

RAINBOW TRAIL

The History Newsletter of the Millennium Legacy Association
(Rainbow Family) Of The 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division
March 2020 Volume 20, Issue 1
"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"

75th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION of the LIBERATION OF KZ DACHAU by American Forces 29 April 1945

As WWII Rainbow son, Jeremy Stuehmeyer, whose father Henry helped to liberate the camp, wrote for REVEILLE's October 2018 issue, "Dachau 2020 will give us the very rare chance for the very first time to meet the Liberators, Survivors and their families, and their friends too, 'whilst we can'." Jeremy's encouragement then to families and descendants and all those who would like to be present - and the spring 2019 invitation by the Dachau Memorial Site Committee through the RDVF to all surviving veteran Liberators to attend the 75th Anniversary remembrance activities as their guests, has resulted in a great deal of interest and discussion.



Among those attending will be 42nd Division veterans, Dee R. Eberhart, Frank Burns, Hilbert Margol and "Bud" Gahs.

Members of the Dutch organization, "Friends of Former Dachau Prisoners (FFDP)" will be present and have invited Rainbow veterans and families to join any of the many organized and interesting activities the FFDP has planned over a six-day period from 28 April – 3 May 2020 which include many observances and remembrances. Among these, including some of the planned events by the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site are the following :

At 17:20 29 April 2020, the exact hour of the Liberation of the Camp will be observed.



On the evening of 2 May, a very important ceremony will be held as the **Andre Delpech Award** will be presented to the 42nd Rainbow Division as liberators of the KZ Dachau and to Dee R. Eberhart by the Comité International de Dachau (CID). For General Delpech's life and description of his dedication to the Free French Resistance as well as his imprisonment at KZ Dachau and other camps, please visit - <https://comiteinternationaldachau.com/en/people/310-andre-delpech-english>

photo of Dee and Barbara Eberhart in attendance at the 2006 Dachau Memorial Site Commemoration.

On 3 May 2020, traditionally observed on the first Sunday following the date 29 April, the International Remembrance celebration in KZ Gedenkstätte Dachau will take place from 9:30AM to 3:00 PM. The wreath-laying ceremony will take place during this time. The photo above is from the 2019 ceremony and was provided by Ludwig Stoeckl, who with his wife, placed this Rainbow Division wreath.



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KZ DACHAU 1933 - 1945 – It would always be a daunting task to learn the identities of all those who would be taken, imprisoned, suffered or vanished at the hands of their Nazi persecutors while doing their utmost to prevent and end the barbarism of their regime. Among those who made a difference, here are glimpses of men whose lives were dedicated to resisting a brutal regime and who paid a price.

From Official Reports (LOG) ON Concentration Camp at Dachau by Col. Kenneth E. Worthing and Major Gustav M. Berg, G-5 Section, XV Corps, **29 April 1945**

1300 Visit by Prince Regent of Luxembourg.

- a. Reported **Prince Xavier of Luxembourg** – evacuated about one week previously as typhus victim.
- b. Prince Louis of Bourbon – executed.
- c. Capt. Jacoby – present in camp – had him produced.
- d. Prince Regent desired to immediately evacuate all Luxembourgers. Explained this could not be accomplished, since all prisoners had to be screened. Offered to have immediate action on such individuals as were requested as of special importance to the country, and that every effort would be made to cooperate. He also requested that we evacuate these people. He was told that Army had to take final action on release and would handle all matters of evacuation. He was also told that since 6A.G. had given specific authority to repatriate Capt. Jacoby – he would be screened and could be taken out. This was all stated as entirely agreeable with the Prince Regent.
- e. Screening board directed to at once screen Capt. Jacoby.



Prince Xavier of Luxembourg – from Wikipedia biography https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Xavier_of_Bourbon-Parma

In 1941-1943 Prince Xavier lived in political isolation, devoting time to his family and managing the Bourbon-Parma fortune. In 1941 he inherited from his late aunt the Puchheim castle in Austria. Prince Xavier became increasingly sympathetic to the anti-Pétain opposition and, via local priests, maintained informal contact with district Resistance leaders. At one point he joined works of the Comité d'Aide aux Réfractaires du STO and welcomed labor camp escapees in wooden areas of his estates, providing basic logistics and setting up shelters for the sick in his library. When two of them were detected and detained, Prince Xavier cycled to Vichy and successfully sought their release. Exposing himself, following a surveillance period in July, he was arrested by the Gestapo. Sentenced to death for espionage and terrorism, he was pardoned by Pétain; first confined in Clermont-Ferrand, Schirmeck and Natzwiller, in September he was finally imprisoned in Dachau as prisoner no. 156270. The Nazis asked Franco about his fate; the Caudillo declared total disinterest. Periodically condemned to the starvation bunker,^[106] when freed by the Americans in April 1945, Prince Xavier weighed 36 kg.



Father Jean Bernard Kentenich (Luxembourg)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Kentenich

Fr. Kentenich at the Dachau concentration camp (the 2nd, from the right)

In March 1942, Father Kentenich was sent to the Dachau concentration camp, at a moment when the living conditions there were worsening. Of the 12,000 prisoners, there were 2,600 priests. He was inmate n. 29392. The Germans were grouped in a block where they have the right to attend daily Mass celebrated by one of them; it is only on 19 March 1943 that Father Kentenich would finally celebrate his first Mass at the camp. He gave a nightly spiritual conference to his fellow prisoners thanks to the protection

of the “capo” (inmate block chief) Guttman, a Communist with a rather violent temper, but fascinated by the behavior of the Father. Guttman saw Kentenich sharing his meager daily bread and soup with a detainee in need. Guttman will save the priest who is destined to die in the gas chamber because of his poor health. On the day of the selection visit by an S.S. physician, the capo hides Father Kentenich; assigned to the disinfection commando, he can now circulate in the camp.

Victor Maurer Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)



29 April 1945 Photo shows 2nd Lt. Heinrich Wicker surrendering the Dachau camp to Brig. Gen. Henning Linden, 42nd "Rainbow" Division while Red Cross representative Victor Maurer holds a white flag of surrender.

How did Victor Maurer come to be in KZ Dachau and hold a white makeshift "flag" during the camp's surrender to BG Linden? The fascinating true story of the members of the ICRC is told in this 1974 book by Drago Arsenijevic (Forni Publishing House) printed in Spain, 315 pages:

Voluntary Hostages of the SS – from PREFACE p. 10

"What I feel so worth telling is not just the story of the remarkable and unequal combat engaged in by a humanitarian organization

against a regime that crushed all that was most honorable in the individual, although this certainly constitutes in itself, an important page in the history of the Second World War. What I want to tell is above all else the story of the determination of a handful of men – and you will see that this is not a metaphor but a simple statement, for there were hardly a dozen of them – to risk their own lives to save the lives of others under unprecedented conditions.

"These men left Switzerland which had stayed cozy and peaceful, on the sidelines of the bloody world conflict, and made their way across the roads of Germany, then in the most frenzied state of chaos that can be imagined. And they did not go to care for the wounded or the refugees, the traditional tasks of Red Cross workers. Their task was to try to snatch from death the victims of the concentration camp world: the deportees. This was not 1938 or 1941, when we hadn't known very much about these death camps, but March and April 1945, a time when the horrors of the Nazi exterminations were well known, and when the risks that these men took were not hypothetical, ill-defined, or simply unknown. It was a superhuman task to try to penetrate the Nazi concentration camps, to try to keep the S.S. from 'erasing' the proof of their odious crimes. Nevertheless, with full knowledge of what was awaiting them, and with unconquerable courage, a few men accepted the challenge...."

(p. 15) Transcription of this printed handwritten order of Himmler given to the commandant of Dachau, April 14, 1945: "*There is absolutely no question of surrendering. The camp must be evacuated immediately. No prisoner must fall into the hands of the enemy alive. At Buchenwald, the prisoners have committed atrocities against the civilian population.*"

This is the story of the work of the ICRC beginning in 1935 to learn the actual conditions of the system of concentration camps. It is detailed, personal and compelling, dealing with the delay, subterfuge, deceit and empty promises of the Nazi Regime.

The day before liberation, 28 April 1945, Victor Maurer had arrived at Dachau late in the afternoon... "The Red Cross delegate was immediately surrounded by men in striped pajamas with hollow cheeks and haggard eyes. Their skeletal arms reached out toward the parcels. Pitiably smiles flitted over these faces, tortured by hunger. It was all they could do to express their enormous joy. With trembling fingers, the deportees caressed the Red Cross emblem painted on the parcel that had just been distributed to them. Victor Maurer, his throat tight, knew what that meant: for the first time, since the unleashing of the Second World War, an ICRC delegate had penetrated *by himself* into the forbidden precincts of the death camps..." (p. 172)

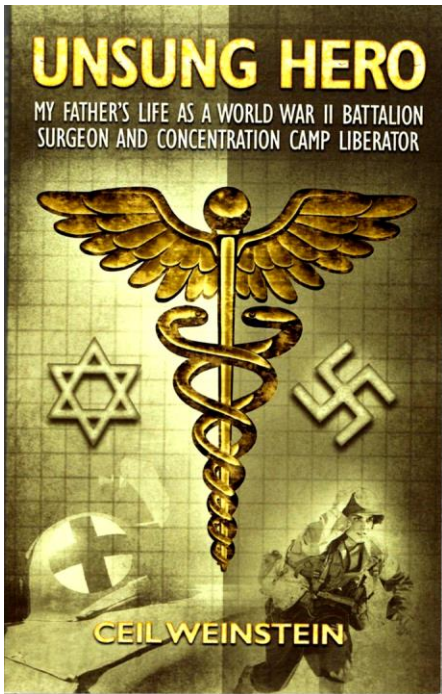
Chapter 18, **Dachau: a white towel flying at the end of a broomstick** – tells the story of the day of 29 April 1945 through the actions of Victor Maurer and his words to BG Henning Linden, 42nd "Rainbow" Division as he entered the inmates compound, "I am the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The camp at Dachau will be turned over to you according to an agreement I have reached with the officer in command of the remaining guards...."

