



RAINBOW MILESTONES 2023 April - June

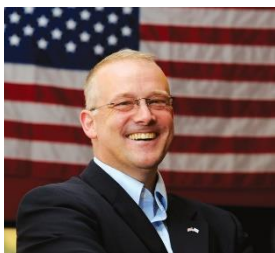


REVEILLE

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CAMPAIGNS

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



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Greetings all – I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. This past quarter was another filled with history-making events and more achievements towards progressing our foundation charter.

To maintain the momentum, I remind everyone that it is scholarship season yet again. Tammy Moss-Hicks, the new RDVF Scholarship Program Chair, is preparing the committee for another round of scholarship awards and we are looking forward to distributing as much of the programmed \$30,000 as possible. I hope you have spread the word to all of your college aged RDVF descendants. This program is one of our hallmark events each year and is such an important way to promote the legacy of the RDVF to the next generation. I look forward to the committee's report and recommendations. To learn more about the program please go to the link (<http://www.rainbowvets.org/rdvf-scholarships>) and download the scholarship application and instructions.

Pat Chaisson continued his amazing work digitizing and capturing the 42d ID and RDVMF historical documents. With the help of Suellen McDaniel, he was able to have the 68 WWII Camp Gruber era Rainbow Reveilles fully digitized and the quality is superb. Pat was also able to go to Washington DC's National Archives to digitize as many 42d ID documents as possible. He was able to scan 68 pages of WWI-era documents covering a wide variety of orders, instructions, and commendations, and another 609 pages of WWII combat narrative, staff section reports and other important historical documents. This is very tedious work and serves to help preserve and make easily accessible our Rainbow history. Thank you, Pat and Suellen, for your untiring work!

Work also continues towards the selection of a new website management company and the full redesign of our current RDVF website. As many of you know, this is long overdue and very much needed. I want to apologize to those who have had recent poor experiences with the current site, to include our membership portal. These current website issues only further solidify the need for us to make this important change. The process is taking a bit longer that we would like, but we want to be sure we select the right firm so we are able to fully meet the needs of the Board and membership. Please be patient and if you have any questions, please alert our REVEILLE editor, Suellen McDaniel (contact information on p. 2 of each issue) and we will do our best to answer.

42ID WWII Veteran John Janosik turned 100 years old on May 30th! And thanks to so many friends, family and generous RDVF members, John had a wonderful time celebrating. Check out the story in this edition for a full update on the festivities!

It was a poignant Memorial Day this year as we remember so many of our comrades who gave their all in the name of freedom. On June 7th there was a funeral ceremony at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in France where they honored a WWI Unknown Soldier of the 42ID.

Deadline for OCTOBER 2023 REVEILLE IS 10 OCTOBER 2023

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Patrick Macklin, contact info above

Gifts payable to RDVF (see page 8)

and DUES FOR RDVF MEMBERS (\$25./annually;\$50.LIFE
for WWII veterans; \$200.LIFE for all others)

Oise-Aisne American Cemetery is the second largest WWI military cemetery located overseas and contains the remains of over 6,000 Americans with approximately 600 of them being unknown. This was a very moving ceremony presided over by United States Army Chief of Staff, General McConville. Attending as a representative of the 42d Infantry Division was CSM Corey Cush who made the trip to France as one of his last and most important acts as the

Division CSM. A video about the services can be found at

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/887544/hero-with-no-name-burial-wwi-unknown-soldier?fbclid=IwAR2d3ySQM73dbSZ2msr-vOX9AW1APZwuTbiCmjdvmoWsQ6B4co1YvtBFj8>

Until the next time, I wish you all a very happy Independence Day and the very best for the remaining summer days.

