

RAINBOW TRAIL

The Millennium Legacy (Rainbow Family) History Newsletter
of the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division
February 2024 Volume 24, Issue 1
"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"

42nd DIVISION GRAFFITI IN FRANCE

25 Juillet 2023

Dear Suellen R. McDaniel,

I'm Brice PERIN, French collector & founder of the Association Les Américains de la Gondrecourt Area, in Gondrecourt Le Château (Meuse, France).

I permit myself to write to you because some months ago, we discovered beautiful graffiti about soldiers of the Company H, 166th Infantry Regiment.



Our friend Beatrice Dahm suggested that I write to you and share some photos of the graffiti.

(see attachments). Today the graffiti are protected in an empty room which doesn't see much light, in a little village on the South of Meuse. According to the history book of the 166th Infantry

Regiment, the soldiers were here at the end of 1917.

I think the graffiti were painted mainly by one man, some seems to be made with pencils. It's often signed by Pvt. Raymond A. Greisheimer.

Now, the house is private and the owner wants to stay anonymous to protect the graffiti. We took photos and we exhibited the photos during this summer in Gondrecourt Le Château with an exhibition about the Artists of the American Expeditionary Forces in France between 1917 and 1919.

Consequently, you can use our photos if you want to do more researches and if you want to write an article about.

I stay available if you have questions.

Yours faithfully,

Brice

Association Les Américains de la Gondrecourt Area
www.lesamericainsdegondrecourt.com

Sun, Sep 17, 2023 at 11:31 AM

Dear Brice,

Yesterday I printed out the photos you enclosed as attachments and have begun to think about the men whom they recall to mind. For example, the photo concerning L.W. Zonner Chillicothe, Ohio has allowed me to follow and learn more -



CONTENTS

42nd Division Graffiti
In France
Brice Perin

Exhibition Photos at
Le Musée de la Mémoire
de Belleau
Béatrice Dahm

Oise-Aisne American
Cemetery
Armistice Day 2023
Photos Béatrice Dahm

Hatten, France
January 1945
Memorial photos
Damien Bauer

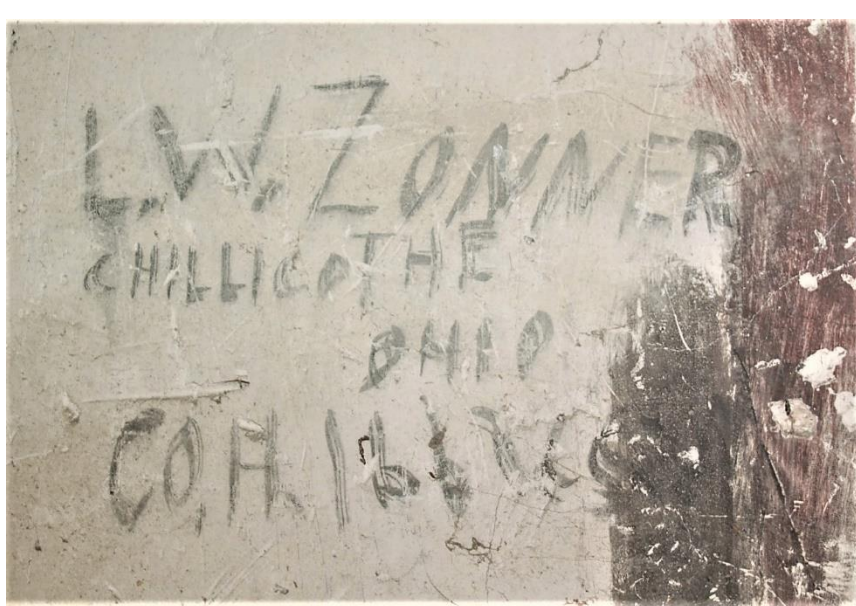
Memorial Bench
(Hatten, France)
Poem by Dee R. Eberhart

Personal Thoughts of War
Robert Spearing,
Company G, 242nd Infantry
42nd "Rainbow" Division

Memorial and Memories
Battle of Ohlungen Wood
Present day photos by
Damien Bauer

Battle, Neubourg, Moder, Mill
By Robert L. Maynes
1st Platoon, Company I
222nd Infantry Regiment
42nd "Rainbow" Division

Liberators and
Humanitarians
The Men of Rainbow
By Eli Heimberg
Assistant to Chaplain,
Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen 1945-46



There were two brothers, Leonard W. Zonner (1899-1954) and Lawrence W. Zonner (1895-1956) who shared the same address in Chillicothe, Ohio during their 1917 training in the 42nd "Rainbow" Division at Camp Mills, Long Island, New York. Both were members of H Company, 166th Regiment.

Lawrence, listed as mechanic, was wounded in action on July 5, 1918; When he returned to the United States in 1919, he became a member of the American Legion Post 62, established in 1919 and a Commander of the Post. This Post 62 is still very strong as can be seen on their website.

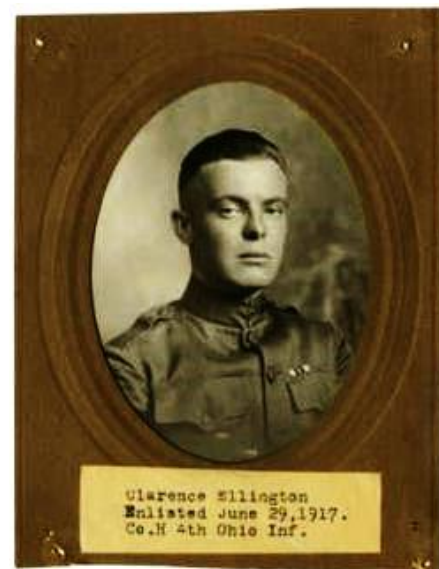
Leonard, a private first class, was wounded in action on July 15, 1918.

The United States Military Police Corps (MPC) was established as the Military Police Training Department at Caserne Changarnier on September 9, 1918 in Auton,

France. The gravestone of Leonard W. Zonner reads that he was a member of this unit (MPC). It makes sense that when he was able to return to duty, he became a member of this unit, which at this time had duties of "specially-trained soldiers to handle massive numbers of prisoners of war and control the movement of troops and supplies in the zones of operation."



In other photos, I see two references to "Ellington". It appears to me that this is **Corporal Clarence B. Ellington**, H Company, 166th Regiment. He appears to have been a barber who gave the men sometimes very close shaves!



[On this find-a-grave.com page for Clarence B. Ellington, occupation barber, it is learned of his premature death at age 38.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/137699608/clarence-bradford-ellington>
His photo preserved and added there by Sara Snell Kirton

Harry Ellsworth Jones, Jr. Pfc. Company H, 166th Infantry, 42nd Division (1893-1963); accountant and railroad man.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/177051199/harry-ellsworth-jones>

From: lesamericainsdegondrecourt@gmail.com

To: jmac1400@aol.com

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 5:11 PM

Dear Suellen,

Thanks for your reply and the informations about the doughboys.

About the house, it is located in a small village (around 100 inhabitants in 1917, around 30 inhabitants today) where most of the houses are like 100 years ago. The graffitis are in a room like an attic, rarely used since World War One. The owners didn't really

know what the graffiti said. It was a friend of theirs who saw our work some years ago, who thought there was a connection with our association.



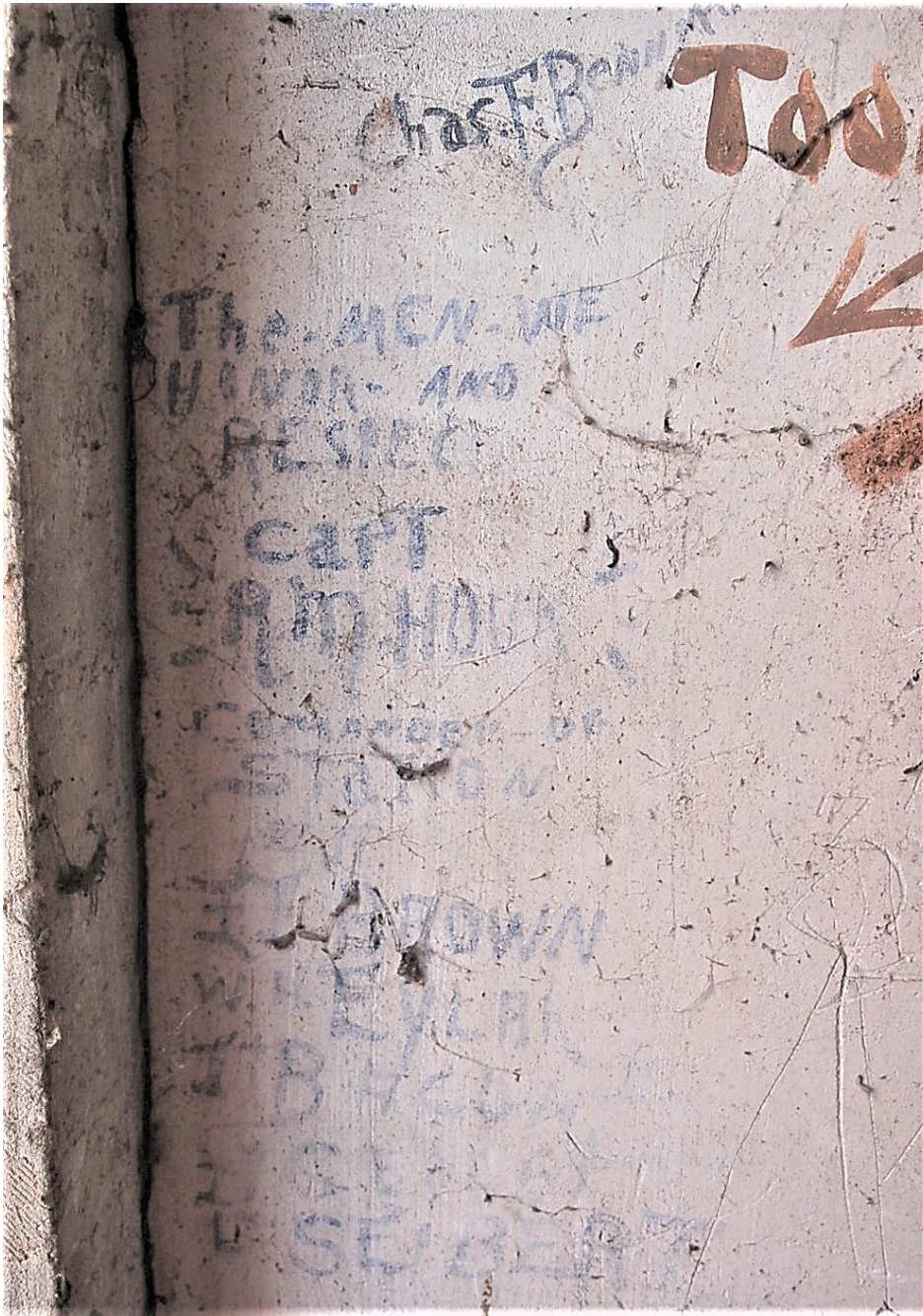
Furthermore, the geographical position of the village, far from the main roads, implies that there has been little activity and change over the past 100 years.

Consequently, the advantage is that they were protected but the disadvantage is that we do not have any French documents or photos which testify to the American presence in the village. Only the history book of the 166th talks about the village.

About the photos, you can use them for an article or others. The most important for us is to share this to the "guardians" of the Rainbow Division History.

