



RAINBOW DIVISION
Veterans Memorial Foundation

Chairman's Message — May 1, 2008

ALL RAINBOWERS, THIS IS A MUST READ ARTICLE. In January of this year, Pete Pettus was contacted by a resident of Dachau, Germany. Herr Ludwig Stoeckl, a master jeweler and goldsmith, knew that our Rainbow Division liberated his town in 1945. The story that follows is a very abbreviated version of the outgrowth of that contact. Mr. Stoeckl's father was also a goldsmith and a staunch anti-Nazi who was severely discriminated against for his political stance. Following the war, Mr. Stoeckl has enjoyed the benefits of living in a democratic society, and he directly attributes his good life to the intervention of the American people in WWII. When we began to intercede in Afghanistan and Iraq, he supported our cause, and learning of the poor conditions resulting for some of our troops and their families, sought to help alleviate or mitigate those conditions. Accordingly, he created a jeweled Purple Heart replica of gold and diamonds to be utilized in some manner for raising funds to support our troops and their families. By the time we became informed enough to want to participate with Mr. Stoeckl, time constraints forced us to act more quickly than could be done through the Board of Trustees. An *ad hoc* Internet-connected committee of seven persons (myself, Jim Clemons, Pete Pettus, Romeo Fagiolo, Dick Tisch, Ken Carpenter and Dee Eberhart) was quickly formed. With Jim Clemons doing virtually all of the "heavy lifting," and with the rest of us operating in an *advise and consent* role, we are now at the following juncture.

In a sizeable ceremony scheduled for June 15 in **Fredericksburg Virginia**, the mayor of Fredericksburg, invited 42nd Rainbow (Mech) representatives, Congressional invitees, our own people, re-enactment actors and a military band and honor guard will all witness Mr. Stoeckl presenting the jeweled replica to our representative. We, the RDVMF, will, in turn, present it to representatives of the Virginia Holocaust Museum for permanent safekeeping and display. This event will receive international publicity (at least in the U.S. and Germany). We need all of you Eastern Seaboard denizens to get to the ceremony if you can do so. To help make this possible, Jim Clemons has arranged for lodging at **Fredericksburg Hospitality House with a \$75 rate**. Use the code "**42nd Veterans PHJ event**." The phone numbers are 800-682-1049 or 540-786-8321. One may also Google Fredericksburg Hospitality House for location and reservation information. Yet to be accomplished is the final delineation of the structure and process for our organization to systematically provide support to the families of the 42nd Rainbow (Mech) troops who have already returned from Iraq, as well as those troops still there. The need has neither created nor is it going away. I know that there are troops from the "Fighting 69th" still deployed, and it is my understanding that the 50th Brigade based in New Jersey will soon deploy 3,000 more troops. These are National Guard troops, and there are bound to be families that need our help. Be looking for information on our RDVMF site (www.rainbowvets.org) and in each issue of the Reveille requesting contributions.

This report will be reaching you very late in the game, but we have no other complete coverage method available for disseminating news important to all of us. We are intending to spread this information through our RDVMF Web site and by contacting each other through e-mail whenever possible, so this will be old news to some of you. P.S. Salt Lake City is closer than you might think. REGISTER NOW. Ted Simonson, Chairman

REVEILLE

VOL. LXXXVIII

JUNE 2008

NO. 5

Rainbow Online: www.rainbowvets.org

CAMPAIGNS

World War I: Lorraine-Champagne-Aisne-Marne-St. Mihiel-Meuse-Argonne.
World War II: Central Europe-Rhineland-Alsace-Ardenne.
War on Terrorism: Operation Iraqi Freedom.

42nd Rainbow Foundation July 16-20, 2008

Red Lion Hotel, Salt Lake City, UT

TUESDAY, JULY 15

Early Bird Reunion Registration Open

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

7:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.

PNP Breakfast

Scholarship Committee Meeting With Working Lunch

Memorials Committee Meeting

Auxiliary Bazaar

Reunion Registration Open

Reunion Welcome Remarks and Opening Cermeony,
Followed by Early Bird Party

***Everyone is urged to be present for the opening ceremony at 7:30 p.m. ***

THURSDAY, JULY 17

Reunion Registration Open

Audit Committee Meeting

KENNECOTT COPPER MINE (description follows)

Auxiliary Executive Committee Meeting

Auxiliary Bazaar

Constitution and By-Laws Committee Meeting

Budget Committee Meeting

Membership Committee Meeting

Auxiliary Business Meeting

Reunion Registration Open.