Rainbow, Never Forget! Gary Yaple, RDVF Chairman

Photo captions Page One

Photo One – On 20 April 2023, Ludwig Stoeckl and Rainbow veteran, Bud Gahs accompanied by Evelin Stoeckl carry the Rainbow Wreath for presentation at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site on the 78th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of the camp. *photo credit: Ludwig Stoeckl*

Photos 2 and 3 Memorial Day Commemoration at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, Seringes-et-Nesles, FR. **Photo 2** – Cathie Jarvis and her son and daughter-in-law, Trey and Chelsea honor Cathie's great-uncle, Emet Bingham, Company E, 165th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Division, whose photo is inset.

Photos 4 and 5 June 7, 2023 service for WWI Unknown Soldier at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.

Photo presentations 2-5 are by French Photographer, Beatrice Dahm

ABOVE photo: New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Major Corey Cush, the senior enlisted leader for the 42nd Infantry Division, salutes the remains of a World War I Soldier which were interred at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery on June 7, 2023. *Photo credit: courtesy NYARNG*

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Each year and with more and more frequency I receive calls from families seeking to honor and bury a veteran parent, grandparent or occasionally child who has died. Being a retired Army Chaplain, they seek my services, looking for both direction on how to honor their loved one well and to access the world which so defined the now departed. They arrive with stories, photos, fond memories, and regrets, sharing all in an attempt to celebrate the values of life's meaning while grieving. They are at a loss, attempting to hold on to that which has slipped away. It seems I come recommended, having remained visible in the veteran community as one who can both provide a service to channel their grief and represent the Army world that once occupied a strategic place in their loved one's soul.

When we say the phrase "never forget", we do so seeking meaning and resolve on several levels. We want to remember the reasons why one entered into the service, why and where they served, the part they played on the world stage, even if only a small cameo appearance. We seek to understand the impact of the military experience and the cascading effects it had upon those who lived it and those who lived with those who lived it. For war is a defining moment where metal is tested, values forged, faith either confirmed or destroyed in disillusion. No one leaves untouched. When we say "never forget", we challenge ourselves to contemplate our victories, failings, wins and losses in the hope that one day we might live in peace and ideally study war no more.

At the close of every memorial ceremony, as the flag is folded, the bugle plays the familiar mournful lament of Taps, we stand in silence. We bear the heavy silence knowing our responsibility. Then the flag is passed to the family with gratitude from the nation and those who serve her. We collectively receive the flag and with it the responsibility of remembrance and rededication. It comes to us to hold the flag and what it represents with all its failings and successes. It falls to our all too human hands as it did to those who now rest in Peace.

Eric Olsen

Chaplain Col. Ret.

Former 42nd Division Chaplain

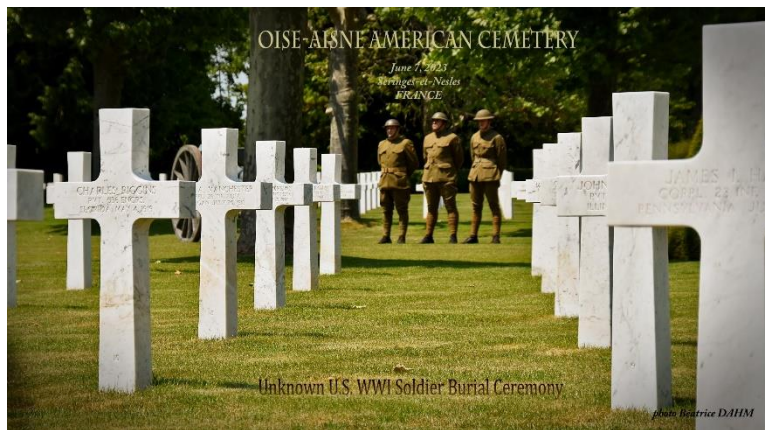


RESTING IN ETERNAL PEACE:

A Rainbow Soldier Lost in World War I Is Buried with Honor

By Patrick J. Chaisson

RDVF Historian



A soldier who fought and died with the Rainbow Division during World War I has recently received a proper burial with full military honors after lying forgotten for over one century.