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

"On 12 March 1945, ICRC President Jacob Burckhardt received a message from SS General Ernst Kaltenbrunner accepting the ICRC's demand to allow delegates to visit the concentration camps. This agreement was bound by the condition that these delegates would have to stay in the camps until the end of the war. Ten delegates, among them Louis Haefliger (Mauthausen Camp), Paul Dunant (Theresienstadt Camp) and Victor Maurer (Dachau Camp), accepted the assignment and visited the camps."

MY POST-PUBLICATION EXPERIENCE SINCE OCTOBER 2019

Ceil Weinstein



Since publishing my biography, “Unsung Hero: My Father’s Life as a WWII Battalion Surgeon and Concentration Camp Liberator,” I have had a wide diversity of experiences that have left me feeling uplifted and sorrowful, proud and humbled, resourceful and clueless; it truly has been a mixed bag.

Initially, I reached out to all the people in the Acknowledgments of the book to verify their addresses and send them free paperback copies. That experience was both joyful and heart wrenching; it was magical to reconnect with the people who helped me with my research ten years ago and devastating to find that some of them had passed away before I got a chance to put a copy into their hands. Some of my feelings of loss were blended with comfort and relief, because I offered a copy of the book to the spouses of those who are now deceased, and reading it eased their grief; they felt as if their loved one had come alive again, if only for a moment. My happiest experience was discovering that one of the Rainbow vets who helped me, John Walker, is 98 years old and still sharp as a tack. I sent him a copy, and he truly enjoyed it.

Photo of Ceil and John Walker at Eastern Region Chapter Rainbow Reunion in 2011



Next, almost all my friends and relatives bought the book, read it, and shared very positive feedback about it. Several said that the writing was masterful, and they couldn’t put it down; they called it a page turner. Many of them bought multiple copies to give to others as gifts. Still others walked their books over to their local libraries and subsequently asked me to send copies to those libraries for circulation. That was unexpected and humbling as well.

Immediately upon publishing the book, I decided to give all my royalties to *Doctors Without Borders*, because I don’t feel comfortable earning money from the story of my father’s heroism. This decision made it easy for me to donate copies to county and university libraries, as well as museums and Holocaust resource centers. Although people are still buying “Unsung Hero” on Amazon.com, I have directed most of my marketing efforts toward paperback donations to libraries and historic archives. In this way, there will be multiple readers per book, and the book will be available for an indefinite period of time. I want everyone to know what my father did, and this maximizes that effort. Also, these donations put my father’s story on the record, which helps combat Holocaust denial.



Photo of Dr. Alvin Weinstein – “In this photo, my Dad is holding up a star that an inmate from Dachau gave him. He ripped it off his inmate uniform, shoved it in Dad’s hand, and said. “Never forget what you saw here today.” Dad never let it out of his sight since then. He carried it in his wallet until he had it framed for this interview with Joseph Preil at the Holocaust Resource Center.” Ceil Weinstein

People’s warm, enthusiastic response to “Unsung Hero” has shown me that people truly care about our soldiers and the sacrifices that they make; and they want to read personal stories about them, not just facts and figures from an encyclopedia. That is the most frequent feedback I’ve received thus far; readers felt drawn into the story because it is so personal. I realize now how important it is to provide a narrative of war that reveals the hearts and minds of the soldiers who have dealt with it, coped with it; they have looked directly into the face of injustice, struggle, and death. We can honor them with plaques and statues, but perhaps our greatest tribute comes from simply telling their stories.

MEMORIAL WALL UNVEILED 27 February 2020 at CAMP SMITH

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE , NY, UNITED STATES

02.28.2020

Story by Eric Durr New York National Guard

Senior Master Sgt. Todd Lobraico Sr., a Sherman, Connecticut resident and member of the 105th Airlift Wing, looks at the memorial wall commemorating 39 New York Army and Air National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 which was unveiled at Camp Smith Training Site on Thursday, Feb. 27. His son, Staff Sgt. Todd Lobraico Jr., who was killed in Afghanistan in 2013, is commemorated on the memorial wall. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantonio)



CAMP SMITH
TRAINING SITE,
CORTLANDT, NY-

New York National Guard leaders unveiled a memorial to the 39 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 at Camp Smith Training Site on Thursday, Feb. 27.

For the full story, please visit -

<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6118932/nyng-fallen-heroes-memorial-wall>

The MISSION and VISION of the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation (RDVF) Inc. as stated on <rainbowvets.org>

MISSION: The Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization dedicated to commemorating the deeds, sacrifices and traditions of the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division through memorials, education and preserving the Legacy of the 42nd Division.

VISION: The Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation will live on in perpetuity by attracting new members through social and educational interaction, and by demonstrating its loyalty and commitment to past, present and future soldiers who served in or with the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division. The Foundation membership will continue to build upon the legacy of the gallant men and women who have served; recognizing their valor, heroism and patriotism, and the sacrifices made by them and their families. Through its fundraising efforts the Foundation will fulfill its mission of maintaining the traditions and memorials of past generations while providing an avenue for recording new traditions and creating new memorials for the history made by the current and future generations of Rainbow Division soldiers and their families.

RDVF 2020 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION AND SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS ARE UPDATED FOR THIS YEAR AND ARE POSTED at <rainbowvets.org>.

The first day of our Rainbow Scholarship year is 1 March 2020 – applications will be considered if received by 15 July.

Please direct questions to RDVF Scholarship Chairman, Gary Yaple
Gyaple1@gmail.com 585-507-8363

Greetings,

It's hard to believe but yes, the 2020 Scholarship Application window has begun. From March 1st through July 15th college-aged students can submit their applications and compete for their share of more than \$25,000. The RDVF has been very generous over the past several years providing more than \$135,000 in scholarship awards to support the educational dreams of so many Rainbow Division descendants attending some of the world's most prestigious institutions. We should all be very proud of the positive impact this program has had on their lives.

I am happy to report that there are a few new and exciting changes to the Scholarship Eligibility and Sponsorship requirements. First, the RDVF Board of Directors voted to support a change that makes immediate Gold Star Family members eligible to apply. This wonderful news allows for the submission of an application by an immediate Gold Star Family Member of an OIF/OEF (or more recent Named Operation) Soldier who died in service under the command of a 42nd Infantry Division unit. Eligibility includes the Soldier's Mother, Father, Sibling, Spouse, or Child. This one simple change to our Scholarship program is incredibly powerful and could mean the world of difference for our Rainbow Division Family members who have endured so much in service to our nation.

Another change made to the Scholarship Program is that the sponsor of an applicant must be a RDVF life-member. It's important to note that the sponsor's role is an important one. The sponsor must vouch for the applicant's eligibility in writing and can only sponsor one applicant per scholarship year. In some cases, we might need to match a sponsor to an applicant who is a Soldier, or a Gold Star applicant. With this in mind, we are seeking a pool of life members who are willing to take on this important role. Please send me an email at Gyaple1@gmail.com if you are interested. If you are not yet a life member, I encourage you to upgrade your membership. The membership dues are very reasonable, and life membership helps stabilize the growth of our membership. In the spirit of service to this great organization, please consider doing this and providing your services to support the scholarship application process in the future.

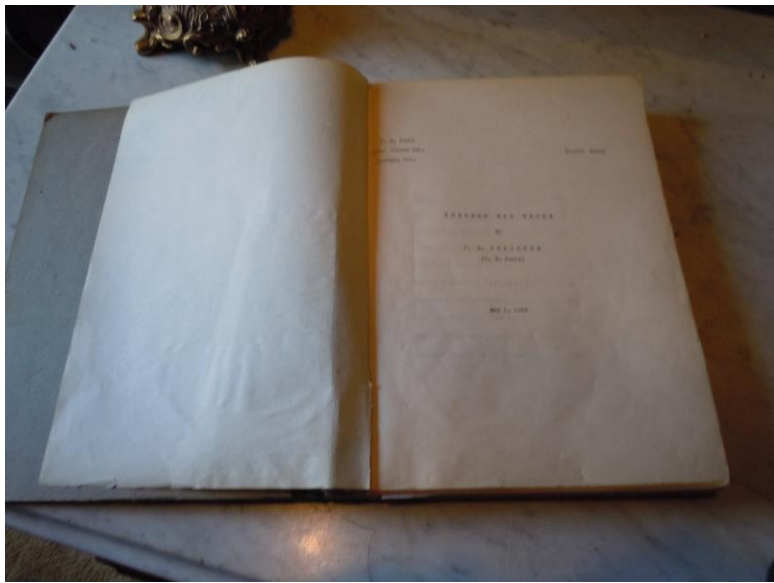
I also ask that all who read this message to please promote the scholarship program by spreading the word to eligible college-aged students. While the program has been very successful in the past, we are actively seeking to expand the pool of applicants and increase the competition for the awards. I encourage the leadership at all levels in the 42d Division to compel their Soldiers to apply. With the 42d ID Headquarters serving overseas, it would be a great thing to be able to award a few of them a Scholarship to use when they return home.

Well that's all for now. Thanks for reading this and we'll see you next time.

