

# RAINBOW TRAIL

The Millennium Legacy (Rainbow Family) History Newsletter  
of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry "Rainbow" Division  
February 2025 Volume 25, Issue 1  
"To Find, Preserve and Share Rainbow Division History"



**VETERANS' DAY 2025**  
Honors at Oise-Aisne

**FISMES BATTLE MUSEUM**  
Bringing History to Life

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp**  
RDVF Representation

**The Harlem Hellfighters**  
In World War I  
And the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division

**A Conversation with Dan Dougherty, WWII**  
veteran of C Co., 157<sup>th</sup> IR  
45<sup>th</sup> Division  
and a story of WWII

**Major Ralph E. Rosen and his unit in WWII**  
A Sequel by  
Carl and Gabrielle Rosen

**Stories from The Badge**  
William F. Clayton E/222  
Fred Venglarcik E/222  
Fred B. Curry D/222

**Honoring WWII Eighth Air Force's 100<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group**  
ABMC Ardennes

**RAINBOW RIFLEMEN**  
Part V  
Robert Spearing III

**2025 RDVF Scholarships**  
Tammy Moss-Hicks  
Scholarship Chair



to France's war dead and to hand down the memory of them to future generations."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_Souvenir\\_fran%C3%A7ais](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Souvenir_fran%C3%A7ais)

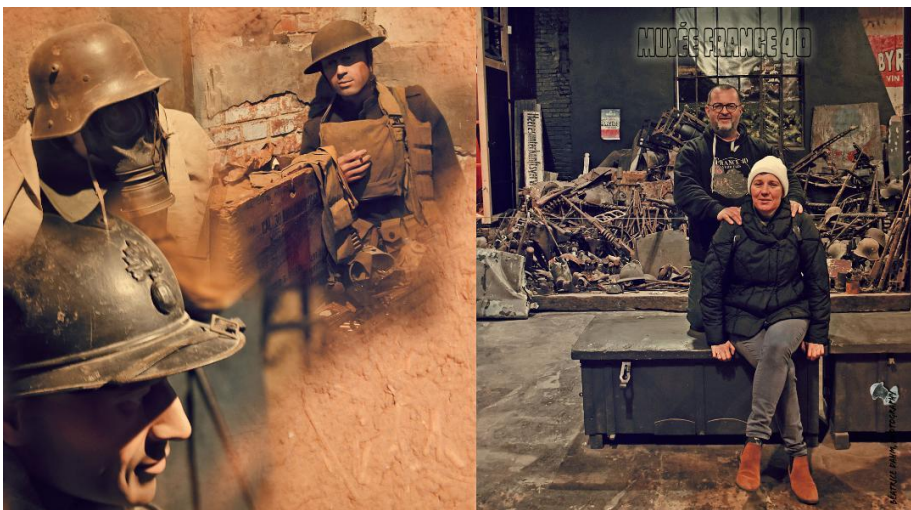
## BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

The Fismes Battle Museum, Fismes, FRANCE

Our friend, French photographer, Béatrice Dahm, whose wonderful photo presentations have graced the pages of both *RAINBOW TRAIL* and the *RAINBOW REVEILLE* for some years, has given us the opportunity to experience a most compelling presentation of the Great War at the Fismes Battle Museum, in her hometown of Fismes, France.

These photos show exhibits that are described in the Museum's brochure, to include "more than 200 original uniforms in realistic displays, vehicles, guns and tanks... The museum's collection also covers a large part of the second World War... The battle of Fismes, France is considered one of the USA's bloodiest forgotten actions in the First World War." The United States' 28<sup>th</sup> Division (originally nicknamed the "Keystone Division" was formed from units of the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1917.

A book that tells the story of the soldiers of this division in combat at Fismes, France is brought to our attention by Béatrice Dahm and told in this history:  
*Toward the Flame A Combat Memoir of World War I* By Hervey Allen; the story of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in the battle of FISMES, FRANCE.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Toward-Flame-Memoir-World-War/dp/0803259476>



In this photo, are the owner of this stunningly realistic museum, Laurent VERMOT-DESROCHES and his wife, Bernadette. Their son, Robin VERMOT-DESROCHES has translated this history for our understanding of the forces at work at Fismes in 1918 and explanation of the provisional American cemetery display there.

"At the end of August 1918, the American casualties in Fismes were very high, 13 718 wounded and 2068 Killed in action... All those American boys were laying dead on the French soil.



“The first ones to be “picked up” were those fallen inside of the city... for those who died outside, in the fields it was different... Most of those bodies were found and buried during the months of January and February 1919 (6 months after the battle!) This dirty [yet honorable] work was given to “black labor battalions.”

“For the sake of efficiency, all these fallen soldiers were not given a coffin; they were wrapped in a blanket, tied up with telephone wire and buried in a plot along the Fismes civilian cemetery.

“A lot of pictures of this cemetery were taken at the end of the war, the picture on the right shows John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces paying a visit to the soldiers buried there.

“From 1922 onwards, the bodies were moved and reburied in cemeteries chosen by the families, at Seringes et Nesles or Arlington for example.

“When the bodies were moved, many objects and human remains were left behind...in fact, it was difficult to move more than 2,000 men buried without coffins.

“In the early 2000s, a housing development was built on the site of the old cemetery, bringing up many relics, many of which were looted and sold ... losing their history forever.

“Fortunately, some of the town's inhabitants had the presence of mind to save some of them from looting.


“Today, we're working to recover, collect and preserve these objects, and to bring back those that have been sold. The items in this showcase are not just bits of rusty scrap metal, they are witnesses to the deaths of young men barely 20 years old, and should be treated with respect.”




“The Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial in France contains the remains of 6,013 American war dead, most of whom lost their lives while fighting in this vicinity in 1918 during World War I.” <https://www.abmc.gov/Oise-Aisne>

Among these honored dead are 474 graves of men of the 28<sup>th</sup> “Keystone” Division; and, 379 fallen soldiers of the 42<sup>nd</sup> “Rainbow” Division.




  
**PRÈS DE 200 MANNEQUINS DANS DES DÉCORS RÉALISTES, DES VÉHICULES, DES CANONS ET DES CANONS ... MAIS SURTOUT DE L'HISTOIRE !**
  
**L'HISTOIRE DE NOTRE RÉGION ET DE NOTRE PAYS DURANT LES DEUX GUERRES MONDIALES**
  
**LE TOUT DANS UNE MUSÉOGRAPHIE PRIVILÉGIANT LE MATÉRIEL RÉEL AUX ÉCRANS.**


  
**NEARLY 200 ORIGINAL UNIFORMS IN REALIST LOOKING DISPLAYS, VEHICLES, GUNS AND TANKS ... BUT MOSTLY HISTORY !**
  
**HISTORY OF OUR REGION AND COUNTRY DURING BOTH WORLD WARS.**
  
**ALL OF THE MUSEUM IS BUILT TO FORGET SCREENS AND TO SEE REAL ITEMS.**

An exhibition of photos by Béatrice Dahm appears in the museum – left to right: Robin VERMOT-DESROCHES (Son), Béatrice Dahm, (photographer) Nathalie LE BARBIER (Oise-Aisne American Cemetery) Laurent VERMOT-DESROCHES (the Owner of the Museum)



# UNANIMOUS APPROVAL RECEIVED FROM THE BOARD OF THE RAINBOW DIVISION VETERANS FOUNDATION, INC.(RDVF)

From Gary Yaple, RDVF Chairman



**Proposal:** Seeking a budget approval not to exceed \$6000, to support the transportation, lodging and per diem costs for two RDVF board members to represent the RDVF during the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dachau Concentration Camp liberation.

