



Vol. LIX

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No. 4

Inaugural Address -

Martin Treptow Remembered



Martin A. Treptow

During his Inaugural Address, President Ronald Reagan, recalling the sacrifices made by American military personnel, pointed across the Potomac River to the sloping hills of Arlington National Cemetery with its row upon row of simple white markers.

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

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

"There, on the Western Front, he was killed trying to carry a message between battalions under heavy artillery fire. We

are told that on his body was found a diary. On the flyleaf under the heading 'My Pledge,' he had written these words:

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

Immediately following the Address, Secretary Peg Keating began receiving phone calls from reporters of the New York Times, the Associated Press and United Press, asking for more information concerning Martin Treptow. Of course, having died in World War I, he had never been a member of the Division Association.

Gradually the facts came out and were played up in newspapers across the nation.

The Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery told reporters that Treptow was not buried there, and referred them to officials in Bloomer, Wisconsin. There reporters found that Private Martin A. Treptow, 24, was killed in Chateau Thierry in France on July 29, 1918, and buried in Bloomer, where an American Legion Post bears his name.

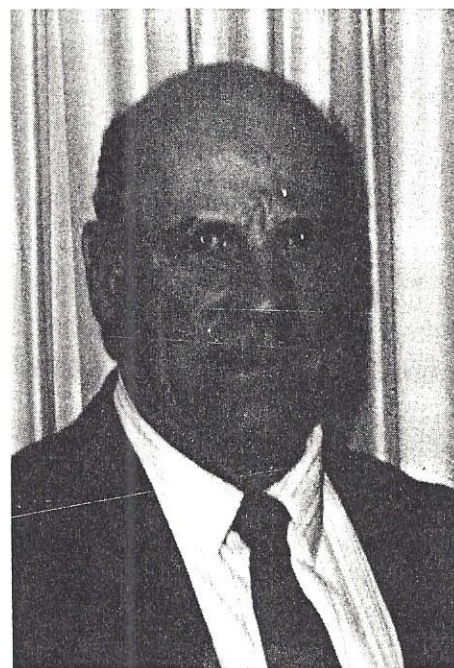
According to state records and an obituary in the September 26, 1918, Bloomer Advance, Treptow was born January 19, 1894, in Eagle Point, grew up in Bloomer and was working in Cherokee, Iowa, when he enlisted in 1917. He was a messenger for Company M, 168th Infantry, 42nd "Rainbow" Division.

Almost overnight in 1918, the words from this soldier's battlefront journal became known throughout the country. The government used the pledge in Liberty Bond drives, and it was entered into the Congressional Record.

His niece, Doris Robert, 59, of Freeport, IL, said, "That pledge has been a part of my life since I was a child. I know it word for word. I think I may even have the original diary."

For further developments on this story, please turn to page 4.

President's Message



President John George, Jr.

The Rainbow year 1980 - 81 is fast coming to a close and I hope the Mid-Year Meeting in Clearwater, Florida, will be well attended and that problems concerning membership, dues, reunion dates, Veterans Day Programs, local chapter concerns and others can be looked into and discussions prepared for consideration of the Membership in Reading next July.

Membership is our main concern and anything that can increase it. As of January we are behind last year by about 30 members. I am hoping that all of us pulling together and making those contacts will gather in those delinquent members. I know that all of you chapter secretaries are doing everything you can to round up members. Keep up the good work.

We have lost more great Rainbowers — Dick Richards, Iowa; P.N.P. Charlton Ragsdale, Alabama; and Everett Parr, Kansas. Our sympathy goes out to each family.

I am planning to meet with our Rainbow friends in Los Angeles, Phoenix and Kansas City in March and look for a good group at each meeting.

I hope all of you had a Happy Holiday Season and that this New Year will be one of your greatest.

DUES ARE DUE!

No Dues - No REVEILLE

August 12, 1986

Martin Treptow (see next page) (Page 4 Rainbow Reville March 1981)

A call was made to Lyle Gehring as a follow-up to the disposition of the diary. The diary is still in the possession of Doris Roberts. CBS had a two year option on the use of the diary which has expired. CBS would have paid something like \$20,000 which in turn would have been donated to veteran's hospitals.

The family would like to keep the diary as long as possible. Wisconsin would like the diary but the family feels it should go to Iowa where Martin enlisted. They also feel the MacArthur memorial is suitable.

There is a Martin A. Treptow American Legion Post in Bloomer, Wisconsin and in Cherokee, Iowa. If these are still active they could be Rainbow memorials.

I am sending my address and the address of the Memorial Foundation to Mr. Gehring so that Rainbow is notified before the diary is sent to an archive.

Mr. Lyle Gehring
8510 Seeno
Roseville, CA. 95611
916 791-7245

Donald Segel
National Historian

the TREPTOW Story

When the Martin Treptow story (see page 1) broke in the press following President Reagan's Inaugural Address, the REVEILLE Editor phoned Treptow's nephew, Lyle Gehring, in Roseville, CA, and had a very pleasant half-hour chat.