On February 8, 2022, a French undertaker named Jean-Paul Feval was digging in the Villers-sur-Fère village cemetery when he uncovered a partial skeleton and several bone fragments



along with several metal items dating back to the First World War. Among these artifacts were the remains of a 1917 steel helmet used by American troops; U.S. uniform insignia buttons; a model 1917 trench knife; a metal cross arm of an American-issue stretcher; remnants of a round United States Army identity tag; and U.S. issue .30 caliber ammunition dated 1917.

Feval quickly notified local authorities, including the Office National des Anciens Combattants (ONAC), a government agency charged with identifying and interring French war dead. The months-long process of verifying this fallen soldier's nationality could now begin.

Renowned Great War archaeology expert Yves Desfossés, working with Oise-Aisne American Cemetery Superintendent (and Rainbow Division descendant) Bert Caloud, recovered the remains and studied the archeological artifacts found alongside them. Based on Desfossés' analysis, French officials issued a written determination that this was the gravesite of an American soldier.

Meanwhile, historians with the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) consulted the wartime memoir of Army Chaplain (MAJ) Francis P. Duffy, which describes the burial of U.S. soldiers from the 42nd "Rainbow" Division in the location where the remains were discovered. Officials established that he was likely a member of the 165th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Division, killed in July 1918 during the fight for Villers-sur-Fère.

On January 11th, 2023, ABMC received official notification from the Secretary of the Army declaring this individual an American Unknown. Burial was authorized at the Oise-Aisne American Military Cemetery, just four kilometers from where the soldier's remains were found in Villers-sur-Fère.

In a well-attended ceremony held June 7th, 2023, the Unknown Soldier was reinterred at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery. Present were a number of dignitaries representing both the French and the United States governments.



In his remarks, Gen. James C. McConville, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, said that "today we gather here to honor the remains of an unknown, American, World War I soldier."

"He was a hero because he embodied the values of courage and honor," McConville added. "He was a hero because he fought for a purpose that was greater than himself. "And he was a hero because he gave the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield for the cause of freedom."

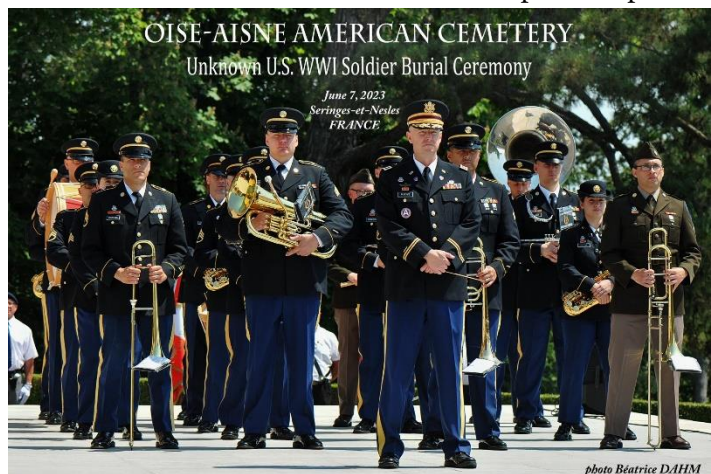


A casket team of paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade then carried the Unknown Soldier to his final resting place in the Oise-Aisne American Military Cemetery. After a rifle volley, "Taps" was sounded and the ceremony concluded.



The Rainbow Division was represented at this event by Division Command Sergeant Major CSM Corey Cush. According

to the 42nd Infantry Division's website, Command Sergeant Major Cush was deeply honored to attend and show his support for the Soldiers of the Rainbow Division both past and present.



Unfortunately, M. Jean-Paul Feval had passed away before he could witness the ceremony. His role in preserving the Unknown Soldier's remains was recognized by several speakers.

