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No. 4

RAINBOW FREES DACHAU FACT OR FICTION?

Did the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division play a major role in the liberation of the infamous prison and death camp known far and wide as DACHAU or is it the figment of the imagination of those Rainbowers who did manage to reach Dachau and have the horrors that existed there indelibly imprinted on their minds?

Through the years a number of vivid articles have been written by various Rainbow soldiers describing conditions as they encountered them upon reaching Dachau, at the same time implying that the 42nd Infantry Division combat troops actually took part in the liberation of those or unfortunate souls who were interned therein and had somehow managed to survive until their rescue.

When the annual reunion was held in West Palm Beach, Florida a few short years ago, a former prisoner at Dachau read of the reunion and took it upon himself to visit the reunion and personally thank the Rainbow men for having saved him, along with a relatively few of his fellow internees who, too, had managed to withstand the starvation and the ever beckoning gas chambers.

All this notwithstanding, Rainbow Veteran Abell Hooton of Versailles, Indiana purchased a book titled "DACHAU," published in 1986 by Thunderbird Press, Metairie, Louisiana and written by Col. Howard A. Buechner, Medical Corps A.U.S. (Ret), wherein the 45th Division is given sole credit for the liberation of Dachau.

In October of 1987 the author autographed the book purchased by Abell Hooton and then wrote to him, advising that the 42nd Infantry Division or any of the 42nd Units did very little in the way of contributing to the liberation.

To quote from the book, "The account of the fall of Dachau contained in the book 'The Liberators' is so inaccurate that it is

actually ludicrous. The writer claims that a Brigadier General Henning Linden from the 42nd Division, along with a handful of staff officers, personally captured the camp by assaulting the machine gunners in the towers with 'rifles blazing'. This account is based on an interview with Lt. Col. Walter J. Fellenz, commander, 1st Battalion, 222d Infantry Regiment, 42nd Division. It is an almost complete fabrication. Unfortunately, it has been adopted as gospel by the Center for Holocaust Studies Documentation and Research, Brooklyn, NY and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles, CA. This report will be considered in detail in Chapter VI."

The author goes on to tell on an unpleasant confrontation with Brigadier General Henning Linden. The incident was reported to Major General Frederick, the 45th Division Commander, who said he would take care of the situation.

"Back at Dachau, the first battalion was relieved by a unit from the 42nd Infantry Division. Perhaps it was this latter relief that gave rise to the false claim that the 42nd Division liberated Dachau."

The author's address is: Howard A. Buechner, M.D., 300 Cuddihy Drive, Metairie, Louisiana 70005, in the event anyone familiar with the circumstances surrounding the liberation of Dachau wishes to correspond with the author, but it would appear that perhaps this particular phase of WW II should be re-examined for the sake of Rainbow History.

MRS. HARRY J. COLLINS 1916-1987

Mrs. Irene Collins (nee Gehmacher), widow of Major General Harry J. Collins, died in Salzburg, Austria on December 26th, 1987, at the age of seventy-one. Interment was in St. Peters Cemetery, Salzburg, on December 31st.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On the night of January 9th, a bad anniversary for many who had been in Task Force Linden, I was reading a letter dated April 17, 1945 from General Harry J. Collins to Edward Weitzel, President of the Rainbow Division Veterans Association at that time. He opened the letter with the following paragraph:

"Sufficient time has elapsed now so I can tell you a bit of our story; as you probably know, in the defensive phase at Gamsheim, Sessenheim, Kilstett, Hatten and Hagenau we lost many of the cream of the crop of our doughboys (35% of total infantry—50% riflemen)—those fine, young, intelligent, strong men; the pick of the division."

General Collins recognized the great heritage of the WW I Rainbow veterans and the value of their Association as a future organizational home for WW II Rainbow veterans. During and after the war he maintained the closest possible ties with the RDVA.