Additional hours will be posted at the reunion if needed.

MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR REHEARSAL
(description follows)

FRIDAY, JULY 18

Auxiliary President's Breakfast

Trustees Meeting

Auxiliary Bazaar

Luncheon

CITY TOUR (description follows)

Auxiliary Bazaar

Unit Dinners

SATURDAY, JULY 19

Auxiliary Bazaar

Auxiliary Secretaries Meeting

Memorial Service

PNAP Luncheon

Joint Business Meeting

Catholic Church Service

Protestant Church Service

Chairman and President's Reception

Banquet Dinner

SUNDAY, JULY 20

Farewells and Departures

New for 2008!

Register Online and Pay by Credit Card
www.armedforcesreunions.com/42inf

Cutoff date August 1, 2008, for September 2008 issue.

THE RAINBOW REVEILLE

Official Publication of the
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Memorial Foundation

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THE RAINBOW REVEILLE

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Chaplain's Message Reveille

Almighty God, we ask your blessing on us as we gather in Salt Lake City to remember and celebrate the heritage of Rainbow, in World War I and World War II; in the aftermath of the infamous "9-11" attack; a year in Iraq, and other assignments as needed for National Security. As citizen-soldiers, veterans and active duty, along with our spouses, may we always consider it a privilege to help to keep our country the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave." Amen

Norman P. Forde
Rainbow Chaplain

Ken,

It must be at least partially a matter of age — in 3 months I will be 84 — so I forget as much as I remember!

We are planning to go to Salt Lake City — we have our plane ticket and hotel reservation. So now if my health holds out we will be there. I don't know if Chaplain Olsen or anyone else from Troy will be there. I have a time trying to pin him down to get any information from him.

Norman

Original In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields, the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields*

Memorial Day Tribute

*"They answered their country's
call to arms,
Into battle they did go.
Where their
final destination was,
No one will ever know.
May their final resting place,
Under some unknown sod,
Be forever hallowed,
For it is known
only to God."*



Over the Rainbow

Julia H. Sturgeon, 58, of Ely, Iowa, passed away Friday, March 7, 2008, at Mercy Medical Center, Cedar Rapids, from breast cancer. Memorial Service: 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, 2008, at St. John Lutheran Church, Ely, by the Rev. Jeff Borgwardt. Family greeted friends from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, 2008, at Murdoch-Lindwood Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Cedar Rapids.

Survivors include her husband, Donald; her children, Sharron Sturgeon of Bloomington, Indiana, Suzanne Sturgeon and husband Nandor Sebestyen of Ely and Theodore Sturgeon of Ely; a sister, Jeannine (Bill) Prince of Southlake, Texas; two brothers, Jeffrey (Susan) Johnson of Marion and James (Julie) Johnson of Cedar Rapids; and a number of nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Julia was born February 24, 1950, the daughter of Theodore and Shirley (Storm) Johnson, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. On August 5, 1972, she was united in marriage to Donald Sturgeon. Julia was a senior administrative assistant at Rockwell Collins. She was a member of the St. John Lutheran Church, Millennium Chapter of Rainbow Division Veterans Association and the Iowa Association of Administrative Professionals.

Donations in memory of Julia may be made to St. John Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 165, Ely, IA 52227 or to Rainbow Division Memorial Fund in c/o Jon Janosik, 3389 Kingston Lane, Youngstown, Ohio 44511.

March 15, 2008

Open Letter to all Life Members

Dear Friends:

First, we wish to thank you for your many years of membership in our Rainbow Association and Foundation.

Second, as you may have heard our membership has fallen, due to deaths and serious health problems to a current level of slightly more than 800, of whom about one quarter are Life Members. Thus, the income from the remaining members who pay \$10 annual dues is expected to cover our increasing operating expenses, especially for printing and mailing the REVEILLE. Postage rates keep going up, while our income from dues keeps going down.

Therefore, even though you are under no obligation to do so, we would appreciate it if you would send a tax deductible contribution, in an amount of your choosing, to our Foundation Treasurer to help meet our annual operating expenses. If you are willing to do so, your check should be made out to RDV Memorial Foundation, c/o Jon Janosik, Treasurer, 3389 Kingston Lane, Youngstown, OH 44511.