Never Forget! - Gary



MEMORIES OF THE GREAT WAR



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

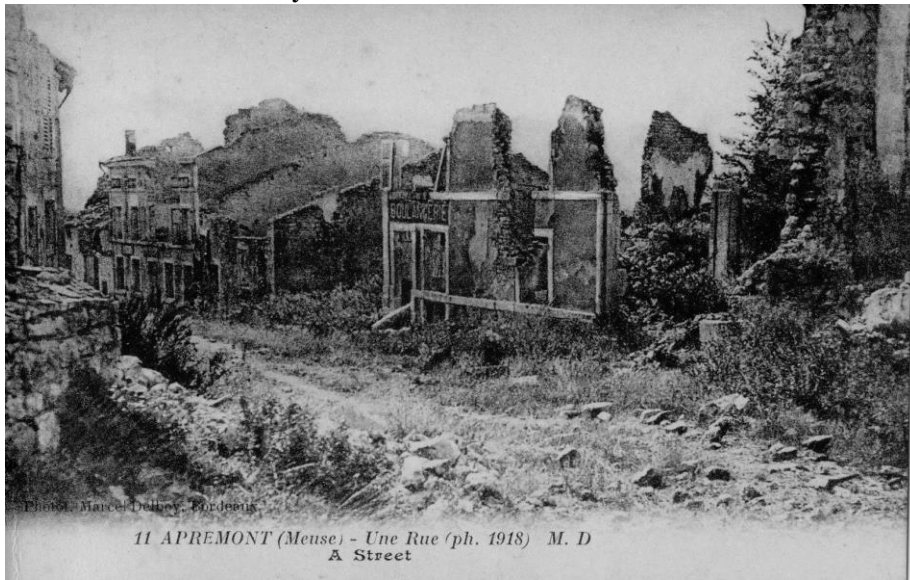
Believed to never have been published, this personal manuscript is 90,000 words or 277 pages of double-spaced typing, penciled corrections and yellowing pages secured in a cardboard binder held together with black tape.

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 August 2019 issue: These men were tired, the horses were tired, everybody and everything just seemed to be dead tired. It wasn't just from the work they had done that night or the night before or that week or the week before, but simply the effect of a nervous, jumpy sort of sleep they had learned to accept as a part of the war. They would lay for hours trying to sleep while their subconscious minds followed the sound of every shell that came within hearing distance. If one came very close, they were instantly aware of it as though they had been wide awake and as a result of this going on for weeks at a time, they became completely exhausted after a few minutes exertion that ordinarily would not affect them in the least.



They had, however, to get away from this part of the front before daybreak. The roads and other parts of their vicinity were in plain view to the Boche during daylight and they did not hesitate at these times to take a crack at a single man or horse with a 77 or 88. The cost of ammunition was nothing compared to the importance of delaying these advancing troops. So, after the men had rested awhile, they started back to their own headquarters where all but the drivers would remain, the drivers and horses continuing on back to the horse lines.

(CONTINUED) –Part XIII Hide and Go Seek...in the ARGONNE (Part II)



Photo 1 - Montfaucon presented one of the hardest nuts the Americans had to crack. It occupied the dominating height of the terrain. The view given here shows the nature of the land over which the 79th and 37th Divs. Charged in storming the hill.

Photo 2 - Montfaucon showing German observatories and fortifications captured by the Americans September 22, 1918

The first two PHOTOS are courtesy of The Descendants and Friends of the 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Division. Their excellent web site is <http://www.314th.org/montfaucon.html>

Montfaucon presented one of the hardest nuts the Americans had to crack. It occupied the dominating height of the terrain. The view given here shows the nature of the land over which the 79th and 37th Divs. charged in storming the hill.



MONTFAUCON, SHOWING GERMAN OBSERVATORIES & FORTIFICATIONS CAPTURED BY THE AMERICAN FORCES SEPT 22, 1918.



Montfaucon, Argonne FRANCE

photo Beatrice DAHM

“[p. 608] The 37th (Ohio) and 79th (Maryland, Va., N. J.) Divisions to the right of the 91st similarly had their line of advance diverted to the right or east by the struggle for Montfaucon. This pinnacle-shaped hill, crowned by the ruins of a village, was adding one more chapter to its long bloody history. For centuries the way in which it dominates the surrounding country has made its possession something to be fought for. The view from its top of not only a large part of

the Argonne, but also the hills to the immediate north of Verdun caused it to be used as an observatory by the Crown Prince of Germany during the 1916 attack on Verdun. On it is located our monument for the Argonne Campaign.

Photo presentation of Montfaucon, Argonne FRANCE is by photographer Beatrice Dahm.

“[p. 634] The honor of being the first units of the Rainbow to enter the long and hard Argonne combat fell to the Artillery Brigade of the Division. While the infantry settled down to such comfort and rest as could be gotten in the

so-called Bois de Montfaucon, so called because four years of trench warfare had wrecked it as a wood and filled it with muddy broken-down bomb proofs and shell holes, the Artillery Brigade was ordered to report to the Commanding General of the 3rd Division. This Division was then fighting its way forward just to the North and Northeast of Montfaucon.

“While the Brigade had served with another Division once before when it went on to the Vesle with the 4th Division, that time it was in support of a Division relieving its own infantry. This time was its first experience in going ahead of the infantry and to a Division which the infantry was not to see.

“The Artillery Brigade was also to experience for the first time the difficulties which come from being changed from Division to Division under fire. They had hardly settled down with the 3rd Division before they were taken from it to go to the support of the 32nd Division. It was with this Division during the days it, with the 1st Division on its left, was capturing the German strong points in front of the Kriemhilde Stellung and during its first and unsuccessful assaults on the Côte Dame Marie. The Rainbow Artillery was then switched over to support its own infantry which two days before had relieved the infantry of the 1st Division. This meant that the 67th Field Artillery Brigade was to have the distinction but at what cost of hardship, great fatigue, cold and danger, of being continuously in combat or marching at night from one combat to the next from September 1st to November 11th, the day of the Armistice.

“As artillery is never in support or reserve during a battle but is always in position, their periods of the tremendous artillery support given the Second Division for their attack through the Rainbow’s 83rd Infantry Brigade, November 1st: “Throughout the balance of our stay in front of St. George-Landres-St. George, I carefully studied the German position for machine gun locations, as did also the commanding officer of the 83rd Infantry Brigade then in line. He sent out numerous patrols.

“At his request we had given him Winn’s [Major Cooper D. Winn, Jr. commander of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion, Georgia] machine gun battalion of the 84th Brigade, and the divisional machine gun battalion, the 149th Pennsylvania. These he had implaced with his own machine gun battalion and given missions of harassing fire similar to artillery fire of the same character, a defensive barrage, and what was of more importance, an overhead accompanying barrage to support the infantry in the coming attack which we expected to make.

“Thus, when the orders came for the general attack of November 1st, which was to be made by fresh divisions with the consequence that the Second Division was to pass through us, we had unusually complete information, as well as preparation, to turn over to the Second Division.

“At the time this new order came out, General Menoher and myself, the division commanders of the other divisions then in the Fifth Corps, and the artillery brigade commanders of our own, the First, the Second, and artillery brigades of the other divisions, and the corps artillery commanders, all were called to General Summerall’s headquarters.

“After I had explained the situation as we then knew it in the greatest detail, General Summerall ordered all artillery commanders to confer with me so as to be sure that every German machine gun position was fired on for destruction....”

Most of the trip back was along the roads, all but a short distance near their own headquarters. The men jogged along sullenly behind the reel; it was just turning daylight and very cold, considering the time of year. The men were terribly hungry too, for rarely these days did they get anything other than emergency rations and seldom anything hot. It left them in a peevish mood and their remarks to other outfits they passed on the road were mostly sizzling.

Coming to their turning off place, they crossed the ditch into the adjoining field and continued plodding along toward their dugout about half a mile away. About half way there they passed a small ration dump. This wasn’t anything new to them but there was something odd about this particular dump. There was something missing and while this fact only registered on their unconscious brains at first glance, the message had been conveyed to their conscious brain by the time they had moved along fifteen or twenty paces. They were about to continue on past it at a distance of 20 or 30 feet when the full realization dawned upon them that there was no one standing guard over these rations an unheard-of situation in these times.

There in that early morning mist were the six horses hitched to an army field telephone reel. Three drivers half asleep jogged lazily in their saddles. Trailing along beside the reel in single file were five men on foot, tired, sore and fighting hard against falling asleep on their feet. The lead team stopped without its driver making a move; the teams behind it stopped, their drivers too sat motionless. The men on foot stopped purely from instinct as the monotonous sound of the carriage ceased. They stood motionless for a moment glaring sullenly at the rations and yet without saying

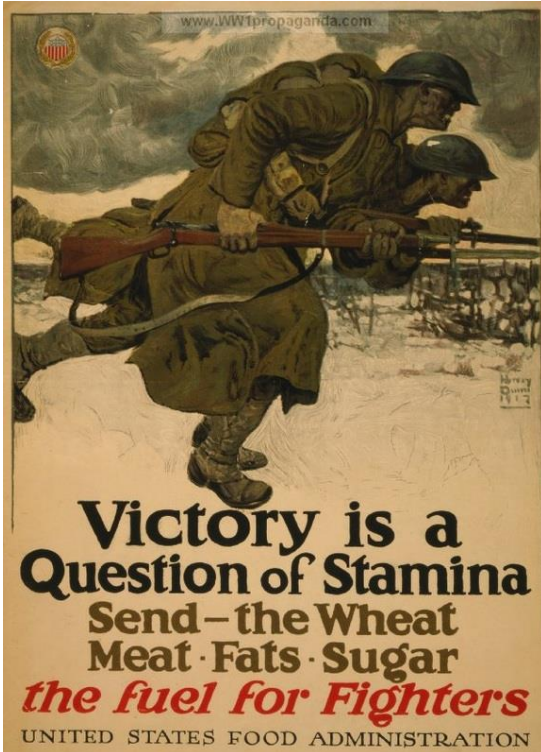
a word, walked slowly over to the ration pile, walked around it, looked at it and then away into the rolling banks of mist. The drivers sat quietly glaring at them through half closed eyes.

Slowly, they began to show more signs of life. Godfry reached over and picked up a can that had been dumped carelessly on top of the pile. Looking at the label on the side of the can, he said slowly, "Corn! hmmmwhat's that?"

Another, untwisted the end of a gunnysack and looking into it, mumbled "Bread! round loaves of breadwhite breadbrown around the edges must be a dozen loaves."