Bert Caloud later told this author that "Oise-Aisne American Cemetery now has 6,013 burials, 598 unknowns, and 241 names on our wall of missing." Caloud went on to say that The Unknown Soldier is "reunited with his brothers as if he'd been here 100 years as well."



In a press release, ABMC officials said this ceremony marked the first burial of an unknown U.S. soldier from World War I since 1988, and was the first burial at Oise-Aisne since 1932.



Those artifacts found with The Unknown Soldier's remains are now preserved at the nearby Chateau-Thierry Monument. However, the flag that draped his casket was presented by Gen. McConville to the mayor of Villers-sur-Fère as a gesture of friendship between the American and French peoples.

The Unknown Soldier received two Purple Heart Medals.

The first one was put in the casket with his remains and has been buried with him. The second, which was engraved "The Unknown Soldier", was pinned on the casket by Gen. McConville and will remain at Oise-Aisne American Military Cemetery.



There, on ground fought over by men of the 42nd Rainbow Division over 100 years ago, a newly-installed grave marker memorializes in honored glory the final resting place of an American soldier known but to God.

All photo presentations are by French photographer, Beatrice Dahm

Photo 1 – French reenactors from the group Poilu de la Marne evoke a haunting tribute as they observe the service.

Photo 2 – Mathieu Baudoin, Oise-Aisne Cemetery Associate, presents a Rouge Bouquet to The Unknown Soldier on behalf of Team Oise-Aisne and in honor and remembrance of SGT Joyce Kilmer, 165th Infantry Regiment who wrote this time-honored poem in tribute to the fallen of Company E, 165th Infantry March 7, 1918 and whose grave is also in this hallowed ground.

Photos 3-5 – French and American dignitaries (top), Gen. James C. McConville and Oise-Aisne American Cemetery Superintendent, Bert Caloud (USMC, Ret.) pay tribute (center); and procession of followers and pall bearers of The Unknown Soldier to the grave site.

Photo 6 - This band was from the US Army Forces Europe/Africa based in Sembach, Germany.

Photo 7 – Gen. McConville presents the folded flag to the Mayor of Villers-sur-Fère, Dominique Deleans.



Photo 8 – Three French re-enactors from the group Poilu de la Marne wearing WWI American Uniforms with the 42nd Division shoulder insignia fired 3 salutes from a WWI French 75mm field gun. The US Army adopted the French 75 during World War I and used it extensively in battle, designating it the M1897.

Photo 9 - A five soldier color guard from the 173rd Airborne Brigade based in Vicenza, Italy carried the US and French National Colors with the US Army Color.

Photo 10 – In this bi-plane flyover, the name of the French pilot was Thierry Roussel. His biplane was a WWI Nieuport 28 with the squadron marking of the 95th Aero squadron - Quentin Roosevelt's squadron with their insignia "The Kicking Mule" painted on it. That was the same type biplane in which he was shot down and killed.

Captions for photos 8-10 are by Bert Caloud.

The traditional ceremony to commemorate the storming and capture of **CROIX ROUGE FARM** by the 42nd "Rainbow" Division on July 26, 1918 will this year take place on 22 July 2023 rather than 26 July, the actual date of the battle and victory.

A Rainbow THANK YOU!
SHARING THE DAYS OF
CELEBRATION of a Wonderful Life
John Janosik's 100th Birthday
 From Laura M. Kramer



Thank you so much for allowing us to share this special event with you. I just wish you could have joined us. None of us expected the turn out and the fun would be so big!



the race that ended up being postponed.

So, Wednesday Uncle John had dinner with Josh Kramer. Thursday, we had dinner at his favorite Restaurant with 7 others who came in, including Zack Cook, Jimmy Kramer from North Carolina, and Matt Kramer his other great-nephews. Matt is our back up when Jim or I can't be there for Uncle John. Those two have a very special bond. As Uncle John has with Jimmy because when Jimmy was in town, he took care of Uncle John and his doctor appointments. I'm telling you, I don't know what I would have done without Uncle John and his devotion to my sons. When I had to work, Uncle John took my place at school functions, sport functions and anything else the boys could have thought of.