Similarly, a small number of key people in the many chapters of our Association have, since 1919, kept our far flung veterans tied together by organizing meetings and reunions and publishing, usually single handedly, thousands of news letters. These have kept the members informed of good tidings and bad, but collectively have provided the bondage in our strong Association network throughout these many years. We have neglected to thank properly these unselfish men, and often their families, who have contributed so much to our unique organization. So, for all of you secretaries, chapter officers and news letter editors/publishers, thank you from all of us for your superb services. May all of your in baskets be filled with letters from your members and may all of your chapter meeting rooms overflow with old Rainbow soldiers basking in that special glow of renewed comradeship.

My appeal for historical accounts, documents, etc., has resulted in some excellent material. For example, wartime letters from Robert Calhoun (L-222), diary accounts from Robert Held (Recon), official "end of the war" telegram from Charles Rockwood (Hq G-3 Sec) and Bill Clayton's tape of the 1944 Rainbow Band and Chorus and his "Foxhole Religion." Some of this will be published and otherwise made available and all will subsequently be transferred to our archives.

I have been informed of extensive taping of interviews with a WW I veteran with video taping to follow. Much more along these lines needs to be accomplished. Those of you who have undertaken genealogical research may know how precious is an old ancestral wartime diary or battle account. With the archival

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THE RAINBOW REVEILLE
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ARCHIVES: J. William Keithan, Jr.

2226 Eastmont Way West
Seattle, WA 98199

LIAISON OFFICER: Philip F. Trout

4121 8th Avenue, Temple, PA 19560

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Carlyle P. Woelfer

339 West View Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28303

SERVICE OFFICER: Donald E. Downard

Rte. 2, Box 2481-R, Boerne, Texas 78006

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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repository system, organized by Bill Keithan, in place, future historians, researchers and our own descendants will have rich WW I and WW II resources to mine.

In Horace Rose's recent Texas Chapter Rainbow Roundup, Al Sykes (Svc 542 FA) sought to locate anyone who had attended Rainbow University at Zell am See. In George Jackson's October 1987 issue of the BADGE, Rainbow University's Nov. 2, 1945 newsletter "Pad and Pencil" was reproduced and, incidentally, its feature editor Robert Mullins went on to pick up a Pulitzer Prize. Therefore, while you are assembling items for our collection, please send me copies of Rainbow University rosters, newsletter, etc., or just your name, if you were a student there, and I will see that these, too, get into the hands of our Archivist, another alumnus of Rainbow U.

General Collins' wartime letters to the RDVA are part of our historical record and, as I began this report with an opening quotation from his April 17, 1945 letter, I will end with two of his last few paragraphs.

"I cannot say enough about the valiant doughboys who have borne the brunt of the fighting and who have taken and held the ground about which you have read. Nor can I adequately describe the efficiency of my Engineers, my medical personnel, my artillerymen (especially my Forward Observers, many of whom I have decorated for bravery beyond the call of duty), my Signal Corps men, my Quartermaster Company, my Ordnance Mechanics and my Service personnel. They have lived up to the finest traditions of the Division and have many times exceeded the standards which I demanded. How they have done what they have done is beyond me. I pray to God that He may spare them and continue to grant them good fortune.

"For the record, the Division has advanced approximately 375 miles, captured 14,000 prisoners, crossed the Rhine River and crossed and recrossed the Main River four times. Our casualties have been negligible because we have moved where the enemy didn't expect us to, because we have attacked under cover of darkness and because our men know the basic principle of base of fire and maneuver and use their supporting arms to the maximum. With all best wishes and kindest personal regards to you and yours."

Yours in Rainbow,
(signed) Harry J. Collins

Major General,
U.S. Army Commanding.

The following note was added to the

above letter:

"April 19th—we just captured Furth which is the west third of the City c Nurnberg—HJC."

In order "to perpetuate that spirit of comradeship which was the greatest single factor in the success of the Division," as stated in the Preamble to our Constitution, please attend your chapter meetings, write to your newsletter editors, persuade a buddy to join up and COME TO Denver in July.

Until we meet again, Auf Wiederschauen (as they used to say in the Tirol).