Yours faithfully
Brice

The LIST on this wall is titled, "The men we honor and respect." Those we are sure of transcribing correctly at this time are -



Captain R.M. Houk

Machine Gun Company 166th Infantry
(p 386 *Ohio in the Rainbow*; Cheseldine 1924)
Roy Morrison Houk Wounded July 15, 1918
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/19557266/roy-morrison-houk>

William H. Eyler 1LT

Co. G 166th Infantry, 42nd Division
killed "Dist. NE Chateau-Thierry" 8-2-18
Awarded Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.
<https://www.abmc.gov/decedent-search/eyler%3DWilliam>
On his find-a-grave page are 7 good items of information,
[1LT William H. Eyler \(1890-1918\) - Find a Grave...](#)



Photo at top of page one is Brice Perin, photographer (right); Gilles Lugin, battlefield historian (left) at exhibition of Brice Perin's photography; he is holding his book of photos. (courtesy of Béatrice Dahm)



Charles Heible

Charles Heible Company H; Mech gassed Ancerviller June 18, 1918

Source: *Ohio in the Rainbow* (Cheseldine 1924)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8820565/charles-heible>



F.L. Rinkliff



Ohio in the Rainbow lists 1st Sergeant Fred Rinkliff, Co. H, 166th Infantry, 42nd Division as having been wounded on October 11, 1918 (p. 437); however, the history on his gravestone tells of a much longer military career.



<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154042528/fred-leroy-rinkliff>

“As a 1st Lieutenant with 131st Infantry 33rd Division in World War One. Wounded by a bullet in the leg. From The 131st U. S. Infantry (First Infantry Illinois National Guard) in the World War by Colonel Joseph B. Sanborn 1919.”

Photo and description added and preserved by Michael Belis on that page.

BÉATRICE DAHM

Introduction to an exhibition of The Great War (the Fall of 2023)

“Béatrice Dahm has two passions in life: photography and the history of the Great War....”
Translated quotation from this article of introduction through a publication of La Musée de la Mémoire de Belleau 1914-1918.

<https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/musee-de-la-memoire-de-belleau-1914-1918>

Photo one – Beatrice Dahm with her French bulldog, Jess, standing by “Iron Mike”, the U.S. Marine Memorial commemorating the valor of the U.S. Marines during the month of June 1918.

<https://www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/3046879/us-marines-and-allies-mark-104th-anniversary-of-the-battle-of-belleau-wood/>

ENTRETEENIR LA MÉMOIRE

Du 15 septembre au 11 novembre 2023, le musée de la Mémoire de Belleau vous propose une nouvelle exposition joignant photographies artistiques et documents d'archives.

« We leave you our deaths. Give them their meaning »

« Nous vous laissons nos morts. Donnez-leur leur importance »

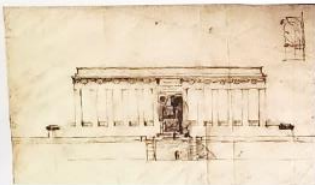
Tiré du poème "The Young Dead Soldiers Do Not Speak" par Archibald MacLeish

Entretenir la mémoire par un hommage photographique

Béatrice Dahm a deux passions dans la vie : la photographie et l'histoire de la Grande Guerre. Le 7 juin dernier, lors d'une cérémonie militaire, un soldat américain tombé au combat dans l'Aisne en 1918, a été inhumé avec les honneurs au cimetière Oise-Aisne de Seringes-et-Nesles. C'est à cette occasion que Béatrice a réalisé les photographies de cette exposition : capturer l'émotion du moment pour mieux rendre hommage aux soldats reposant ici.



Entretenir la mémoire dans les cimetières et monuments américains



En écho à cet accrochage, le musée vous propose une exposition sur l'**American Battle Monuments Commission** ou **ABMC** : photographies, dessins et documents d'archives viennent illustrer sa fondation, ses missions passées et actuelles, ses liens avec le Bois de Belleau.

MUSÉE DE LA MÉMOIRE DE BELLEAU

BEATRICE DAHM ●●● ENTRETEENIR LA MÉMOIRE

"WE LEAVE YOU OUR DEATHS. GIVE THEM THEIR MEANING"
« NOUS VOUS LAISSONS NOS MORTS. DONNEZ-LEUR LEUR IMPORTANCE »

— Tiré du poème "The Young Dead Soldiers Do Not Speak" par Archibald MacLeish

Béatrice Dahm a deux passions dans la vie : la photographie et l'histoire de la Grande Guerre. Originaire de Fismes, c'est en 2011, à la Caverne du Dragon, qu'elle exposera pour la première fois ses œuvres photographiques.



Depuis elle expose régulièrement dans l'Aisne, la Marne, à Craonnelle, Amigny-Rouy, Seringes-et-Nesles ainsi qu'au Centre des Congrès de Reims. Passeuse de mémoire, Béatrice Dahm tient à rendre hommage aux « héros disparus » de 14-18.

Le 7 juin dernier, un soldat américain non identifié a été inhumé avec les plus grands honneurs au cimetière militaire américain de Seringes-et-Nesles.

Belleau
architecture
cimetières ABMC
Conflit 1918
Marne Belleau Aisne
mémoire
hommage guerre
entretenir photographie

Le chef d'État-major de l'armée américaine, présent pour l'occasion, a décoré ce combattant à titre posthume. C'est à cette occasion que Béatrice a réalisé les photographies de cette exposition : capturer l'émotion du moment pour mieux rendre hommage aux soldats reposant ici.

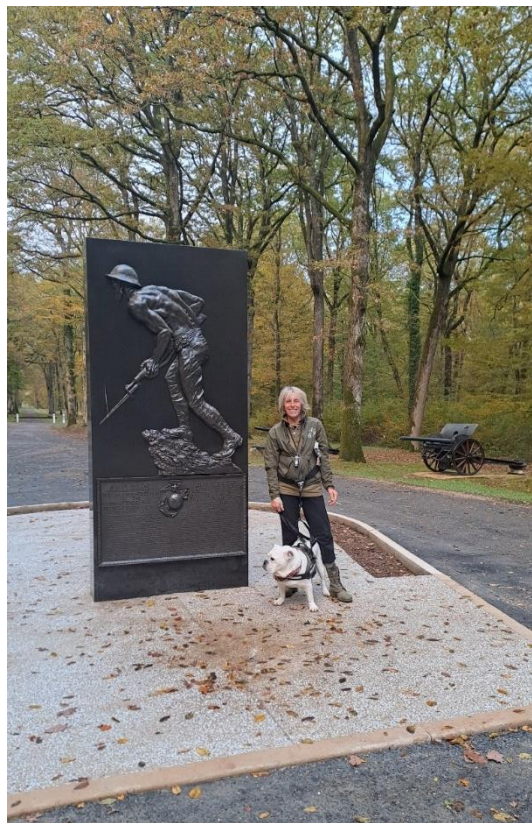


Photo two (right) – Beatrice at la Musée in front of her photographic exhibition.

Photos below – 2023 Veterans Day observance at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, Seringes-et-Nesles, FRANCE

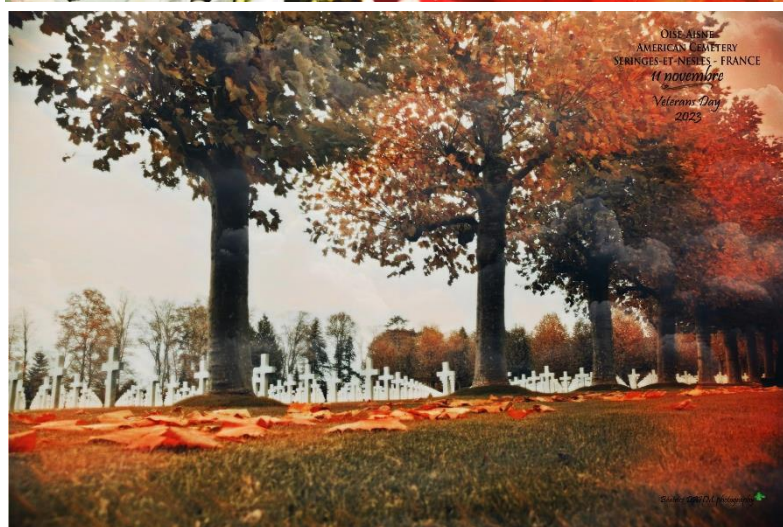
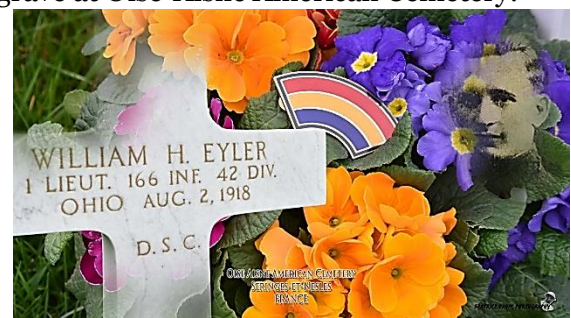


Photo : Jean-Paul Roseleux, Mayor of Fère-en-Tardenois (left); Charlie Diaz, Superintendent of Oise-Aisne American Cemetery (right). Photo presentations by Beatrice Dahm



In honor of and tribute to the life and service of **1LIEUT. William H. Eyler**, whose name was found in “a little village south of Meuse”, on the wall list of “the men we honor and respect,” by the men of the 166th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Division WWI, Béatrice Dahm has sent us her special photographs of his grave at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.

And below,



In honor of and tribute to the life and service of **Pvt. Emet Bingham**, 165th Infantry, 42nd Division WWI. His faithful Bingham Family unfailingly remember him each year with their love and respect.

**MONUMENT BENCH
45th Anniversary Tribute
September 23, 1990**

Soon winter gray will shroud this place,
This place where quiet speeding wheels
Blowing clouds of snow will briefly hide
Pale sandstone monument with
Sherman tank in bas relief,
Full throttle forward,
From Rittershoffen on to Hatten,
Where enemy Panzers lie in wait.

But now, autumn evening, ceremonial day,
We pause here at this tribute bench,
To rest, to reflect, to compose,
Perhaps, our own Wanderers Nachtlied –
Over all the fields is quiet,
Listen, scarcely a sound,
Quiet evensong of forest birds,
Wait, you too, may hear
Faint mutter of distant, ancient battle,
Louder and louder from far recall,
Ripping tear of MG-42's,
Screams and blasts of 88's,
Fast freight howls of Nebelwerfers,
Throaty coughs, Schmeisser pistols,
Single spaced shots, bolt action Mausers.

Our sounds, too, are close at hand,
Outbound shells from 105's,
Rustling and whispering overhead,
Proximity fuses and devastation,
75's and 76's – tanks and T.D.'s,
And, '57's, anti-tank guns,
Fast fire and movement to stay alive.
Infantry weapons –
A line of M-1's – 8 shots each,
Reload and fire,
B.A.R.'s, methodical machine guns,
Rhythmically drumming their songs of death.
The spang of mortars, shells leaving tubes.

They can still be heard,
And if you listen well,
Surrounding, shouting guttural voices,
Piercing screams of enemy wounded,
Soon to die in deep winter snow.
The shattering battle, never ending,
Wrecking, destroying two peaceful towns,
Stripping life from innocent people.

Flickering images, fitful sounds,
At this lasting memory stone,
Flanked by Hatten and Rittershoffen,
MLR south in dark Haguenau woods,
Gray casemates grown perfect in camouflage.

We come here today
In loving remembrance,
To honor our comrades
Who fell in these fields,
Who fell in these woods,
And in the rubble of two tiny towns.
We come here too, remembering long,
Franco-American blood spilled together,
At our Yorktown and Brandywine,
At your Champagne and Chateau Thierry,
From the Riviera to the Colmar Pocket,
At Hatten, Haguenau and Rittershoffen,
From the banks of the Rhine to Danube crossings,
The blood of our two people joined,
Drenching your beautiful sorrowing land.

It is little enough we do, for you,
You who have suffered so much
From two terrible wars,
To leave you this bench, this tribute in stone,
With its simple inscription eternally carved,
"In memory of our fallen comrades
(both American and French
And (all of your) civilian dead."