On Friday we had a pizza party with family pictures out at my brother in law's farm (Rick his nephew and his wife Janie). We all took pictures with Uncle John and our families, but they have not come back yet. The rest of the gang from North Carolina came in - His niece Sue Cook, his great-niece Ashley Lowe and her husband Rich, and their 3 kids, the first great-nephews and niece, Hunter, Sawyer, and Savannah Lowe. Also, Zack's with Paige and their daughter Sunni Cook came in. Uncle Johnny was the oldest at 100 and Sunni was the youngest at 11 months old.

That Saturday we went to church where our small choir sang to him after mass. He cried. It was beautiful. The family - all 20 of us - gathered at a restaurant where we had a celebration and all kinds of fun for the kids. It was a wonderful night and Uncle John loved it. The best gift he could get is the chance to watch all his family together and see the kids having fun and the adults having just as much. It was wonderful and he was just overwhelmed.

Sunday we were going to have a family dinner, but it turned into so much more. Our local Veterans Administration got the ball rolling, and he came to present Uncle John with a flag and some proclamations from our mayor, county reps and the VA. He called the local TV stations and newspaper, and they came and interviewed him. It was amazing. We learned even more. He shared all about Rainbow and showed them the maps and told them stories. They were there over 2 hours. Oh, he was just in his glory. We received videos from his family in Slovakia and all over the US. We showed him the videos and some of the cards he received. His great-nephew Nate (Nathaniel Kramer) is a Staff Sergeant with the Vienna Reserve Air Base in town. He just got out of the Air Force this past year. He is the one who presented Uncle John with the gift from the President, Governor, and Rainbow.



Monday was Memorial Day and we gathered as a family to celebrate. We gave him his cards (were around 170 cards) and someone from the school where he taught for 35 years posted his birthday to their class reunion site. You cannot imagine the letters, notes, cards, and postings we were able to share with him. Oh, if you could have seen him. He just cried that so many old students reached out to him. The letters were funny and the accomplishments that the students have made just take your breath away.

Tuesday was his actual birthday. We reached out to his old church friends and invited them to his house to visit. You cannot imagine how many came. Most were in their 80's and 90's, but for those friends of his who are no longer here, their children came. You had to be there to experience the love and laughter we all shared. He was very involved in the church here and ran most of the events of the church, fund raisers, was choir director and oversaw decorating the church weekly. Even the old florist who used to do the flowers came. This was all by word of mouth.

It truly was a wonderful week. I believe it opened the eyes of my kids to see just how many lives he touched and how the good people do is never forgotten. If you saw the letters from Rainbowners and their kids to Uncle John, you would see how much you matter. They wrote to him about the cards he sent, the memorials others made in their loved one's name to Rainbow and about the reunions. One whole family, all three daughters of one of the men who passed away about 10 years ago wrote to him and shared their memories. You have made a difference in our lives too. We thank you again and again. For all you do.

Photos are shared by Laurie Kramer.

Photo 1 – the family of John Janosik on his 100th birthday

Photo 2 – John Janosik, veteran of the 132nd Signal Company, 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division WWII

Photo 3 – John's great-nephew, S/SGT Nathaniel Kramer presents him with gifts received from the President of the United States, Governor of IL and the 42nd “Rainbow” Infantry Division.

RETURN TO DACHAU 2023

Erin Faith Allen



"I live because of your army. I live because of your deeds."

These two sentences carry the tremendous power of what the great men of the Rainbow Division took part in on April 29th, 1945.

When the Americans opened the gates of Dachau, they saved lives - and they opened the doorways for life itself in the form of the children and grandchildren of the prisoners. That's no small thing.