**Proposed RDVF Envoys:**

Rob Giordano, Memorials Officer

Harry Miller, RDVF Vice Chair and former 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander

**Background:** Rainbow Division Set to Mark 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dachau liberation with Historic Visit

This spring, a major milestone in the history of the famed 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division will be commemorated during the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp. Members of the 42<sup>nd</sup> (Rainbow) Division Foundation have been invited to participate in a series of solemn events honoring the liberation efforts of 42<sup>nd</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Armored Divisions.

A number of surviving liberators, accompanied by their family members, are planning to attend the week-long remembrance ceremonies at the site of the former Nazi concentration camp, now a memorial to the atrocities committed during World War II.

The commemoration will include guided tours, memorial events, and a central commemorative ceremony at Dachau, providing an opportunity for descendants to walk in the footsteps of their relatives who helped free thousands of prisoners in April 1945.

Tentative schedule of events:

- April 30, 2025 Arrival of liberators and family members
- May 1, 2025 Welcome events and dinner
- May 2, 2025 Special events for liberators and their descendants
- May 3, 2025 Guided tours of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site
- May 4, 2025 Religious services and the central commemorative ceremony (by invitation)
- May 5, 2025 Departure

The ceremonies will mark a profound moment of remembrance, paying tribute to those who helped liberate one of the first concentration camps established by the Nazis and honoring the survivors and descendants who continue to keep their stories alive.

In addition to the travel expenses, I recommend the RDVF sponsor a hosted social for 42<sup>nd</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Division liberators at one of the hotels. Estimated cost, \$300.00 as well as provide for a 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Plaque Presentation to the staff at Dachau and the German people in commemoration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation. Estimated cost: 100.00

## THE HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS IN WORLD WAR I FROM RDVF Chairman, Gary Yaple

The 369th Sustainment Brigade is a unit within today's 42d Infantry Division organizational structure. This command carries on the history and lineage of the famed 369th Harlem Hellfighters. In 1917 they were an all-black US Infantry Regiment from NY that was assigned to the French during WWI. They have an incredible history with many battle streamers and unit awards to include the Croix de Guerre.

The RDVF sponsored this upcoming event with funding to help reduce the cost of tickets for their junior NCOs and Soldiers. The RDVF will have board representation at the event to support them as they honor their 369th history while simultaneously sharing in the history of the Rainbow Division.

COL Pat Clare, commander of the 369th, is an RDVF life member, and sits on the Board of Directors. He does a great job of promoting the benefits of the RDVF to his Soldiers.

Rainbow! Never Forget!

You are cordially Invited to attend:  
**The Harlem Hellfighters Ball!**

On the 21st day of February 2025, at 1800 hrs.

On behalf of the 369<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade Command Team, Colonel Patrick Clare and Command Sergeant Major Leyland Jones, we'd like to invite members of the RDVF to join us at the Hellfighters Ball on 21 February from 1800-2200, at the Harlem Armory in New York.

This inaugural annual event will honor the triumphant return of the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from World War I, and their march up 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in February 1919. The Ball will also serve to promote camaraderie amongst the various organizations whose united purpose is to preserve and honor the legacy of these brave Soldiers.

We greatly appreciate the RDVF support, and we would be honored to have the RDVF represented at our event if you are able to make it. Additional details and the link to RSVP is below. We are requesting RSVP by 6 February so we can finalize the head count with our caterer.

We hope to see you there!

**A CONVERSATION WITH DAN DOUGHERTY, WWII VETERAN OF  
C COMPANY, 157<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT, 45<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION  
THE THUNDERBIRD DIVISION**

(from emails between Suellen McDaniel and Dan Dougherty in September 2024)

**September 28, 2024**

**Subject: MIA PFC Clossie D. Brown, Co. C, 157th Regiment, 45th Division ACCOUNTED FOR**

**(Suellen)** Hi, Dan: I was following up on a recently accounted for Soldier of the Rainbow Division whose final memorial service is scheduled for next week and also found a member of your unit just accounted for.

<http://www.thepatriotspage.com/Recovered.htm> If you scroll down about two inches, you'll see it.

**(Dan)** Suellen: Thanks for sending this. Turns out Brown was F Company of the 157th IR. In a quick look found four from the 157th all lost re Reipertswiller when six line companies were captured. It was to reform those units that caused me to be transferred from the 44th to the 45th Division. My fun story of that is attached. [*Two Sergeants from K Company*]

**(Suellen)** Dan, thank you for this superb description of this part of your service! I kept saying, "Wow!" all through it. I'd like to ask you if you would permit me to include it in the biannual history newsletter, RAINBOW TRAIL, next issue February 2025. It is truly good to be able to widen our focus as we learn Rainbow Division history and understand the forces who fought side by side with the WWII men of the 42nd.

**September 29, 2024**

**(Dan)** Fine. Speaking of fighting side by side, when the 7th Army had Nuremberg surrounded (Apr 15-20, 1945), the 42nd troops were immediately on our right and we in C Co-157 IR were charged with staying in touch with the Rainbow troops so we didn't end up shooting each other.

Some time ago I tried to interest the Shoah Foundation in doing a documentary about C Co GIs and some of the Holocaust prisoners we liberated. They weren't interested but my 2-page proposal and attachments combined virtually everything I have on Dachau. It is attached and you can use any part of it. One of those prisoners was Nick Hope who just turned 100 last week and who lives an hour from me in northern California. Nick had a good reunion with a Rainbow vet a few years back.

Have also attached, "Return to Dachau" from 2023 with Bud Gahs and "The Hofbrauhaus and the 45th Division." Rainbow folks will get a kick out of Ed Speairs' reason for claiming this pub for the 45th Division!

**EDITOR:** In this issue, a Story and a 2023 Presentation by Dan Dougherty are just below; thank you, Dan!!

## TWO SERGEANTS FROM K COMPANY

In December 1944 when Hitler realized that his Wacht am Rhein (our Battle of the Bulge) would fail, he had troops he had not used; and, desperate to be able to report a victory to the German people, he ordered an attack on what he knew to be the thinly deployed U.S. 7th Army. Operation Nordwind, Hitler's last offensive of World War II, kicked off against the 44<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> Divisions at 11 p.m. on New Year's Eve 1944 and then Himmler's group crossed the Rhine on 05Jan45.