**D.R. Eberhart
Company I, 242nd Infantry
42nd Rainbow Division**

27 January 2024 from Damien Bauer, French battlefield guide and historian, –
"I went to Hatten - Rittershoffen last week to honor your soldiers, and I also had a thought for your father." *Thank you, Damien!*



Photo center -
The inscription on
this battle-scarred
town wall reads,
"Vestige de la Bataille
de Janvier 1945."

Photos are from
Damien Bauer.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON WAR

By Robert "Bob" Spearing

Company G, 242nd Infantry Regiment,
42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division

Courtesy of Mayland Crosson, wife of Tom Crosson (G/242)
who has shared with us this portion of her friend, Bob's letter to her
dated January 4, 1999

Dear Mayland,

I can tell you, one of the places which would give me the worst spooks of all is the place in the woods outside of Koenigsbruck. Aside from the fact that I spent three long, cold, scary nights in the company outpost – with some very terrifying experiences, I could never, ever forget leading the rear guard through and out of the Haguenau Woods [January 20, 1945].

The main body of all troops had pulled out at 6p.m. Me and my rifle squad of six men had to stay put until 12 midnight before we could leave our precarious position at the end of a salient which penetrated well into the German lines.

We groped our way out of Koenigsbruck via the narrow trails behind the Sauer River. All this through a very heavy blizzard blowing into our faces. We had to pick up three bridge-blowing engineer teams on the way and deliver them safely (if we were lucky) to our new mainline setup in Kaltenhaus and Haguenau. I, of course, being the big deal, led the procession through and out of the woods – all the time expecting some German patrol to cut us off and cut me down with one of their machine pistols. In that ordeal, we were on our feet without any rest for more than twelve hours. Believe me, there is nothing spookier than finding your way through a dark forest with the possibility of being shot up at any moment. I do not want to revisit the woods outside of Koenigsbruck.



Photo(s) from pp. 34 and 35, 42nd 'Rainbow' Infantry Division History World War II (Daly 1946)

Photo caption reads, "Their faces grim, Rainbow doughs move ahead through the woods along a narrow lane past a mine field. Some have their fingers on the triggers of their rifles. Near them is the enemy. Unseen are the deadly Shu mines which may be hidden beneath the leaves."

It was our second day of action at Gambsheim. The Germans began to counter attack sometime in mid-morning. When the stuff started to whistle about my ears, I was able to find an abandoned German slit trench in the middle of a field we were crossing. It was just long enough to contain all my crew and just deep enough to keep us from getting hit from bullets. Although no real protection from diving shells or mortars, we were in pretty good shape if things didn't get too hot. They got too hot. The enemy fire made us all stay flat on our stomachs and we weren't too deep down in the trench as it had filled with water and was frozen solid just about a foot and a half below the surface of the field.

At any rate, the enemy soon had us pinned down flat so we could not get away and they began to lob mortars and shells in at us attempting, of course, to flop one right in on us. One shell or well-directed mortar would get all of us.

Desperately looking for a way out, I kept bobbing my head up to see where we might find a safer position. Every time I put my head up, an enemy sniper put a bullet right next to my ear. All very thrilling? I was dying a thousand deaths.

Then, as suddenly as the heat had been turned on, the enemy turned it off.

I got over to where Bob Collins was at the other end of the field and he ordered me to get my squad out of the slit trench and back about 50 yards to a stone wall. Back in the slit trench again I gave orders for a withdrawal to the stone wall. One at a time, they left on my order. I was the last to leave and guess what? The Germans turned the heat up and the sniper was once again trying to knock my ears off.

Mortars were coming in again. I knew I had to move and do it quick. I crawled from one end of the trench to the other where I could exit for the stone wall. I had a musette bag hanging on to my chest. It was full of hand grenades. It suddenly slipped down a hole in the ice beneath me and I was trapped. I couldn't back up or go forward. At full panic with this, I jerked my head and neck back with the most powerful gesture I could muster and thank God, the bag's strap parted and the bag fell into the hole. I got up and started running for the wall – with the sniper on both of my ears.



Suddenly, without warning, my feet slipped on the ice sheet just before the stone wall and I fell backward in the perfect picture of a soldier who had just been wounded. I heard one of my men gasp, "Spearing bought it!!" As luck would have it, the sniper thought so, too, and stopped shooting at me.

Once my body hit the ice, my body continued along, sliding across the ice and I finally stopped after my feet hit a tree trunk. I just lay there, trying to get my breath, thanking God the sniper had been fooled. It was at this time that I heard Bob King's voice coming to me from behind my tree. I didn't want to move and let the sniper know he missed me but King's calls got so urgent I finally gasped, "What is it?!" He said, very matter-of-factly, "you are getting wet." No, I do not want to see that spot again.

S/Sgt Robert L. "Bob" Spearing's photo as a member of G Company, 242nd Infantry Regiment is found in the pictorial and review book for the 242nd Infantry Regiment, Camp Gruber, OK, fall of 1944



10 February 2024 from Damien Bauer. "Hello, my friend, I hope you are doing well. I'm sending you these photos taken on January 25. I went to honor your fallen soldiers at the battle of Ohlungen Wood.

Suellen, the woodland photo is the path taken by Company G (222nd) on the evening of January 25, 1945.

I was accompanied this year by Madame Haegel from Schweighouse, Wayne Cruse from Anti-Tank Company 222 infantry régiment having been killed in her home on January 25, 45, and she paid tribute to him and Barney Parrish by laying flowers in the Schweighouse church.



The parish priest from Schweighouse included the two soldiers in the intentions for prayer in the last Sunday mass. The war memorial where the flowers were laid is that of the village of Ohlungen.

Greetings, Damien

(editor – please see the February 2023 issue of RAINBOW TRAIL for a description of the ceremonies in honor of Bud Gahs and the men of his squad lost on that day.)

Below is the Cristelle house (left) and his family meeting with Bud Gahs in 25 August 2022.



EXCERPTS from *The Furnace and The Fire/the Story of a Regiment of Infantry* (the 222nd Infantry Regiment) (Vienna, Austria 1945)

p. 31 The first wave of enemy troops forded the narrow Moder River under cover of darkness and artillery fire, swarming across the stream to strike the Regiment's positions simultaneously at Schweighausen, Neubourg and Ohlungen Forest. From our swimming holes we laid down a devastation curtain of fire with everything we had. Still the enemy advanced, half-drunk, spurred on by desperate and guttural commands. The two sides clashed in close combat rendering artillery support useless. Suddenly, the foray broke up and what was left of the enemy dashed madly back to their own lines. What was left of us stayed where it was. And this was merely one small sector of the lines. In other sections, the fighting continued with the same ferocity...

p. 34 For a night and a day the battle raged incessantly, but by evening of January 25, it was evident that the German offensive had failed. The breakthrough on the eastern and western edges of Ohlungen Forest had been met and repulsed; the towns of Schweighausen, Ohlungen, Uhlwiller, and Neubourg were still in the possession of the original defenders; the entire advance of the five German regiments had been crushed. On the evening of the 25th, a coordinated attack by our forces had been planned, with H-Hour set at 0730, January 26th. During the night, however, the enemy pulled back across the Moder, rendering the morning attack nothing more than a re-establishment of the Main Line of Resistance. In this great onslaught the Germans had done no more than shut themselves out of Alsace for good.

EXCERPT from FORGED by THE FURNACE AND THE FIRE

A Platoon of the 42nd Rainbow Division's Experiences During WWII

Chapter IV: Battle, Neubourg, Moder, Mill

By Robert L. Maynes, Company I, 222nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division

[Editor – in 1999 Robert Maynes printed 100 copies of this memoir; at a later reunion which I attended, he had only one copy left! This reprinted chapter is from that copy. His inscription reads,

Suellen, Enjoy the reading as I did the writing!!]

All present-day color photos were taken and sent by Damien Bauer, battlefield historian and reenactor.

As soon as I Company entered Neubourg, France, the order went out to immediately establish defensive positions. Haste was essential. An attack from the pursuing German forces was expected soon, possibly within hours. The company's MLR [Main Line of Resistance] was to be established just south of the Haguenau road and to extend west from Neubourg for a distance of nearly two miles, normal frontage for an entire regiment, where elements of the 409th Inf. Regt., 103rd Div. would occupy our left flank. The 1st platoon was to establish and occupy the MLR from the town of Neubourg west for one third of the company front.

T/Sgt. Evanoff and his squad leaders, after spacing out the general locations of the foxholes to match the platoon front, ordered us to dig our two-man fortifications and although near exhaustion from our 20-mile night-time forced march we immediately began digging. The prospect of an imminent enemy attack and the basic instinct of survival prodded us into action.

In record time, digging furiously, Harry and I finished our foxhole, complete with earthen steps and drain pit to protect our feet from the melting snow and water, and a roof of logs and compacted dirt for warmth and protection from enemy artillery and small arms fire. It was located a few yards south of the road to Haguenau, about 100 yards west of Neubourg and over 100 yards from the next hole to our left. Located in the wooded area to our right rear was platoon headquarters, which housed Lt. Rosener, Evanoff, Lisbon, and our platoon medic, Ted Monyette. Company and battalion headquarters were located several thousand yards to our left rear in the town of Dauendorf.

That afternoon and on and off during the next two days it snowed. The snow covered the disturbed earth of our fortifications and provided perfect natural camouflage.

"Bob, maybe the Krauts aren't 'comin' after all," said Felty during one of the many conversations we had to while away the time.

Shifting to find a less uncomfortable position in our cramped underground dwelling I said, "Don't count on it, Harry. Last I heard was that our recon troops had sighted them about five or six miles north of here and heading our way."

"Back in Burlenbach, we were calling all the shots, but now it's the Germans' ball game and we're waiting helplessly for them to come and attack us. Bob, I'm scared. I know that many of us will be killed when they hit. I have a premonition that I'll be one of them," stated Harry. "How about you?"

"Guess I'm the eternal optimist; I always think it's going to be one of the other guys. Hey! Get off this stuff! You're startin' to depress me. We're both gonna make it through, and don't you forget it. O.K.!"

(General von Obstfelder, in charge of Nordwind's attack to sever the Haguenau road and encircle and destroy the defending American troops, reviewed his latest intelligence report: The 222nd had dug a series of widely spaced foxholes along the south edge of the Haguenau road apparently as an outpost line extending from Schweighausen in the east and extending west past Neubourg for another three kilometers. All efforts to definitively locate the main force of the 222nd had failed, but it was assumed that its troops were located in defensive positions in the scattered patches of the Ohlungen Forest further south of the Haguenau road. The terrain defended by the 222nd was best suited for penetration by an armored attack.

The general issued the following order: The troops of the 47th VG Div., 25th PG Div. and the 7th Para Div. would continue south into the Haguenau Forest and on 23 Jan 45 establish defensive positions along the east-west axis of the railroad line running through the forest. From these positions five regiments of the three divisions would launch an attack at 2000 hours 24 Jan 45 and penetrate the 222nd's defenses at four separate points after crossing the Moder River. The attack would be preceded at 1800 hours by a one-hour artillery barrage from the combined artillery of the three divisions.)

About mid-afternoon on the 24th, I was ordered to report to battalion headquarters in one hour for a night patrol, leaving Felty as the sole occupant of our foxhole. When the patrol of approximately 15 men was constituted, each foxhole had only one man in the 1st Platoon's portion of the MLR.

As I prepared to leave, I knew that Harry was worried about my safety when he said, "Bob, take care of yourself!"

"Don't worry about me, Harry. This is probably only going to be a reconnaissance patrol. We'll go out, listen for a few hours, and return before dawn. I'll see you back here about mid-morning tomorrow. You take care." I replied.