In the photograph, you see Damir, Emilijan, and Bud. The man behind Bud is Damir, and he is the grandson of Emilijan. He had been telling Bud his grandfather's story:

After too many months in captivity behind the barbed wire fence of Dachau, and having witnessed the most horrific atrocities imaginable, Emilijan was mostly dead when a GI found him in the dirt and saved his life. If the Americans had arrived any later, he would not have survived. He spent the next three months in a coma recovering from the years of unspeakable brutalities he had endured.

Thankfully, he did survive, and has lived many decades of life. His grandson Damir is devoted to him, to his story, and to the gratitude they both feel for the Americans who freed his grandfather.

At 98 years old, Bud was the sole representative of the Rainbow at this year's 78th commemoration of the liberation. Dan Dougherty of the 157th Regiment, 45th Division was the only other liberator present.



The memorial staff outdid themselves to welcome Bud, and we were so honored to spend time with the eighteen survivors who attended the commemoration events. There are no words for experiencing history through the eyes of this generation who experienced so much, and it is an utter privilege to

be in their presence.

When Bud carried the Rainbow wreath and laid it with reverence at the memorial ceremony, he also carried a bittersweet weight in his heart and his mind: the men of the mighty Rainbow Division who walked, laughed, fought, and bled beside him all those years ago.

[Ed. Note: Bud's 99th birthday was on 25 June 2023 – Happy Birthday, Bud, and thank you, for so much!!!]

Photos are provided by Erin Faith Allen

Photo 1 – Dachau camp survivor Emilijan, his grandson, Damir and Bud Gahs

Photo 2 – Erin Faith Allen and Bud, 78th Anniversary Commemoration of the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp

Dachau Liberation Commemoration

Robert Munson

The U.S. Army's 42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division reported on Sunday, 29 April 1945:

[The 222nd Regiment's] 2d Bn reached DACHAU [at 1300]. After enemy resistance was broken the 2d Bn entered DACHAU and captured the famous concentration camp which contained approximately 32,000 political prisoners. The inhuman sights that were seen there cannot be adequately described. Thousands of dead bodies were found in boxcars, the incinerators for burning the bodies were still operating, and thousands of inmates were walking around on skeleton legs. ...

At the time, my father was an 18-year-old infantryman in the 42nd but his company was in division reserve, still moving towards the area. At midnight he arrived and then spent the next two days about 10 km (6 miles) to the south in the small town of Allach. Here, the division liberated a small sub-camp providing labor to the near-by BMW aircraft engine factory. Like many World War II veterans, my father never talked much about what he experienced during the war nor those two days near Munich.

The German Nazi regime opened the Dachau Concentration Camp in 1933 shortly after seizing power. The Nazis initially put political prisoners in the camp, but its uses expanded over time. By its liberation, the whole Dachau camp system had imprisoned over 200,000 people of whom about 41,500 were killed or died. On the morning of the 29th of April 1945, the soldiers of the 42nd Infantry, 20th Armored and 45th Infantry Divisions put this camp out of business and liberated the prisoners, some near-death.

I came to Dachau almost eight decades later to participate in the ceremony marking the 78th Anniversary of the camp's liberation. I had the honor of participating as a member of the delegation of the US Consulate, Munich, headed by the Consul General Tim Liston. I work as a civilian for the US Army's 21 Theater Sustainment Command (Kaiserslautern, Germany), but I am also a retired US Air Force officer. I wore my uniform to the ceremony as a tribute to the American soldiers who liberated the camp. One of these veterans from the 42nd, Lockered "Bud" Gahs, attended the ceremony. As a private, he served in the 222nd Regiment during the liberation and now returned to the camp.

The Dachau organizing committee filled the weekend with events ranging from discussions and interviews to solemn religious services and small commemorations at certain points, such as the crematorium. However, the weekend centered around the main ceremony on Sunday morning. This ceremony, like many in years past, strove to honor the memory of the people who perished in the camp but also keep alive the knowledge of what happened so, as many participants stated, it won't happen again. Speeches by dignitaries underscored the significance of the day, but short statements by the few survivors present brought poignancy to the event.