Yours in Rainbow,
Herbert A. Butt, Secretary

The Farmhand

Continued From April Issue

Before anything, I had to check on the soldiers. They were up the hill and across the road. Going there I had to threaten the dogs to get them over their barking fit.

I couldn't imagine what they were doing there. And another question: What they might have expected from our house. With all the animals around they had to know the place was inhabited. A barefoot 13-year-old male human wearing well-worn cut-off bib overalls greeted them. It never occurred to me to have any fear of the troops. At that time I wanted to be in the military. I just knew I would be perfect at fighting Germans or Japs, or wherever they needed me.

"What are you fellers doing?" I was nosy.

"They put us here to guard this corner, you know, let the command know if anything is coming."

"Looks like not much happ'nin'."

"Will be before the day is over. This place will be crawling with troops in a little while. We got here ahead to scout and guard this road." The men were sitting on the ground with their helmets off. They had cut saplings and made a wall around their enclave.

"Your guns. I don't see no guns." I was disappointed they didn't have rifles or something to make them more soldierish. They had backpacks, helmets, and water canteens, but soldiers without rifles were a letdown.

"Those wooden sticks are what we have to use for now. There aren't enough real rifles to supply the whole Army just now," the corporal said.

"Sam, my brother joined in 1940. He had to learn to march in the same britches he took with him for three weeks before he got regular Army clothes. They were short on stuff back then. I guess they don't have that fixed just yet. Huh?"

"You got it, kid. They say they will have plenty of stuff when we get to Europe into real fighting. You got a brother in the Army, have ya?"

"Well yeah. There are two more in. One is in the Marines. I guess that's kind of like the Army. You know, the clothes are a lot alike."

The troops seemed to warm to me when they found out my people were also in the military. The one who did the talking asked, "Where are your brothers stationed?"

"Sam is in Midland most of the time. He's a B-17 mechanic. Bound to be the best one they have. He was the best mechanic around here before he left. The Marine one, Tom, he's in El Toro, California. I'm not sure what he does. But he's a Marine. I've heard Marines are mighty tough. The oldest brother John is in North Africa. He's a P-40 pilot. In case you don't know, that's the fastest thing. He's already shot down one ME-109. Before he's done over there he'll have a bunch more. Them Germans'll be sorry they met him." I was proud of my brothers and what they were doing.

"You live here long?"

"Yeah, I reckon. I was born in that house. You folks had any breakfast?"

"We're OK. We got what they call K-rations."

"What about if I fixed some scrambled eggs?" I hadn't eaten and had to make something for myself.

The troops looked at each other. Our house didn't look like much good could come from it.

It was originally a two-room structure that two more rooms had been added to the backside of it. The first house was built in 1890 and had never been painted. Would a meal from there be worth eating?

"Let me fix you some eggs and I'll bring them to ya. You don't like it, you can throw it out. The dogs like eggs," I said.

"Can't beat a deal like that. Go ahead, kid."

My new name was Kid. I hurried down the hill to the house. The only thing I knew how to cook was breakfast. I planned to be eating mostly breakfast food while the parents were away.

We had a new kerosene stove so getting a fire was much easier than the old woodstove. Bacon was the first thing into the skillet. It had been cured in the winter and was getting rank. Close to rotten might have been a better description. But it was all I had for meat and I had plenty so I cooked more than I thought they could eat.

It took awhile but I got up the hill with bacon, eggs, tomatoes and gravy for the soldiers.

"You might not like the bacon. It's all we got." I was worried that Army fare might be better. But I'd heard the K-rations were filling but not tasty.

After a few bites the men went after the food. "Hey, kid, this is mighty good. And that bacon has just the right amount of seasoning. Where'd you learn to cook?"

"I could always cook. I wondered if you would take to the bacon. It's stuff we make here. You know, cure it and smokehouse it." I was enjoying their compliments.

There was bacon left and the gravy bowl had a lot left, but I'd made a lot. The dogs growled at each other as they gulped down the leftovers.

"You feed the dogs gravy, leftovers, all the time?" the corporal asked.

"They're just dogs. They get what we don't eat or what they catch."

"How long will you fellers be here?"

"Quite awhile. Might be other people come to take our place. We'll have a battle right soon. Today or tomorrow."

"A battle?"

"It's a sham battle. A fake battle. Be some guys come and try to sneak up on us, you know, outsmart us, and take us out. They will be wearing yellow armbands. You see us, we're wearing reds. We're called the reds." "If you guys are here in the morning, you want another breakfast?"