After all the patrol had assembled at battalion headquarters in Dauendorf, the S-2 pointed at a map on the wall and briefed us:

Here on the west end, where I Company's sector joins elements of the 103rd Infantry division, is the remnants of a shell-damaged mill, located on the north bank of the Moder River. Immediately west of this mill a few hundred yards is a small foot bridge which crosses the Moder. Under cover of darkness you men will cross that bridge and continue north until you detect the presence of the enemy. This is a reconnaissance mission so avoid a fire fight. Learn all you can about them: troop strength, movement, weapons, equipment, unusual activity, etc. You know the drill. Find out all you can about them and report back here before first light tomorrow. Again, I remind you that this is *not*, I repeat, is *not* a combat patrol so do not engage them if at all possible. Any questions?

Being none, he concluded, "Good luck! Be careful!"

After crossing the footbridge over the Moder River we heard the sound of enemy artillery fire whistling overhead and the crunch of the projectiles landing far to our right rear, possibly in and around Neubourg.

As the patrol silently and cautiously worked its way through patches of protective woods, I thought, "Those shells have to be landing near Harry! I hope he keeps his head down and stays in our hole!"

The barrage lasted about an hour. The noise of distant exploding shells served to mask any unplanned noise from our patrol. We were well inside the Ohlungen Forest when the shelling ceased. We stopped, lay down in the deep snow, and listened for any noise that would be indicative of enemy activity.

Within minutes we soon heard the sound of shovels scrapping and digging earth, of axes chopping trees, of human grunts of exertion, and of German soldiers talking as they fortified their positions, all within a couple hundred yards of where we lay.

The night was bitter cold and I thought I would surely freeze in spite of the layers of clothing. I had no control over the muscles of my body as they twitched involuntarily. I controlled the threatening noise of chattering teeth by cushioning them with my lips. I drew my legs up tight against my body and stretched my wool overcoat in an attempt to cover and wrap my freezing feet. When the Sgt. in charge of the patrol (S/Sgt. Fox if memory is correct) asked me to creep up closer to get a better read on the enemy, I welcomed even that limited opportunity to move my chilled and still body.

After completing my one-man mini-patrol, which took about an hour and a half and covered three or four hundred yards of enemy front, I reported back to Fox.

"Fox, there is one big bunch of Krauts all along the railroad embankment immediately in front of us! From all the noise I heard and the sighting I made, my best guess would be about 200 enemy troops," I whispered.

"Thanks, Maynes," his almost silent reply.

The frosty chill returned once I was again immobile. The time passed so slowly. I thought I would surely freeze to death that night. At last, the order to move out was indicated and we retraced our steps and arrived at Dauendorf shortly before first light.

Upon entering battalion headquarters at that pre-dawn hour I was surprised at the flurry of activity. S/Sgt. Fox told the first NCO he could waylay that our patrol needed to report to the S-2.

"He's in a meetin' with the Colonel and the rest of the staff. Make yourselves comfortable, it could be awhile," he said, as he turned to dash off.

"Hold it, man. What's goin' on? Somethin' happen last night? We've been out all night on patrol. We don't have a clue 'bout what's been goin' on back here. Dammit man, fill us in!" pleaded Fox.

From this sergeant, from other staff support personnel, and finally from the S-2 before and during our patrol briefing, we learned what little they knew of the situation: That night the Germans shelled the towns of Schweighausen and Neubourg and the forested area in-between with barrage after barrage of artillery – 88's, 105's, 150's and rocket shells. I and K Company of the 3rd Battalion and E and F of the 2nd were defending that frontage. The enemy artillery severed all land-line communications between the companies and their respective battalion headquarters.

The weak and spasmodic radio contact after the shelling told a story of a mile-deep penetration into the K Company front by several German infantry and armored regiments. Our regimental reserve, the 1st battalion, (commanded by Maj. Fellenz) was committed to the battle as was the 3rd battalion, 314th Inf. Reg., and the 68th Armd. Inf. Bn. The battle was still raging, outcome unknown.

Present at the patrol briefing by the S-2 was Lt. Col. Niblock, our battalion commander.

At the conclusion of the debriefing, he spoke, "Men, last night's enemy attack on I company in and around Neubourg precludes your returning to your unit as previously planned. The battle is still raging even as we talk. Instead, I am ordering you to return to the mill and establish defensive positions in the mill and along the Moder river. If I can come up with some additional troops, I'll send them down to help you. Any questions?"

Concerned about Felty, I asked, “Sir, any casualties in I Company during last night’s attack?”

The Colonel replied, “I’m sure there were, but with communications being what they are, we don’t know yet. Sorry.”

(A meeting and conversation took place concurrently and nearby between Pfc. Lowell McMillen and his lieutenant, 2nd Lt. Richard E. Vensel, when McMillen returned from the patrol of the previous night. Lt. Vensel said, “McMillen, we need to assembly down at the mill with the rest of the patrol. We’re going to jump off in a few minutes and attack the Germans.”



McMillen replied, “Sir, you can’t do that! It will be a suicide mission! Our whole patrol will be killed! There is no cover! It’s several hundred yards across an open, flat field! We won’t stand a chance!”

“We are going in under artillery cover,” was Vensel’s answer.

“Sir, that will work only if the Germans are pinned down in their foxholes until we can over-run, attack and kill them. I still say it’s a suicide mission! It won’t work! You shouldn’t go!” McMillen argued.

“It is my orders! I must carry them out!” said Vensel.

McMillen snapped back, “Orders, hell! What good are those orders if you and my buddies are killed and nothing is accomplished? For God’s sake, sir, don’t do it!”

“I must go! I am duty bound to carry out this order,” said Vensel, adding, “McMillen, from your foxhole, I want you to provide our attacking patrol with covering fire from your BAR, O.K!”

From Damien Bauer February 2021: These pictures I made at the beginning of the year after the heavy snowfall we had; it was made near the wood d’Ohlungen. I wear a uniform of a BAR gunner of the 222 regiment. The weather was the same as it had in 1945.

Upon leaving battalion headquarters, our patrol trudged through the snow, retraced its route back down the hill, and veered right toward the mill. By the time we arrived at the Haguenau road the sun was out and the fog had lifted. Standing there we happened to glance to the right front, and saw at about five or six hundred yards, about twenty German soldiers in white camouflage uniforms. They were using long wooden planks to span and cross the Moder river. Three or four were already across. We opened fire on them. Bursts of fire from I Company foxholes along the MLR followed suit. Our combined efforts, although at too great a range for accuracy, caused the ghost-like figures to retreat into the woods to their rear.

Immediately enemy artillery began falling all around us, bursting on the walls of the damaged mill, in the trees along the Moder, and in the open fields behind us. We hit the ground and prayed. Our fellow troops manning the MLR were also receiving artillery fire. We had succeeded in breaking up an attack on our company, but were paying for it. Luckily no one was hit during the barrage. The greatest indignity was that we could not answer their shelling with counter-battery fire as our artillery was still stateside.



After things settled down our patrol negotiated the tangled debris of a blown bridge, crossed the Moder, and assembled in the relatively protective cover of the remnants of the mill.

From Damien Bauer, 21 February 2021: I made pictures of the white house you see is the mill of Uhrbruck and the pictures made in the forest I made them just behind the mill some left and some right on some photos you can see foxhole and below you can see the mill is the area that company E had to defend.

Second Lt. Richard E. Vensel soon joined us. With his slim build, his chiseled military features, his confident demeanor, his deep, compelling voice and his flamboyant distinctive dress, he had all the appearances of being the ideal leader of men. As he spoke, I could not take my eyes off of his jacket. It was a fur-lined half-jacket which he had reversed with the shiny grey fur now on the outside. On him it looked impressive. We would always be able to locate our leader. So engrossed was I that I missed the first part of his briefing and picked it up as he said, “We will move out under the support of our own 60, 81 and 4.2

mortars, cross this field to our front in a diamond formation, and engage, destroy or capture the enemy in the woods beyond. Any questions?”

For a minute we were all so dumbfounded that we could not speak. Then, the gross idiocy of his order hit us.

“Sir, are you out of your ever-lovin’ mind? There are over 200 Krauts dug in over there!” said one.

“Our orders from the battalion commander were to take up defensive positions at the mill and along the river. I’m not gonna disobey a Colonel’s orders!” said another.

“Sir, we won’t stand a chance out there on that field. Those heinies will mow us down like they’re shootin’ ducks in a barrel!” argued another.

Reason did not prevail that day. Vensel forcefully reminded us that he was the officer in charge of this patrol and that his orders would be obeyed and that if we did not obey, we would be guilty of cowardice in the face of the enemy and be charged with treason. He prevailed.

His last statement before he led us out onto the field was, “What’s the matter, men? You afraid to die?”

As we filed out onto the field, a line from one of Shakespeare’s plays kept going through my mind: “(A soldier) seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon’s mouth.” [from William Shakespeare’s poem, *The Seven Ages of Man in his play, “As You Like It.”* Photo right, 2LT Richard E. Vensel]



Once lined out on that snowy, open field I was at the center of the formation about 50 yards behind Lt. Vensel who occupied the forward point of the patrol.

Our mortar fire swished overhead and burst in the tree-tops of the enemy-held woods a few hundred yards to our front. Answering German artillery whistled overhead and exploded on the crumbling walls of the mill to our immediate rear. As the mid-morning sun reflected off of the fur jacket of the swaggering figure to my front, I had thoughts of the hare-brained hare in *Alice in Wonderland*. This was total insanity.

Suddenly, several bursts of machine gun fire erupted from the woods. Before my eyes, Lt. Vensel’s mid-section seemed to explode and disintegrate. The Lieutenant, virtually cut in two crumpled to the snow-covered field in a grotesque, twisted, bloody heap.

I hit the ground on chest and stomach. Bits of snow sprayed my face as machine gun bullets hit the ground

and ricocheted over my head. With rifle butt, arms and elbows pushing, I slid backward feet first. I slipped with ease through the icy snow. Bullets hit where I had been and kicked snow over head and face. I slid back. The sweep of automatic fire showered my face, head and back with snow. I slid faster and harder. The bullets immediately followed, landing where I had just vacated.

As I moved my body backward, I prayed. I prayed to God that I would survive. I prayed that the machine gunner would continue his rhythm and arc of fire. I prayed that I would soon reach the mill. Time moved in slow motion. Seconds were as minutes, minutes as hours.

“Please, God, will it never end?”

As if in answer to my prayer, my last movement propelled me down a sloping incline. From the illusory safety of my position, I looked around. The west wall of the mill enclosure was a short distance to my right rear. Keeping low, I dashed over to the wall and along its side toward the river and crossed the sloping damaged wall at river’s edge. I had reached the safety of the mill.

What a welcome sight. Fox, Morrow, Maxwell and Hicks were there. I joined them in returning fire on the Krauts in the woods. Between the bursts of fire upon the enemy we exchanged bursts of conversations.

S/Sgt. Fox, as I had, had slid backward through the snow to reach safety. The hood to his field jacket, apparently protruding above his helmet and all body parts, was riddled with bullet holes from ricocheting enemy machine gun fire. He was untouched.

Sgt. Morrow had received a bullet wound in the flesh above one elbow, but assured us that it was of no consequence. Maxwell and Hicks had not been wounded. I told the group that I had witnessed Lt. Vensel’s gruesome death. One of the others said that he had seen a Sgt. Rescorla take a bad hit and presumed he was dead.

All the while, artillery fire continued to rain down upon and near the mill, a burst overhead on the wall above, a burst behind on the twisted wreckage of the bridge, a tree burst left rear across the river, ground bursts in front, left and rear. Harassed but unscathed.

Suddenly, out on the battlefield to my left front, I saw a soldier as he staggered to his feet. He looked around as if confused, dazed or wounded. He was without helmet or rifle.