*"I count upon you to enable me to announce to the Fuhrer in a few days' time that the swastika flag flies again over Strasbourg Cathedral."*

Order of the Day, Himmler's Army of the upper Rhine, January 5, 1945.

The Germans never did retake Strasbourg but, among other actions, troops of the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division found themselves under heavy attack in miserably cold conditions in the Vosges Mountains of northern Alsace in France; and it was during the third week of January that six companies (C, G, I, K, L & M) of its 157<sup>th</sup> Regiment were captured. These units were immediately reformed and for C Company (Co) this took place in the village of Schoenbourg in Alsace.



C Co's morning report for 21Jan45 listed 5 officers and 69 enlisted men Missing In Action and things moved quickly after that. First, a new commanding officer and an executive officer were appointed from within the regiment and then four 2nd lieutenants right out of Ft. Benning arrived from the replacement depot to serve as new platoon leaders.

To help rebuild these units, other divisions in the 7<sup>th</sup> Army were ordered to send experienced noncommissioned officers to the 45<sup>th</sup> and on January 25, 30 sergeants of various grades arrived at C Co. Experienced sergeants? At the time, Leonard Parker and I were privates first class serving as rifleman and BAR gunner respectively in K Co, 324<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 44<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division; but on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> we were abruptly promoted to staff sergeant and immediately dispatched to the 45<sup>th</sup>. The first sergeant wished us "Good luck" and later that day Leonard and I arrived in Schoenbourg to

learn we were now squad leaders in C Co of the 157<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

Finally, 89 privates arrived from the replacement depot and were quickly divided among the four platoons. So, now complete with new officers, sergeants and privates, C Co was ready to start training. Leonard and I had trained for seven months in K Co with the 44<sup>th</sup> Division prior to combat. In January 1945, six newly reformed companies of the 157<sup>th</sup> Regiment trained for one week!

Mostly we ran exercises in the nearby woods and one day the guys in my squad shot two deer that wandered by. One fellow dressed the carcasses and after we obtained the necessary ingredients from the C Co kitchen, the lady of the house in which we were billeted prepared a gourmet venison meal for us. I remember her as pleasant and helpful but our stay couldn't have been easy for her. On the mantle in her home was the photo of her son in a German army uniform.



Our last day in Schoenbourg was 02Feb45 and the enlisted men were ordered to assemble that night in the village schoolhouse to hear Captain Joseph C. Barry, the battalion chaplain. My previous experience with army chaplains had occurred Easter week of 1944 during a one-day break in maneuvers with the 44<sup>th</sup> Division in Louisiana. That Good Friday we were marched to a hillside where we sat on our helmets while a Catholic mass was said for the entire regiment. I imagine families heard from GIs that week about the 44<sup>th</sup>'s version of the separation of church and state. I wasn't looking forward to the session but this night would be different. It was dark in the school and I could not see Father Barry but his voice was loud and clear. He didn't talk very long. There was no religious service, no prayer, no mention of God or Christ. Rather, using some very stern language, Ft. Barry admonished us not to desert! "Wow," I thought, "what have I got myself into?"

I often wondered about that night but it wasn't until years later after obtaining C Co morning reports that I confirmed my suspicion. In the reports, I identified fifty men who served with me in the second platoon sometime during January-May 1945 and five of them were Absent Without Leave at one time or another; and, from the dates, you have to assume some of these guys had walked off the battlefield in January and thus missed being captured. Later when they did rejoin the platoon, we were unaware they had come from serving time in the stockade. Father Barry was a beloved chaplain in the 45<sup>th</sup> Division serving from Sicily through to Munich. After the war he was associated with the University of Notre Dame where he was chaplain to the football team under coaches Terry Brennan and Joe Kuharich. It's easy for me to visualize Barry



45th Infantry Division



44th Infantry Division



in the locker room at half time with the Irish down by ten points. He would have been light on theology and heavy on “Don’t quit fighting!”

The reformed C Co had 60 casualties (10 killed-in-action) during the March 18–April 3 period when we breached the Siegfried Line, crossed the Rhine and fought at Aschaffenburg. More were killed at Nuremberg including a corporal in my platoon who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. C Co helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp on 29 Apr 45 and we ended the war in Munich which the 45<sup>th</sup> Division occupied for six weeks. Then, after moves to Augsburg and Camp St. Louis near Reims, France, we sailed from LeHavre in early September for the USA.

Leonard and I spent twenty months together in the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Divisions which is pretty good for two guys in the infantry. In civilian life after the war, Leonard completed his education at the University of Minnesota and M.I.T. and had a distinguished career as an architect in Minneapolis. He designed buildings all over the world and was professor emeritus at the University. I was raised in Minnesota and when I returned for visits, it was a chance for the two “experienced sergeants” from K Co to have reunions. Leonard died in 2011.

Postscript: On the evening of 16 Nov 54 in San Francisco I was a guest at a huge all-city Boy Scout potluck supper held in the Civic Auditorium. I arrived to find that the honored guest and speaker at the event

William Frishe Dean, Sr.

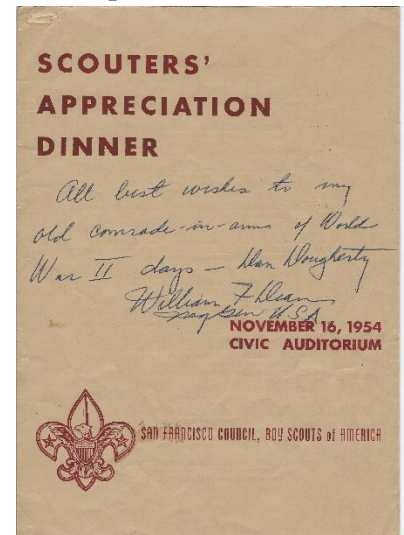


was Major General William F. Dean. This was after his return from a long solitary confinement while a prisoner-of-war in Korea where he had been captured while leading the 24<sup>th</sup> Division but I knew Dean had also commanded the 44<sup>th</sup> Division in World War II.

Before the meal the General was accommodating the young Scouts who lined up to get his autograph. So, I got in line and when reaching his table told him I was one of the sergeants sent from the 44<sup>th</sup> to the 45<sup>th</sup> in Alsace in WW II. He put down his pen, stood up, grasped my hand warmly, and kindly said, “You must have been a damn fine soldier. I told them to send our very best!” He then inscribed my program: “All best wishes to my old

comrade in arms from World War II days.” I spared telling him that when required to send two sergeants to the 45<sup>th</sup> Division, K Co had sent two privates as its “very best”!

Dan P. Dougherty, DFS (Damn Fine Soldier)



## Dachau Talk, April 30, 2023 DACHAU MEMORIAL SITE

Dan P. Dougherty

Staff Sergeant, Guide of 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, C Company, 157 Infantry Regiment, 45<sup>th</sup> Division, U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Army, E.T.O.

