? Say, these babies can walk away with anything on wheels.”

“Well, boy! I hope you’re right.” Turning to the other men who were inspecting the mules, Dip continued, “Come on, fellas, unlimber the cart. We’ll leave it here and just use the reel.”

The men uncoupled the cart and left the reel, with several miles of telephone wire wound neatly around the drum, standing there hitched to the team of mules. There was nothing new about mules, since supply company had several hundred they used for hauling supplies, but to see a team hitched to a reel-cart where six horses had always been the old Spanish custom was simply a little too much for these men. The driver was perfectly sober, unfortunately, and made the situation all the more unaccountable.

The men stood there awhile longer trying to fathom the thing out. Godfry broke loose again, with, “If you ever want to gum up anything just leave it to that gang of highbinders back at the horse-lines. If those birds don’t think up enough idiotic ideas to get us all knocked off I’ll miss my guess. They give us a lot of dumb nags and a lot of dumb drivers to lay telephone lines with and then wonder why they always find the line laid in the wrong place, and now, look at this!”

“Let’s take it up where the Boche’ll get a good look at it,” said Slim. “They’ll all die laughing.”

“Oh boy! Wait ‘till the doughboys see this,” said Chuck. “We’re in for plenty razzing then. Better string that line with the hand reels, Dip.”

“Will, like hell,” replied Dip. “The Captain sent this outfit up here to be tried out and, boy, that’s one thing we shine at when it comes to trying things out.”

About half-past eight, the little group of some six linemen, the reel-cart outfit and driver had finished their last minute adjustments of equipment and started across the field towards the other battalion headquarters. The mules trotted along briskly in the cool night air and the drum of the reel spun around paying off the wire. Godfry rode a small farm-implement-iron-seat arrangement that extended out to the rear of the reel from where he handled the brake and other drum mechanism by means of a little steering wheel arrangement. The linemen followed along at a dog trot swinging the wire over to one side out of the way or pulling out slack to allow for repairs if cut later by shell fragments. The night was quite dark and fairly quiet.

The first battalion headquarters located in the old concrete culvert under a sunken road well down on the slope towards the river was reached by the old line that had been conveniently strung along the road. The Boche, however, played their artillery harassingly along these roads and managed to keep the line pretty well cut up most of the time. Tonight, they planned on laying this new line along a little creek to a point where a little ditch, now dry, cut off, leading to the culvert. It was at least in defilade of enemy fire and could be worked on with less exposure. It was a more circuitous route by about a half mile requiring in all about a mile of wire and the work of laying it.

On reaching the creek the pace slowed up considerably as they felt their way along. The water was about fifteen feet across in most places and five or six feet deep. What little light there was reflected off the ripples of the water, furnishing a convenient guide line to follow. But the ground was anything but smooth and the iron seat on the reel now became something like sitting on an awkwardly trotting horse without a saddle, only much more so, and Godfry was perfectly frank in his none too quiet expressions of his dislike for this job. He was particularly adept, however, in handling the drum of the reel so as to avoid those horribly entangled messes the wire could get itself into at times, and it took hours to untangle one of these bird nests. But he bounced around on the seat taking it while growling away at the driver for picking out all the bumps he could find.

“Now listen, stup!” snarled Godfry as the reel banged over a big piece of rock. “I’ve told you for the last time to watch where you’re going.”

“Aw, shut up! How the hell can I see anything up here,” returned the driver none too pleasantly.

“Well, why don’t you hang a flare on that old mule’s nose? But you couldn’t see anything even at that. I never saw a driver yet that could see straight, even in daylight.”

Again, the wheel hit a big chunk of rock and Godfry held on with all his strength to keep from being thrown off as it banged down again with a wallop that made him see stars for an instant.

“Listen, you long legged fathead. Watch where you’re going.”

“But the only reply was the banging of the wheels against the axle as they continued on through the darkness. The linemen kept working up close behind the reel now to keep from getting lost. They continued on for about a quarter of a mile farther when suddenly one wheel hit a tree stump, turning the reel clear over and depositing Godfry nicely in the mud near the edge of the water.

Dip ran over to help him out and see if he was hurt, but there was no damage done. Godfry washed the mud from his face and hands and climbed up on the bank again, when there followed a few minutes of plain cussing directed at the driver that should have blotted out what little light remained. The others chided Godfry lightly for not jumping clear of the reel as he felt it going over but there had been precious little time for this. They fell to now in righting the reel and straightening out the harness. The mules had not minded this much. One of them jumped a little when the pole of the reel smacked it on hitting the rock but otherwise they just stood quietly and waited for the harness to be untangled.

The procession continued with their work but now Dip was walking ahead of the mules to sort of feel his way along while Godfry was trailing along in the rear on foot, not trusting the reel and evidently, from his grumbling to himself as he plodded along in the dark, he didn’t give a damn whether the wire on the reel got tangled up or not, wished for everything he could think of to happen to the driver and hoped the mules would get killed. Just nice clean happy thoughts ran through his mind as his mud-laden gas mask slapped back and forth across his chest while he stumbled along.

They had passed the deepest part of the little valley they were in and were well on their way to the turning off point when there came a terrific crash, followed instantly by something heavy plunging into the water. The driver had held his seat on the near mule, which appeared to have been dragged close to the edge of the water, and he started yelling for help. The other men, far from being surprised at anything, came alongside leisurely to look the situation over, so they could dope out the easiest way to get the pieces assembled again. The situation was quite simple; one wheel of the reel had hit a good-sized tree head on and the momentum from the weight of all that wire on the drum had caused the pole, the tongue of the reel, to swing over with such force that it literally knocked the off mule clear over into the water.