"Bring it on!" The closest one patted me on the back and said, "One of these days you're gonna be a great chef!"

"What's a chef?" I never heard of such.

"That's a high-powered cook!"

I was beside myself. I was finally getting to help fight the war.

I watered the animals and collected tomatoes. My tomato pile was such I took more to the people on the hill. I was excited about all that was happening and hated to take the time to walk the goat pasture fence. But I did. It was noon and time to get the mail when I was through with that. I liked going to the store. With the fresh news of the Army coming, there would be much to talk about.

When I got to the store, the people who ran the place, my aunt, uncle and cousin,

already knew about the soldiers. They were everywhere. I was disappointed my news wasn't news anymore. Even so, life couldn't be better.

Across the river was crawling with military people. There were a huge number of six-wheeled trucks plus lowboys to haul bulldozers. I moseyed down to the high bank overlooking the river. The Army, along with other things, had found a place to train people at building pontoon bridges. Luckily, the river was in a docile state that would allow such things.

Sometimes it wasn't. Rains could change the size of the river in hours. In a short time the stream could go from being easily fordable on a horse to a muddy, boiling, mass of water over a half mile wide.

Where we lived was one of the world's beauty spots. Near the Cookson store the blue water flowing from the Oklahoma Ozarks crossed a long stretch of white gravel. Stretching to the south and west from there was a 100-yard-high bluff of blue and white flintrock. The beauty of the place was not something the people who lived there recognized every minute. It was all we saw. But it was hard country in which to make a living. This fact made the beautiful landscape less important.

I was glad they picked a perfect place for the bridge. It was across an eddy just upriver from the millrace. The off ramp from the bridge to be was never where an earlier road had been scooped out of the riverbank. The crude road was steep with sharp turns. A local jokester put up a sign that said, "Speed Limit 55." The vehicle drivers using the steep inclined road had to stay in low gear and punish the engine to get upon the plateau above the river. Five miles per hour was the maximum speed for the short, torturous, one-lane road.

The soldiers were busy. Upriver they were unloading the wide-bottomed boats that would be the pontoons for the bridge. On my side of the river they tied a heavy line to a big sycamore and strung it back across, connecting it to the winch on a six-wheeled truck. The line would keep the bridge from being washed downriver. Then they floated the olive colored boats into place and tied them together. There was much yelling. Getting the bridge done in a hurry was important. I was fascinated watching the construction. The plowing of the corn had to be put off another day. There was too much important stuff happening for me to be burdened with boring farm work.

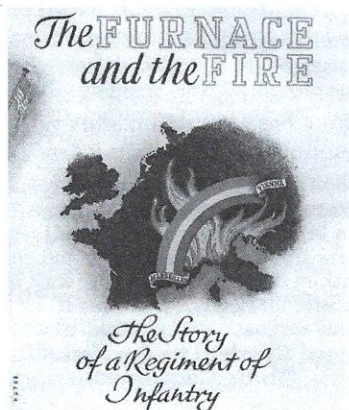
By mid-afternoon the bridge was done. Like a supervisor, I watched from the high bank, marveling at the crossing. The boats were tied together and secured to the line crossing the river that held everything in place. Then they laid out the wood planks across the boats that would be the road.

First across was the command car. It was a vehicle larger and spiffier than a jeep. The seats were full sized, cushioned, and covered with leather. The car ground its way up the steep incline and stopped not far from me. A major and sergeant dismounted to watch as the jeep and six-wheel trucks crossed.

(To Be Continued)

Letters

From Fred Buck, son of David G. Buck, Cannon Co., 222nd Inf. Regt. (2/25/) My father co-wrote the history of the 222 in WW2 which was published in Austria in 1946 when he was part of the Army of occupation at that time. He left the service as a corporal, and was a forward observer and translator during active service. I have his copy of the history, titled "The Furnace and The Fire," in which he noted which passages were written by him and which by his fellow writer, "Muddy." (3/5/08) I know my father would want to make the book accessible to anyone interested in the history of his regiment in WW2. If you think it's legal and would be a worthwhile addition to your archives, let me know. I'm a retired letter carrier, and work part time in our local museum digitizing and restoring photographs and documents in the collection, so it's a simple task to do that with the 222 book. [ed. Since then, Fred has made a number of copies on CD of his father's own book and has sent them to the Millennium Chapter as gifts to other members who would be interested in owning it. If you are, please send your mailing address to Suellen McDaniel, 1400 Knolls Dr., Newton, NC 28658-9452; and if you can, include a small amount for shipping expenses. Thanks to Fred, this book, long out of print and extremely expensive to purchase in rare book-stores, is now available to everyone in Rainbow.] (4/18/08) from Mr. Clifford Clark, Cannon Company, 222nd Infantry: "Dear Suellen; Yesterday I telephoned and asked you whether the book put on tape by Fred Buck was an official document. I called Lou Kramer last night. He believes the book written by David Buck is the official history of the 222nd during the European campaign. He agreed that the 42nd Division probably had permitted, maybe even encouraged, printing of such documents by local publishers. He had received a copy of the original book some time ago. Therefore, it seems accurate to say that the book was written by David Buck, under the direction of the regimental commander, who might be considered as co-author and whose picture is in the document. Best wishes, Clifford D. Clark"