### KZ DACHAU

*Nazi dawn – Dachau’s gate opened wide,  
Swallowing prisoners for a dozen years,  
Incubator for the Holocaust.  
Long hard roads and gray/blue stripes;  
For gray SS; and American soldiers,  
Rainbow 42<sup>nd</sup>; Thunderbird 45<sup>th</sup>,  
All of their dead  
Pointing the way.*

*Explosion for the world to see.  
Skeletons, alive and dead.  
Liberators’ tears of rage.*

*SS sprawled, in the coal yard, in the moat.  
Death head guards had slunk away,  
Replaced by Waffen SS – Viking,  
Who believed the lies and chose Valhalla,  
Unmourned by those behind the wire.*

*Grill iron work gate swung open.  
Crematorium doors clanged shut.  
Nazi twilight at the end of April.  
One final plume of oily smoke,  
In an outer yard of the Berlin bunker,  
Pilot beacon for the fires of hell.*

*Dee R. Eberhart  
Company I, 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regt.  
42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry “Rainbow” Division WWII  
Reprinted with his permission  
From his book of poetry, Relics of War*

If you ask any veteran of the 42<sup>nd</sup> or 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division who participated in the liberation of Dachau on April 29, 1945, to summarize his experience in one word, without needing any time to think, he would respond *corpses*. The common experience that day was coming upon a long train of box cars and making the horrifying discovery the cars contained totally emaciated human corpses, nothing but skin and bones, still in the remnants of their striped uniforms. It blew the soldiers away and I remind you these were hard-core infantry troops used to death and destruction but there was no way to prepare for what we were to find at Dachau.

What we had encountered was the Buchenwald-Dachau Death Train and it set the stage for the horror that was to unfold inside: Piles of naked corpses and a confinement area with over 30,000 wasted prisoners in all stages of ill health.

Today as we close the observance of the seventy-eighth anniversary of the liberation, we once again acknowledge that Dachau epitomized man’s inhumanity to man; but, in the words of survivor John Steiner, survivors and liberators at this observance have gathered “in a spirit of relatedness keeping us mindful of one of the finest hours of our life.”

## **Editorial**

### **A FOREWARD AND INTRODUCTION**

#### **to the Following Story by Carl and Gabrielle Rosen**

Family memories and legends can help to define our lives and histories in powerful ways. The collective memories passed down through the decades and sifted by time become part of us consciously and unconsciously. They can uplift, inspire and instruct. The “unfinished business” of following these hidden trails in attempts to discover more is always compelling and personal.

Such a story of family legend and respect in the August 2024 issue of RAINBOW TRAIL, *WWII's Forgotten and Unrecognized Heroes – Major Ralph E. Rosen and His Unit from North Africa to Southern Germany* by Carl and Gabrielle Rosen is an example of this journey to document and honor the lives and service of our personal veterans and those with whom they served.

The story of the life and WWII military service of Dr. Ralph E. Rosen has been woven, pieced together from stories told his son, Carl and granddaughter, Gabrielle and added to from memories of other family members separated from one another by time and distance who also recall stories told to them. Now, in this February 2025 issue of RAINBOW TRAIL, added to this previously shared history come several hoped-for revelations and verifications. Official documentation of his WWII service has been found in the National Archives in Washington D.C. and has added needed background to the history.

By now, we all understand something of the enormity of the loss of the personnel documents stored in the National Personnel and Records Center, (NPRC) at Saint Louis, MO in the devastating fire of 1973. This catastrophe destroyed approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF).

<https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/fire-1973>

Because of this, many, if not most, of our family military service legends cannot be officially documented, the veterans of World Wars I and II themselves have mostly left us and almost none of us can take the time to search through other sources to follow an elusive trail; but when possible, we persist. Legends and stories are our comfort and inspiration and we want to proclaim our respect and to accord our veterans honor in the sight of the world.

Family memory counts!! There is always *some* reason why a name or story sticks to the mind even without official proof. In October 2020 Gabrielle made her way through the maze of research possibilities that she saw were worth a try. When she first contacted this editor, she wrote, in part,

*“I just spoke with my father and he mentioned to me that my grandfather's unit (a mobile M.A.S.H. unit) was in the 5th Army in Italy and then in the 7th Army in France and in Germany. He also said that my grandfather's unit was attached to the 42 Division through the 5th and the 7th but he doesn't know which actual unit my grandfather was in.”*

Regretfully, official verification has not yet been found for a 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry “Rainbow” Division connection; however, proof of Captain Rosen’s presence at Dachau Concentration Camp soon after liberation comes in the form of the photographs he took there and have been verified that this was so by Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Israel where his camera and photos have been permanently archived.

Proof has also been found of Dr. Rosen’s service as Dental Surgeon in the Medical Detachment within the 894<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion.

Captain Ralph E. Rosen’s name appears on the Officers’ roster on both the 894<sup>th</sup> AAA Bn and the 894<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment histories.

His DD214 Military Record and Report of Separation was also retrieved from the National Archives in D.C., recording his battles and campaigns as: European Theater, Algeria-French Morocco, Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Central Europe and Rhineland. His list of medals included the Bronze Star Medal.

At his separation from the service, he is reported as personally having acquired 114 Adjusted Service Rating (ASR) points.

See Patrick J. Chaisson’s (RDVF Historian Emeritus) article on “Points” in the RAINBOW REVEILLE April 2022 on the subject of the Points system in WWII -

<https://www.rainbowvets.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Rainbow-Reveille-April-2022-pages-1-8.pdf>



Since last August, in an article released in November 2024 in time for Veterans' Day, Dr. Rosen's life and story has been respectfully described after his interview of Carl and Gabrielle Rosen by Robert Marchand, staff writer for *Greenwich Time*. It includes links to further information, including the August 2024 RAINBOW TRAIL article. <https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/article/greenwich-ct-wwii-temple-shalom-19897686.php>

At this time, several intriguing possibilities for recognition of their WWII veteran and his unit are being explored by the Rosen family in a timely desire to make this story known nationally during the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the end of World War II.

## **Major Ralph E. Rosen and His Unit: The Service of WWII's Most Forgotten Heroes SEQUEL: A History Continued by Carl and Gabrielle Rosen**



My grandfather, Doctor Ralph E. Rosen (Major, USA, ret.) truly believed in the American dream: "life, liberty, and justice for all." So, with this, he understood the words "united we stand, divided we fall."

Consequently, for him a life of service was as natural as breathing air because he felt grateful for the freedoms America granted him and with this, he wanted to ensure that the American way of life would continue.

So, Captain Ralph E. Rosen and his unit were one of the first American units into WWII (departing for North Africa on January 3, 1943 from the Port of Embarkation, Staten Island) and they served one of the longest times on the line in battle. By the end of his military service, my grandfather had personally accrued 114 points as his medical unit followed behind mobile anti-aircraft tanks and infantry units while taking care of injured soldiers from the Invasions of North Africa and Sicily up through Italy, into southern

France and then, into southern Germany. This mobile medical unit was in every major U.S. battle in these locations and they treated injured soldiers for the full length of time the U.S. was at war with the Nazis.