“Come on! Come on!” shouted the driver frantically. “Grab hold of those traces and help me. That mule’s goin’ to drown if we don’t hold his head up out of the water.”

“Oh, t’hell with ‘im,” said Chuck, taking hold of some of the entangled harness along with the others. “You brought these jackasses up here to get ‘em killed off anyway, didn’t you?”

“Now, come on fellas, altogether. Let’s drag him up on the bank here,” called Dip, who had come back to see what the delay was.

They tugged desperately at the traces for awhile but were soon tired out and hadn’t budged the big black hulk an inch out of the water. The mule was hopelessly tangled up in the harness and without a foot hold; only his head above the water and at a place where the bank dropped straight down about two feet into the water. He would whimper and lunge forward, then settle back into the water as his strength gave out and only the traces held him from sinking and, at the same time, had him bound some way that prevented him swimming out to the other side.

The men, perspiring and all-in, gave up with disgust the idea of dragging the mule out, bodily.

“What’ll we do?” asked the driver.

“How about unhooking the traces,” suggested Godfry.

“That’s a bright idea,” replied Chuck. “You have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to unhook those damn things when you’ve got slack enough, much less do it now with a ton of mule hanging on the end of them.”

Godfry got out his red-handled French pocket knife and started hacking away at what appeared to be a simple piece of round leather about the size of his index finger. He hacked and sawed and pulled and tried to pull through from the underside until finally his knife kept slipping off all the time. Puzzled at this, he felt of the knife blade and discovered it to be curled back and bent all out of shape and full of nicks. Feeling of the traces now where he had tried to cut

them, he was further enlightened when he found that under the leather covering was a steel cable as big around as his little finger, a cable that there was nothing in the line of tools that would do more than scrape the rust off, within forty miles of this place.

“Well, I’ll be damned! Cut the traces, yeah, cut the traces. You’re a smart guy, Chuck. Why the hell didn’t you say these things had steel cables in ‘em,” mumbled Godfry.

The others, all but the driver, had sat down to rest as Godfry tried to cut the traces and when his efforts ended, they all razed him for being so dumb.

Finally, they got back to the business at hand and Chuck asked, “What can we do with it? We can’t sit here and let the driver hold it all night to keep it from drowning.”

“Can as far as I’m concerned,” replied one of the linemen.

“Here, too,” called several others.

Quoting from a previous newspaper account, Godfry said, “Famous Rainbow, now veteran shock troops of the Western front, playing leading role in the great offensive being launched against the Germans,” then added sourly, “now stuck in the mud with a couple o’ mules and a reel-cart back of the Vesle river a fine how-de-do, and again it was the resourcefulness and courage of the drivers that pulled us throughbahh!! Leave it to you fellows every time to mess things up.”

“Let’s push the whole outfit in the creek and leave it there,” suggested another of the linemen. “We can string the rest of the line by hand anyway.”

“If you guys weren’t so damn lazy you’d have strung it by hand anyway,” said the driver. “But no! We’ve got to get out all the rolling stock just to string a measly little ol’ telephone line Come on, now! We’ve got to do something; I can’t hold this thing all night.”

“Well, you’re a driver, ain’t you,” said one of the linemen. “Why don’t you do something about it?”

“Well, now listen, you guys,” said Chuck getting up. “I’ll wade across to the other side and drive the mule up close enough for some slack in the traces. Now the minute you get it, unhook ‘em and we’ll pull him out on the other side Come on, let’s go!”

With this, Chuck went into the water and felt his way cautiously to the other side. It was up to his neck in depth and he had to stop midway and help some of the others who had volunteered to go with him. In the meantime, the near mule was unhitched and cleared of the harness to avoid any possibility of pulling it into the water, too. The men from the other side came back into the water around the mule and unfastened all of the harness they could; the breast strap, however, could not be budged, against the weight of the mule lying in it. Directions were called to the men up on the other bank and when all was ready, Chuck laid in good and hard with a club on the hind end of the mule. It made a lunge forward, just enough to loosen the traces and then the whole mess of harness was dragged along with the mule as he found a solid footing and came out on the other side.

Chuck grabbed him and loosened the last bit of harness, all but the bridle, so they could get it untangled. None of the men had paid much attention to the war since the mule fell in the creek; in fact, things were very quiet. But as the mule got his wind back and felt himself relieved of the entangled harness, he shook himself vigorously and raising his muzzle high into the air, loosed one of the most ear-splitting bellows that roared out into the dead of the night. Like a steam ship whistle with the shrill whistling blasts in between, it seemed to hang in the air and all about one’s ears even after it had stopped; the air fairly vibrated with the terrific sound that only an Army mule could eject.

For a moment it held the men spellbound, then, like the awakening from a bad dream they came back to life and to the full realization of what was going on about them. In their efforts to get the line laid, they had completely overlooked the possibility of taking an ornery mule so close to the front lines, even at night; and now it came, with the lighting up of that section of the front almost as bright as day with star shells popping up all along the front.

Dip yelled across the creek, “Beat it!!!” but this was quite superfluous as everybody was already scrambling up out of that valley on either side in less than nothing flat, the mules going where they may.

Following almost on their heels came the inevitable whizz-bangs and the 155's that raked the valley around the deserted reel-cart for fifteen minutes.

The men found holes and lay in them waiting for the show to stop. They wondered how the reel-cart was making out and wondered too, where the mules went to since they had sounded off their departure with tails high in the air, following the first shell burst nearby. No use to wonder, though, where they'd go, since they knew there was only one place to get any oats.