Each man picked up something, looked at it then ambled slowly over to the reel and deposited it carefully where it would ride safely. Then with each trip between the reel and ration pile a little more speed was added and finally they were flying back and forth with feverish activity until the complete pile of rations had been loaded onto the reel and the tarpolin on which the rations had been piled was now tied down tightly over the whole load, concealing its contents.

Now, every man was wide awake, even the horses showed fresh signs of life as they tugged against the traces to get the added load underway. The large wheels of the reel sank deeply into the soft ground as they rolled along; the dismounted men followed close up behind it to see that nothing happened to this gift from heaven.



As they moved on away from where the ration pile had been, every man became half-drunk with the supreme satisfaction of having, this once in their whole army career, put one over on that ethereal group of soldiers who so mysteriously produced things to eat but always for some other outfit, yet whom they had never been able to lay their hands on. This fact alone wiped out every trace of their perpetual animosity toward the bellyrobbers and mess sergeants.

It came at a time when rations such as these had not been tasted for weeks. There was bread, flour, a hind quarter of beef, bacon, assorted canned goods, tobacco, candles and a hundred and one other things; everything they needed so badly but had been far beyond their fondest hopes of ever finding in this khaki-infested, half-starved section of the western front. The various troops were moving fast at this time; supply units hauled these rations up at night and dumped them at a certain location where a guard from the unit for which they were intended, stood guard over them until their men came up and carried them to their cooks; but this dump, containing a day's rations for a company of 250 men, had somehow or other been dumped at the wrong place and the departure of the supply truck was perhaps hastened somewhat by a few opportune shells from the Boche. Now they would serve as a few days banquet menu for a little group of twenty telephone men who had been living on emergency rations for so long they had forgotten what real food looked like.

Arriving safely at their own dugout they were met by the rest of their group and given a welcome such as hunters of old returning after a successful kill had never known. All surplus equipment was quickly removed from the dugout to make room for the rations; they even threatened to move out the switchboard and operator as he complained of being crowded so close by the rations piled high around him. A division was quickly made for the three drivers who were sent on their way back to the horse lines; another unheard-of precedent as further evidence of the change that had come over these men, since next to the horses they held the drivers as about the most useless things on earth.

And a few hours later the first issue of the banquet was under full sway. Men sat around and toyed with flapjacks swimming in syrup; tried to sink them by piling real butter on top of them. Bacon passed around in bundles after it cooled enough to handle; coffee so thick one could almost spread it with a knife, and with a generous supply of sugar and canned milk. Everybody wanted to help the cook, poor fellow, so flabbergasted at this burst of friendship he cried. Not having had anything to cook for so long he was awkward and fumbled everything, as the men crowded around handling the bundles of cordite that made such excellent fuel.

The feast lasted for three days and compared only with the engagement in the Champagne as outstanding events of the World War, as far as these men were concerned. A few of the officers who had learned of this little coup, came in for their share, virtually eating out of the hands of these men in the ranks, and furnishing them with a popular subject of conversation for months to follow.

All of them became sick at one time or another during those three days, some violently, but fortunately no fatalities. They worked at nights now like demons just to build up a good appetite for the next day; they slept the sleep of a baby during the day, with stomachs bulging. And it became again a first-class war where they didn't give a damn how much longer it lasted. They might find another unguarded ration dump sometime, at least they would keep a sharper lookout from now on.

42d DIVISION SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS IN THE WORLD WAR

Prepared by the American Battle Monuments Commission US Government Printing Office 1944

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015051180720&view=1up&seq=1>



“Oct. 17-20 No changes in the front line occurred on October 17. Early in the afternoon, patrols of the 84th Infantry Brigade reported that the enemy was withdrawing in the brigade zone of action, but about 1:45 p.m., when the 165th and the 166th Infantry Regiments sent out patrols to their fronts to verify this fact, they received heavy machine-gun and artillery fire.

“In orders issued at 8:30 p.m. the V Corps directed its divisions to continue their preparations to advance, and ordered the 42d Division to continue to exploit vigorously to its front.

“Patrolling was active on October 18, but no changes in the front line occurred during the day.

“During the morning the V Corps issued orders for further organization for defense on its front, designating the forward trace of the line of resistance in

the sector of the 42d Division as the line, road and trail at the base of Hill 288 – northern edge of western portion of the Bois de Romagne – Côte de Maldah – Hill 174, about 1 kilometer north of Fléville....”



For official topographical maps of the advance of the 42d Division use this link Below -

<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/worldwarI/Division%2042.htm>

Photo presentation by Béatrice Dahm

“Fleeville!” said Godfry, with emphasis on the “Flee”, as they sat around the switchboard dugout near the town of that name a few days later. “If that ain’t a hell of a name for a town! And to think our men had to put up such a fight to get itbattle of Fleeville! Wouldn’t that make a fine name for history? All their nutty names, no wonder they think we’re a little batty sometimes; I feel a little foolish every time I go into the town.”

“The guy that named these burgs must have been plastered most of the time,” replied Dip.

“That’s a hot one you fellows pulled yesterday afternoon,” said Chuck, walking up and taking a seat near the edge of the hole used for a dugout.

“Yeah! Funny I suppose, as long as you wasn’t there. Well, it wasn’t funny to me,” replied Godfry.

“You might have known you’d get in trouble sooner or later. We’ve got no business totin’ around a lot of captured machine guns and automatic rifles anyway.”

“We’d been alright if the captain hadn’t walked up just when some guy started shootin’ at that airplane.”

“It was so far away half you guys couldn’t even see it, much less tell whether it was Boche or Allied.”

“Well, what the hell’s the difference. We were only shootin’ ‘em for the fun of it anyway and as long as it was over the German lines it didn’t make any difference.”

“What’d you do with your souvenirs?”

“Had to turn ‘em all in and I had figured on takin’ mine back to the states, too.”

“What’d the captain say?”

“Somebody said he was over at Exermont at that meeting but when we all busted loose at that plane, we discovered he had been trying to sleep in his dugout. He heard all the racket and thought he had been caught in a counter attack; he came chargin’ out of his hole and when he discovered it was a gang of his own men shootin’ off their souvenirs, he blew up. He looked up to see what we were shootin’ at and it took him sometime to discover the little speck way over the German lines, and this didn’t exactly square things. Boy What he didn’t say to us wasn’t worth mentioning at all.”

“Aw He’ll forget about it.”

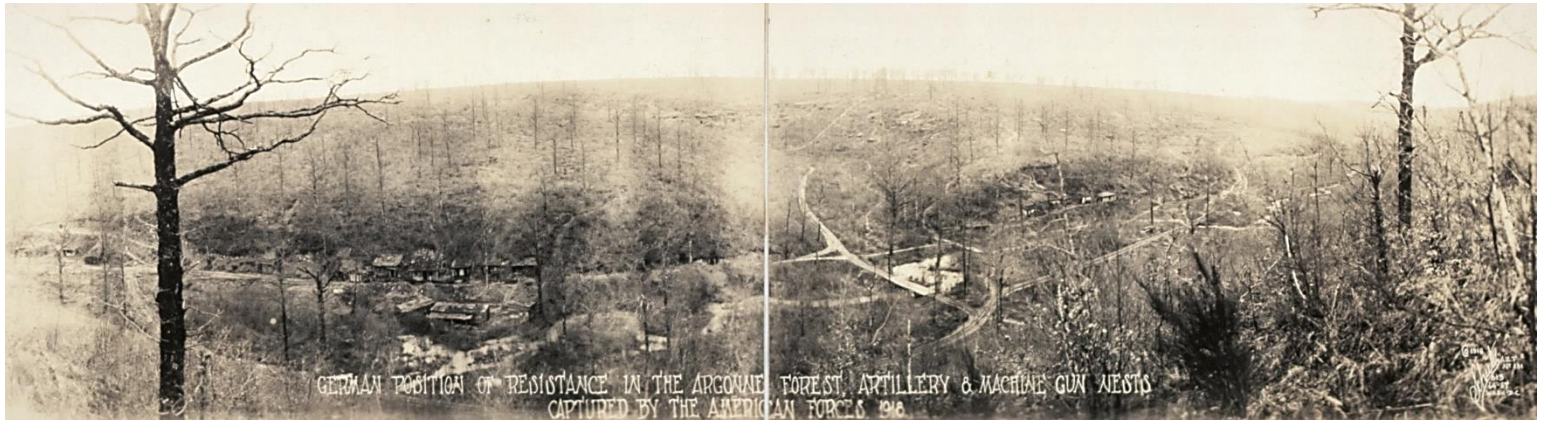
“That ain’t doin’ our souvenirs any good though,” replied Godfry.

Now it seems these men had picked up souvenirs from time to time until they had accumulated about a dozen captured German machine guns and as many automatic rifles. On afternoons when things were a little dull, they’d set up one or two and fire at enemy planes that came overhead. On this afternoon in question, all had been set up somehow or other and they were just aching for something to shoot at when they spied this plane at a distance far beyond the range of these guns. Since they fired them for amusement anyway, this fact made little difference and all were blazing away in its general direction at the same time. It was strictly against orders to carry these things, much less fire them for no reason at all. Nothing had been said about it heretofore because it always happened when the captain was away, but orders got all balled up this day and he had been awakened by the roaring of this whole bunch. It sounded like a first-class machine-gun attack and the men were having the time of their lives when the captain came upon the scene. All were put under technical arrest after the bawling out he gave them but he forgot it the next day and the only damage done was that of taking these playthings away from the men.

In spite of the rapid succession of events at this stage of the war and the worn-out condition of the men and horses from lack of rest, these men continued to occupy their spare moments with something interesting and amusing enough to keep their thoughts more evenly balanced. And it was not only in their spare moments, but often during their busiest that they managed to interpose highly humorous situations. They were veterans, in a way, and the whole business took on the aspects of a huge game; many played, some lost, and to the others came that spirit of the gamble with all its feverish activities, its thrills, its ultra satisfaction at having put one over on the enemy, and the numerous phases of the game that spurred them on, that gripped them with that unexplainable fascination they could not shake themselves free of even if they had wanted to, which they hadn’t.