Gehring said that the famous diary was still in the possession of the family and that he had been besieged by the media, television and motion picture companies competing for the rights to the diary. But, he said, none of the family, including his sister, Doris Robert of Freeport, IL, want to make any money from the diary.

So, we offered him an alternate solution: place the diary in the MacArthur Memorial in Roanoke, Virginia, where it would be safeguarded and open to the view of thousands of visitors each year. He was not aware of the existence of the Rainbow Division Veterans Association, so we mailed him back copies of the REVEILLE and promised to send him a copy of this issue.

We will keep in contact with Mr. Gehring and give you another report in the next issue of REVEILLE.

Iowa State Reunion

Plans have been finalized for the Iowa State Association Reunion on April 25 and 26, 1981, at the Quality Inn, Waterloo, Iowa.

The room rates for the Reunion are: one person, \$24.00 per night; two persons, \$31.00. Rollaways and additional persons are \$5.00 each. Reservations may be mailed for rooms directly to the Quality Inn. Do remember to specify that you are attending the Rainbow Reunion, as we have the second floor reserved and they will fill these rooms first.

The ladies are asked to bring "white elephants" as such for a great Bingo Game on Saturday evening.

Everything is going well and we hope there will be a good turnout.

- Arlan and Rose Haugen

NOTICE! All letters concerning the question of changing Reunion dates will be held until all are in before publishing any in the REVEILLE. Send your letter to Charles Sayers, P.O. Box 125, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

Trenches of St. Geomes

by Frode Anderson

It was COLD! Snow and ice on the streets. Cold hay barns to sleep in unless there were cows or horses present also. They helped the lucky ones.

Barrack shoes (no hobnails yet) were worn out. Some with holes in soles. Green wood to burn if there was a place to burn in. Two meals a day was all the cooks could manage working 24 hours a day!

A stock of flour and no way to bake bread, so no bread until our flour was traded for French bread. No pay day so everybody was feeling lower than a snake's belly.

Then came the order to get out and dig trenches! If you had holes in your shoe soles you were excused. If not, it was out to the trenches and first sweep or shovel out the snow. Then at the frozen ground with picks and shovels.

It was said that our company broke 27 pick handles in one day! One man would get his pick under a rock or stuck in the frozen ground and if he couldn't break the handle a buddy would help him. You can imagine the "bitching" that went on!

Actually it was the best thing for us as we otherwise would have layed around in the hay and got sick from the inaction. It was tough, but it was good medicine. And here it is 63 years later and a few of the 2nd Bn., 168th Infantry are still around who will recall the "Trenches of St. Geomes."

Those Rainbows!

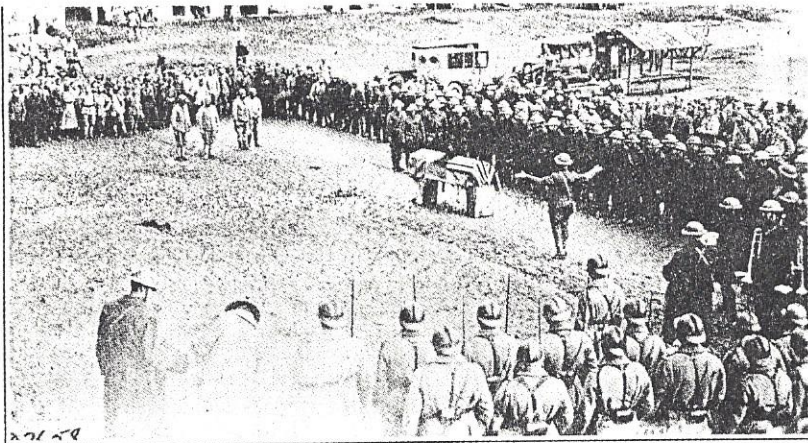
This is in response to a REVEILLE article by PNP Ralph Heasty regarding the appearance of rainbows in the sky at some special moment in time.

I was a 1st Sergeant, Battery C, 412 FA Battalion at the staging area in Rosenheim, Germany, in June 1946. Col Sullivan, Engineer, placed me in charge of the packet which was leaving Europe to go home to be discharged. The only thing any of the officers or men in the packet had in common was that they were to be discharged at Ford Dix, N.J.

We were in formation outside the barracks at Rosenheim, about three hundred of us, getting ready to board the train for Bremerhaven. Col Sullivan introduced me to the group and asked me whether I had anything to say to the troops.

At that moment, two huge, bright double rainbows appeared, spanning the distance between two of the barracks buildings. Very few of the detachment were veterans of Rainbow, so I pointed to the double rainbow and inquired, "OK, all your Combat Charlies, just what in hell has your outfit done for you as a parting gesture?"

I was careful not to walk too close to the rail on the way home. Carroll R. Anderson, Santa Fe, MN.