The longer these men waited in the shell holes the madder they got. The morning air now was becoming very cold. It penetrated their wet clothing and was all the more uncomfortable since they couldn't get out and exercise to keep their blood in circulation. On the other hand, it burned them up to have a line shot out while they were laying it.

The firing died down eventually and the men stole cautiously down to the reel-cart to again check up on the damage. The reel had been hit several times by fragments but no unusual damage. The wire had been cut in many places and after considerable difficulty they got out enough to finish the line by hand. They covered the reel with old bushes and things to keep it from being seen, then finished laying the line and returned, dead tired now, to their headquarters where they arrived just before daybreak. They would get another team and bring the reel back on the following night.

A few days later, the outfit was relieved and sent back to join the rest of their division. They had a rest period now; that is, if one could call traveling from one section of the front to another a rest, for this sort of thing was destined to become the nearest thing to a rest they ever got. It was a little diversion, however, and a chance to get plastered a few times which they were sorely in need of. This time, it was to the St. Mihiel sector, and the famous "Walk" as these men dubbed it.

Photo – The Vesle at Muizon, France, 13 miles from Bazoches-sur-Vesle <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vesle>



TO BE CONTINUED in the February 2019 Rainbow Trail – Chapter XI THE ST. MIHIEL WALK

From COL John Andonie, NYARNG Chief of Staff: The CMH Public Affairs Team just posted a WWI video--the second in the series, "The Great War--Building an Army", also 12 minutes long <https://youtu.be/OgUbChQtFTo>

MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR II

FIRST BATTALION – 242ND Infantry – 42ND Division

HATTEN, FRANCE 8 January to 11 January 1945

From the official after-action report of the Battle of Hatten, France –

“On January 8th, 1945 the 1st Battalion, 242nd Infantry 42nd Infantry Division occupied and defended the MLR on a frontage of 4,000 yards, running north and south with Hatten, the pivot point. The 3rd Battalion 242nd Infantry was on the right, the 3rd Battalion of the 313th Infantry on the left. One platoon of A-T Co. 242nd Infantry, one platoon minus one TD of “B” Co., 813th TD, and “A” Battery of the 79th Division were in support. “B” Co. 242nd Infantry was on the right of the railroad track, inclusive; “A” Co. on the left. “C” Co. in reserve had 20 men with wire and radio under command of Sgt. Merle Todd manning the OPLR. The MLR tied into nine pill boxes of various sizes of the old Maginot Line. The mission of the 1st Battalion 242nd Infantry was to hold the MLR at all costs....”



ACTIONS OF ANTI-TANK COMPANY/242ND INFANTRY AT HATTEN-RITTERSHOFFEN, FRANCE

JANUARY 9-12, 1945

(Taken from official reports and printed in the publication of the Rainbow Division Veterans, REVEILLE, September and November 1999 and January 2000).



By direction of the President of the United States the Presidential Unit Citation is awarded to:

Antitank Company, 242d Infantry Regiment, 42d Infantry Division,

for extraordinary heroism against an armed enemy:

During the period 9 through 11 January 1945, inclusive, at and near Hatten, France, the Antitank Company was positioned in support of the 1st Battalion, 242d Infantry, on the Main Line of Resistance, with orders to hold their positions at all costs against any attack by enemy armor. On the morning of January 9, 1945, its zone of operation was attacked by three regiments from the 21st and 25th German Panzer Divisions, supported by heavy armor, flame throwing tanks, self propelled guns, infantry and artillery. The Anti-tank gun crews remained steadfast in their positions. The Mine Platoon under fierce fire from the enemy, continued to lay their mines on the main street of Hatten. Completely in disregard of their own personal safety, and despite the loss of many of their guns, the company continued to fight tenaciously, side by side with the riflemen of the 1st Battalion for more than 48 hours in face of the enemy. Sixty-six of its men, of a strength of 155, were casualties in the action. The gallantry, determination and esprit de corps, displayed by the Anti-Tank Company, 242d Infantry, exemplifies the highest traditions of the armed forces.



that his squad was being fired on by enemy rifle and machine guns. Upon trying to call the 1st and 2nd squads, LT Wells found that communications had been broken by the preceding artillery barrage. He then directed S/SGT Milmont to check the remainder of his men to see that they were in position and all right, while he, LT Wells, checked on the 1st and 2nd Squads.

At 0530 hours, S/SGT Milmont, T/4 Elmer Marshall, PFC Joseph Loncaric and PFC Ervin L. Thompson made their way back to the gun position by crawling through the intense mortar and artillery fire, after checking on the LMG crew with the 3rd Squad.

At 0535, LT Wells and T/SGT Enge contacted the 1st and 2nd Squads. They found these squads intact but receiving heavy mortar fire.

At 0001 hours, January 9, 1945, A Company, 1st Battalion, reported contact with an enemy patrol at a blown-out bridge near Pillbox #9. CPT Vincent Caringola, company commander of Anti-Tank Company, alerted his 1st Platoon upon hearing this word. As his 1st Platoon was supporting the 1st Battalion/242nd, he proceeded to their C.P. to find out full particulars.

At 0225 hours, Hatten was receiving heavy enemy artillery fire. All platoons of the company were fully alerted at 0400.

At 0500, A Company reported that enemy infantry was attacking in force. At once, CPT Caringola started back to his 1st Platoon.

At 0515, S/SGT Milmont, squad leader of the 3rd Squad, 1st Platoon who was at his gun position reported this attack by phone to LT Richard H. Wells and T/SGT Wallace A. Enge

At 0545, the LT and SGT started back to the 3rd Squad position but on the way, they became aware that 3rd Squad position was untenable because the enemy had infiltrated to within a few hundred yards of their position and had captured an American TD [tank destroyer] one hundred yards to their left front...PFC Raczkowski and PFC C.L. Thompson had held off the enemy foot troops with a 30 cal. LMG up to this time.