Recognizing him, I yelled, "Davis! Hit the ground! Hit the ground! I'll come out and get you. Stay down and stay put!"

To lighten my load, I removed my cartridge belt and left my rifle. I asked my buddies to cover me. I crossed the wall at its low point near the Moder, crouched down, and raced to where Wilber Davis had hit the ground. When I got there, I learned that Davis was badly wounded as he had taken several bullets to the body. He was fast losing his ability to comprehend.

Wilber was tall, over six feet, and heavy, over 200 pounds. I needed as much of his physical strength as he could muster for the return. I pleaded, I implored, I cajoled, and I urged. Half supporting his weight while keeping a low profile was difficult but we finally covered about half the distance before Davis became so incoherent and weak that he was of little help. I loaded him on my back, draped his arms over my shoulders and around my neck, and slowly crawled and wiggled through the snow. As the terrain provided a bit more cover, I changed my position. With both on our backs I locked my arms under Wilber's and over his chest and pushed with my feet.

After what seemed an eternity, we reached the southern, tumbled-down end of the wall at river's edge. I tried and tried, but by now was so weak that I could not lift us both over the wall. At one point I almost dumped us both into the raging Moder river.

Maxwell and Fox appeared and helped me lug Davis the few remaining yards to the relative protection of the mill. We administered first aid to Wilber. The radio operator called for an ambulance.

In record time a jeep pulled up to the jumbled and tangled remains of what once was a bridge to the mill. To carry a 200-pound man on a stretcher over that mass of twisted girders, broken beams, and raging water was a challenge, but we did it. By this time some walking wounded had reached the safety of the mill. They too were helped across the river and into an ambulance. As the jeep and ambulance departed, shells continued to fall on the mill and the immediate environs.

Elsewhere on the patrol battlefield: at the first sweep of enemy machine-gun fire Cpl. Ed Burkhalter hit the ground. Lying there in the prone position, on his stomach, he suddenly felt a searing hot pain in his shoulder and back. A bullet entered his body under one shoulder blade, clipped and severed ribs from his backbone as it traversed the length of his body, and finally whirled and spiraled to a stop inside his internal organs, causing untold damage and internal bleeding. Although in shock and quickly losing blood he managed to work his way back to the wooded cover near the river. Passing in and out of consciousness he awoke, realized that the lower half of his body was submerged in the water of the Moder, and attempted to crawl out onto the bank. In his weakened condition, he was unable to do so. Burkhalter remained half-submerged and half-floating in the icy cold water of the Moder throughout that day, that night and until the following morning.

When discovered, his vital signs were weak and faint, almost non-existent. He was evacuated from the battlefield to medical care in France and ultimately, a lengthy recuperation in the United States. [The above was from conversations with Edward Burkhalter many years later at Rainbow reunions.]

Elsewhere (location and details unknown to author) on the patrol battlefield Theodore Berg was seriously wounded, also spent long hours on the battlefield before discovery, and was eventually evacuated to the United States, in full body cast, for recuperation and eventual recovery.

In McMillen's own words,

After the attack started, I left my foxhole for an old vegetable cellar, which was a perfect place for cover and fire support. As I fired away with my BAR, enemy artillery began to rain down on my position. Shortly after that, Sgt. Tritto came back to the telephone nearby and called Corp Artillery. I heard the entire conversation.

Sgt. Tritto said, "Give us some cover so we can recover our dead and wounded."

The reply, "You don't have any priority!"

Tritto's heated reply was, "Give us some cover or I'm going to come back there and blow up your command post."

"Who are you?" was the answering question.

He said, Sgt. Tritto, I Company, 222nd."

"We'll see about it," the verbal reply. Three long rounds fell on the battlefield. Corp Artillery's total response. Big deal.

Sgt. Sodek escaped any fire by jumping into the Moder River. He came back soaking wet to his waist.

It was impossible to ascertain an exact composition of the patrol that day because of several factors: the two-day life of the patrol, the haphazard augmentation of the patrol with troops from other units, the usurping of the command of the patrol by Lt. Vensel, the change of mission by Vensel, and his untimely yet predictable death. Of the fifteen to twenty men on that fateful patrol there were only five or six of us who were not killed or wounded.

Enemy shelling of the mill decreased and by late afternoon of the 25th of January, ceased. The German infantry was no longer returning our rifle and BAR fire. An eerie quiet enveloped the entire battlefield. We had not been in contact with company or battalion headquarters for some time as our radio had ceased to work. To find out what was going on we left the mill to rejoin our

company. The others headed up the hill toward company headquarters at Dauendorf; I walked east on the Haguenau road toward Neubourg.

Trudging along I thought only of Felty, “I hope he made it through the enemy attack on Neubourg last night! Was it only last night? So much has happened. Or is all this a bad dream? No! No! It did happen! But surely Harry is O.K. I know he is!”

I could hear my thoughts. I was talking to myself. I trembled. I shook. I cried like a wounded animal. The events of the past twenty-four hours were taking their toll: the lack of sleep, the long, cold night, the bursting shells, the bullets kicking up snow, The wounded, the dead.

Suddenly I saw a figure emerging from a foxhole a few yards to my front. It was Pfc. John L. Fox.

“Thank God, it’s good to see you, Fox!” I said.

After exchanging greetings, I asked about Felty.

Pfc. Fox answered, “I heard that Harry Felty and Isodore Schwarz were put on a machine gun borrowed from M company. It was set up in the woods near Neubourg. They were hit hard by 88s and Kraut infantry during the night. Today I heard the rumor that they had been badly wounded, or maybe even killed.”

“I’m on my way to Neubourg to find out for sure,” I said, continuing, “Felty and I were close. I gotta know!”

Pfc. Fox said he would go with me. As we walked along, Pfc. Fox told me that during the night a German patrol approached the 1st platoon’s line. Harvey R. Juud, who occupied the next foxhole, opened fire on the patrol. Members of the patrol returned the fire, and several bursts of enemy “burp gun” fire ripped into the front of Juud’s foxhole and into his body, killing him instantly.

Pfc. Fox continued, “That Kraut patrol passes through our line between Juud’s hole and mine. They were only about 15 to 20 yards away as I watch them file by. After the last one disappears to the rear, I cautiously creep out of my foxhole to see where they would go. About then the last guy turns his head and speaks to me in German! Thank God they weren’t in white camouflage or I’d be dead right now. I grunt and nod my head and try hard to look like one of their patrol. He buys it! I follow along behind as they made a wide sweep of the open country back there,” pointing at the rolling fields just short of Dauendorf. “At one point it looks like they might go into those woods over there,” pointing again. “If they did, I was gonna lose myself in the woods, but they didn’t. I continue to follow them as they go back through our lines. I lag behind and duck into my foxhole. Bob, today I’m just glad to be alive.”



As we ambled down the road toward Neubourg, I proceeded to update Pfc. Fox on my patrol and the disaster at the mill.”

Suddenly, “Whump”, a shell landed south of us, “BAROOM”, we scrambled for the ditch. “Whump”, a shell landed north of us, “BAROOM”, we hit the ditch, “Whump”, “BAROOM”, an explosion ripped the earth a few scant yards south, spraying our bodies with bits of earth and snow.

We scrambled to our feet and ran like the wind the 100 or 150 yards to Neubourg and a basement. Once again, we had been reminded that the Germans *would* fire their 88s at a target as small as two soldiers walking down a road.

There I learned that Felty and Schwarz had died heroic deaths at their machine gun fighting off the attacking Germans. I would miss Harry. I lost a member of my family; I lost a brother that night.

Under the steady influence and outstanding leadership of T/Sgt. Evanoff, the 1st platoon blunted, stopped and repelled the attack of the enemy during that fateful night. Tonight, the battlefield was relatively quiet. Tomorrow, the 26th of January at 0730, we were to launch an all-out attack against the Germans. During the night they removed all their remaining troops back across the river and continued retreating north. The attack amounted to nothing more than re-establishment of our Main Line of Resistance. The Rainbow fired the last shot of the last battle of the “Battle of the Bulge” and drove the German Army from the battlefield.

The 222nd had two officers and 32 enlisted men killed, six officers and 140 enlisted men wounded, and 74 enlisted men missing in action. The seven enemy regiments opposing the 222nd had 800 killed, an undetermined number wounded, and 200 captured.

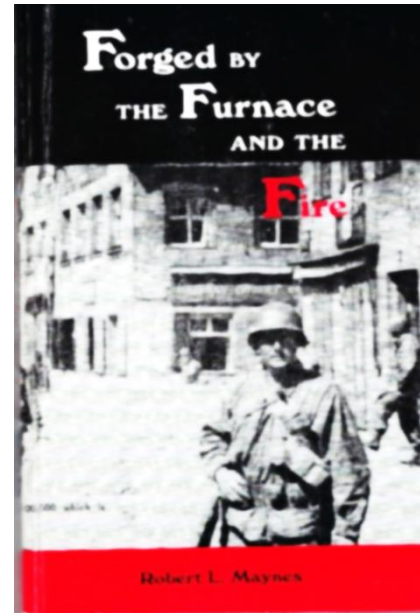
The 222nd Regiment was cited for extraordinary gallantry and outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy on 24-25 January 1945 in the Ohlungen Forest and the vicinity of Schweighausen and Neubourg, France.



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

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

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



The Soldier in the forefront of this cover photo is Pfc. Robert L. Maynes, 1st Platoon, Company I, 222nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division.

Excerpts from the FOREWARD of this book –

"Realizing that the book's title, *Forged by the Furnace and the Fire* does need explanation, I submit the following: *Fire* means combat; *Furnace* requires more explanation. Each of the three regiments comprising the 42nd Rainbow Division had a code name; the code name for our regiment, the 222nd was *Furnace*. I hasten to explain that a history of the 222nd Regiment in combat, *The Furnace and the Fire* was published in Vienna, Austria in 1945. It is not my intent to plagiarize that great work. Both here and in the enclosed bibliography, I give full credit to that publication as a reference source and to its author for his clever double-entendre of the regiment's code name...

"*Forged* describes my character development as a member of the *Furnace* during its battles and trials by *fire*. From the moment I entered combat at Strasbourg; through the desperate winter battles in Alsace; the days and long nights while in defensive positions in the Vosges Mountains near Wingen, France; grueling attack through the Hardt Mountains; penetration of the Siegfried Line; entry into Germany; crossing the Rhine; sweeping across the *Vaterland* atop the tanks and TDs of the 12th Armored; attack on Wurzburg, Schweinfurt, Furth, I was continuously experiencing life and death situations and decisions that would mold, would forge my attitudes and attributes throughout the remainder of my life...

"At Dachau I saw the *Furnaces* and thought of the *Fires* that had been built in them by the SS to reduce the Jewish bodies to ask for easy burial. My sense of justice and morality was further *Forged* by thoughts of man's inhumanity to man when I learned that the *Fires* in the *Furnaces* of the death camps of Hitler had consumed six million Jews...."

LIBERATORS AND HUMANITARIANS THE MEN OF THE RAINBOW DIVISION

By Eli Heimberg
November 26, 1994

Beside the fact that the Rainbow Division of World War II completed its military mission successfully and also liberated the Dachau concentration camp, little note is made of its other great achievement, that of the humanitarian efforts and the attempts to rehabilitate the victims of the Holocaust. I witnessed that.

Because of the foresight and sensitivity of its Commander, Major General Harry J. Collins, its Officers, and many of its enlisted men, I saw renewed hope and spirit awakened in the souls of these unfortunate people. This history should not be left untold in the archives of the "Rainbow".

Despite the horrors we saw at Dachau and other such hell holes, there was a feeling, at least the unfortunate survivors would be nursed back to health, and through some miracle would be united with the remnants of their families or relatives.