However, up until now, we could find no paper proof of Major Ralph E. Rosen and his unit's service because my grandfather's military records were destroyed in an Army repository fire in the '70s. Then, with the very kind interest and assistance of Suellen McDaniel (the editor of Rainbow Trail), an article was printed in this publication in August 2024 and with this, Erin Faith Allen, researcher, believed that she could assist in helping to authenticate Major Ralph E. Rosen's and his unit's service through the National Archives.

So, with their very kind assistance, my grandfather's and his unit's service no longer lies buried in history. To the point: with this information many things became clear.

Captain Ralph E. Rosen and his unit entered the war from Fort Dix, NJ and when their mobile medical unit departed for Europe on January 3, 1943, their destination was unknown but on January 18, 1943, they landed at Oran, Algeria and provided medical support for their unit which had set up a tactical position providing anti-aircraft protection for the city, installations, and harbor.



As well, this unit only had two surgeons: Major Samuel Berenson and Captain Ralph E. Rosen (later promoted to Major) who was listed as a dental surgeon but whose duties were that of a general surgeon. Their mobile medical unit, from the Invasion of North Africa (the Battle of Kasserine Pass, the Battle of Hill 609, Bizerte etc.) to the Invasion of Sicily, and then into Italy (Salerno, Monte Cassino, Anzio etc.) were part of the 67th Coastal Artillery Regiment but on March 20, 1944, this unit was disbanded and re-organized as the 894th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion on the drive to Rome to defend field artillery units.



By July 1, 1944, the 894th AAA with Captain Ralph E. Rosen's mobile medical unit had reached Siena, Italy and then was moved to Naples to defend Naples. After Naples, the 894th AAA with their mobile medical unit moved to Southern France, first to the Gulf of St. Tropez to defend local port installations, again with Captain Ralph E. Rosen and his mobile medical unit providing medical support. Then, the 894th AAA moved north to set up defenses for airfields and tactical air command.

On November 14, 1944, the 894 AAA was moved into Eastern France and then, into Southern Germany along with Captain Ralph E. Rosen and his unit's medical support.

Note: this mobile medical unit starting under the 67th Coastal Artillery regiment had reorganized under the 894th AAA and because this was a mobile anti-aircraft unit, its assignments and medical unit were moved from one Army to the next as was needed. On August 29, 1945, Captain Ralph E. Rosen and his unit were sent to Huttenfeld, Germany and assigned to the 495AAA Gun Battalion for departure back to the U.S.

As well, after the war, the following information was stated in the unit's military notes regarding Major Ralph E. Rosen and his unit's medical service to the Army: "Personnel of the Detachment have been overseas approximately 30 months and experience gained has been invaluable in making a smooth-running organization."

To the point: Major Ralph E. Rosen was honored to serve and to be of service and there were not many men who could do what they did: to serve as a mobile medical unit from when the U.S. entered the war until after the war in Europe had ended. They, like many, many servicemen and women served during WWII with the hope to make the world a better place for everyone.

So, he kept a photo in his wallet from Dachau Concentration Camp to remind himself of man's inhumanity to man. Truly, what he saw during the war and at Dachau Concentration Camp inspired him to do as much good as he could and he did a lot of good.

However again, my grandfather's and his unit's amazing and inspiring story has laid hidden for 8 decades until Suellen McDaniel editor, Rainbow Trail and Erin Faith Allen (researcher), kindly helped me and my father (honorably discharged Captain Carl Rosen) to bring their service, sacrifice, and story to life with the hope that their story can be an inspiration to all Americans today because now, more than ever, hope, inspiration, faith in the American dream, and service seem to be fleeting. Their unit was the pre-cursor to the Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (M.A.S.H.) units in use from the Korean War to the Gulf War and which have been replaced by the combat support hospitals we have today.

Note: when Major Ralph E. Rosen came back from the war, he kept his dental practice in the Bronx so that anyone who needed dental care could get it and if they couldn't afford it, Doctor Rosen quietly and kindly treated them for free. As well, Doctor Rosen wrote letters non-stop to Congress talking about the importance of our Democracy and treating all Americans with kindness and dignity because he was outraged by the unbridled prejudice toward African Americans, Asians, women, people of color, people of different faiths, and those who did not identify as straight.

For my grandfather, the Statue of Liberty was his beacon of hope and his guiding light because his parents were immigrants, he was born into poverty, and regardless of all of this, his family was welcomed and given the chance to participate in the American dream: "life, liberty, and justice for all." So, Doctor Ralph E. Rosen (Major, USA, ret.) was honoured and more than happy to do his part. He served before, after, and during WWII; he volunteered to go into Dachau Concentration Camp to bring out the living and to help properly bury the dead; he worked as a dentist and as an oral surgeon and he made a very, very good life for himself and for his family and friends.



Note: during a time of rampant antisemitism in Greenwich, CT in the early 1950's, Doctor Ralph E. Rosen with his good friend Lou Koch went door to door in Greenwich telling his story of the war and Dachau Concentration Camp and the importance of building a Jewish synagogue (which would be the first) with the hope of getting enough signatures from the residents of Greenwich so that a Jewish synagogue could be built because at this time, there were negative covenants toward Jews buying land in Greenwich. He also encouraged his good friend Albert List (a wealthy industrialist) to approach the Catholic Church so that the Jewish community in Greenwich could buy a parcel of its land which was directly next door to Christ Church for this synagogue so that this synagogue could show that the Jewish community had arrived in Greenwich. Then, once Temple Sholom had been built, he encouraged Temple Sholom and Christ Church to participate in certain community events together to foster goodwill. Then, he invited his good friends including Barbara Tuchman (historian, author, and dear family friend)

to move to Greenwich because Jews were now welcomed here.

For my grandfather, a life of service was as natural as breathing air. The American dream and the words "life, liberty, and justice for all" were not just words and Albert List used Doctor Ralph E. Rosen's talking points of the war, the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp, and the need for a synagogue in Greenwich which would be in full view in Greenwich when he spoke with the bishop and successfully pitched him the idea of selling a parcel of land to the Greenwich Jewish community. To the point: Doctor Rosen formulated and successfully followed a plan so that his beloved wife Pauline Rosen, their family, and their friends could have a synagogue to pray in and a town that they could feel at home in. Now today, there are 7 Jewish places of worship in Greenwich.

Yes, the olive branches (the acts of goodwill) that Doctor Ralph E. Rosen encouraged helped to melt away anti-Semitic feelings and prejudice here. For my grandfather, prejudice was based on ignorance and fear and he personally saw the end results of unbridled prejudice at Dachau Concentration Camp. So, he served the Jewish community and the general community in Greenwich as he served during the war: with great conviction while never looking for any thanks. He simply kept his boots to the ground and kept moving.

Now, 80 years later, my father (honorably discharged Captain Carl Rosen) and I are hoping the story of Major Ralph E. Rosen and his unit as very kindly printed in *Rainbow Trail* and authenticated by Erin Faith Allen's research contribution will be told over and over again to remind all Americans of what is truly important: to never forget that we are Americans, to never forget what we stand for and to remind all Americans that it is our duty to serve our country and our Democracy because if we don't, we will be willingly giving away our belief in the American dream and with this, "life, liberty, and justice for all" will very quickly become a distant memory.