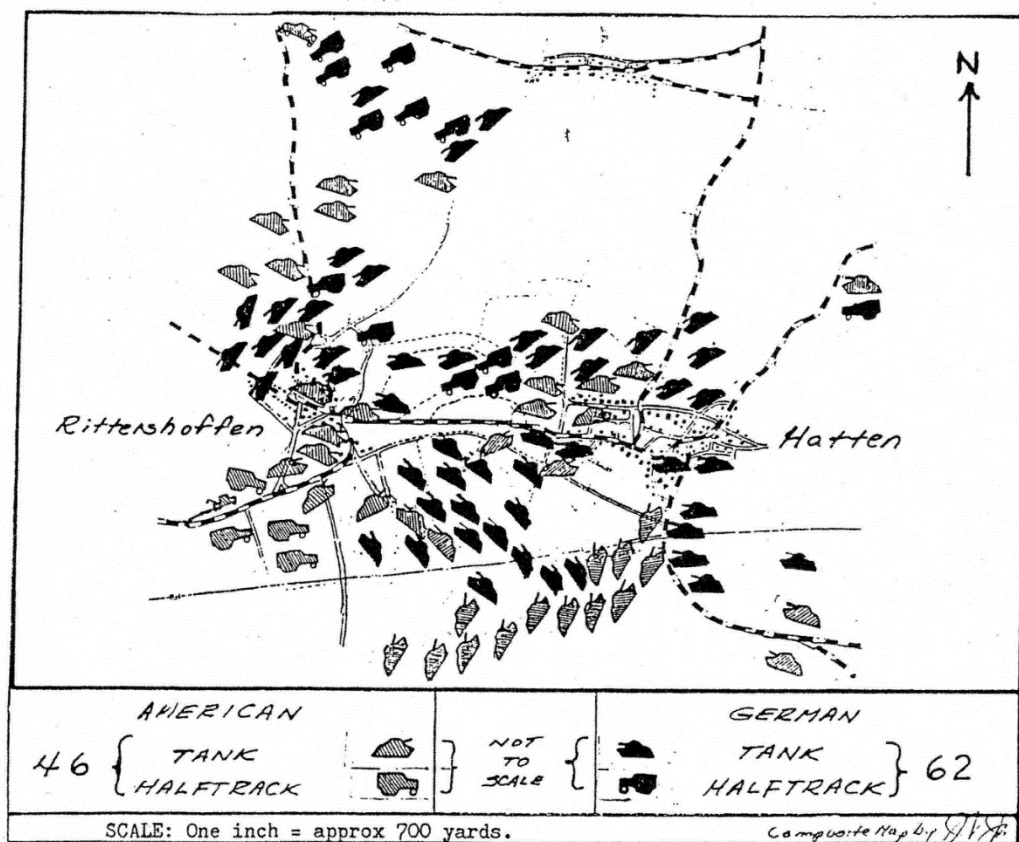
At 0600, Lt. Wells arrived at the 3rd Squad position by crawling and running through a hail of fire. The enemy turned the captured TD's 76 mm gun on the 3rd Squad. A direct hit by enemy mortars silenced the LMG. PFC Ervin L. Thompson and CPL Gullett brought the 57 mm AT gun to bear on the captured TD but a well-aimed rifle grenade landed on their position, wounding two members of the crew. The enemy kept coming and when they were within 50 yards of the 3rd Squad position, that squad, under LT Wells tried to get back to the edge of Hatten to fight from the houses.

At 0615, LT Wells, SGT Milmont, T/4 Marshall and PFC Loncaric reached the edge of Hatten. LT Wells ordered the men to take some PWs to the rear and to contact CPT Caringola, on the way, at the Battalion Command Post (CP). They were to ask for further orders while he tried to contact the 1st and 2nd Squads. CPT Caringola ordered the men to take up positions with the riflemen protecting the battalion CP.

At 7:20, the 2nd Squad was attacked by the enemy. With the aid of their 50-caliber machine gun, they were able to drive the enemy off.

At 0800, LT Wells, having contacted the 1st and 2nd Squads, returned to the CP. CPT Caringola told LT Wells to go to the 3rd Platoon and have them move their two right flank guns to help the 3rd Platoon.

America's Stalingrad...January 9-19, 1945! At battle's end, 108 dead tanks, halftracks, and tank destroyers dotted the landscape. Rainbowmen of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 242nd Infantry Regiment held from January 9th-11th until relieved by the 79th Inf. Div, the 14th Armored Div, and other forces. Two German Panzer Divisions (the 21st & 25th) couldn't dislodge the Americans.



At 0820 hours, the 3rd Squad, the 3rd Platoon (the left flank gun) saw four enemy tanks coming from the woods to their extreme left front, heading towards Hatten. The 3rd Squad's field of fire had been, originally, coordinated with the fire of the two M18 TDs, and was not in position to fire on the enemy tanks. The TD sitting near them had been abandoned. S/SGT Richard R. Danilowski, knowing that his gun was the only weapon in a position to prevent the enemy armor from penetrating the 1st Battalion lines, moved his gun from the prepared position into the open, under artillery fire, and opened up on the enemy tanks at 0825. Although the nearest tank was 800 yards away, one enemy tank was destroyed and the rest driven back into the woods.