After we left Dachau, Chaplain Bohnen, myself, and Hundt, my dog, unknowingly moved ahead of our sector and found ourselves in "unclaimed territory". As dusk fell, we realized it would be dangerous to proceed further. We drove off the autobahn (at that time the German superhighway) and found an abandoned farmhouse. I drove the jeep into the barn, cautiously checked to see if anything was mined and took a look in the icebox (not a refrigerator) which was well stocked.

Chaplain Bohnen discreetly concluded that the only food we should touch be the eggs, which we hard boiled. As night fell, we felt assured that Hundt's soft growl would alert us if anyone approached. We left the next morning, relieved that the night was uneventful, and continued on to our next billet in Munich. After that we were billeted with the rest of Division Headquarters in one night stands in the Bavarian towns of Waldering on May 1; Oberpframmern, May 2; Assling, May 3; Obing, May 4; finally arriving May 5 in Palling. We could see the foothills of the Tyrolean Alps from there.

Several days after we had arrived in Palling, before V.E. day, we were awakened just after midnight by someone pounding loudly on the door. I believe Al Sly and Art Kettels were in the room with me. It was Chaplain Lisle Bartholomew, the Division Chaplain. He said, "I have orders from General Collins to tell you that Field Marshal Kesselring is coming through our lines to surrender and no one is to intercept him or hold him up, but to allow him passage through. Do you get the message?" We got the message. As I drowsed off, I mused, if Kesselring came into our room, I'd say, "You're in the wrong place, keep on going!"

Excerpt from A Letter from Edwin Rusteberg, H1B-242D Infantry Regiment and General Staff Corps, Headquarters, 42D Infantry Division, to his children, Suellen McDaniel and Bill Rusteberg, written in the late 1980's

Then there was the evening when I received a strange call from the "Donut" girls of the American Red Cross. "Hi, Colonel!" came the feminine voice on the wire, "Come on down to our place at the station and have donuts and coffee with our guest, Field Marshall Kesselring of the German Army!!!" In disbelief, I replied: "Are you pulling my leg – it's not April Fool's Day, you know!!!" "No, we're not!!" came the reply. "We thought you and the General ought to know about it – so come down and see for yourself!!" Hopping in my jeep, I tore off for the Bahnhof to verify this interesting situation. Knowing from reports I had seen that Field Marshall Kesselring, who had commanded all German forces in Italy at war's end, was to be tried by the British for war crimes, I couldn't figure out what he would be doing on the loose at the Bahnhof. As I entered the Red Cross facility there, I could see instantly that the report to me was correct, as Field Marshall Kesselring and several of our Donut girls were happily engaged in conversation as they munched away at the pastries on the table. Joining this happy gathering and meeting the Field Marshall firsthand, I tried to piece together the story behind this unusual event, so I started out by asking the girls what happened.

"We saw him get off the train with all the others," came the reply. "but didn't notice him too much until the train left and there he was all alone. He seemed to be a bit uneasy and bewildered as he walked along the platform so we invited him to have some donuts and coffee with us. As we chatted a bit, he told us that he was Field Marshall Kesselring of the German Army – so that's when we called you!" Turning to the Field Marshall, I asked him how he happened to be here. "The British Government is going to try me for War Crimes in Italy", he replied, "and I was under guard of a British Detachment on my trip from Germany to Italy, where the trial is to be held. At Munich, my guards got off the train to relax and get some exercise, and the train took off without them! So here I am at the next stop, Salzburg, 'All Alone!!'" Getting to the nearest telephone, the wires got hot immediately as I reported the incident to my General [MG Harry J. Collins] in Salzburg, who relayed the story to General Mark Clark in Vienna. It wasn't long before an embarrassed British Security Detachment arrived to take over their missing war criminal. The Field Marshall was later sentenced to death but Field Marshall Montgomery of the British Army, would have none of it and, in a passionate plea for the chivalry of his worthy opponent in Italy, secured his release.

We were told in Palling, Bavaria hostilities would cease as of May 8, 1945. Ceremonies were arranged throughout the Division celebrating that day as V.E. Day. The next day May 9, 1945 we received President Truman's proclamation, the war in Europe was over!

Several days later we continued into Austria, arriving on May 14 in the Tyrolean town of Kitzbuhel. This is a town nestled in a valley surrounded by mountains. Before the war it was a ski resort and a winter playground for royalty and the affluent of Europe. The Grand Hotel was to be our headquarters and some of us were temporarily billeted there. Later on, we were billeted in the homes of local burghers. Al Sly and I (with Hundt) were billeted in the home of the local postmaster, Herr Schmolz. Although a local official only, his uniform was almost as ornate as a General's.

Almost every trade had a uniform. One morning I saw a man riding a bicycle down the main thoroughfare outfitted in a full-dress suit and top hat. Perhaps he was the town clown? But when he reappeared that evening, coming home, his face and clothing looked like he had been dragged out of a coal pit. My curiosity peaked. I asked Herr Schmolz about this character. He told me that man was the town chimney sweep and the top hat and formal attire was his uniform which gave dignity to his craft.

We remained in Kitzbuhel for several months. And that period was used for rest and rehabilitation for the Division. Furloughs were issued to visit other centers in Europe for short periods.

In August, 1945, the Division sector was extended into Salzburg. The part of the Command Post called CP II was now located in the outskirts of Salzburg in a section called Parsch. Once we were in Salzburg, General Collins' office requested the Division Chaplain's office through Chaplain Bohnen to look into the conditions of a Displaced Persons Camp in the area, named Reidenberg. Prior to its becoming a displaced Persons camp, Reidenberg was the headquarters for an Austrian Cavalry unit.

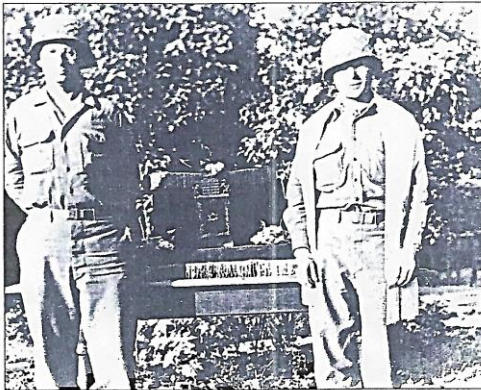
When we entered Reidenberg, we saw to our dismay, barbed wire around the perimeter and armed guards manning the gated entrance to the camp. We learned the camp was a center for displaced persons of various nationalities including Yugoslavs, Poles, Russians, Czechs, and Hungarians waiting to be repatriated in addition to groups that were considered stateless persons.

Many of these people had been liberated from concentration camps, others had entered Germany and Austria voluntarily for whatever reasons. They were now in a detention camp. Their lives were a bit safer, existing with

a meager food ration of 1500 calories per day, not enough to sustain a healthy person, let alone an emaciated one. After all this time, these survivors were not free men; women and children could not come and go as they wished.

What happened since April when the liberations took place? I quote from Chaplain Judah Naditch's book, *Eisenhower and the Jews*: "...the story went back to the famous mission of Earl G. Harrison, then dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Law School. In July 1945, Mr. Harrison, at the request of the President of the United States, made an inquiry into the condition and needs of stateless persons or non-repatriable displaced persons in the liberated countries of Eastern Europe and in the SHAEF area of Germany (Austria), with particular reference to Jewish refugees. In accordance with a letter of June 22, 1945 from President Truman, Mr. Harrison was to investigate the conditions under which displaced persons were living, especially in Germany and Austria; the needs of such persons; how those needs were being met by the military authorities, the governments of residence and international and private relief bodies, and the views of the non-repatriable

3/28/07
Mr. Eli Heimberg
1400 Knowles Dr
Newtown, NC 28658
DEAR SUE,
ENCLOSED IS A COPY OF
THE RAINBOW FLAG AND
PHOTO OF CHAPLAIN BOHNEN
AND ME TAKEN IN THE FIELD
DURING WWII
REGARDS,
E. W. Heimberg



EH17. Jewish services performed outdoors from the hood of a jeep by Chaplain Eli Bohnen and his assistant Eli Heimberg, March-May 1945. Collection Eli Heimberg.

persons as to their future destinations...Mr. Harrison had others join him, including the European Director of the American Joint Distribution Committee.

“The Harrison report threw a bombshell into American governmental circles at home and American and Allied Military circles in Europe. Although the full Harrison report was not available to the military authorities in Frankfort (Vienna) until early in September, General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff in Washington, was sufficiently upset to cable some of the conclusions of the Harrison report to General Eisenhower and General Clark at the beginning of August. The Chief of Staff’s cable, sent on Aug. 3, was received at Frankfort the following day, and summarized the conclusions of the Harrison report.

(Harrison Report)

“1. Military authorities refuse to recognize Jews as a separate category or as stateless despite admitted greater suffering. Apparent policy is to treat all groups by nationality alone and to force repatriation by unpleasantness of surroundings and conditions.

“2. Immediate improvement in billeting is considered essential, if necessary, by requisitioning from German population, particularly in rural areas, a step which Military Government personnel have been reluctant to take, despite authorization to do so.

“3. In addition, program of separate camps for Jews should be pushed more vigorously on model of Feldafing Camp (a camp in the German sector).

“4. Highly important UNRRA assume management of camps especially of non-repatriables at the earliest possible date. Despite military professed eagerness to have UNRRA assume such responsibility, Rhatigan (UNRRA) is not receiving adequate assistance in such matters as headquarters and transport.

“5. Official recognition and assistance in communications and tracing of relatives sorely needed to prevent complete breakdown of morale among Jewish families separated for years.”

“Later on, General Clark told Nadich, General Eisenhower and he had been relaxing on the French Riviera, taking a much needed rest for several days, when the cables began flying from Washington as a result of the Harrison report. The contents of the cables relayed to them cut short their brief period of relaxation and both of them hurried back to their respective headquarters, Eisenhower to Frankfort and Clark to Vienna.”

To go off on a tangent for a moment, I always wondered what prompted our commander, Major General Harry J. Collins to appoint a Jewish Chaplain to the 42d Division. Very few infantry divisions could proudly lay claim having such broad spectrum of religious military representation. Was it because the original Rainbow was founded on the premise that its men were representative of all America, covering the nation “like a Rainbow”? Or was it foresight of the days to come wherein he should prepare for an unusual peace role with his command?

I believe both of them were true. Very few infantry divisions had a fully assigned Jewish Chaplain, let alone having the only assistant division chaplain of that faith. During formal formations and meetings Collins fondly referred to Chaplain Bohnen as “Padre”.

His compassion, sensitivity, and foresight were reflected sooner than most commanders when it came his turn to do something about those in his sector who were displaced persons, whether they be those liberated from concentration camps, stateless persons and those fleeing from eastern Europe to avoid persecution. Until the 42nd Division was moved into the Salzburg area nothing was done about this problem, everything was in limbo.

Coming back to Camp Reidenberg, in Salzburg. We asked the guard at the camp’s entrance where the Jewish displaced persons were housed. General Collins, through channels, specifically ordered Chaplain Bohnen to look into this situation.

We parked the jeep outside a two-story stone building to which the guard directed us, and were immediately surrounded by curious “detainees”. When they learned who we were and who we were representing, we were welcomed with great joy. I need not tell you there was a hesitancy about coming near Hundt, my constant canine companion, until I reassured them.

We knew their rations were meager and came prepared to distribute Red Cross parcels which were originally needed for American prisoners of war. They were accepted with gratitude. Those who appeared to be the leaders in the group were asked to escort us on a tour and show us around. They were so eager to be near us and with us that we ended up with everybody going with us.

The building we entered, a former barracks, was one of the dorms for the detainees. Each room had in it two-tier beds, having makeshift mattress covers filled with straw, if obtainable. About thirty to forty people called each room “home”. There was no division or separation whatsoever by sex, age, or family unit.