Dee R. Eberhart

EDITOR'S CORNER

We don't like to get too serious in our little corner of the world, but it's difficult to be glib when our good friend and Secretary-Treasurer of the Artillery Chapter, PNP John George, is slowly recovering from major surgery, having had a lung removed recently at Tulsa. Let's all keep John in our prayers for an excellent recovery.

Fr. Erb reports from Africa that he is busy; always keeps the Rainbow people in his prayers; and that he doubts very much he will be able to attend the national reunion in Denver.

Laura Craig of Orlando, FL advises she misses seeing all the ladies and would like very much to make it to Denver. Outside of a heart attack, a broken wrist and having her purse snatched, she is doing fine. We hope you have a better year, Laura.

Hopefully Southern California stopped that shake, rattle and roll business long enough for the Mid Year to be successful. If anything of tremendous import took place you'll read about it in the May Reveille.

232D HQ CO REUNION

Plans are under way for a 232d Hq Company reunion in Nashville, TN on October 13-16, 1988. If interested, contact Kennedy Smartt, Box 7095, Chestnut Mountain, GA 30502. Fall colors should be at their best at that time, going to and from Nashville.

R. ALLEN GIBBONS

Information has been filtering in, since a request was carried in the January Reveille, regarding the many years of service and contributions made to the Rainbow Division Veterans Association by R. Allen Gibbons. A sketch will be run in the near future as it is apparent many current members of RDVA, especially those who have become members in the past ten or twelve years, know little or nothing about this gentleman.

HQ & HQ BATTERY DIVARTY

Reunion Chairman Richard Bayles, ex first sergeant of Headquarters Battery Division Artillery, is planning a special get-together of members of that organization at Denver with rooms located in close proximity so you don't have to run all over the hotel looking for an old buddy. Robert Fatout, CO of Hq Bty, is making plans to attend and Chairman Bayles is busy contacting Rainbows with expectations of having the largest gathering of artillerymen from Hq Btry since WW II.

INTERIM JUDGE ADVOCATE

Ted Johnson has been appointed Judge Advocate of the RDVA by President Dee Eberhart to finish the unexpired term left vacant by the recent death of PNP Loyd Matson. For many years Loyd's wit, knowledge and definitive answers added special luster to the Judge Advocate's office.

Ted and Loyd were the first two WW II veterans elected as president of the RDVA for their respective terms. Ted is currently resident of the Rainbow Memorial Foundation and has served RDVA well as Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. He is highly qualified to take over the duties of the Judge Advocate.

THE MEN OF COMPANY K

Bill and Joan Clayton went to the Mid Year in Phoenix in February of 1987 a day early so they could visit a friend there. When their friend learned they were there for a WW II Infantry Division Reunion he gave Bill a book to read, "The Men Of Company K."

While reading and thumbing through the book Bill found a photo of an old friend, Jack Dolan. From the index he got Dolan's address and contacted him upon returning to California. His friend was a member of Company K, 333d, 84th Division, but shipped out from Camp Kilmer on the S.S. Edmund Alexander, the same ship that took Bill and the rest of Company E, 222d, about a month later.

Bill relates there are many things in the book with which anyone who served in a fle company during the Ardennes/Alsace campaign in January '45 can relate. In his opinion, the book is well written and tells it like it was. He says "any former rifleman will realize he was not the only cold and scared GI in the ETO."

MEDAL OF HONOR (Vito R. Bertoldo)

The article published in the January issue of the Reveille regarding the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to Vito R. Bertoldo, M/Sgt. Co. A, 242d Infantry, 42nd Rainbow Division in WW II for his heroic deeds at Hatten, France on 9-10 January 1945 resulted in considerable interest by our readers with several communications reaching the Editor's desk.