Note: My grandfather and his unit, and many, many more units served and serve so that we, all Americans, can have peace on our shores. So, please never forget the story of Major Ralph E. Rosen and his unit, why they served, and what they accomplished for future generations. They have given us a gift: the blessings of "life, liberty, and justice" for all; and instead of looking to benefit only ourselves, ask how each of us can make life better for our fellow Americans because by seeing this path forward, we together can build and enjoy the blessings of liberty.

"United we stand, divided we fall" and my grandfather knew this and believed in this until the day that he died. He used his service to build bridges to peace and goodwill with the hope that all Americans would learn from his and many others' service.

To the point: it is not too late to learn from them and to follow their lead. Let their story be the beginning and not the end.

*All photos and captions are contributed by Gabrielle Rosen*

*Photo One - Captain Ralph E. Rosen at his home prior to being called up*

*Photo Two - Insignia of the 67<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery*

*Photo Three - Doctor and Mrs. Ralph E. Rosen (Major, USA, Ret) on their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in Greenwich CT*



As a regular contributor to *Rainbow Reveille* and a war historian who dedicates my time to the 42nd Division, I've been truly honored to trace the footsteps of hundreds of Rainbow soldiers, uncovering family histories that weave through the front-line battlefields and moments of profound human experience. My mission is always to transform archival records into living memories and bring our veterans to life, and serve as a bridge from the past into the present. Through my research I strive to echo the Rainbow Division's own legacy: to pursue my mission no matter the obstacles that present themselves - Erin Faith Allen [www.fortitude-research.com](http://www.fortitude-research.com)

## **From *The Badge*: STORIES of WORLD WAR II**

### **A Letter of Complaint to THE "TRIPLE DEUCE" TRAVEL AGENCY**

From William F. Clayton, PFC, Ret., AUS  
E 222d Inf Regiment  
42d Infantry Division Veterans' Association  
Reprinted from the October 1987 *The Badge*

Gentlemen:

Recently I saw a photo of the troopship *Edmond B. Alexander* and was reminded that your organization chartered that ship for transportation to the Continent as part of a European tour in 1944. I was a member of the group that took your tour. There are a number of comments that I am making with the hope that your organization will take appropriate action to make any future tours more comfortable for the participants.

Since we were all very anxious to spend as much time as possible on the Continent, you were expected to make a most expeditious crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. Instead, you chose a constantly zig-zagging course during which time your navigator sought out the stormiest of weather. Your erratic course of zigging, zagging, bobbing and weaving was so severe that many of my fellow passengers became quite nauseous. Also, there seemed to be several other vessels on the same course as the "Alexander" making many of us fear that a collision at sea was a distinct possibility.



"Gramps, when you invented the Rainbow, you picked my favorite colors."



Bill Clayton, Official Photographer

Your Purser should be replaced with someone more competent. My reservation requested a single-occupant deck cabin, midship on the starboard side. Without explanation, I was assigned sleeping space in the stern of the ship below the waterline. The accommodations were quite crowded. I realize that your tour was economy fare, and I did not expect a heated pool. However, there should have been facilities other than a cold, saltwater shower.

Ship services were sadly lacking. The menu had no variety, choice of entrée was limited, and your pastry/dessert chef displayed no imagination. Not once was I invited to dine at the Captain's Table. During the entire cruise, valet service failed to pick up my laundry. As a result, I debarked on the Continent with soiled clothing and unshined shoes.

As recreation facilities were practically non-existent, your cruise was extremely boring most of the time. Reading material was limited to girlie magazines and comic books, which we passengers exchanged among ourselves. There was no exercise gym or shuffleboard courts. The only option was running in place and calisthenics in the aisles. There were no bridge tournaments, no shipboard games and no dances.

The situation did not improve when we landed on the continent. Your Tour Directors were sometimes abrupt and gruff. They actually ordered us around, taking us on a European Tour that seemed to have no geographic directional planning. We actually crossed the same river three times. Most of us on the tour thought that once would have been sufficient. We were often forced to travel at night; frequently walking and carrying our own baggage. The weather was cold and wet and the accommodations spartan, with no thermostats and inadequate plumbing. There were no planned sightseeing side trips and the natives were rude and sometimes downright hostile.

Please correct these deficiencies or I will never take another tour with your organization, nor will I recommend it to my friends.

## A LONG WAY HOME

By Fred Venglarcik, Co. E – 222<sup>nd</sup> Inf.

Reprinted from the November 1997 issue of the 222<sup>nd</sup> newsletter, *The Badge*

[in 2004 an edited version was printed in the RDVF publication, *Hold At All Cost/42D Rainbow Division Prisoners of War* ]

The 222<sup>nd</sup> was involved in combat along with the 232<sup>nd</sup> Regiment in early January of 1945. I was in the lead jeep with a .50-caliber machine gun. Our anti-aircraft guns started when German fighter planes dove to strafe the lead vehicles of our convoy. As we approached German troops, the jeep stopped and I and the others in it went back to the trucks to get our guns. As the battle ensued, Cos. E and F of the 232<sup>nd</sup> led the attack, backed up by Co. E of the 222<sup>nd</sup>. The lead companies suffered casualties, fell back and then Company G led the second wave of the attack. After Co. G fell back, it was Co. E of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Inf.'s turn to lead the attack. There were heavy casualties in all four companies. We managed to get to the railroad station when German tanks were spotted. We asked for our own tanks to help out but they wouldn't come forward without someone to lead them.

Our squad leader, Sgt. Harry D. Pratt (Toledo, OH) asked if there were any volunteers to go back to get the tanks. Kenneth Dickey (Indianapolis IN) and I volunteered and began running toward them. I had a .45 but traded it for a carbine because it had more firepower. A bullet hit me between two of my fingers, stopped by the stock of the carbine from entering my stomach. I jumped into a trench for cover. We expected our own troops to come to our rescue but soon discovered we were surrounded by Germans, who took the three of us prisoner.

Pratt, Dickey and I were marched to a schoolhouse on the other side of the Rhine and placed in a basement where we slept. I took off my overcoat to sleep and someone stole it during the night. The next day we were interrogated by the Germans. To each question I only gave my name, rank and serial number – even when they asked me about my chewing gum. The Germans were upset with me and one took my helmet outside. He returned shortly and gave it back to me. Later I learned that he had been ordered to fill it with cold water to throw on me, only, luckily, the water faucet was frozen. They planned to give me an icy bath for having such a smart mouth.

I had a lot of candy, gum and cigarettes in my backpack which the Germans confiscated from me. When I asked them for my stuff back, the Germans said I had a lot and the other prisoners didn't have any, so they split it up among them. I said, "Fine. So where is my share?" Needless to say, I didn't get any.

The following day, we marched to another camp which held Russian prisoners and were fed cheese and "sawdust" bread. The next day we were loaded into boxcars and taken to Stalag 5A [Ludwigsburg, Germany] which was like horse

stables with straw mattresses. A British major who was an MD (captured at Dunkirk) took me and another prisoner who had been shot in the wrist to the hospital where we were treated for our wounds.