We knew they obtained their food from a central mess hall and returned to this building to consume their ration, or if the weather was pleasant to eat outside. But I was curious as to where the toilets were located. In response to my question, someone took me by the arm guiding me to the window overlooking the enclave.

Pointing to a long hut approximately eight hundred feet long and five hundred feet away (about three city blocks), he said, “There are the toilets”. Now I knew from where the disgusting odor of human excrement embellished with lime emanated. I asked him, “What do you do at night?” His answer was, “The best we can. If we can’t make it we are unfortunate and soil ourselves.” One cannot imagine the degrading, dehumanizing experience this was just to maintain their basic body requirements.

Their food ration was fifteen hundred calories a day. The Austrian population was receiving 2500 calories per day. As it was, even such ration would be insufficient for people who suffered malnutrition for a long period. There was no medical service. Agencies such as UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency and the American Joint Distribution Committee had not yet become operational.

Only ten percent of the detainees could get passes to leave the camp each day. And then they were required to return by dusk of that day.

In the days after the victims of the concentration camps were liberated, Jewish survivors had been thrown together with other ethnic groups, many of whom had not been incarcerated originally in these camps. They had come voluntarily to Germany and Austria to help in the German war machine, others came as foremen, volunteer labor in factories, guards in the concentration camps and fugitives from the armies of the East.

As our tour guides unfolded the story of their living conditions, we realized how bitter their lives had continued to be. In some instances, things had not changed. They were facing some of the same tormentors who were living with them under the guise of sanctuary. The only difference the tormentors could look forward to repatriation, whereas the Jewish DP’s yearned to leave what had become to them a graveyard in Europe.

But they had no place to go. They did not want to return to the homes where the Nazi’s propaganda had poisoned the minds of the population against them. The British Mandate over what was then Palestine (in 1948 the United Nations voted the creation of Israel) closed the doors to that land to these unfortunate people. Sometime later, in October of 1945, the two English speaking Allies formed the Anglo-American Commission to investigate and try to resolve this problem. Until then, and sometime thereafter, suffering continued.

While there, a little three-year-old standing beside her mother caught my eye. As I approached her, I could sense a feeling of fear. There was a candy bar in my pocket and I asked her mother if the child could have it. She nodded approvingly. As my outstretched hand touched her tiny fingers, I knew I had found a friend.

Her mother said, “Why don’t you pick her up? She would like that, her father is dead.” I picked up the frail body and encouraged her to eat the candy. To my surprise she started to eat it, wrapper and all. Her mother whispered softly, “She never had a candy bar before and has to learn that the wrapper must come off first.”

Meanwhile, activity at Division Headquarters had intensified and many projects were brewing. The Division, having just extended its sector to Salzburg, was getting settled in its new headquarters, creating and establishing adequate military government controls in the form-Nazi oriented government. Nevertheless, General Collins was fully aware and concerned of the most crucial problems facing the Displaced Persons,

especially those of the Jewish faith. Much to his credit, he was one of the first military commanders to initiate action to alleviate many of the conditions.

After Chaplain Bohnen's initial report and with the benevolent support of his fellow officers and the General, he was able to acquire at least a more reasonable food ration than before. With the General's blessing, letters were sent from the Chaplain's office to religious congregations throughout the United States appealing to them to send food parcels, clothing, shoes, soap, and even cosmetics. Some people could not understand the need for cosmetics, until it was pointed that it was one of the rehabilitation necessities to again establish a feeling of self-worth.

In a book written by Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes* (1989 Oxford: Pergamon Press), he tells, "The 42nd had an assistant Military Government Officer, Stanley R. Nowinski, a Catholic Polish-American, who, in Austria became the 'Displaced Persons' Control Officer. His task was to coordinate between the military and Austrian civilian authorities, mainly to assure a speedy repatriation of the DPs who were in his area. Despite difficulties and the addition of more DPs (about 100,000 in the end), the task seemed to have been more or less accomplished by late August, when only a camp for repatriated Italians, Camp Reidenberg, still existed. People were shipped from there in weekly batches of about 500, to Italy of course. However, rumors began reaching Nowinski that there were no Italians at all. When he visited the camp, he was met by a young man who represented, supposedly, an International Red Cross Committee for the repatriation of Italians and Greeks. Nowinski soon found out that these "Greeks" and "Italians" were Jews. After some time, the young man left and another one came in his place, Aba Weinstein (today Gefan, one time Israeli Ambassador to Romania), a Jewish partisan from the Lithuanian forests, representing the Brichah ('flight' in Hebrew). He had come from Poland, and his job was to smuggle Jews to Italy. Nowinski saw the dedication and enthusiasm of these people, and helped them as best he could. He obtained official recognition for Weinstein, and though vigilant control by the British on the Austro-Italian border, in the end made further large scale smuggling impossible, they continued their cooperation. With Nowinski's help, the DPs were divided into two categories: those who wanted to stay in Austria temporarily, until the situation regarding immigration was clarified, and those who wished to press on, either to Italy, via the French Zone of Austria (the Innsbruck area) or into the US Zone in Germany. British protests caused a CIC investigation of Nowinski's work, but the conclusion of the CIC (Counter-Intelligence Corps) was that Nowinski was doing a good job and should carry on doing it. By October, there were two camps for the first category, one in Salzburg, called New Palestine, consisting of small apartments that housed about 1000 people initially: the other was in the holiday resort of Bad Gastein, with about the same number. By that time, a new director for the American Joint distribution Committee in the US Zone in Austria had taken Reznick's place, James P. Rice of Cleveland." We will be referring to these periods as we continue to unfold the story of the "Men of the Rainbow."

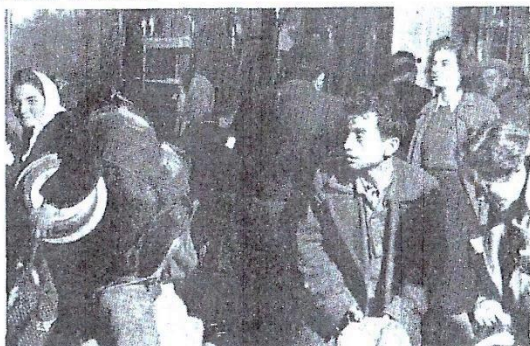
Photo is from booklet, A Year of Progress (1946)

By the early part of September 1945, General Collins and his Officers were ready to implement their plan of action. The remaining Jewish inhabitants were moved from the hated Camp Reidenberg to a housing development in a Salzburg suburb, called Parsch. It was a significant move. The change was made with joy. I could only compare their exodus from that camp, the people carrying their worldly belongings, to that of the exodus from Egypt. This was the first time any ruling government showed any consideration for them. Families were now housed in small apartments. Those without families were quartered two to a bedroom, sharing a kitchen in the apartment with the other tenants. Each bedroom had two beds, each bed having a solidly filled straw mattress, with 2 blankets per person. The kitchens had wood-burning stoves for those who wished to heat or cook their own meals. Those who were very Orthodox, who observed the Kosher dietary laws, who lived on

General Collins At DP Camp . . .



Major General Harry J. Collins makes an inspection tour of Displaced Persons camps to receive first hand information about the camps and the problems and complaints of the Displaced Persons themselves.



Displaced Persons Carry All Their Belongings

potato skins and water and who suffered for being faithful to their strong beliefs throughout these years could now partake of a nourishing meal. However, ritually kosher slaughtered meat was not available.

A community mess hall was built under the supervision of the Division by local laborers. The kitchen was manned by the DPs, paid for by the various relief agencies. Those who wished to eat in the privacy of their quarters could do so; those who wished to eat in the mess also had their choice.

As liaison for the Chaplain's Office between the military and the DPs, it was my mission to make life for them as comfortable as could be under the circumstances and to make whatever efforts possible to aid in their rehabilitation.

By this time the appeal to the organizations and congregations started to bear fruit. The Chaplain's office was swamped with parcels to the point that it became an avalanche. One day we received two freight cars of mail just addressed to the Chaplain. Because of the postal overload we had a visit from the Inspector General to find out if there was a black-market operation going on. With the benign approval and satisfaction of General Collins and his staff, we moved into quarters right next to the APO in a room of approximately 3000 square feet.

Little did we know that the appeal would result in such overwhelming results and subsequent beneficial ramifications. It was necessary to create a staff, four people to open packages, classify the contents, and then warehouse them. Shelves were built to store the classified items. All parcels were acknowledged and a typist worked full time doing this chore. The staff developed a system wherein after the packages were unpacked they cut off the return address and put it into a basket to be acknowledged. As with all people who have pride in their work, they developed their own jargon. The return addresses were called "froms". They proudly counted them up each night to measure the day's accomplishment. The members of the staff were all inhabitants of the Camp.

It was heartwarming to see a small society evolve six months after their liberation. A combination school house and house of prayer was erected on the grounds. A qualified teacher among the inhabitants volunteered to teach the ten or so children. A "Minyan" (a quorum of 10 for group prayer) was resumed for daily and Sabbath observance. And of all things, a newspaper was published by October 10, 1945! Laboriously, copies were made with a spirit duplicator. This was before the age of "Xerox". Using the crudest methods, the original copy was formed on an imprint from a special carbon paper. This copy was squeezed on to a gelatinous surface leaving an image which could be duplicated up to thirty or forty copies.

The members of the community could now come and go without requiring a pass. However, "bugs" had to be ironed out. Our little society would not be complete unless it achieved a sense of self government and developed an incentive for fruitful work.

With the Chaplain's concurrence, I requested the community attend a very important meeting one night after supper. At that meeting I pointed out, that while we waited for the eventual goal we dreamed, it was to our present advantage to prove to our benefactors (the 42nd Division) we could be self-sufficient, if given the opportunity.

We needed garbage clean up, police, and schooling. The school was already in place. A freely elected governing body was necessary to accomplish these things, and to go a step further, to act as their official voice. I proposed they elect a community council of five people, one of them to be appointed as Chairman or President. To my pleasant surprise, within a few days there were 10 candidates from 10 parties running for office. A quick date was set for elections with adequate time for campaigning. Duly elected representatives were subsequently installed.

We had come to the point when the rations were almost adequate, but we now needed incentives for the wheels of the newly formed government to work. The contributions from the States had achieved their purpose. Those who were in dire need of food and clothing had already received their allotments. The warehouse now became sort of a PX. A system of points was developed and scrip was issued to be redeemed for any time someone spent on work. A self-sufficient economy emerged - tailors, teachers, storekeepers, students, sanitation people, policemen, kitchen help - all participated.

After the council was installed, one of them was chosen to be Mayor of New Palestine. He was Aaron Goryn. He was a pharmacist and his wife, Adele, a dental assistant. They were a shining beacon of leadership. Mr. and Mrs. Goryn eventually found their freedom in the United States and presently live in Illinois. They are the proud parents of a daughter, who is married, has two children, is a Ph.D. and is an executive in one of America's Fortune 500 companies.

Although some meat was included in the diet, those who were strictly orthodox abstained from eating it. As it was, there was not much protein in their diet and this denial could create a food deficiency. Some of the people asked me what could be done, since their ration was not being used. They had not consumed any meat for many years. The purpose for Kosher ritual slaughtering is two-fold. The animal must be slaughtered in a humane way in accordance with certain guidelines and after it is slaughtered, it must be examined for disease. This must be done by a person who has been trained for such purpose and is called a Shohet.

After this discussion, I made an appointment with the Burgomeister of Salzburg and took along one of the inhabitants of the camp who was a Shohet. The Burgomeister was not too well pleased about the meeting, but he knew I was there with the blessing of General Collins. It was agreed that two head of cattle of a certain weight (this was the normal ration available for the Camp) would be made available for ritual slaughter every Thursday. Thereafter, for the first time in many years, the survivors of the concentration camps and the refugees hidden in forests could welcome the Friday night Sabbath with Kosher meat.