From: jmac1400@aol.com

To: spske-s@att.net

Subject: for Ken Re The Rainbow Reveille

Date: Sat., 3 May 2008 15:51:47 +0000

A story from Arnold L. "Arnie" Crouch, H2B-242. It was printed in Reminisce Magazine in the October/November issue 2007.

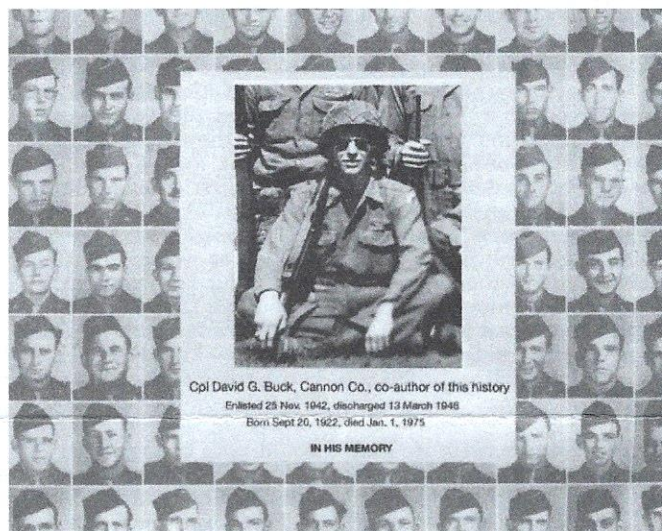
"When the USS General Williams S. Black docked in Marseille, France, on December 8, 1944, its passenger list consisted of the 242nd Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Infantry Division (the Rainbow Division) — which meant I was on board.

"Shortly after we had sailed from New York, I came below decks to find the platoon gathered around Lt. Cornelius J. Sullivan, our platoon leader. "Sully" was slicing what appeared to be a block of light-colored cheese and handing pieces to the guys

"When we had boarded the ship, we had been given mail that had been accumulating for us, and I assumed Sully had received a package from home and was sharing his cheese with us. Being a chowhound, I made sure I got a piece of that cheese.

"As soon as Sully handed me a slice, I took a huge bite — and immediately gagged! He was distributing 'salt water' soap to be used for washing up on board, as no fresh water was used for that purpose. It took quite awhile for the laughter to die down."

Plan your next roadtrip with MapQuest.com: America's No. 1 Mapping Site.



IN FLANDERS FIELDS The Pledge

*In Flanders Fields the cannon boom
and fitful flashes light the gloom
While above, like eagles, fly
The fierce destroyers of the sky;
With stains the earth wherein you lie
In Flanders Fields.*

*Sleep on, ye brave, The shrieking shell,
The quaking trench, the startled yell,
The fury of the battle hell
Shall wake you not, for all is well.
Sleep peacefully, for all is well.*

*Your flaming torch aloft we bear,
With burning heart an oath we swear
To keep the faith, to fight it through,
To crush the foe, or sleep with you
In Flanders Fields.*