A week later we were transported to Stalag 4B [Mühlberg, Germany], fingerprinted and photographed. Privates and PFCs were sent to a work camp, Stalag 4A, near Lillienstein. Water for the camp was brought in a tank, on a horse-drawn wagon. We went out on work details early in the morning, returning at night for a bowl of grass soup, that sometimes held potatoes, along with about 20 grams of bread per person.

This was my life until May of 1945. When the Russians were advancing, prisoners were told to keep all their belongings together in case of evacuation. On May 5 we were marched out of the camp, but only in a circle, perhaps to confuse the Russian air force. We had a friend whose name we don't recall, but we called him "Gimpy" because he couldn't walk well due to improperly healed leg wounds. Another soldier and I stayed with Gimpy and we lagged so much, we were eventually left behind. We found some houses where we stopped to ask for food. A German soldier challenged us and then directed us back to the rest of the prisoners. This happened several times in a row and finally, the three of us were left behind permanently.

We spent eight to ten days wandering, asking for food and looking for shelter at night, occasionally running into Russian and French soldiers. One night we were entering a stable beneath a house (common in Germany and France). We noticed a light in the kitchen and decided to let the family know we were there. I knocked on the French door, which was opened by a woman who started to scream when she saw us. We explained we were just looking for a place to sleep. Her husband, a farmer, led us to his hayloft. In the middle of the night we heard artillery fire. That same night a German officer and six soldiers entered the barn and asked who we were. We told them we were former POWs and then they just divided the hayloft so they could sleep on one side and us on the other. The next day we went our separate ways.

Marching along the road, I found a piece of meat about 10 by 3 inches and put it in my knapsack.

Dickey said, "What are you doing that for?"  
"I'm going to try to find a way to cook it."  
"Well, I'm not going to eat it!"

Later, I found a pot, built a fire and cooked that piece of meat with some potatoes we had gathered. Dickey tried to eat the whole pot. It was one of the best meals we'd had in four months.

One day we ran across some Russians in wagons who wanted to know why we were so skinny. When we told them we were ex-POWs, they threw two boxes to the ground for us. One was a box of oatmeal cookies and one was a box of 50 cigars. That night we found shelter at another farmer's. We asked for some milk and the farmer brought us a pan and told us to go milk his cow, which we did. We crushed oatmeal cookies in some mugs, added milk and ate until our stomachs were bloated. What a treat!

As we continued to look for the American line, a German confiscated three bicycles for us to use. Some other Russian soldiers made us change out of our uniforms at gunpoint, although I was only willing to change my T-shirt. I don't know why they wanted us out of uniform. We finally ran into some Americans – first, a former fellow prisoner and then an American major with a truck. The three of us saluted the major and he wanted to know why two civilians were saluting him. We explained the loss of the uniforms to the disgust of the major who told us to get in the back of the goddam truck.

I climbed in and found myself next to a British major, another former POW. I pulled out my knapsack and started eating oatmeal cookies. I shared some with the major who was grateful. Then I pulled out a cigar and started smoking it.

"Would you like a cigar, Major?"  
His eyes got big and he said, "You must have been living the life of Riley."

We were taken to camp *Lucky Strike* for three or four weeks where I tried to sneak back in the chow lines for extra rations. My combat jacket had Struthers, O(hio) on it. While there, I ran into my next-door neighbor from Struthers. We ended up coming back to the States together. He had been a POW captured after making a bombing run.

I was finally loaded on board ship June 12, 1945 and returned home for rest, recuperation and relaxation. After my leave, I was stationed at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia where I received 1 ½ rations because I was an ex-POW (about 99 cents worth of food in those days). Fortunately, the war ended in the Pacific and I was discharged on November 17, 1945.

I've been active in an organization for ex-POWs. If you would like more information about it, please contact me.

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to KENNETH M. DICKEY, 35 892 434, Private First Class, Infantry, Company E, 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action. On 5 January 1945, at Gombsheim, France, Private Dickey volunteered to return through territory covered by a heavy barrage of enemy fire to bring up tanks which were badly needed to support our attack. Since undertaking this mission, Private Dickey has been missing in action. Entered military service from Indianapolis, Indiana.

The BRONZE STAR MEDAL is awarded to FREDERICK L. VENGLARCIK, 35 316 530, Private First Class, Infantry, Company E, 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action. On 5 January 1945, at Gombsheim, France, Private Venglarcik, volunteered to return through territory covered by a heavy barrage of enemy fire to bring up tanks which were badly needed to support our attack. Since undertaking this mission, Private Venglarcik has been missing in action. Entered military service from Mahonig Struthers, Ohio.

### Excerpt from **A RECIPE FOR REST**

By Fred B. Curry

From the October 1987 issue of *The Badge*

Newsletter of the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 42<sup>nd</sup> "Rainbow" Infantry Division

"...I expect a goodly percentage of us dogfoots have had at times trouble reaching the somnolent state, even when we haven't consumed coffee, coke or other caffeinated liquids. You read these doctor's columns in the paper saying sleep isn't all that necessary and that Edison only got four hours sack time a night, but I'm not Edison and neither are you, probably. Take it from me, right out of the horse's mouth, when you miss five or six hours snorage, you can feel like you've been washed, rinsed, and run through the ringer.

So, I thought I'd lay on you, gratis, this little intellectual device or maneuver I blundered into a few years back, for bringing on the sandman. I never did understand this counting sheep business, but according to cartoons I've seen through the years I suppose you visualize a fence with the wooly boogers hopping over it one at a time and you count them as they clear the hurdle. My system is a little like that, but not much.

What you do is, if you can't lapse off into dream country, in a modicum of time, you start thinking about what you did during the day, beginning at any particular interval, preferably the moment you got out of bed, or the beginning of any activity of some length such as a golf round or carrying out a small project. If it was a bad golf round, scratch it - no need depressing yourself more. Try to think of each and every little thing you did, in sequence. You'll find yourself wandering to other thoughts - but bring yourself back, stay on it.

That's it. No charge. You don't need to go to a shrink to cure your insomnia. Follow the formula above. And remember to give a nostalgic reflection of those good old sad sack compadres you waded through that mess 'over there,' with.

Fred B. Curry, 1912 - 1998 was older than most Soldiers drafted into service in WWII. He served in Company D, 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry "Rainbow" Division from 1943 - 1946; married and with a teaching degree in the state of Texas, when he returned home, he resumed his career, teaching biology. His oldest brother, also an educator, served in the U.S. Army in WWI.