RAINBOW FIFTIETH

By Elizabeth Spencer, wife of
Chester W. Spencer H2B/222
On the Occasion of the 1995 Rainbow
Tour on the 50th Anniversary of V-E Day,
the End of World War II in Europe

*Rain today, all morning long.
Sunday morning in Dachau the camp
April thirtieth, 1995
steadily it came down upon us all,
speakers, listeners, wreath-bearers,
come to honor those who remain
steadfast.*

*There, as ceremonies were ending
we stood, umbrellas dripping,
in a circle, around the courtyard of the
camp
where they once walked or fell
where they were walking,
remembering.*

*The 42nd, who took this death camp,
had returned.*

*Then, as we went out, passing through
the gates,
the rain stopped, as we went on.
It was as though the tears of the
departed
were being shed upon us,
for us, and all the future generations.*

*Do they, can they, tell what lies
ahead of us,
ahead of our grandchildren?
Will the grandchildren stand here,
after another fifty years have passed,
remembering?*

Karl Freller, a member of the Bavarian Landtag (state parliament) and one of the key speakers, brought the commemoration forward to the present day. He spoke of the Russian and German assistance for the Ukrainian military by emphasizing that “if the Americans had not been armed, Dachau would have never been liberated.”

A Polish-American and survivor of Dachau was one of the last to add a few words. He was born in Poland and survived twelve concentration camps and the Warsaw Ghetto twice as a young man during the war. He lost his whole family in the camps and after the war immigrated to the US. He spoke briefly of his experiences, but he emphasized that he is proud of the efforts Germany has made to heal the wounds caused by places like Dachau.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, many groups placed wreaths in remembrance. I assisted in the placing of the American wreath provided by the Consulate, closely followed by Ludwig Stöckl laying the wreath for the 42nd “Rainbow” Division Veterans Foundation.

I wore my Air Force uniform as a tribute, but it also served as a connection to others who recognized it as an American symbol. A Kurdish man from Turkey thanked the US military for all “we” have done. I met a Slovenian man whose father had survived Dachau. I spoke at length to a man whose father, a Jewish German man, had been imprisoned in four camps during the war. At the very end, this man was on a bus with four others on their way to be executed. Soldiers from the 42nd stopped the bus and freed the men from their Nazi captors. I met an Italian partisan who had been liberated from the camp. Meetings I will never forget.

Throughout the morning, I spoke to other Americans who happened to come to the Dachau site during the ceremony, some tourists, some living in Germany. I saw American and Polish Scouts, the young and the old, visiting and trying to understand the atrocities which happened in the camp but were ended 78 years ago by the US Army. I had this military connection, but also the personal connection to my dad as a soldier in the 42nd who likely witnessed some of it. The Dachau Commemoration revolved around a terrible phase in German history but underscores how memory can also improve the future.



Photo from Bob Munson

US Consulate Delegation with the 42nd RDVF Wreath

From left to right: Sergeant Kevin Carta, Gunnery Sergeant Jonathan Wyche, Lockered "Bud" Gahs, Robert Munson (USAF retired), Sergeant Kaleb McVoy, Lance Corporal Joseph Kahlich

FOLLOWING MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

The Liberation of Dachau

Judy Brookover

I had the unique privilege to visit the Dachau concentration camp in Germany this last May. I'd like to share my impressions of my visit and memories of the stories my father told me as one of the liberators of the camp on April 29, 1945.

My father, William L. Butts, was a cadet at Oklahoma Military Academy when he was voluntarily inducted into the US Army, 42nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, 42nd Infantry/The Rainbow Division, on April 15, 1943. He was 18 years old. His parents, (my grandparents) William S. and Ruth Butts, saved the letters he wrote home from Europe from 1943-March 19, 1946. My grandfather also served in the Rainbow Division in WW I.