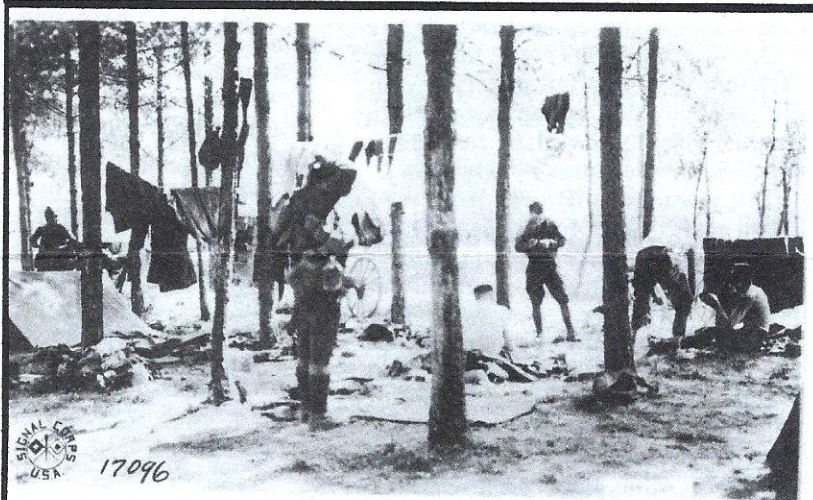
— By Charles B. Galbreath,
State Librarian of Ohio in the same year, 1915, wrote this reply, a prophetic
pledge to use the world's resources for the defense of stricken Belgium.



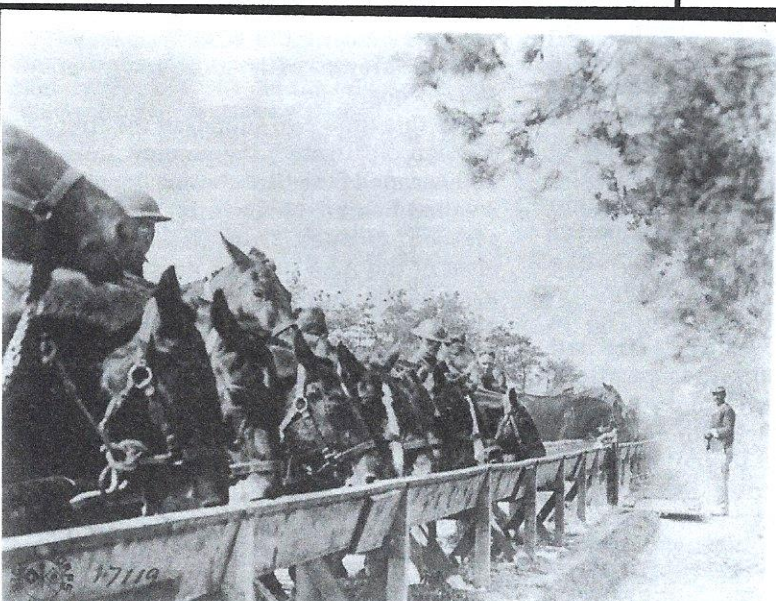
Patrol of 165th Regt. Inf., formerly 69th Regt. Inf. N.Y.N.G., entering presumably evacuated town in search of hidden machine gun nests and prisoners. Lamarche en Woevre, France, Sept. 14, 1918.

Capt. Dickinson's daughter, Margaret "Peggy" Fleming, born on the eve of the Battle of the Champagne was officially designated "Rainbow Girl" by MG Harry J. Collins during the reactivation of the 42D Division in July 1943. She is now making the CDs available for sale to all and these may be ordered for \$12.00 (incl. S&H) from:

Kay Wells,
PO Box 53, Culleoka, TN 3851
Home, 931 687 2258
lemaymare@yahoo.com



Camp 3/5 168th Infantry, formerly 3d Regt. Inf. Iowa, N.G., and 151st Field Artillery, formerly 1st Regt. F.A. Minn. N.G., 1918 Division are quartered in woods with 2d line trench through. Near Guippes, France, July 8, 1918.



Waiting horses of the 149th Field Artillery, 1st Regt. F.A. Ill., 42d Division. Camp near St. Etienne, France, June 1, 1918.

COMMEMORATION – 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENDING OF THE GREAT WAR 1914 – 1918

A preliminary schedule of events from French historian, Lise Pommois:

1. **Verdun:** show in June and July
2. **Nonsard** close to the US cemetery in Thiaucourt (near Montsec):
13 September historical show
3. **Montfaucon** (not far from the other US cemetery Romagne or Meuse-Argonne): there are four dates: 26 and 27 September - 3 and 4 October.
4. Exhibition about the Saint Mihiel salient, Meuse-Argonne offensive - Lafayette Escadrille, the ambulances in WWI, the Americans in the Foreign Legion etc: from July 1 (dedication July 4) thru' the end of December in **Verdun**.

p.s. The shows are in the open and they involve light and sound, so I imagine they'll be at night. More information later

These three photos are part of the personal collection of Captain Jacob McGavrock Dickinson, Jr., 149th Field Artillery of the 42d Infantry "Rainbow" Division, WWI. Some of the 120 photos were captioned by Capt. Dickinson, whose personal collection was placed on CD following the request of French historian, Lise Pommois, author of "In Search of Rainbow Memorials" and "Winter Storm/War in Northern Alsace November 1944 – March 1945". They will be part of the 90th Commemoration of the End of World War I, the Great War in displays in Europe this summer and fall.