At 0900, enemy personnel carriers and tanks began coming from the woods...LT Raymond L. Keplinger, Jr., 3rd Platoon Leader, came from right flank gun, at this time, and the 57mm gun was again moved to a more advantageous position, under artillery fire. This time, a personnel carrier and its occupants were destroyed with the ammunition. The rest of the enemy vehicles veered off to the right and were soon out of range.

At 0915, LT Keplinger noticed that the 3rd Squad's ammunition was running out and that the squad would need help. He took off in his jeep to get ammunition and assistance from the other two squads.

At 0925, T/SGT Enge, who had been fighting with a rifle squad, reached a position where he saw the 2nd Squad of the 1st Platoon firing their 50-caliber MG at enemy troops within a hundred yards of them, and S/SGT Joos directing fire of their 57mm gun at the enemy tanks which had veered away from the 3rd Platoon. A heavy concentration of mortar shells was falling between SGT Enge and the 2nd Squad, making it impossible to reach them. One enemy tank was hit before enemy infantry overran their position. T/SGT Enge had picked up an SC300 radio at the CP. He now took it to the 1st Squad of the 1st Platoon and established communications at 0945 hours.

LT Wells contacted LT Keplinger on the right flank of the 1st Battalion and told him what had happened in Hatten and that he could move his two guns to the left flank to help his 3rd Squad. LT Keplinger told LT Wells that ammunition was critical and any help in that area would be appreciated. LT Keplinger directed T/SGT Lindsey to move the two guns, and with a jeep load of ammunition, started back to his other gun. Stopping on the way, he phoned 1st Battalion commander and asked that ammunition be sent to him.

At 1000, CPT Caringola, seeing that tank support was needed badly, went from Hatten to Rittershofen, under heavy enemy artillery fire, in order to contact a CO of the 48th Tank Battalion. While there, he contacted LT Danny McBride, platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon and ordered him to go forward to reconnoiter from positions on the west edge of Hatten and to move to Hatten as soon as possible. LT James V. Yeates, mine platoon leader, who was at the Co. CP in Betschdorf, hearing of the situation, ordered the A Company kitchen truck to be loaded with mines and brought forward while he searched for a position for a mine field to delay armor penetration into Hatten.

At 1030, CPT Caringola returned to the 1st Battalion CP where he saw LT Wells, who informed him of the ammunition shortage of the 3rd Platoon. He told the CPT that he had a truck load of ammunition to take to the 3rd Platoon.

At 1045, LT Yeates arrived at the CP and he and CPT Caringola decided to lay a hasty roadblock across the main street of Hatten near the church.

At 1055, the CPT sent CPL James Derry to Rittershoffen to pick up two daisy chains which had been laid there.

For the second time that day, CPL Derry had to go back on a heavily shelled road and this time, to pick up mines already fused.

At 1100, the 1st and 2nd Squads of the 3rd Platoon were moving into positions when enemy tanks were sighted coming from the woods. There were at least 15 tanks and 10 armored personnel carriers streaming from the woods. At this critical moment, LT Wells arrived with his load of ammunition. The 3rd Platoon had been spotted by the enemy when they fired previously. The enemy tanks and the 3rd Platoon opened fire simultaneously. The ammunition unloaded, LT



HATTEN : les ruines autour de l'église.

Wells went back to Hatten to tell the CPT of the situation. The first shells from the enemy tanks' attack on the 3rd Platoon severed a tree a foot above S/SGT Robert S. Wiggins head and killed CPL Milam of the 2nd Squad, mortally wounding S/SGT Joe Mastel, 1st Squad leader and wounding LT Keplinger. T/SGT Lindsey jumped behind the gun and started firing again. One shell hit approximately 10 feet behind the 3rd Squad gun, showering the crew with dirt and snow. PFC Hicks dropped from his truck, from which he was unloading ammunition, wounded in the stomach and the squad leader, Richard Danilowski clutched his face with his hands. Although wounded, he continued to direct fire from his exposed position. Both guns continued blasting away and the tanks returned their fire. When the tanks were out of range, enemy mortar fire started dropping in

the woods. Four more enemy tanks and two personnel carriers were left blazing and wrecked on the field.

[Photo - Die alte Kirche von Hatten; photo taken from the French History, "L'Outre-Forêt/Revue D'Histoire de "Alsace du Nord"]

At 1100 hours in Hatten, the 1st Squad of the 1st Platoon reported over their radio to CPT Caringola that the enemy tanks were coming into range. Over the radio, the sound of the 57 could be heard firing. PVT Golden reported that he was

hit and that the squad had got two Mark IV tanks. Then the CPT heard a tremendous explosion and that was the last heard from the 1st Squad of the 1st Platoon.

At 1120, CPL James Derry came into Hatten with the daisy chains of mines, and started to lay them. At this time, the Mine Platoon arrived with one hundred mines. They immediately began laying the hasty mine field. Two men were nicked by sniper fire, and shrapnel was raining down, but the Mine Platoon doggedly stuck to the job at hand. At the completion of this field, one Squad under SGT H.P. Raymer started back after more mines to set up road blocks to the other avenues of approach. The two remaining squads deployed on each side of the street to cover the mine field with small arms.

At 1135, just as LT Yeates and CPT Caringola had gotten the last mine and man placed, an enemy tank rolled down the street and commenced firing at the building where the men of the Mine Platoon were deployed. Enemy tankers sprang from the tank and tried to remove the mines, but were quickly mowed down. Seeing that it was impossible to get through, the enemy tank retreated. The MLR was now broken and the 1st Battalion had an exposed flank. LT Kiplinger of the 3rd Platoon rounded up the remnants of a Platoon from B Company, and with these and his own men preserved the flank of the 1st Battalion which was very precarious at this time.