Alvin R. Cahoon, Muskogee, Oklahoma, writes that he was a Platoon Sergeant in Company A, 242d Infantry, at Camp Gruber; that Vito R. Bertoldo received his basic training under him at Camp Gruber and, so far as is known, Vito Bertoldo was the only WW II Rainbow soldier to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A copy of the obituary of Vito R. Bertoldo, as published in the San Francisco Examiner on July 26, 1966, has been furnished by Carl L. Gray, Belmont, CA. Vito died in the VA Hospital at Martinez, CA on Saturday, July 23, 1966, at the age of 49, after a brief illness. He had worked for the Veterans Administration in Chicago and subsequently California, but, became a successful landscaping contractor in San Jose, CA, with the assistance of Carl Gray, who was employed by Sears and helped Vito establish credit in procuring the necessary equipment to pursue the endeavor he had chosen.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Vito was the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart and the French Croix de Guerre.

Besides hearing from the above, Morton John Barnard (Lt Col JAGC Ret) of Winnetka, Illinois writes that shortly after his arrival in France in January 1945 he was designated as Division Awards and Decorations Officer and was informed of Sgt. Bertoldo's heroism. He obtained statements from everyone in the 242d, who had any knowledge of what had taken place, and wrote the citation substantially as reported in the January Reveille. As the authority of the Division Commander was limited to Bronze Star and Silver Medals, the material was taken by Awards Officer Barnard to 7th Army Headquarters, where he spoke to the Army Awards and Decorations Officer and insisted he wanted the Medal of Honor bestowed upon Sgt. Bertoldo and would see that he received it, if it was the last thing he ever did.

Needless to say, Morton Barnard was greatly pleased when he saw a picture of President Harry Truman hanging the Medal of Honor around Sgt. Bertoldo's neck.

He further advises he had the privilege of meeting Vito Bertoldo on one occasion after the war, while Vito was working in Chicago, and describes him as having been a very shy person. He had been described by some who knew him as the soldier who was the most inconspicuous person they had known and the one least likely to have acted with such gallantry.

(ED'S NOTE: Such material as we have, including the published obituary, will be turned over to Historian Don Segel and Archivist Wm. Keithan, in the event it is not already a part of their files.)

CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Almighty God, You have provided us a good land for our heritage. We pray that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Your favor and glad to do Your will. Bless our Nation with honest industry and sound learning. Save us from violence, discord, pride, arrogance and every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the many brought here out of oppression and lost hope. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those who, in Your name, we entrust with the authority of government, that there may be justice with peace at home; and that, through obedience to Your law, we may encourage all nations to grant civil liberties to their people.

In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness and, in the days of trouble, trust You to be our help.

Praise be to You, our God and Redeemer. Amen.

Chaplain Raymond H. Willemssen

RAINBOW JEWELRY, ETC.

Marian Benyak, 15806 Thompson Road, Thompson, Ohio 44086 (216-298-3619) does have Rainbow jewelry available. Here is the complete list of items with CORRECTED prices: For the men, Bow Tie \$10.00; Tie Tac \$3.00; tie bar \$3.00; 1" Infantry Pin @ \$7.00.

For the ladies (or men) Rainbow Pin @ \$5.00; Ear rings for pierced ears \$6.00; and Ear rings (screw on type) \$6.00.

The "bow tie" is the cord type placed under the collar with a Rainbow ornament that slides up and down, however, it is \$10.00 instead of the \$3.00 previously quoted.

A SPECIAL BOTTLE OF WINE

On Saturday, April 24, 1982, The Tulsa Tribune printed an article, written by Reporter Marilyn Duck, concerning a lifetime of friendship sealed in a bottle of wine that wouldn't be opened until most of the friends were gone.

Tulsans from the famed WW I Rainbow Division had been having parties for more than 60 years, but there was a special item of business on the agenda at that April 24th, 1982 meeting.

A member of the "Last Man's Club" was to be chosen keeper of the wine.

Paul Havenstrite of Tulsa stated "Every soldier's unit has one—well, not every outfit, but the close-knit ones." Paul said: "I know that fellas in the Civil War had it."

Rainbow veteran Ross Warner bought the wine in Tulsa 25 years ago (30 years ago as of 1987). Originally, the last survivor was to drink it alone, but the club pretty much decided to let the last two survivors share the toast.