Replacements didn’t come fast enough so each battalion, originally consisting of three batteries, was now reduced to two batteries. The men, horses and equipment of the third battery were used to fill in the other two, to bring them up to the proper strength. And on they went. The men had nothing but contempt now for the enemy and showed it at every turn. Artillery dueling became an almost continuous function; if they could spot an enemy battery firing at one of theirs, no time was lost in taking issue and blazing away until one or the other was silenced. Much of the terrain was under direct observation of enemy observation posts and they virtually shot at everything and anything with 77’s, 88’s

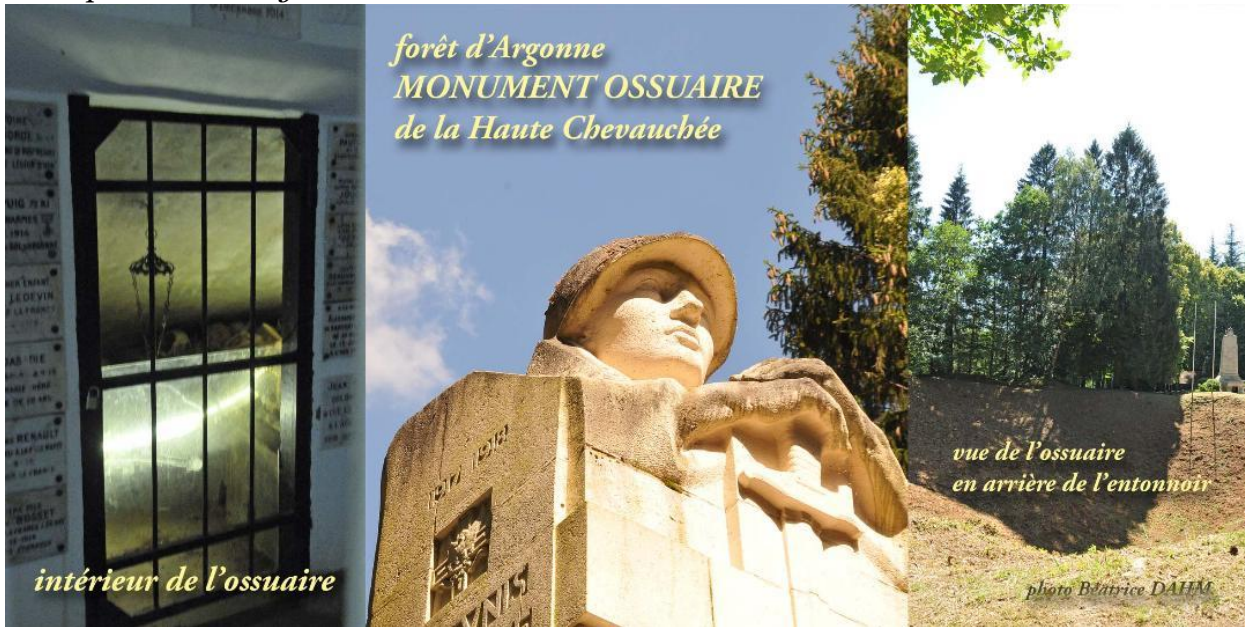
and 155's. The barrage and other concentrated methods of fire had become gradually replaced by the more popular and sporting artillery dueling.



GERMAN POSITION OF RESISTANCE IN THE ARGONNE FOREST, ARTILLERY & MACHINE GUN NESTS CAPTURED BY THE AMERICAN FORCES 1918

German position of resistance in the Argonne Forest, artillery & machine gun nests captured by the American Forces 1918 https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/54/Argonne_forest_1918.jpg

Photo presentation by Béatrice Dahm



nothing as they could. The night became very dark, broken only by the stabbing flash of light from the sporadic gun fire and shell bursts.

“Let’s go down and get a can of water, Godfry,” said Chuck.

“Say, you can think up the damndest things to do,” returned Godfry, sourly.

“Aw, come on. We’re the last ones out tonight and the chances are we won’t be called before tomorrow night. Get your lazy bones moving a little do ‘em good.”

The two, carrying an old rusty ten-gallon milk can between them, started down the old cart road to the well. It was located about a half mile away, an old pump that had been operated by a wind mill at one time, was not operated by hand, with the skeleton of the steel wind mill frame standing over it. Alongside of this pump was a battery of 155 rifles, a large long-range gun that used an extremely heavy propelling charge and on this night they were firing spasmodically at their maximum range. One of these guns sat directly in front of the wind mill and was covered with camouflaging. When it fired, everything within a quarter of a mile radius jumped and rattled from the terrific concussion; puffs of dust floated away from the camouflage, the wind mill frame vibrated, men’s helmets toppled around on their heads and sometimes fell to the ground if not held on, dust kicked up along the road and floated away lazily and men grabbed their ears and cursed when one of the babies went off nearby.

Chuck and Godfry had been down to this pump several times before and both knew of this battery. They did not make this trip during the day, however, since they slept mostly during the day and it wasn’t a particularly healthy route either, during the day time. They jogged along on this night with the milk can bouncing along between them. Godfry, being much the smaller of the two, was taking about two steps to Chuck’s one and at times it took on something like Godfry being bounced along behind the can as Chuck stepped out a little too fast for him.

The men were still sitting around the little dugout after dark waiting for their turn to go out to repair any of the telephone lines that may become shot out. Four of the men were out in pairs at this time and six more awaited calls. Their supper had been brought up at dusk and, having finished with this, such as it was, they loafed around doing about as much

“Say where the hell’s the fire?” blurted out Godfry stumbling along in the darkness. “You got me clear off the road here.”

Chuck laughed and when he laughed his huge hulk shook something like a horse and bounced poor Godfry around some more on the other end of the milk can. “Aw, that’s alright, Godfry. I was just thinking.”

“You call that thinking. By God you must have your brains in your back from the way it feels to me.”

“Naw! I was just wonderin’ how those guys are makin’ out on that line to Sommerce.”

“Well, get over. You don’t need to lean toward that burg every time you think about it,” growled Godfry. “I can’t see a damn thing in this darkness.”

“Do you think they’ll be back by midnight?” asked Chuck, barging along.

“What the hell’s the difference. I’d rather be there than carrying this water. I don’t want any water, anyway.”

Chuck had a sort of sixth sense that kept him on this road which was nothing more than a wagon track across the open field. They had both forgotten about the battery as they arrived at the pump. They knew it was there, in fact saw the slits of the aiming point lights out in front, but none of the guns had been firing and, hearing the muffled sounds of men talking under the camouflaging, they never gave them or the guns a second thought as they started jiggling the old pump handle trying to get the pump primed.

“What’s the matter with the damn thing?” asked Godfry, frantically pumping away at the pump handle.

“It needs priming,” replied Chuck. “Keep on, real fast, it’ll start soon.”

“You holdin’ the can?”

“Yeah, go on, go on! When you stop you have to start all over again.”

“This is a hell of a pump.”

“It’s a French pump,” replied Chuck. “Talk French to it. Maybe it’ll work better.”

“You sure there’s any water left in this gadget?”

“Yeah! Go on, go on! Don’t talk so much.”

All the time Godfry was pumping as hard as he could, Chuck was trying to balance the old milk can so he would be sure to catch the water as it would squirt out eventually. Godfry continued, making all the noise he could with the old pump.

They heard the rattle of the breech being closed on the gun nearby; then a little whistle, but they were so engrossed with their own difficulties they had no time to think about anything else. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion; it came out of the darkness without any warning they had sense enough to take heed of, and was followed by a blinding flash of light. Loose dirt and dust flew past them, their helmets were blown off; the old milk can went rattling down over the bare rocks surrounding the well as Chuck grabbed for something to hold onto.

Now their ear drums were buzzing like a buzz saw as they called to each other.

“Chuck! Chuck!” shouted Godfry. “You alright?”

“Yeah, shaken up a little. You alright?”

“Yeah! What was that?”

“That gun there, right beside you.”

“What?”

“One of those 155 rifles right there,” shouted Chuck. “Look out! They may fire again!”

Slowly it dawned on Godfry that it was just one of these guns bustin’ loose. It was so close that he could nearly reach the breech as the gun recoiled when it went off. Realizing then that he had forgotten about this battery, he started in on a scathing denunciation of the whole lousy outfit as he groped around in the darkness for his helmet.

“Hey! You bunch of dumb idiots. Why don’t you holler before you fire that piece.”

“Go to hell!” came from under the camouflaging.

“You guys have to sit there like a bunch of saps all day and wait ‘till we come after water to do your practicing?”

“Go on! Get your water and beat it,” came the voice from the gun pit.



FIRING WHILE WEARING GAS-MASKS

Signal Corps Photo

"You guys are always bustin' up a good war," shouted Godfry again. "Why don't...."