At 1155, the enemy tanks began forming south of Hatten for what appeared to be a sweep along the woods in which the 3rd Platoon and one Platoon of B Company was located. A terrific barrage was laid down on their position, but the attack did not materialize.

At 1215, CPT Caringola again left Hatten along the shell battered road to Rittershoffen to contact the TDS. This time, there was a tank battle along the road and the Captain's Jeep was hit by enemy machine gun fire.

At 1235, he contacted the TDS and the 2nd Platoon of the AT Company.

At 1245, a tank again approached the mine field in Hatten and blasted the houses in which the Mine Platoon was located.

At 1255, the enemy drove pigs down the road in an attempt to detonate the mines, but small arms and machine guns slaughtered the pigs.

At 1300 hours, LT McBride, Platoon Leader of the 2nd Platoon, informed S/SGT Solomon Feingold and S/SGT Donald Veach of the 1st and 3rd Squads respectively, to prepare their guns and crews for immediate movement from their positions in Rittershoffen to Hatten where they were to engage enemy tanks that had broken through. The 2nd Squad under S/SGT George Peterson was to remain in position because their Squad truck was back at the Company CP for emergency motor repairs.

At 1305, the two guns with LT McBride in the lead proceeded to leave Rittershoffen. The road leading into Hatten was under observed enemy fire and the vehicles passed between friendly tanks and infantry who were firing at the enemy from both sides of the road.

At 1310, the guns reached the first intersection in Hatten where they were met by LT Wells, CPT Reiter, CO of G Company, and the 1ST LT in charge of 3 TDS. LT McBride was informed that he could not move his guns any further because the enemy had control of all the town except a few houses near the intersection.

At 1315, the road was sealed off by the enemy and all communications were out. This completed an encirclement of our men in Hatten. The officers immediately prepared to set up a perimeter defense and hold out as long as possible against the expected enemy attack. One TD was assigned to cover the road leading in from the south, the 2nd TD was assigned to cover the road leading in from the north, the 3rd TD to cover the road leading in from the west, and the 3rd Squad A/T gun to cover the main street looking east. The 1st Squad gun was to remain in reserve. As the guns and TDs moved into position, enemy snipers opened fire from buildings on both sides of the street. An enemy Mark IV tank, trying to enter the southern road was knocked out by the TD covering the area.

At 1330, one enemy survivor was captured. Information obtained by SGT Feingold, who spoke German, confirmed that this tank was one of five approaching the area. Meanwhile, LT Wells told the other officers that he was going to make an attempt to drive through the lines with his Jeep to contact regiment and inform them of the situation: at the same time to ask for artillery fire. He called his driver, T/5 George Abel and the two of them set out.

At 1415, seven Germans came from behind a building with raised hands yelling "Don't shoot" in German. The LT told the men of the 3rd Squad to hold fire, but this was only a trick to get better positions. The Germans broke for the doorway

of the houses on both sides of the street and opened fire on our men. S/SGT Veach ordered his gunner, CPL Moreschi, to open fire on not only the house the Germans had fled to, but every house in sight.

Meanwhile, LT McBride and SGT Feingold were organizing defenses against any further infiltration of the barns and buildings. LT McBride took the defenses to the north and SGT Feingold to the south. A/T men acting as riflemen were placed at strategic points in the buildings, barns, and yards. CPL Moreschi was firing the 57 as fast as PFC Moore could pump the shells into the breech of the gun. At one time, about ten Germans were coming along the street hugging the sides of the buildings. SGT Veach directed fire to the spot and the first round killed four of the enemy. The others turned into a doorway where CPL Moreschi threw the next round.

At this time, 1430 hours, LT Wells returned and informed the others that the 2nd Battalion/242nd Infantry and supporting tanks had been alerted and could be expected to drive up the northern and southern flanks of the town. He also said that artillery would open up to keep the enemy from advancing.

At 1440, the artillery opened fire but their range was short and the shells were landing in the zone of the TDs and the two squads. Shrapnel from the first shell hit S/SGT Veach in the thigh causing a severe wound. A rifleman standing next to him was instantly killed by the same burst. CPL Moreschi took charge of the squad (composed of PFC Moore, PFC Meyers, PVT Franklin and PVT Dunn). The former three had been members of the 1st Squad. Members of the two squads were acting as a group. The second shell hit the TD covering the road to the west and set it on fire. The 3rd Squad, despite this, continued to blast away. When all the ammunition was exhausted, PFC Bogue and PFC Meyers brought up the ammunition from the 1st Squad truck. Then a shell burst across the street and shrapnel hit the 1st and 3rd Squad trucks. Several pieces of shrapnel pierced the radiator on the 1st Squad truck. LT Wells said he was going to make a dash to contact Regiment. He wanted to report the artillery short rounds and bring up ammunition which was desperately low. Once again, in the same Jeep, and with T/5 Abel at the wheel, he started out.

At 1600, LT Wells returned with small arms ammunition which was distributed among the men. He informed LT McBride that aid was on the way at darkness.



At 1615, LT McBride was called to direct fire against a group of enemy coming across the field north of the town. He placed men at different spots telling them to hold their fire until the enemy was 200 yards away. They were caught by surprise and they turned and fled, leaving 12 dead on the field. Meanwhile, enemy sniper fire was getting heavier. LT Wells said he was going to enter one of the houses from which the fire was heavy. He was last seen entering the door of the house at 1630. As darkness set in, enemy small arms fire decreased. The 1st and 3rd Squads stood by.

LT Wells was killed in action on 9 January 1945 and is under the care of the Lorraine American Cemetery, St. Avold, France.