On that April night in '82 three men—Havenstrite, Arthur F. Brock and Amos V. Todd—were to draw straws to see who would keep the wine.

The straw-drawing idea came from Mrs. H. Everett Pope Jr., daughter-in-law of the late H. Everett Pope, a Rainbow veteran who died in '82. For years the bottle was kept in Mr. Pope's office and Mrs. Pope had taken care of it since his death, but she was of the opinion it belonged with one of the WW I veterans.

At age 88 in 1982, Paul Havenstrite said: "I'll take two weeks to drink it, I guess."

At last count in April, 1987, there were seven WW I Rainbow veterans still members of the Tulsa Chapter, including those mentioned above.

Tulsa Chapter Secy-Treas. Robert D. Neese failed to mention which one of these gentlemen is the current custodian of the wine. Perhaps he will keep us posted on the whereabouts of the wine and when the field ultimately narrows down to see who is going to drink a toast to his former buddies.

EUROPEAN TOUR

The European Tour is still on for September '88. Phil Trout has room for more Rainbow people. Contact him at 4121 8th Avenue, Temple, PA 19560; or, at the latest, talk to him at the national reunion in Denver. It will be Austria revisited.

1988 NATIONAL REUNION DENVER, COLORADO

Super Bowl XXII is now relegated to pro football's statistical junk pile and all the superlatives the innumerable sports-writers had in reserve to write about John What's-his-name and the Denver Broncos can gather dust for another year, at least. The defeat of the Broncos has, however, permitted our Colorado compatriots to come back down to earth (even though, geographically, they are still a mile high) and get on with the business of making final plans and arrangements to accommodate the anticipated large gathering of Rainbow veterans and their guests for the national reunion on July 13-14-15-16, 1988.

The locale for all the festivities is the Sheraton Denver Tech Center, 4900 DTC Parkway, Denver, CO 80237. Room rates are a modest \$50 per night for single, double or triple occupancy.

There are a total of 623 guest rooms with 24 being equipped for handicapped persons. Most rooms have refrigerators; all have remote control TV and clock radios. Complimentary cocktails daily for hotel guests; complete recreation center featuring pools, sauna, Jacuzzi and lots more.

There is a 24 hour New York style deli; Compari's northern Italian cuisine; Cafe in the Park for breakfast, lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. Lily's Lounge for happy hour and evening entertainment; the Gazebo Lounge for quiet cocktails; retail shops, gift shop, hair salon, shoe shine, car rental, so whatever your lifestyle you will find it available.

The hotel has 22 rooms accommodating 10 to 1500 for various meetings.

The Sheraton Denver Tech Center is situated in the southern suburbs of Denver with a view of the city's skyline to the north and the beautiful snowcapped Rockies to the west.

Busses run at 30 minute intervals from the airport for about \$7.00 per person for the twelve minute ride.

Liaison Officer Phil Trout assures us it is an impressive hotel with a spacious lobby, plenty of seating; and excellent elevator service, which should avoid all the congestion and delays of getting to and from your room.

There is so much to see and do in Colorado it's impossible to list all the attractions. The scenery is beyond description for its beauty. The Air Force Academy, Garden of the Gods and Pike's Peak are all near Colorado Springs. Rocky Mountain National Park is northwest of Denver. If you want to do something you can talk about for years there is the all day train trip by narrow gauge railroad from Durango, Colorado through the mostly abandoned silver mining country. If you

are interested, you should contact either your travel agent or the Durango Chamber of Commerce without delay as it is a complete sell-out every day.

Reunion Chairman Richard Bayles, 2741 S. Garfield, Denver CO 80210 is accepting early registrations at \$35 per person. He also has the hotel reservation forms to assure you of getting preferential treatment and the bargain rate during your stay.

NOW TO GET IT RIGHT. There will be an Early Bird Party, but it will be on the evening of July 13th (the first day of the reunion) and not the 12th, as reported in the January issue.

If you plan to drive there will be a description of route numbers, etc, enabling you to reach the hotel with a minimum of difficulty, in both the May and June issues.