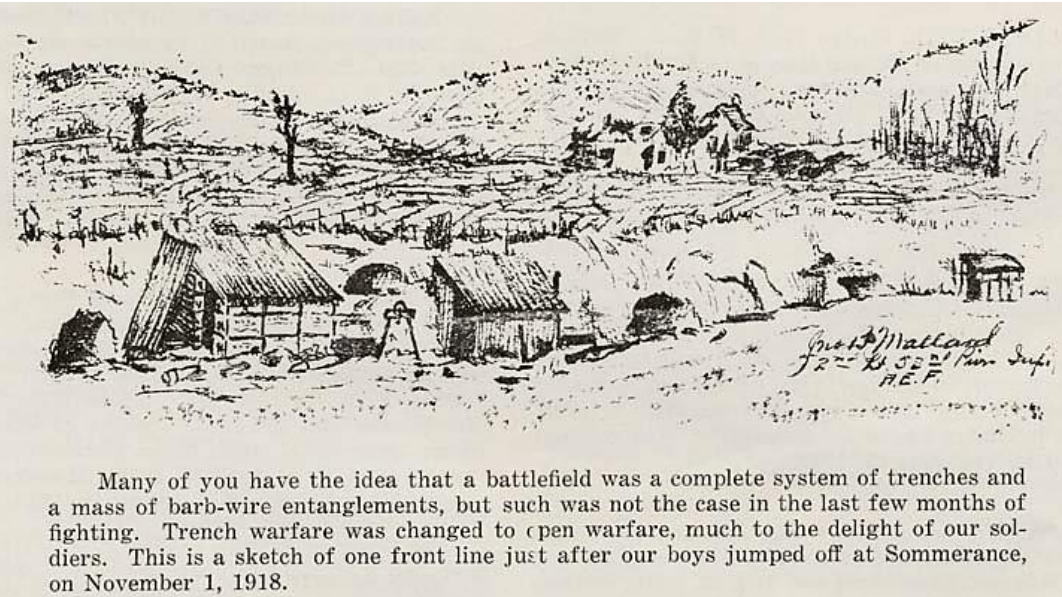
"Tweet Whamm!!!" went the piece again. But this time they had heeded the warning whistle and held their ears.

"Cut it out, will you?" shouted Godfry again, but it was no use.

Chuck and Godfry now moved away some distance until the firing had finished, where they lay on the ground cussing the men of that battery. It was not long, however, before the firing had ceased and they got their water and returned to their dugout.

About the 24th of October found these men occupying a forward position about a half mile east of the village of Sommerance just back of a road running parallel with the front. Another drive had been scheduled for this date and it was the intention of this battalion to move up into this position where they could start firing from, after the infantry started and keep them covered until the other battalion could come up past them. This other battalion would continue on to a point where they would set up their guns and cover the advancing infantry until the first battalion would have time to jump around them, and so on.

It was never intended, of course, to put a battalion in one of these forward positions more than a few hours before the drive started, or perhaps overnight; these positions were right behind the infantry front line trenches and so situated that they could not fire a gun until after the infantry started their general advance, because to fire one that close would immediately expose their location and result in having them blown out of such a place in rather short order. But as it usually turned out, they decided to delay the drive from a week to ten days just after the forward battalion had succeeded in digging themselves in, and there they'd remain during that period, daring not to fire a shot or otherwise show themselves above ground during the daytime. A choice spot to be in at this stage of the game, since much of the rear-guard defense being put up by the retreating Heinies was done with their artillery and on this particular front they occupied the heights on their side from where they could direct their fire with an uncanny accuracy.



Many of you have the idea that a battlefield was a complete system of trenches and a mass of barb-wire entanglements, but such was not the case in the last few months of fighting. Trench warfare was changed to open warfare, much to the delight of our soldiers. This is a sketch of one front line just after our boys jumped off at Sommerance, on November 1, 1918.

A little open stretch of field about a quarter of a mile wide extended back from the road for a distance of another quarter mile. It was open in front, bounded on each side by woods and at the back by a wooded line of high hills occupied by the machine gun outfits. About half way back from the road were the two batteries, dug in and covered with camouflaging and directly behind them and just in front of the line of hills was the battalion headquarters and telephone switchboard, also dug in.

*J.R. Graham TAR HEEL WAR RECORD (in the Great World War)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

This drive was delayed until the first of November. The battalion headquarters became an almost constant target for the Heinies' artillery during this interval as did also the whole stretch of open country occupied by the batteries. The kitchen, located some two hundred yards to the left of the switchboard dugout and in a gully with vertical banks, also became an excellent target due to its thin column of smoke that trickled up from it most of the time. It could be reached from the battalion headquarters by following this same gully over a circuitous route for quite some distance but the shorter and more direct route, across a flat piece of open country, was used mostly, in spite of the absolute orders against doing this during the daytime.

But the position remained safe enough if one used reasonable precaution. These men had long since become artists at this sort of thing and could, instinctively, in this position draw a line, one side of which was comparative safety and the other side just the opposite. They respected these boundaries with the utmost delicacy though outwardly they seemed to give it little regard and showed the utmost contempt for the Heinies' aim. Dead spots, spots in defilade, judging the enemy shells long before they burst and other technique of artillery dueling occupied most of their time during the next few days.

About nine o'clock of the first morning in their newly dug domain the telephone men sat quietly soaking up a lot of old Sol's warmth.

"What's the matter with you and the lieutenant?" asked Slim, casually.

"Oh, the usual stuff," replied Godfry, somewhat sympathetically. "He can't help it. Poor devil's scared within an inch of his life."

"Boy, he don't show his face out of the major's dugout any more than he has to. He didn't go after any breakfast this morning, you know."

"No, I know it, but that ain't the half of it. You know what he did?"

"He called the C-battery operator and asked him if they wanted any friction tape might as well have asked him if he wanted a porterhouse steak. Well, the fellow said 'yes', of course, so the lieutenant told him he could have a little if he came over after it, then, as an after-thought told him to stop by our kitchen and bring over his breakfast on the way over. C-battery's switchboard is in that gully right near our kitchen, you know."

"Well, the dirty louse!" replied Slim. "I heard him say he was going to have you court martialed, Godfry. What was it all about?"

"Well, you know we strung that line back to the other battalion with salvaged German telephone wire. We've got every one of our reel carts and hand reels loaded to capacity with our own wire so I was trying to tell him it was only a waste of time to pick up that line when we move forward. He said I was trying to be smart and we'd have to pick it up if it was the last thing we ever did. He did it just for spite and made me plenty hot."

"You goin' to pick it up?"

"Hell, no!"

"What'll the lieutenant do about it?"

"He won't do a damn thing about it. If he does bring charges against me after we're relieved, the case won't get to first base with the colonel. And, besides, the stuff he's pulled lately will get him in plenty trouble if it becomes generally known."

"Boy, you two were sure all hot and bothered when I came in this morning. His eyes were bulged out as big as saucers."

Well, the poor devil's scared, Slim. That's the only time he's showed himself outside the dugout since we've been here."

"Wonder how long they're going to keep us here?"

"It's hard to tell, now. They're not going to try to take Landres-St. George until they are loaded for fair. And the Boche ain't going to let anyone stroll around in that valley with any comfort," continued Godfry. "Say, did you see those guys come up with that reel cart last night?"

"No, I was out on the infantry line at the time."

"Well, they got up here before it was dark enough and the Boche spotted them pulling in off the road and let go with everything they had. I heard the racket and looked out, and there came our dashing reel cart outfit, and boy were they dashing! They came down along side of that woods over there with the reel cart just bouncing along the high spots and when they got to the hill here everybody jumped for fox holes. The horses ran up the hill as far as they could drag the cart and stopped there. The Boche was dropping whizz-bangs and 155's right along behind them 'till they passed out of sight behind the woods, so then he raked the whole vicinity for fifteen minutes while those guys lay in their holes and cussed each other for lettin' the nags run away. There was no damage done though outside of a few more spokes knocked out of the reel cart wheels and the nags were too tired to go far anyway."

Just after dark that night Slim and Bashman were sitting in a large open hole adjoining the one containing the switchboard. They were awaiting a call to go out on the lines and were passing the time away by doing some first class growling about everything in general when Bashman suddenly struck a match, lit his cigarette and put the match out quickly.

"Pffut! Pffut! Pffut! Pffut!" came the slow cadence of machine gun bullets beside him with each one kicking up its own little chunk of mud in his face, and followed by the melancholy droning of one of our machine guns on the hill above.

"Dam it! Exploded Slim. "I told you to be careful with those matches."

"Do'u suppose that bird was shootin' at me?" drawled Bashman, somewhat astonished.

"No. But that's just his way of giving you a warning."

"Why, that orie-eyed dough-headed son of a sea cook! I'm goin' up there an' get me a machine gunner," said Bashman. Starting to climb out of his hole.

Slim grabbed hold of him and pulled him back, saying, "Come 'ere, you damn fool. You couldn't find that guy in a thousand years; there's a hundred of those guns up there."

"Why, he can't get away with that stuff."

"No? Well, light another match and see but wait 'till I get the hell away from here," replied Slim.

A little later that night, at nine o'clock to be exact, Slim and Godfry were in the open hole containing the switchboard. They had been talking, when suddenly Slim exclaimed, "Well, there they go again." Eight shells had just droned their way over and struck along a line parallel with the road and just a few feet from it, and fairly well distributed across the open stretch. About two minutes later, eight more would fall along the same line but ten yards further in; then another line ten yards further and this would keep up until the line of bursting shells had reached the hill. Then they would drop back to the starting point and do it all over again but in steps advanced about two yards ahead of the preceding steps. This would be again repeated until the whole stretch had been covered about five times, perhaps around midnight, when they would stop and go to bed, with the satisfaction of knowing they had done a good job in the darkness and with typical German machine-like regularity.



By watching the first job of covering this field, these men could tell how near any salvo would come to striking on a line with their hole by determining the distance between the hole and the line of bursting shells on each side. Then they knew how long to wait before really burrowing themselves deeper into their hole.

"Those bozos must think we're tryin' to sleep," exclaimed Godfry in disgust.

"Well, it'll be a half hour before they get back this far," replied Slim.

"Our poor batteries out there," said Godfry. "D'u suppose they really know our batteries are in that field?"

"Hell, yes! They probably figured this is the only place around here where battery positions could be located."

"Well, to hell with 'em. Let 'em shoot their lousy heads off for all I care. If they ever get through lining up guns for this drive, this'll be another Champagne when it does start. Then we'll drive 'em out of those heights."

"Yeah! If it ever does start, is right."

All the time the Boche were keeping at their job methodically.

"Hey! Watch 'em now," said Slim. "they're getting pretty close."