Able Company/232nd Infantry At Drusenheim and Sessenheim

(Excerpted from the History of Able Company - a typical rifle company which had glorious days, discouraging days, happy days and sad days but had the satisfaction of knowing it had done its job to the fullest extent of its abilities).

Drusenheim was to be a memorable place in the minds of every man in the company as it was here that A company really entered combat for the first time. After dismounting from the Ducks that had brought us here from Kilstett, we slept in an abandoned dance hall. The next day we moved into billets while half of the company prepared defensive positions on the outskirts of town. So far it looked like the same type of situation that we had enjoyed there, after relieving elements of the 36th Division. We found out differently on the second day when two P-47s bombed directly across the river. That morning, the Germans struck.

The town, actually, was separated in two parts by the Moder River which at this point was little more than a stream. The Germans first hit a detachment of our men who had crossed the stream to prepare defensive positions on that side. Eventually, these men were forced to withdraw to our side of the stream in order to solidify our main line of resistance. The force of the attack subsided after several days, but the town was kept under shellfire during our entire stay.

The siege of Drusenheim lasted eleven days for Able Company. On the eleventh day, we were relieved by the 2nd BN, of the 314th Infantry of the 79th Division. It is to the credit of Able Company to say that the battalion that relieved us was subsequently heavily decimated shortly afterward. For all of the fierce fighting that took place at Drusenheim, we had suffered a minimum of casualties. In the meantime, we had ten times in Germans over our casualty rate that we were certain of plus those undetermined. Thus we left our first battleground with added confidence in ourselves, and a much better idea of what this thing called combat was all about.

After leaving Drusenheim, we moved further north to the town of Soufflenheim. Now, the company was divided which caused future prob-

lems. Shortly before we left Drusenheim, our first platoon had moved to Roschwoog. We all considered this as a comic episode because, as we got the story, the town had been taken with one shot to make it official. However, that town was to be a death trap for the first platoon, because when they later withdrew after being almost surrounded, they left an entire squad behind, which was captured.

At this time, the main body of the company was in Soufflenheim where we spent the night. The second night, the third and fourth platoons went south of the town; supposedly to aid Company I of the Third Battalion. When we arrived, I Company did not need them, but they stayed the night, sleeping in a fortified troop shelter which was part of the Maginot Line. The next morning, trucks were sent to take the two platoons back to Soufflenheim.

Meanwhile, the second platoon had gone to Sessenheim, about a mile east of Soufflenheim. Their mission was to aid B Company which had taken a terrific mauling but still managed to hold the town. The Germans had put bridges across the Rhine at Sessenheim. As a result, the Germans were throwing everything they had against the town in order to drive south and form a junction at Drusenheim with the forces advancing from the Gambsheim bridgehead.

After the third and fourth platoon arrived back in Soufflenheim, they were incorporated into Task Force Custer which was made up of elements of the 1st Bn. and the remnants of L Company, and were going to the aid of the second platoon and B Company who were fighting together in Sessenheim against the 7th Parachute Division and the 10th SS Panzer Division. The second platoon was in the Sessenheim woods east of the town when the Task Force arrived. The third platoon fought their way into town and the fourth joined two mortar sections from D Company around the edge of town to give supporting fire. There was no supporting artillery. The mortars drew heavy artillery fire and were forced to seek other positions southwest of the town where they dug in along with the fourth platoon. Here, they were subjected to another heavy artillery barrage. After the artillery had lifted, they moved into town to be greeted by a third barrage. By this time it was apparent that the Germans had every house and every blade of grass "zeroed in".

Our third and fourth platoon plus the A&P platoon and the D Company mortarmen acting as riflemen were organized into another task force with the mission of retaking Stattmatten;; for all practical purposes another section of Sessenheim because they were so closely joined. The Task Force then moved to the east end of Sessenheim but were pinned down by a terrific artillery barrage. When this ended, two German tanks emerged from the woods, accompanied by another artillery barrage. By now dusk had descended so we took up defensive positions for the night. During the night, the rumble of enemy vehicles gave evidence that the enemy was being reinforced. This became evident when the enemy attacked at dawn.