If you drive from the eastern United States, and have never done so previously, don't start looking for that magnificent scenery as soon as you cross into Colorado, but it's there. As the renowned Jack Paar always says: "I KID YOU NOT."

NEW MEMBERS NEEDED

During WW I and WW II our Country called us. We all served Rainbow well and now we need you in the Rainbow Division Veterans Association drive. As of now, we have 1299 (figures in the November Reveille) paid-up members. If you haven't paid dues, please do so and get involved finding others. National dues are \$6.00 per year, plus unit dues.

The Association lost about 134 members over the Rainbow last year and, if we don't continue to locate others, we can't continue to enjoy the Rainbow fellowship we now have. I don't know the average number who leave us each year, but I think it will grow larger as we grow older. We will either go forward or fall backward.

I made about 1,000 contacts. I'm not asking anything of you that I am not willing to do. I challenge each of you to make a few calls and/or write a few letters or visit, if you can, former Rainbowmen who, for one reason or another, have not joined our organization. Many of you are already doing a fine job, but we need everyone involved in getting the Rainbow message across. Just think about the fellowship when you meet an old buddy. This motivates me. Keep up the good work. This, I believe, is what Rainbow is all about.

Dolian Harris,
National Membership Chairman

LIFE IN THE E.T.O.

It wasn't exactly the way Clifford J. Miller of the 2nd Platoon, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 242nd Infantry had ever imagined he would "celebrate" his 21st birthday, which he reached on January 4, 1945 by preparing to enter combat the following day.

About 1800 hours on January 5, 1945, his platoon jumped off on its very first combat mission. Their assignment was to clear the town of Gamsheim and the surrounding woods. They had gone about 1,000 yards when a Jerry machine gun opened up. The 2nd platoon held up while the first platoon went forward and knocked out the machine gun nest and captured four Krauts. The Company Commander then called the rest of the company forward and deployed them in the same position as the 2nd platoon had just taken. The CO then radioed the news back to the battalion CO. About five minutes later the Jerries threw artillery in and, although no one was hurt by the first barrage, one C.J. Miller was plenty scared.

After a brief interlude came the second barrage and the last shell that dropped landed about 15 to 20 feet behind Clifford, showering him with dirt and rocks. That particular shell killed four comrades and wounded six others. The 2nd platoon then withdrew about 200 yards and dug in for the night.

About 0400 the next morning they headed for town and had to fight all the way, but finally reached the town and then the other side and were doing very well until the Germans brought up tanks and artillery and counterattacked. A lot of men were lost and it was again necessary to withdraw to the morning's starting point and were under artillery fire all the way. They remained there three days, expecting a mechanized attack at any moment, but it never came.

The 2nd platoon was finally relieved by fresh troops. When the 2nd platoon regrouped, there were only 13 men left, having started out with 40.

They then went to Rittershofen, where they remained for the night. The next morning they again took off, destination "Hatten." The mission was to clear the town of snipers. They made it into town safely and were clearing buildings when there was a loud rumble. A quick look out a window disclosed dozens of German tanks headed their way. One got within 200 yards of the house Clifford was in and was still coming when a bazooka put it out of action. The artillery, TD's and bazookas got so many of the tanks the remainder withdrew.

After staying in Hatten that night and the next day, during which time the enemy was pounding them with artillery, in-

cluding white phosphorous, they withdrew to Rittershofen and bedded down for the night, but were awakened by artillery falling on their position. The Germans had managed to get tanks into town and were really firing, necessitating a hasty withdrawal to Neiderbitsdorf. There they dug in with orders to hold or die; they were not running any farther. Quite a strange feeling to know you can't run; it's do or die.

After two days Clifford's group relieved the 3rd Battalion on their left in the Hagenau forests. They ran patrols and remained on the defensive. On one such patrol they encountered the Germans' main line of defense and were immediately caught in a crossfire and were outnumbered probably three to one, but kept going and finally reached Ginsenhausen, their objective. They had covered about nine miles that day.