Lieut. J. J. Holiday, Chaplain, 166th Infantry Regiment, rendering last rites over the body of Pvt. Dyer J. Bird, Co. D, 166th Infantry, from Broadway, Ohio, the first 42nd Division soldier killed in World War I. This ceremony took place at Domjevin, France, on March 3, 1918.

The contents of this letter is ancient history for many of our readers in the REVEILLE, especially our younger Rainbowners, but it may recall something of interest to the old guys like myself. My eyesight is failing so fast that I can hardly see the keys on the typewriter, but I will do the best I can. You are doing a remarkable job as our editor, and you may not have time to edit what I send in.

I do wish that I knew more about our younger Rainbowners, as I know that they did a remarkable job in France, Germany and Austria, and all other assignments they were engaged in, as they were like the Rainbowners of long ago - they never quit. The following lines may give the readers some news that they are not aware of:

In World War I, the Rainbow Division was in action 164 days and nights. The Rainbow lost to the enemy only 122 prisoners, all while on patrol during attacks, none by defeat. The Rainbow lost 2,810 killed in action or died of wounds received in action, and 11,873 wounded in action, a total of 14,683 casualties. This was out of a total of approximately 48,000 officers and men who served in the Division.

I am enclosing a photo which I wish you could find space for in the REVEILLE, and perhaps some of the old soldiers of WW I still living may see the picture and recognize it.

With best regards,
Jim Warde, Memphis, TN

Doughboy Provides Theme

By DAVID TREADWELL, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—The fighting in the dense French forest was savage, with no quarter given. American doughboys crawled forward against deadly nests of German guns, closing in with hand grenades and bayonets. The advance seemed endless.

It was against this backdrop, during the "war to end all wars," that Martin A. Treptow, a 24-year-old private in the famed U.S. Army Rainbow Division and the largely forgotten soldier President Reagan quoted in his Inaugural Address, was killed. He died on July 29, 1918, while trying to carry a message between battalions under heavy fire.

After his body was recovered, a blood-stained diary was found in his uniform pocket, with this pledge written in it: "America must win this war. Therefore I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone."

Almost overnight in 1918, the words from this ordinary soldier's battlefield journal became known throughout the country. The government used the pledge to sell war bonds during Liberty Drives, and it was entered into the Congressional Record.

Reagan, in his address from the West Front of the Capitol during his inauguration as the 40th U.S. President, revived interest in Treptow when he cited the small-town barber as an example of American heroism and recited his pledge.

Not much is known about Treptow, who left his hometown of Bloomer in the Paul Bunyan northwoods country of Wisconsin in 1917 to enlist in the Army.

"He was just an ordinary young man who went into the service," Jerome Reischel, commander of the American Legion Post in Bloomer said in an interview. "He had a dia-

ry on him when they found him, and this heart-stirring expression of this ordinary doughboy was used on posters during Liberty Drives and read into the Congressional Record."

According to the legion post's history book, Treptow was the first of nine doughboys from Bloomer killed in action during World War I. Because of the renown of his pledge, it was later decided to name the post after him.

The Rainbow Division—so called because it was made up of units from several states that stretched "over the whole country like a rainbow"—was among the first American units to see action in France. Officially known as the 42nd Division, it was commanded by Douglas MacArthur, then a colonel, who is credited with giving the division its nickname.

Diary-keeping was not uncommon among the U.S. soldiers for whom the cities, countryside and battlefields of France were, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, a "great adventure." A few diaries were published, many were deposited in libraries and still more were passed down as family heirlooms.

"What strikes the readers of these personal war records is their unflaggingly positive, even enthusiastic tone," Stanford University historian David M. Kennedy notes in "Over Here," his book on World War I.

How Reagan was drawn to Treptow's words for his inaugural speech is uncertain. R.J. Costanzo, superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, said he was asked by the Defense Department last week for information about Treptow. But, Costanzo said, "I had no idea what the information was for until I heard the speech today."

In his speech, Reagan left the impression that Treptow's body was



Associated Press

Pvt. Martin Treptow

Co. M - 168th Inf
one of the thousands beneath the simple white markers on the sloping hills of the Arlington burial ground. But the state Department of Veterans Affairs in Wisconsin said Treptow's body was shipped home to Bloomer, and Bloomer City Clerk Charles Cole said that Treptow is buried in the city cemetery in a plot with a granite marker.

Perhaps no one was more surprised to hear Treptow's pledge on television than his niece, Doris Robert, 59, of Freeport, Ill., and her brother, Lyle Gehring, 65, of Roseville, Calif.

Robert, reached by phone, said, "I never was so shocked in my life. That pledge has been a part of my life since I was a child. I know it word for word. I think I may even have the original diary."

Gehring, who said a framed copy of the pledge hung in the family household in Bloomer, said: "I was profoundly surprised, at the same time extremely proud. I hope it will result in the universal acceptance of such patriotism throughout the country."