A month or so later, one of the orthodox inhabitants mused, "We are so thankful for what has been done for us. Would it not be nice to welcome the holy Sabbath when we break bread with 'Challah' instead of the black bread?" A Challah is a twisted loaf of egg bread. Even though he had not made a request, nor would the food have any effect on his health, having it would reinforce his faith and belief. On my way back to the hotel (we were now billeted in a hotel in central Salzburg), I thought to myself miracles do occur, but they have to be helped sometimes. The next morning, I made an appointment with Captain William J. Stamford, Commanding Officer of Division Headquarters Company, and my commanding officer. I related the story to him and asked him if the Company would consider trading its white bread ration every Friday with that of the DPs' black bread. He thought for a moment and said, "What a blessed idea! Let me share it with others in the

Company and see how they feel about it." Suffice to say, the next Friday a six wheeler drove into the DP camp, unloaded loaves of white bread (which was now Challah) in exchange for black bread (which was now simulated pumpernickel). Years later, my daughter, Ellen, observed, "this act of taking ordinary food and using it for out of the ordinary as in this case caused that food to become Holy (Webster defines 'Holy' as "set apart in the service of God."). By this act every man in the Company shared in this benevolent deed, Captain Stamford lives with his wife in Plainview, Texas. They have raised three children. "Bill" has retired from his work as a principal. He and Betty, who have always been devout people, have been giving of themselves full time in worthy causes, from their church work, to every aspect of volunteer civic activity.

On September 7, 1945, High Holiday Services were held for Jewish members of the armed forces in the auditorium of the Mozarteum. The Mozarteum, in Salzburg, had been the center-point of the Mozart music festivals, the home of the great Austrian composer, Mozart. Civilians and members of the DP community were invited to attend and participate. Chaplain Bohnen officiated at the services with Cantor Joseph Kagan, a refugee assisting him. We were very fortunate to have found one with his skill and trained musicianship. At an



DIE REICHSMUSIKHOCHSCHULE MOZARTEUM

appropriate time, General Collins came to pay his respects. The DPs were overwhelmed and delighted at the General's appearance. Here was one of the liberators of the war who not only was a great military figure but compassionate and understanding human being, and who came to acknowledge their Holy Day. Photo of *Mozarteum* is from *Salzburg: Gestalt und Antlitz*, printed in Salzburg in 1943; Bild 243

One day, Mac, who worked in our "homemade PX," asked me, "does the American Army have any infantry?" I said, "Of course, the 42d Division is an infantry unit. Why do you ask?" He replied, "I never see any soldiers on foot. They always ride. And your "Jimcees" are the most wonderful pieces of equipment I have ever seen." He saw my puzzled look and I said, "Can you show me and tell me where you got the name?" We went outside and he took me over to the nearest two and a half ton truck, pointed to the nameplate in front which had the insignia of General Motors Corp "GMC". "Look, he said very proudly, "Ji em cee."

By October 1945, the Division erected a new sign before coming in to the entrance of the camp. A new name was given to the camp. New Palestine, to express the yearning of where most of its inhabitants wanted to go. A new director of the American Joint Distribution Committee replaced Reuben Reznick. Earlier in August, he attended with the Chaplain and myself the first circumcision of a baby in then Camp Reidenberg. The American Joint Distribution Committee is a relief agency that has done its charitable work for decades in Europe to aid victims of pogroms and has done other philanthropical deeds. This agency, in addition to UNNRA, and the Red Cross were the only agencies recognized by the Armed Services to carry on relief and rehabilitation work in the American Zone in Europe.

Austria, in the American Zone was divided into two sectors outside of Vienna, with the 26th Infantry Division responsible for upper Austria and the 42nd Infantry Division responsible for the Salzburg area and south. General Mark Clark was in command of all of the United States forces in Austria. General Clark was unhappy with the conditions in upper Austria, and on October 7, summoned all the senior officers in his command, including Chaplain Bohnen and James Rice of the American Joint Distribution Committee, to a meeting in Vienna. Chaplain Bohnen described this hastily summoned trip as General Collins' Midnight Ride." The General drove through the night, interrogating every officer involved with DPs and uncovering every aspect of the problem facing Jewish DPs. General Collins had given the DP situation his personal attention whereas the commander of the 26th Division not only failed to do so but his attitude was obstructionist. General Collins continuously received reports on the DPs. He always saw to it that he was completely informed. Chaplain Bohnen was in constant contact with him.



The next morning, General Clark started the meeting stating that he intended that President Truman's orders shall be carried out in the US Zone of Austria, not only because they were orders, but because he himself was in sympathy with the principle that the Jews had been the most persecuted by the Nazis and therefore would be entitled to first consideration. General Collins could point out the achievements in this sphere in the sector of the 42nd Division, and the leadership and humanitarianism of his men. The General of the 26th Division was relieved of his command and returned home for 'rest and rehabilitation.' That day, Clark

appointed a committee composed of General Hume (G-5 on Clark's staff), Chaplain Bohnen and James Rice of the AJDC to choose new sites for camps. That was the origin of the new Bad Gastein Camp located in the Alps. Subsequently, Chaplain Bohnen was assigned a driver, Joseph Samelson, to be able to visit Bad Gastein frequently and to continue to service the needs of the Division's men.

Archival photo of Bad Gastein, Austria 30 August 1945 from RDVA archivist, Bill Keithan's collection

On one of the first days when some of the DPs were being transferred from Linz to Bad Gastein, I received a call from Chaplain Bohnen to intercept a convoy on the way to Bad Gastein before it entered the Division sector. It appeared that some of the transferees were upset and bewildered because they were being moved. I could not blame them for this feeling because every time they were moved there was always the fear and uncertainty of where they would end. It was my mission to reassure them. I drove to the checkpoint with my dog, Hundt and waited until the lead truck came into sight and flagged the driver down. I explained my orders, but when I asked the convoy commander to have everybody unloaded from the trucks so that I could talk to them, he refused. After going into detail and pointing out that I would be saving him an unnecessary trip back with the load, he finally consented.

After they had dismounted, I told the people that I was from Chaplain Bohnen's office and I spoke in his



name. I recognized their frustration, because every time they were taken to another place they had a new fear being transported into the unknown. I told them of the conditions in "New Palestine." The conditions in Bad Gastein would even be better and there would be opportunities to learn skills. I said, "Hopefully, the time will come when you will finally go to the "Promised Land;" and, I continued, "If there are those of you who would rather turn back and miss this opportunity, I will understand your fear, and I will see to it that you go back, and have no fear of reprisals." Many shouted and asked, "What would you do if you were in our place?" My answer was, "From now on, go forward, don't turn your back on your future." The convoy reassembled and continued to Bad Gastein.

From a collection sent to Rainbow Archivist Bill Keithan by William Smart, who wrote: "These photos depict the arrival of several hundred Jewish displaced persons, mostly Polish." Capt. David Levy, Cos. D and SVC, facilitates the direction of the passengers to their new quarters at Bad Gastein, Austria.

Meanwhile, "New Palestine" was a going community. The Division, trying to make life as normal as could be under the circumstances, built a playhouse-recreation hall. A piano was borrowed. Original plays were written by the inhabitants, by some who in their past were professionals in that field. The plays were performed to an ever appreciative audience. A booklet was published entitled, *English for Everyman*, with acknowledgements to the *Salzburger Nachrichten*, the local Salzburg newspaper for giving permission to use a series of their lessons, and for the money donated by the American Joint Distribution Committee to have it published. The booklet was used to learn to speak English and was dedicated to Major General Harry J. Collins.

With the renewed hope for the future, several weddings took place in November. Some told me only a year earlier they thought their lives were over. One cannot fathom the joy of these occasions. When the Chanukah holiday (the Feast of Lights) arrived November 29th, the Division sponsored a Chanukah party, given for the children of "New Palestine Camp". Candy and other gifts, contributions of Division personnel, were presented to the children. The following night, movies were shown to the kids.

At Bad Gastein, after some problems of getting adjusted, the people who had been concerned realized that under the circumstances, their decision was for the best. Schools were started for the children. Eventually a high school program evolved. Vocational training opportunities for adults were created after the proper equipment was obtained. Courses in machine shop work, carpentry, tailoring and agriculture were available. Courses in self improvement were given, such as language, science, writing and drama.

In December and January, food rations had improved to the point that the daily ration averaged 2560 calories per person. The relief organizations were becoming effective. UNRRA assumed more administrative control. More relief supplies were now available from the major relief agencies, UNRRA, the AJDC, and the ARC. Transportation and distribution procedures upset because of military priorities were now coming back to normal. What had started as a population of 1000, before leaving Reidenberg had now dwindled to 450 in

New Palestine. In Bad Gastein, a facility designed for 2500 DPs was now down to 1300. Many of the younger people, impatient for a brighter future left the camps, risked their lives to cross the Alpine frontier through a railroad tunnel, to travel on to a seaport in Italy.

In early February, the Joint Anglo-American Committee on Palestine, an inquiring body from both countries arrived at New Palestine, Salzburg and Bad Gastein to investigate the alternatives to the repatriation of the inhabitants of the camps. One of the American representatives was Judge Simon Rifkind, a Federal judge for the Southern District of the State of New York who was on temporary leave from that position to act as a civilian advisor to the Theatre Commander (General Eisenhower). The residents of the camps would not get over the interest displayed by the Committee, especially by Judge Rifkind. Many years later I read his submitted report which is one of the most eloquently written statements I have ever read. The visit by the Commission assured the DPs they were not forgotten, and no stone would be left unturned until the DP camps were empty and their residents were in lands of their choice. They could now face whatever discomforts and annoyances which might come their way with the full knowledge that these soon would be no more and that it was only a question of time until this unhappy chapter of their lives would be part of their past.

In the latter part of March, 1946, Chaplain Bohnen and I, as well as many others in the Army, had amassed enough points to return home. The “Rainbow” had done its job and had done it well. The 42nd Division had been trained to fight a war, not to be a social service agency. General Collins, his officers and enlisted men, as can be seen from this narrative, rose to the occasion and held the “fort” until the proper relief and rehabilitation agencies were in a position to take over – UNRRA, AJDC, and the ARC. It was time to go home to our families.

Eventually the Division sector was enlarged to encompass all of Austria. There was no need for DP camps, since many of the inhabitants were able to migrate to the places of their choice.

In war, the “Rainbow” liberated men. In peace, men of the “Rainbow” became humanitarians by renewing the hope of those who had found only despair.

Let us all be proud to have been part of that magnificent “Rainbow.”

[ed. with thanks to Josh Caster, curator of Special Collections, Love Library, University of Nebraska who provided these recollections of ELI HEIMBERG; to author, Margot Clark-Junkins, who received them through her request for materials in writing her forthcoming book, *Following the Front: The Dispatches of WWII Correspondent Sidney A. Olson*”, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Fall 2024 ; and who passed them on to the editor of RAINBOW TRAIL.

Photo collection of Rabbi Eli Bohnen 1945-46

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn524737?rsc=122227&cv=30&x=1883&y=1441&z=1.7e-4>

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 2024

1st May Commemoration at Muehldorf memorial site,

3rd May Commemoration at German military base at former place of Dachau subcamp Kaufering,

4th May Commemoration at the place, where the SS killed 4000 prisoners of war and Commemoration at death march memorial

5th May Commemoration at Dachau Memorial Site.

Sent by Jeremy Stuehmeyer, son of WWII Rainbow veteran, Henry Stuehmeyer, Cannon Co., 232nd Inf.

For more information online - https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/en/current_news/events/

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For questions, suggestions and submissions; our next issue deadline is 10 August 2024.

Our history newsletters are now posted online at <rainbowvets.org> on the NEWS/Press Room link.