Just as they entered town and turned a corner they found themselves "face to face" with a German 88. He was run out of town by small arms fire and then reached a bridge the Germans were ready to blow up with about 600 to 700 pounds of TNT and dynamite, but the Rainbow men foiled their plans and took the bridge intact. All night long the Germans tried to sneak in and blow the bridge, but they were annihilated on each attempt.

The following day the balance of the 42nd forces came up and Cliff and his comrades started out to find their own company, which was 18 miles to the south and still pushing. They were reunited at Donauworth in time to get back into combat. At that point the Division lost a number of tanks and a lot of men. The survivors pushed on to the Danube River, which was anything but blue.

The engineers constructed a bridge across the Danube, which had to be protected against air attacks for a couple of days. The Rainbow troops then proceeded along a super highway into Munich on tanks and captured an airfield on the far side of Munich, where several planes and about 1500 enemy soldiers fell into the U.S. hands. Victors and vanquished slept together that first night without an armed guard. The Americans came in that night, tired and cold, so they went to bed. Upon awaking the next morning there were Germans all over the place, anxious to surrender, so the enemy forces of 1500 turned themselves over to the Rainbow contingent of approximately 100.

From a small town outside Munich the Americans moved on to Manhoron, where they remained for four days until receipt of the wonderful news that Germany had

surrendered. The platoon was then sent to Lota to occupy it and, after four days, moved to Transtein. Two days later they moved to the Alps and relieved the 36th Division, which was holding and occupying the area. The entire company was then sent to Mulbach, a small town in a valley surrounded by beautiful mountains and that was the first opportunity Clifford Miller had to reflect upon the rough four months since his birthday and legally becoming an adult.

V.A. SURVEYS VETS ON BENEFITS

The Veterans Administration has begun a major survey to gather and update data on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the nation's 27.6 million veterans.

The survey will provide information on both users and non-users of VA medical and benefits programs. The study is of particular importance since VA's normal administrative records provide information only on veterans who use the various programs. The results will enable the VA to monitor the effect of current benefits and to estimate the impact of proposed program changes. The last such survey was conducted in 1979.

The U.S. Census Bureau, which is doing the survey for the VA, will conduct in-depth interviews with 10,000 men and women veterans over the next few months. Interviewees will be selected from participants in past Census surveys and will be contacted directly.

First results of the \$1.5 million survey are expected to be available by the middle of 1988.

A SOLDIER, 18, AT DACHAU

As an eighteen year old combat infantryman attempting to survive back in December of 1944, along with thousands of other young American men, Sam Platamone experienced the usual hardships of front line duty. Thirty-three consecutive days of exposure to a frigid winter and a persistent enemy led Sam to believe that he had survived the worst that life had to offer. He soon reached a different conclusion.

In the early afternoon of April 29, 1945, his unit, the 222nd Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Rainbow Division, spearheaded into Germany's oldest death camp, Dachau. The sights his eyes beheld that day, scenes that a normal person would have had difficulty fantasizing, are indelibly imprinted in Sam's mind forever.

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TOTAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP 1-30-88

CHAPTER	LIFE	MEMBERS	TOTAL 1987	TOTAL 1988	MEMBERS	LIFE
Huntsville		61	61	35	35	
Montgomery		6	6	0	0	
Phoenix		14	14	13	13	
California	6	39	45	44	37	7
Colorado		11	11	24	24	
Washington, DC		24	24	27	22	5
Clearwater		25	25	26	20	6
Orlando	3	15	18	17	16	1
Atlanta	1	10	11	11	10	1
Illinois	1	44	45	36	36	
Indianapolis		8	8	0	0	
South Bend	1	24	25	19	18	1
Iowa State	2	65	67	62	60	2
Chanute (Kansas)		10	10	4	4	
Dodge City-Pratt		4	4	5	5	
Northeast (Maine)		17	17	21	21	
Baltimore		17	17	14	14	
Detroit	1	80	81	71	65	6
Minnesota		50	50	68	68	
MO-KAN	1	24	25	25	25	
St. Louis		20	20	14	13	1
Lincoln (NE)		6	6	7	7	
New Jersey		0	0	16	16	
OHIO STATE & 132D	1	130	131	123	122	1
MUSKOGEE		17	17	1	1	
Oklahoma City	4	7	11	7	3	4
Tulsa		23	23	19	19	
EASTON, PA		8	8	8	8	
LANCASTER		10	10	11	11	
Philadelphia		11	11	19	19	
Reading		26	26	24	24	
Charleston (SC)		9	9	17	17	
Memphis		8	8	6	5	1
Dallas		93	93	90	89	1
Richmond (VA)		5	5	5	5	
Roanoke		6	6	6	6	
Appleton (WI)		0	0	0	0	