My father rarely spoke about his experiences during WW2. In 1993 he transcribed all of his letters and wrote a history of his father's service in the Rainbow Division during WWI, and of his experiences during WW2. My son, Joe Brookover, visited Dachau in 2009. On May 27, 2023, I achieved my goal to visit some of the places where my father was stationed in Germany, including the Dachau concentration camp.

Dachau was one of the first camps built by Nazi Germany on March 22, 1933. It was initially intended to confine Hitler's political opponents, and it is located on the grounds of an abandoned munitions factory northeast of the medieval town of Dachau in southern Germany, north and west of Munich by about 10 miles. It was intended to be a forced labor camp, and included 100 subcamps, Arbeitskommandos. Eventually, Dachau also imprisoned Jews, Romani, German and Austrian criminals, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and foreign nationals from countries that Germany had invaded and occupied. The camp area had 32 barracks, including one for clergy who opposed the Nazi regime, and one for medical experiments. A total of 2,720 clergy, mostly catholic, are recorded as imprisoned at Dachau. Adjacent to the camp was a larger area used to train Hitler's SS troops. This area included a crematorium and a gas chamber, which still stand today.



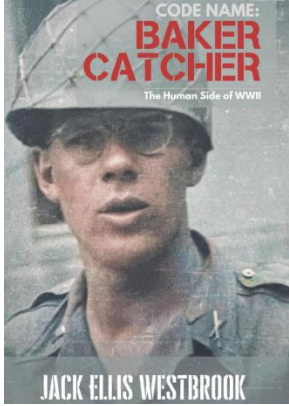
The following information has been directly copied from my father's notes:

“About April 29th (1945) we moved to the vicinity of Dachau where the infamous German concentration camp was located and took over a house for the night. That evening several of us walked toward the camp where our men had taken four prisoners, 2 SS and two other Germans in non-military uniforms. Lt. Harsh had gone back to the HQ and we were debating what to do with them when a captain from an American armored unit came up in a jeep with a Sgt. driving. The Capt. said they would ‘take care’ of the prisoners. He then gave the 2 SS men shovels and told them to start digging. Several of us sensed what was happening and went back to the house. Later Sgt. Hall returned to the house and told us that the Capt. and Sgt. had forced the Germans to dig their own graves then executed them with their pistols. The two non-military men had begged for their lives to no avail but the two SS men were defiant to the end. We were all sickened by the incident but it was nothing compared to what was to happen the next day.

The next day one of our trucks came by to take us to the concentration camp for a ‘tour.’ I was on the radio and disappointed that I couldn't go but later thankful that I hadn't seen it after hearing from those who went. They were literally sick from the sights.”

I felt humbled, honored and proud to visit Dachau and honor my father, all of the soldiers of the 42nd Rainbow Division, and all of the victims of the Holocaust. I will never forget my visit to Dachau, and the sacrifice that my father and all of the soldiers, past and present, from the Rainbow Division made. I am thankful that the site has been preserved and that a tragic part of world history will not be forgotten. Hopefully it will never happen again. **Photo of T/5 William L. Butts is from Judy Brookover**

Code Name: Baker Catcher



By 1LT Jack Ellis Westbrook
2nd Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 222nd Infantry Regiment.
Just published June 14, 2023; available at Amazon; 239 pages

There are thousands of books in the marketplace about WWII, all interesting and full of information on the most notorious war in history. So why read another?
At the request of his children, Jack began to pen his memories of serving in the Anti-Tank Company, 222nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd 'Rainbow' Division, beginning with officer training school and ending with his return home to Texas after his participation in the Occupation of Austria after the end of the war. His account will fill you with stories you've never heard before. Sometimes you will laugh, but most of all you will be filled with awe as you experience through Jack's eyes what life was like on the front lines. Jack wasn't a colonel, general, or important political bigwig. He was like you. And this is his story: the human side of World War II.

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