At 2030, LT McBride informed the men that aid had arrived and gone into position on both sides of the town. The 1st and 3rd Squads were to remain in the area for the night. He had the two guns moved to high ground on the southwest edge of town. Gun no. 1 was placed to cover the field and draw to the southwest. It was in an open position, silhouetted by the burning buildings to the left and rear. The enemy held the high ground to the south and southwest. Gun no. 3 went into position 100 yards to the right of the 1st Squad, in a thinly wooded area covering the fields to the southwest. PFC Eisemann was placed as security near a knocked-out Mark IV tank. He killed a German who was a member of the tank crew and had been playing possum in the snow. Temperature was five degrees below zero. During the night, things were relatively quiet except for enemy tank movement and patrols.

At 0700, January 10th, LT McBride informed the men that he was going to the CP, in a truck, to get rations for the men who had not eaten in 24 hours.

At 0800, the 1st Squad covered the withdrawal of some infantry elements and TDs to the southeast, where they took up positions to the rear of the A/T gun. CPL Moreschi was informed of the 1st Squad move to new defense lines. As the 1st Squad moved, enemy mortar fire hit the spot they had been. Six more rounds followed the truck as it moved across the field. They met LT McBride who ordered both guns back to their original positions in Rittershofen. Enemy mortar and artillery was falling in Rittershofen. LT McBride brought a new truck to the 2nd Squad. The Platoon SGT, T/SGT John Lappe, on three occasions, under heavy fire, went from one position to another bringing rations, small arms ammunition, shoe pacs and hoods.

At 1430, the 3rd Battalion, 313th Infantry supported by tanks, took up positions to the right front of the 1st Squad and several hundred yards beyond.

At 1500, the enemy cut loose with a terrific barrage of all types of shells. Enemy planes bombed and strafed. The 1st Squad gun was hit by shrapnel: one piece dented the cradle of the gun.

At 1545, SGT Lappe, who was with the 3rd Squad, phoned the 1st Squad and told them they were being attacked by enemy infantry and tanks. They were holding the Germans off with small arms, 50 cal. MG, bazookas, and grenades. The 3rd Squad had already accounted for two tanks, and the 2nd Squad accounted for a half-track and light tank. He said he could see enemy infantry overrunning the 2nd Squad, and he said the 3rd Squad ammunition was running low. Then the wire went dead.

At 1630, the barrage abated, somewhat, and S/SGT Feingold placed half the squad in a house to cover the field and road leading into town, while the other half manned the gun. During the night, LT Barratt, the recon officer, tried to contact the Mine Platoon and 1st Platoon to tell they were relieved, but could not find them.

At 1730, January 10th, the 1st Battalion had been officially relieved.

At 1500, January 11th, the enemy commenced heavy shelling again, and followed with infantry attack on three sides of Rittershoffen. The 1st Squad, under MG, artillery, and small arms fire, moved to higher ground 500 yards west. They found the ground occupied by the 14th Armored Division which had its own guns in place. LT Barratt informed the 1st Squad that they had been relieved by the 2nd Battalion/315th Infantry. The 1st Squad made their way to Niederbetschdorf.



That evening, the 1st and 3rd Squads of the 2nd Platoon made their way to Niederbetschdorf. The 3rd Platoon stayed on the left flank of the 3rd Battalion/242nd Infantry during the entire engagement until the move to Haguenau on January 20th.

1945 Hatten, France, “APRES” [photo taken from “L’Outre-Forêt/Revue D’Histoire de “Alsace du Nord”]

Conclusion of the After-action report of The Battle of Hatten, France:

“The 1st Bn 242nd Inf. action lasted fifty-two hours. It was definitely established that it was engaged by elements of the 21st and 25th Panzer Divisions. The effective strength of the 1st Bn 242nd Inf. As of 82400A Jan. was 33 officers and seven hundred forty-eight EM. The effective strength as of 11 Jan. was 11 officers and 253 EM. The low temperature during this period was 15 degrees F, weather clear and cold, during the day, with heavy ground fog during the night and early morning hours. The ground had a blanket of snow.”

[Ed. NOTE: the 1st Battalion, 242nd Infantry Regiment was also awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, known then as a Citation of Unit, for extraordinary gallantry and outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy during the period 9-10 January 1945, inclusive, at and near Hatten, France]

RECOLLECTIONS OF WORLD WAR II

THE ARMY GETS ALONG ON ITS STOMACH

By Louis E. Hubach, B/232, 42nd Division

In my twenty-some years of telling my stories to our 7th graders, one might wonder: what is the most frequently asked question?

“What do you eat?” Easily the most frequently asked query. It’s hard to answer in view of the various types of food – candy bars, “D” Rations [a special blend of Hershey’s chocolate for the military], canned “K” Rations – a box with cans of meat or cheese and other stuff.

but our favorite answer is probably –

“Pancakes.”



It brings to mind one day above Reipertswiller, [France] before the March 15, [1945] assault, when our company cooks brought up two G.I. stoves. They were gasoline-powered and each of them the size of a small refrigerator.

On a bright, sunny Sunday we got our wish – pancakes with syrup made of diluted orange marmalade.

My buddy, George Balz and I were voracious eaters of them. When breakfast was over, we discovered the cooks had a lot of leftover batter. We made a deal with the cooks –

“You keep making them and the two of us will eat them all!!!”
I would guess each of us ate 30 or so! Gee, they tasted good. It never happened again.

I haven’t changed – I still love ‘em but now, with Ohio being a ‘maple syrup state’, we don’t have to have orange marmalade syrup as we would have liked and were used to.