UNIT CHAPTERS

222d Infantry	22	486	508	371	345	26
"M" Company		34	34	27	27	
Hq Co 232nd Inf		16	16	1	1	
1st BN 232nd	3	127	130	113	110	3
2nd BN 232nd	2	83	85	92	90	2
3rd BN 232nd		58	18	49	49	
242nd Infantry		228	228	175	171	
Artillery	2	153	155	143	139	3
122nd Med BN	4	51	55	40	40	
Med Det Spec Trps		11	11	11	11	
142nd Combat Engr		20	20	21	19	2
MP Platoon	6	34	40	39	33	6
42nd Recon	3	10	13	15	12	3
Division Band		23	23	24	24	
National At Large		37	37	24	24	
Life (Not Claimed)*	55	0	55	40	0	40
TOTALS	118	2354	2417	2080	1953	127

THEN AND NOW

In 1943, in addition to being in the army, here are a few things to jog your memory: A 3-BR home cost \$3600; today \$78,843. Average income was \$2,650; today \$29,896. No new Fords available in '43. Today \$9,940. Gas was 21¢ (if you even had a car) and in '88 it's 95¢ or more. A loaf of bread cost 9¢ and a gallon of milk ws 62¢. Oh, yes, a G.I. got \$50.00, less insurance, laundry, allotments, etc.

Rainbow Div. VA and Memorial Foundation,
c/o Hugo E. Grimm, Publishing Editor
P.O. Box 200
Lake Sherwood, MO 63357
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As a result of that day's trauma, his anger mounts whenever he picks up newspaper quoting some pundit, who, in many cases, was not even born before WW II ended, but who imagines himself knowledgeable enough to proselytize that the Holocaust was and is a myth—a Zionist ploy to extract reparations from Germany.

Since the world has an abundance of bigoted people, who easily subscribe to this type of preaching, Sam considers it his duty to describe what he saw on that fateful day 42 years ago—hoping, of course, to polarize readers to the truth as he saw it.

On a railroad siding just outside the camp, a train, comprised of 50 box cars containing 30 prisoners each, recently arrived from Buchenwald, served as a harbinger of the hell the Rainbow men would be introduced to beyond the wall.

The SS in charge of Dachau had allowed the train to remain on the siding a number of days without providing food or water for the prisoners. Consequently, many had died of exposure, malnutrition and dehydration.

Rather than grant the few survivors the ecstasy of liberation as the Rainbow units approached, the SS mounted heavy machine guns along the siding and fired into every locked box car. Some prisoners managed to escape from the train, but were methodically gunned down as they ran.

Within the camp of 33,000 prisoners, 2000 more inmates lay dead, shot down by SS who singled out important prisoners, those individuals against whom they held personal grudges, and others for reasons known only to them.

Because of the Germans' stalled war effort, the camp had run out of coal with which to stoke its incinerators. As a result, the buildings adjacent to the ovens were overflowing with stacked bodies of gassed victims for whom liberation had arrived too late.

Man's inhumanity to man continues. Countless people are still dying needlessly throughout the globe. Nevertheless, it is wrong to pretend the Nazis did not perpetrate the Holocaust.

(From an article appearing in the Diocesan paper at St. Luke's parish, Temple City, CA.)

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