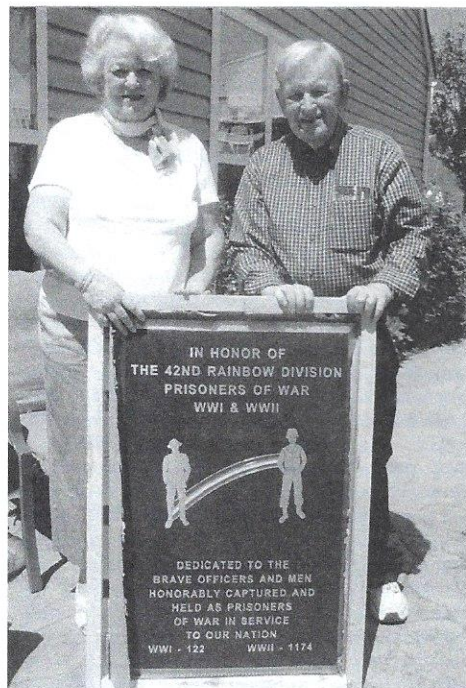
The defensive setup at this time had the Task Force still defending the forward edge of Sessenheim with our second platoon in the woods along with K Company defending our right flank. The rear of the town was defended by B Company which had some forty odd men left in the company. Our left flank was being protected by our first platoon, in the town of Roschwoog. C Company was in the town of Runtzenheim doing the bulk of the work as left flank security. When the enemy attacked on the left flank, in overwhelming numbers K Company withdrew. Our second platoon was forced from the woods to the cover of the town. This left Sessenheim surrounded on three sides. The enemy drove into town from the right flank and forced B company and some second platoon men out of town. Later that night, the encirclement of the town was completed along with the town of Roschwoog.

At this time, two squads of the first platoon infiltrated the enemy lines and escaped from Roschwoog, leaving a squad behind. Meanwhile, the third platoon escaped from Sessenheim. Most of the A&P platoon escaped but most of the fourth platoon and parts of the second and third platoons were missing in action.

The following day, the 3rd battalion of the 314th and two battalions of the 103rd Division (410th and 411th Regiments) along with six tanks of the 781st Tank Battalion counterattacked but were strongly repulsed. This occasioned a withdrawal by the entire 6th Corps to new defensive positions along the Moder, including Haguenau.

Tommy

The poem "Tommy" by Rudyard Kipling, is from a different time, 1862: a different country, Great Britain, and almost a different language, English Cockney; yet it is right on the target concerning American veterans and all Americans today. "Tommy Atkins" is the British equivalent of the American G.I. Tommy Atkins is the speaker in Kipling's poem. The speaker is calling our attention to the disparity in the value that the citizenry places on its soldiers. The disparity is the miserable treatment accorded the soldier and ex-soldier in peacetime, contrasted with their treatment when the winds of war are blowing or, as Tommy puts it, when "there's trouble in the wind." Kipling's tribute to Tommy is relevant today, because in 1997, more than 100 years after it was penned by him, an American "Tommy" wouldn't have to look too far for modern day examples to support his disparity contention.



Plaque to be installed at Andersonville.

— Tommy —

By Rudyard Kipling

I went into a public house to get a pint o' beer

The publican 'e up an' sez, "we serve no red coats here"

The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die

I outs into the street again an' to myself say I:

O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy go away,"

But it's "thank you Mr. Atkins," when the band begins to play,

The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,

O it's "thank you Mr. Atkins" when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,

They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;

They sent me to the gallery or round the music 'alls,

But when it came to fightin; Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy wait "outside;"

But it's "special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide,

The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,

It's special train for Atkins when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep

Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;

An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit

Is five times better business than

paradin' in full kit:

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy 'ow's yer soul?"

But it's "thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll,

The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,

O it's "thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too.

But single men in barracks most remarkable like you.

An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,

Why, single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints;

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, fall be'nd"

But it's "please to walk in front sir" when there's trouble in the wind.

There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind!

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all.

We'll wait for extra rations if you treat us rational.

Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face

The widow's uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "chuck him out, the brute!"

But it's "saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, and anything you please;

An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool — you bet that Tommy sees!

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March 1, 2008 — April 30, 2008

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