Going along with the stoves were the omnipresent G.I. cans with gasoline power to heat them. One for washing and the other for rinsing. The mess kits had a long handle that clipped everything together – pan, top and silverware – dipped by each owner in the boiling cans...and the fun was over.

Photo of D ration chocolate bar

U.S. Army Center Of Military History - <http://www.history.com/news/hungry-history/d-day-rations-how-chocolate-helped-win-the-war>

Permission details

This image is a work of a [U.S. Army](#) soldier or employee, taken or made as part of that person's official duties. As a work of the [U.S. federal government](#), the image is in the [public domain](#)

Who We are - Our Rainbow Descendants of the MILLENNIUM LEGACY ASSOCIATION Of the 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division, an affiliate of the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation, Inc. at <rainbowvets.org>

Our Millennium membership actively supports our purpose and goal of “finding, preserving and sharing Rainbow Division History” to all who inquire – WWI and WWII Rainbow History is our specialty and in addition to our history newsletter, RAINBOW TRAIL, we respond to inquiries received through our affiliation with the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation, Inc. website at <rainbowvets.org>. Each week brings two or three new history questions from Rainbow families and descendants, educators, historians and researchers, some from European countries. Memorial Day and Veterans Day commemorations always stir great interest and a desire to learn more.

NOTES of Appreciation to the Millennium Legacy Association from WWI and WWII Rainbow Descendants



From Patricia Brown, WWI daughter of CPL Leonard B. Chandler, Company B, 151st Machine Gun Battalion (2nd Georgia Infantry),

“With appreciation for all of your help with my endeavors to research WWI in honor of my Dad, Leonard B. Chandler. Since my last note to you, I’ve donated to the Scholarship Foundation and, just today, have sent a check for a Life Membership. Many thanks again for your thoughtfulness and time you’ve given me, and my sister as I’m sharing everything with her. Sincerely, Patricia Chandler Brown

Thank you, Pat for sending us the special photos of your father, including this special one at camp with his buddies! – Leonard is first on the right.

From Wendy Wustenberg, WWII Niece of Staff SGT William H. Morris, Company E, 222nd Infantry Regiment

“...These are treasures to our family and the world. Thank you for your efforts to research and connect me to other Rainbow families. I want to support the Foundation’s commitment to tell this story now and forever and honor the peace these men fought so valiantly to achieve. Your information ignited the interest of our youngest generation and brought their school history to life. We had very important conversations in our gatherings and I must say, it had a big, good impact on all of us. With deepest appreciation, Wendy Wustenberg



Thank you, Wendy, for letting us share the amount of information of his extensive military service you and your family have sent us to be placed in our 222nd Infantry Regiment Project, including this wonderful photo –

A SURVIVOR OF THE DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP MEETS A RAINBOW LIBERATOR

From Jeremy Stuehmeyer, WWII son of Henry Stuehmeyer, Cannon Company, 232nd Infantry Regiment

In Petaluma, California 25 June 2018, Rainbow Division veteran Henry Stuehmeyer meets Dachau survivor Nick Hope 73 years after liberation. A liberator of the camp, Mr. Stuehmeyer served in Cannon Company, 232nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Division.

Photos sent by Jeremy Stuehmeyer can be viewed on Facebook -

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10216797326022376&id=1139911435¬if_t=feedback_reaction_generic¬if_id=1530028652478058&ref=tn_tnmn



Jeremy is seen standing in center of photo on the right. For a video of the meeting and article on ABC7 news, please visit –



<https://abc7ny.com/society/concentration-camp-survivor-meets-liberator-73-years-later/3661672/>

Jeremy lives in the UK and would love to hear from everyone who would like to be in touch - jedstu@outlook.com

Thank you, Jeremy, it's a pleasure to be in touch with you and to help in your ongoing research.

MILLENNIUM Legacy Association of the 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division

Honorary President and National RDVF Secretary: Melanie K. Remple <tarempel@hutchtel.net> (320) 587-1123

President: Emily Marcason-Tolmie <emilymarcason@yahoo.com>

Treasurer: Sue Cullumber <suemikecul@cox.net>

Secretary/Editor of Rainbow Trail and Reveille: Suellen R. McDaniel <jmac1400@aol.com> (828) 464-1466

Archival Restoration/Graphics: Tim Robertson <trobertson1@cinci.rr.com>

Rainbow Millennium Chapter Facebook Page www.facebook.com/42ndRainbowDivision

Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation, Inc. www.rainbowvets.org

Click on the NEWS page to read past and current issues of REVEILLE

Rainbow Descendants page on <rainbowvets.org> website.

<http://www.rainbowvets.org/history/rainbow-descendants>

(This page as well as <rainbowvets.org> reaches Rainbow researchers who answer and direct inquiries)

HONORING OUR RAINBOW DIVISION VETERANS

These custom Rainbow Division flags honored the memories of WWI Soldiers of the Rainbow who slumber for eternity at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, France. Placed by members of the Rainbow Tour in July 2018, as shown in the photo below taken by RDVF Historian, Patrick Chaisson.

FRONT



42ND Infantry "Rainbow" Division 100 Years of Service
WWI, WWII, Operation Iraqi Freedom
1918 - 2018

They may be ordered from the **GETTYSBURG FLAG WORKS**. Orders for single flags are priced at \$15.00. For inquiries, please contact

Victoria Kunert
Gettysburg Flag Works
715 Columbia Turnpike
East Greenbush, New York
12061
P. 888.697.3524 x17
F. 518.479.3662

Pat's photos of the Rainbow Tour may be viewed here -

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/patchais/29900969678/in/photostream/>