"Where's the next ones comin'?"

"Wait a minute there they come!"

There followed the symphony of crescendos as the shells whined toward them and struck along a line a few yards in front of their hole. Following this came the thunderous clap-clapping sound of the bursting shells, then all was quiet for another two or three minutes.

"Well, we're safe enough for a little while," exclaimed Slim.

"Yeah, but they came pretty close on this round. We'll have to watch the next one."

Another salvo came over right on schedule and passed over them, striking along a line a few yards behind them. The men resumed their talking again as unconcerned as though this sort of thing was going on in another country. About a half hour later, however, the Germans had patiently worked around to their vicinity again but with the usual step up in their range. These men were way ahead of the Boche, however, and well crowded down into the corner of the hole under the switchboard when Slim shouted, "Lookout!!"

This time the symphony of the other on-coming shells was drowned out by the fast air-shoving sound of one shell that was coming at them. Almost before they could tense their bodies against what might come, the shell struck the top of the two feet of ground that served as a wall between their hole and the major's dugout, just wide enough to deflect the pieces from going downward. They rose quickly with the usual feeling around to see if either had been hit, but the extent of the damage was the caving in of one side of their hole, knocking the switchboard down on top of them and blowing the telephone lines loose from the switchboard and whipping them back a hundred yards or so.

"A dirty, lousy trick!" exclaimed Godfry, picking himself up out of the loose dirt that nearly covered him. "What hit me?"

"That was the switchboard," replied Slim. "Boy! That baby sure had our address right that time."

It jarred them so bad it left them a little dazed for awhile, though they passed it off with their characteristic 'what-the-hell' attitude.

Slim stuck his head up over the edge of his hole toward the linemen's holes and called out, "Come on! Come on! You guys! You can't sleep tonight. There ain't a piece of telephone wire within a hundred yards of here, so get busy!"

The linemen filed out slowly, grumbling as usual, and after a few chiding remarks, started to work pulling the lines back in while Slim and Godfry pegged the switchboard on the other mud wall and started shoveling the dirt out of their hole. The machine gunners kept up their monotonous harassing fire all night long from the heights directly behind them.

Late the next morning one of the linemen came up along the gully and scrambled over the edge and into the pit where Slim and Godfry were lounging and handling the few calls that came in at the switchboard. It was a bright sun-shiny day and all through these nights the men looked forward to the warmth of this next day's sun.

"Where you been?" asked Slim.

"Over t' the kitchen getting' some breakfast," replied the lineman. "And that's the last damn time I'm going clear around that gully to get over here."

"You know what the orders are."

"Orders hell! I'm too tired to be walkin' half way around the world just to get over here. I can beat 'em across in the open anyway."

"Well, boy, they don't care what they shoot at now days with a 77, you know," mused Godfry.

"Seen the lieutenant today?" asked the lineman.

"Yeah, he came up early this morning then went back. He's staying back at Regimental now. Slim and I plugged the lines through this morning and went to breakfast without anyone at the switchboard. He got here a little before we got back and must have seen where that shell hit last night; suppose he was getting ready to call the hospitals to try and locate us when we came quietly upon the scene. He must have had it doped out that it couldn't have missed us and when he first saw us he just stared wild eyed, seeing ghosts or something. He was pretty disappointed to see us drop into the hole and start to work, because he just turned around finally and started back along the gully without saying a word."

"Is he one of your old timers?"

"Yeah, but the others are all OK." replied Godfry.

A little later the line to the other battalion went out and Slim, along with Dosier and Bashman, started out to repair it. The line passed along the bottom of the row of hills behind them, to a point near their kitchen; here it passed back through the gully a ways then directly up over a high and barren bald head knob and on to the rear. Several similar knobs were nearby with deep ravines between them and their tops, about an acre in size, were pockmarked with shell holes. In laying these lines at night over strange ground, they would find them in daylight in some of the most



any rest, to repair them.

ungodly places anyone could ever imagine locating such a line. Dead horses seemed always to attract telephone lines, for, if there was a dead horse within a mile of the place, they'd find, the next day, that they had strung the line right past it; lines would be swung overhead from tree to tree across a road at night, only to find the next day that it was a balloon road and had been cut by the cable holding an observation balloon as its maneuvering truck had passed along that piece of road; stringing lines in front of the muzzles of large guns hid in bushes, past ammunition dumps, over open stretches swept periodically by machine gun fire and a hundred similar places proved to be a jinx these men could not shake themselves free of. Once the lines were laid in these places, after a hard night's work, it too often developed that they were put out of commission before the men got back and they would have to return in the daylight and without

And so it was that they climbed up old Baldy Knob, as they dubbed it, on this trip following the line along until they would come to where it was broken. The Boche, as usual, seemed to know what they were about and let them go without firing a shot at them. About two hours later, in mid-afternoon, the trio came up over this same route from behind; they had finished their job and intended to stop at the kitchen and get something to eat, when, with nothing other than the usual warning, the Boche slammed everything at them that they had lying around loose. All the way from ash-cans down to 77's came at them and in less than nothing they had gone sliding into the closest shell holes, much the same as though they had been sliding for the home plate in a ball game.

For minutes that seemed like hours they were rocked around in their shell holes by the concussion and vibration of bursting shells. Finally, it slacked down and they began to peep over the edges of the holes and call to one another. Slim and Dosier showed up but no sign of Bashman. They continued calling between the stray shells that were still coming their way. Finally, they saw a chunk of mud rise slowly up out of a shell hole nearby and come down with a kersock! On the edge, then they discovered Bashman's head behind it, when he called out,

"Hi, boy! They all jus' leave me heah long enough I'll have dis place fortified," and back to work he went. On a closer look they discovered Bashman had piled up a mud wall around his shell hole, already more than a foot high.

They looked down the hill into the gully at their kitchen where they saw the stove with pans of hot food just waiting to be eaten. The walls of the gully where the kitchen was were some ten feet high and nearly straight up, with flat ground on either side covered with dried up saplings and underbrush. This part of the gully was in dead space, so called because artillery shells, unless fired at by long range cross fire and then very doubtful, could not drop within the gully proper. In these walls were numerous little holes and as these men watched from the hill above, they could see the men dash out, mess kits in hand, scoop up some grub and dash back again to eat it in safety; while the Boche rained 77's and 155's all around them on the flat ground above, with fragments keeping up a steady whizzing and crackling through the underbrush, and horizontally back and forth across the top of the gully. The men, still looking down from above, were trying hard to convince their nagging stomachs that they weren't really so hungry just now, but the sight of that food had much the opposite effect.

"Man, I'm sure hungry," said Bashman as he peered over his little breastworks down at the kitchen below.

"Do you think we can make it, Slim," called Dosier.

"No, not yet. We'll stay here for awhile. They'll let up pretty soon. There's no use taking chances," replied Slim.

"Man, they sure tryin' hard to hit dat kitchen; whew boy..... look at dat dirt fly!" called Bashman again as the Boche continued to drop larger caliber shells all around in the vicinity of the kitchen.

"Reckon they can really see us heah?"

"Boy, if you think they can't, just start running down to that kitchen once."

As though the Boche had been following their thoughts, a few large caliber ash cans landed near them on top of the hill, sending slivers of steel as big as their arm skimming across the tops of their shell holes. It left no further doubt in Bashman's mind and they settled back in their holes waiting for the shelling to let up.

Some fifteen minutes later it had let up considerably and Dosier decided to make a run for it. The others remained in their holes to see how he would make out. Picking what he thought the opportune time, Dosier jumped up out of his hole and started tearing down the hill toward the gully as fast as he could run. Now it is awkward enough to try to run on level ground with a gas mask strapped up in the alert position, a steel helmet to bounce around on one's head, clumsy shoes, a pistol belt with pistol, ammunition, canteen and other equipment dangling every which way to encumber the runner; but to do this down a rather steep hill and knowing the Boche were not passing up any opportunities to boost you along a little faster with a few shells, was an entirely different matter. In almost no time Dosier became tilted a little too far forward; he tried to run faster to catch up his balance and this didn't seem to help matters. The steps he was taking carried him clear over shell holes but the loose dirt was giving him a considerable side motion that also didn't seem to help matters much. Then, when about halfway to the gully, came the inevitable and diabolical crescendo of the Boche's oncoming encouragement, and just before they broke Dosier, having been gradually falling forward anyway and unable to catch himself, dove for a shell hole directly in front, and what a dive it was! His loose equipment that had been flapping so spectacularly all along, now came loose and went in all directions; his body hit the pile of loose dirt around the shell hole and plowed on through it into the hole just as the shells started to burst.

He recovered, however, and waved to those above. He managed to retrieve his helmet finally and squirmed his way into the gully, then quickly along to where the kitchen was. The others followed, after quite some time though, and were soon leaning close up against the side of the gully, eating their grub to the accompaniment of the shell fragments keeping up a monotonous crackling through the dried saplings and underbrush overhead.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE AUGUST ISSUE OF RAINBOW TRAIL

COMMEMORATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE OHLUNGEN FOREST and the VICINITY OF SCHWEIGHAUSEN and NEUBORG, FR



By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today awarded

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)
FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM
TO THE
222ND INFANTRY REGIMENT

The 222nd Infantry Regiment is cited for extraordinary and outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy on 24 and 25 January 1945, in the Bois D'Ohlungen, and the vicinity of Schweighausen and Neuborg, France. On the night of 24 January 1945, the 222nd Infantry Regiment, under strength by half a Battalion of riflemen, yet necessarily extended over a 7500-yard front, was attacked by five regiments from the 7th Parachute, 25th Panzer and 47th German VG Divisions which were supported by heavy artillery. Ordered to hold at all costs, the Regiment withstood the enemy's desperate bid to break the Seventh Army Moder River Line. Fighting back from ice-filled foxholes, the outnumbered defenders fought off wave after wave of enemy attacking all along the Regiment's front and infiltrating into friendly positions, well behind the Main Line of Resistance. Wild fighting raged throughout the night and well into the next day as the fanatical attackers sought to break out into open country, but every measure was met by determined counterattacks. On the night of the 25th, the frustrated enemy fell back to his original line, leaving the ground littered with enemy dead. Despite the loss of 237 officers and men, the 222nd Infantry Regiment held its position, exacting a heavy toll of men and equipment from the enemy. The courage and devotion to duty shown by the members of the 222nd Infantry Regiment in smashing one of the enemy's principal strategic efforts to reconquer Alsace, are worthy of emulation and exemplify the highest traditions of the Army of the United States.



house. The people in the neighborhood had taken shelter in the cellar when suddenly someone knocked on the door. Everyone was in a panic, but it was a wounded American soldier who was looking for a place to spend the night. People were not very sure if it was a German soldier in disguise and no one slept all night except the soldier. The next day he went back into action very early."



From Damien Bauer, historian, battlefield guide and re-enactor, Alsace, France

28 January 2020

Hi Suellen, I am sending you a first series of pictures of the event I organized on Saturday in the *Ohlungen Forest*. I have a flowerpot in *Neuburg* and in *Schweighouse*. I will send you more pictures in the next few days. I wanted to also tell you that I had the right to access the archive of the town of *Schweighouse* and I have recovered some civilian testimony at the time when 222nd was in the village. I will translate them as I go along and I will send them to you.

5 February 2020

I've already translated 2 civilian testimonials that lived in *Schweighouse* when 222 was in the village I have another one that I'll also translate for you.

"The Moder river served as a front line. We children slept on the potato heap, my parents sat there. Apart from some artillery fire, the days were calm and we children often went to the house next door where American soldiers were stationed, to look for chocolate."

"My great-grandfather remembers that one night an American soldier came to take refuge in their house. The people in the neighborhood had taken shelter in the cellar when suddenly someone knocked on the door. Everyone was in a panic, but it was a wounded American soldier who was looking for a place to spend the night. People were not very sure if it was a German soldier in disguise and no one slept all night except the soldier. The next day he went back into action very early."



On these two pages are some of the photos from Damien taken 25 January 2020.



To Damien and his troop, Our sincere and deep thanks for your dedication, devotion and honor in remembering all who experienced these times, their courage and sacrifice.



THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF – THE SURRENDER OF VEITSHÖCHHEIM, GERMANY

A personal account of Stanley A. McHugh, Major, Military Police Platoon, 42nd Division, as printed in the January 1995 issue of *The Rainbow Reveille*



The morning of **6 April 1945**, an American soldier and a German PW, dressed in civilian clothing, were brought into my office. The American soldier stated that he had been a prisoner of the Germans since December 1944 and that he, with the German soldier, a sergeant, had come from a town on the Main River about 5 miles north of Wuerzburg; that this town was garrisoned by about 125-130 soldiers, and that the SS reinforcements were due to arrive that night. It was the opinion of the American soldier that due to shelling of this town the night before, which resulted in 8 deaths, the garrison would surrender if contact could be made and some semblance of attack to satisfy the commanding officer. The German sergeant verified this; he had donned civilian clothes to get across the river to arrange things with the Americans.



For several minutes, Lt. Snodell and I debated what to do. When the American soldier said there were other American PWs in the town, we asked for volunteers. With Sgt. H.E. Rowatt, PFC M.J. Heuser (interpreter) and PFC E.G. Stoner, we started out for the town of Veitshöchheim. We soon found that the town was on the other side of the river; the road from Wuerzburg to the town was blocked, and the only access would be a river crossing similar to that made by the sergeant and the American soldier. The first part of the trip was on the west side of the river through the towns of Zell and Margetshöchheim. As we rode, we became aware of the lack of white flags and the absence of the familiar G.I. The German sergeant cautioned us not to make a show of our weapons. We drove to the river's edge, where we pulled in behind an anchored barge. We saw no German soldiers on the opposite shore, so we

decided to ride across with two boys who had a rowboat. PFC Stoner was left to guard the two jeeps. On arriving on the opposite shore, about 1330, we approached a large house and barn. The German sergeant asked where the Germans who had been billeted there had gone; receiving no answer, we returned to the rear of the house, opened the gate and were confronted by nine or more German soldiers, who covered us. One of the soldiers halted our group, and we could see that we were also covered by a machine gun from an upper window. A lieutenant asked our mission. Through our interpreter, PFC Heuser, we informed the lieutenant that we understood that the garrison wished to surrender. He was visibly annoyed, gesturing with a grenade he held in his hand. He stated that it was not his intention to surrender. The German sergeant then removed his civilian clothes and put on his uniform, saying it was all right with him if they didn't want to surrender.



left to right: SGT Rowatt, PFC Heuser, PFC Stoner

Through the interpreter, I told the Lieutenant that we treated PWs fairly; I would see that they got a ride back, and that they would have a better chance of living if they went back with us as PWs. Realizing that we had probably contacted the wrong group, I told PFC Heuser that

his knowledge of German might decide our fate. I told him to describe our treatment of PWs as elegantly as he could and to inform the lieutenant that it was hopeless for him and his men to resist further; our forces were encircling the town, and it would only be a matter of time. The Lieutenant then stated that he

would lay down his arms, don civilian clothes and return to his home. I told him that this would be more dangerous for him and his men – that they would be captured and shot as spies. The Lieutenant decided to keep his uniform and attempt an escape. PFC Heuser suggested that it would be better if the decision were left up to the captain of the garrison...whereupon it was agreed to go to the captain. At this time, a group of civilians arrived, one of whom claimed to be the Burgermeister. They wanted permission to put up white flags. The Lieutenant decided against this. We agreed to leave Sgt. Rowatt with the Lieutenant's men, who were piling their weapons in a corner of the yard. PFC Heuser, the American PW, the German Lieutenant and Sergeant, and I started walking toward the garrison CP. Lt. Snodell followed this group by a few yards and was soon leading an aggregation of civilians and soldiers two or three hundred strong.



After walking about a mile, we arrived at the CP. I was told that the captain would see us. We agreed to go into a house, out of view of the civilians. Lt. Snodell and the American PW waited on the outside and were soon joined by a large party of German soldiers and six other American PWs. Lt. Snodell, through the aid of a young civilian interpreter, called to the soldiers and persuaded several of them to influence the captain to surrender. Finally, the captain arrived, listened to our proposition, which included the threat of artillery fire and an infantry attack. The captain was impressed and asked for our terms. I told PFC Heuser to inform the captain that the artillery would shell the town unless we returned to the other side of the river, where we could radio back to Division. As if in answer to our prayers, an artillery liaison plane circled over our heads, adding emphasis to our speech. At the moment, the presence of the plane indicated the possibility of fire on the town as there were no white flags. Our terms were for the captain to gather his men at the river bank and lay down their arms. They would, then, be shuttled across the river to trucks.

Aerial view of Veitshöchheim (Alarmy.com information next page)

Lt. Snodell then informed me that an “SS” soldier had been present and had stated that he was going for reinforcements. Lt. Snodell had told the American PWs of this and told them to pick up the liberated weapons. Lt. Snodell was then rowed across the river to radio Division and to bring sufficient transportation back. The German sergeant then informed us that the “SS” man had returned with a machine gun squad. He was setting up on the railroad trestle overlooking our position with the intention of preventing our crossing. Also, I was told that some of the Germans were picking up their weapons. Hoping that one more bluff would enable us to return across the river, I asked the six American PWs if they would volunteer to get in the boat and attempt a crossing. This they did and were not fired on. Then the German soldiers followed suit. All the weapons were loaded in the boat. This included two heavy machine guns, several burp guns, and innumerable hand grenades, rifles, and pistols. At this time the Burgermeister asked for instructions in order to fully comply. White flags were raised and he thanked us for preventing further destruction. I had instructed the Captain to have Sgt. Rowatt guided to us, but the Captain failed to appear. I decided to cross the river to see if the Captain had re-crossed. PFC Heuser was to bring the last load over.

Arriving on the west bank, I saw Sgt. Rowatt walking down the road with at least 25 prisoners. He said he had been sweating us out, and had exhausted his supply of cigarettes, nerves, and desire for further

experience of this kind. He stated that when the Lt. had arrived to tell the men that the Captain had surrendered, he didn't know whether to get in front as their prisoner or to follow as their guard. He was further startled to see 20 German soldiers, in addition to his original 9 approaching. They readily agreed to lay down their arms and fall in the column. Unable to locate the rest of us, Sgt. Rowatt retraced his steps to the original crossing site, secured boats and completed the evacuation. When he arrived, he found both his jeeps missing. Answering the Germans' questions, he had stated that the men had apparently gone for more trucks. My relief to find Sgt. Rowatt on our side of the river was only matched by the apparent relief in his eyes and face on seeing the rest of us.

PFC Stoner watched, with strong misgivings, as we had rowed across the river and disappeared in the yard of the large house. He suddenly found himself confronted by more civilians who were interested in his presence. They asked many questions, but he could only remember the expression "Nicht verstehen." He thought of turning on the radio, and saw the interest of the people around him. Upon the arrival of Lt. Snodell, Stoner took over the guarding of the first group while Lt. Snodell returned to the CP. While waiting, he collected a couple of more prisoners. When the entire party was across, we located three AA guns, fully loaded, with an ammunition dump nearby. Our experience ended when we arrived back at the CP with 129 prisoners, plus a Captain and Lieutenant, with their weapons and equipment.

[NOTE: Major McHugh, Lieutenant Snodell, Sergeant Rowatt and PFC Heuser were awarded the Silver Star; PFC Stoner was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.]

<https://www.alamy.com/> Image ID: D3NHKC

The photo shows the aerial view of Veitshöchheim/Main, Germany, June 2005. Photo: Thomas Muncke

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