## **MASTERS OF THE AIR WAR DRAMA MINI SERIES 100<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP** **A Visit to the Ardennes American Cemetery, American Battle Monuments Commission** **164, Route de Condroz - B4121 Neupré, Belgium** **From Superintendent Hubert Caloud January 27, 2025**

Any fans out there? Today hosted about a 60-person international group. They came to honor our dead and Sgt. William M. Hinton, portrayed in the mini-series. This group was on tour with We Happy Few 506, a tour company promoting tours, podcasts, online events relating to WWII. Three of the group were actors in the miniseries - Sawyer Spielberg, son of Steven Spielberg, who portrayed Lt. Roy Claytor, Kai Alexander (Sgt. William Quinn) as well as Bailey Brook (Sgt. Charles K. Bailey). Also present was Col. Ryan J. Garlow USAF Commanding Officer of 100<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, based in Mildenhall, England. This is the active-duty squadron descended from the World War II 100<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.



Sgt. Hinton's B-17 to unveil a memorial dedicated to the crew of the B-17, *Alice from Dallas*. Genk is in the Flemish part of Belgium, a little NW of Maastricht, in The Netherlands.

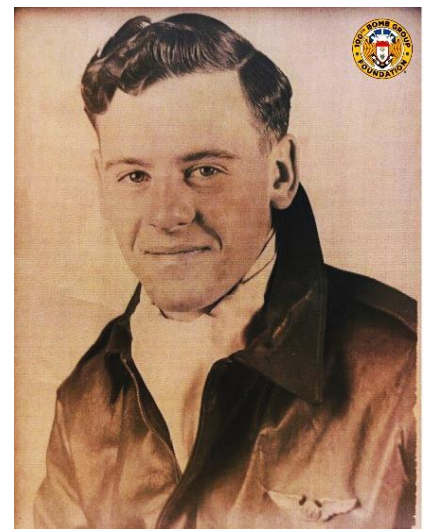
After briefing the group, we laid a wreath and played the National Anthem before going to Plot A and the grave of Sgt. Hinton. Here, Col. Garlow gave the background of the mission Sgt. Hinton was lost on. He also talked about his step-grandfather who flew in the same bomb group and was shot down on the same mission but survived the war. His grandfather was lost in WWII flying an A-26, believed buried by the Germans but not recovered after the war hence listed on the Wall of Missing in the ABMC Brittany cemetery. I had the actors apply sand to Sgt. Hinton's inscription, placed flowers, flags and his photo before sounding rifle volleys and taps. We took several group photos, at the memorial and the grave. A group that large is like herding cats but they were history-minded and attentive. From the cemetery they continued to Genk, Belgium, the crash site of



I enjoyed the visit, but I can't ID all the actors in the photo with me. I do know the tall one with the red camera is Steven Spielberg's son, Sawyer, we talked about Phil Rivers. His dad knew Phil from filming *Saving Private Ryan* and recognized his name. Phil (since deceased) was the Normandy Cemetery Superintendent during the filming of *Saving Private Ryan*. The guy beside me without headgear is Matthew Leitch, a *Band of Brothers* actor (Sergeant Floyd Talbert). Mat was the tour group leader. I've seen him do events with J.D. Huitt from History Underground and the Gettysburg Museum of History. JD was just on Guadalcanal with Dave Holland, another one of my History-geek friends.

In their memory,

**Hubert Caloud**  
Superintendent  
Ardennes American Cemetery  
American Battle Monuments Commission  
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[www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov) | Join us on Facebook



Group photos are from Bert Caloud;  
The photo on the right is Sgt. William M. Hinton, on his personal page of the 100<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Foundation's excellent history website.

[https://100thbg.com/personnel/?personnel\\_id=2355](https://100thbg.com/personnel/?personnel_id=2355)

Masters of the Air film series

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masters\\_of\\_the\\_Air](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masters_of_the_Air)

## RAINBOW RIFLEMEN

By Robert Spearing III, Co. G, 242<sup>nd</sup> Inf., 42<sup>nd</sup> Division

**PART 5** (continued from *REVEILLE* October 2024)



“Below decks again, not many are going to chow. The ship is heaving, rolling, and bucking. A few hours of this, and we will soon find out who can take it and who can’t. Some of my squad are already showing signs of nausea, Carl McGahen in particular. It won’t be long now. Pfc. Tom Crosson of Parrish’s squad will suffer, too.

I can’t wait to get up into my bunk and open the large, green can of mixed, salted nuts that I have just purchased from the ship’s store. In a moment, I have the can open and I’m chewing away. I’m in sheer ecstasy, oblivious to any other outside influences. I should have known better, but I continued to stuff the nuts into my mouth until I had finished the entire lot! With the last mouthfuls, however, I began to realize just what a fool I’d been not to ration myself to a few handfuls. Suddenly, the saltiness is too much, and I am beginning to develop a very queasy stomach. The question became, could I get over it without doing what I immediately should do (vomit)? But how could I, the seaman and the “Ancient Mariner,” who, in the eyes of everyone in our company, knew all about the sea? How could I be caught in such a weakling, landlubber act as heaving? Especially when the ship had barely gotten underway. Although there were indications that some of our people were about to “feed the fishes,” none had done so yet. I couldn’t even go undetected in the latrine, because my assistant BAR man (Browning Automatic Rifle man), Pfc. Paul Pederzani, was in charge there. Nor could I go over the rail, either, since this was policed by the clean-up crew ... all members of OUR company. [photo: troop transport, U.S.S. General William M. Black]

### **November 26, 1944**

How I made it through the night without regurgitating, I will never know, but somehow I did, and fortunately, I wasn’t called upon to do anything. I hung on from one wave of nausea to the next, but with each passing moment, I felt just a fraction of a bit better than I had the last. When breakfast came (on the 26<sup>th</sup>), I was able to conceal my ailment and go through the chow line, but only for coffee. I did the same for supper and even after this, my stomach had still not settled. I’d have to lay off food for another twelve hours if I was going to escape the embarrassment of heaving!

In the meantime, during the night and early hours of the morning, the ship has moved well south to a position just about 250 to 300 miles north of the Virginia/North Carolina coast, just above Cape Hatteras, probably one of the worst areas in the world for rough and irregular seas. Anyone who has been on a cruise ship outward bound from New York City for Bermuda or any of the islands in the Caribbean Sea, knows all about this uncomfortable stretch of water.

Back in 1935, my parents took my cousin and I on a 7-day cruise. First, we went to Bermuda and then to the Bahamas. The waters off the Cape were so rough that we and two other families were the only occupants of the luxurious dining room of the then very new Furness Line Cruise Ship, *The Monarch of Bermuda*. On the return trip, it was no better. Because of this, our waiter told us a lot of gourmet food was going to be thrown overboard. My cousin and I did our best to see that not too much of it was wasted. We each polished off a breast of pheasant and six quail each at one sitting! This, along with all the regular courses listed such as: shrimp cocktails, soup, fish, vegetables, and, of course, several desserts.

I can still see the envious expressions of the other waiters. They were all standing by their vacant tables eyeing the joyful activity going on at ours. They knew there wasn’t going to be too much in the way of tips for them if the ship didn’t stop pitching! It didn’t all the way back to New York as she kept pitching her bow under the swell one after another.

### **8:00 A.M., Sunday – November 26, 1944**

The ship is now at Latitude 36°, 55 min. North, and Longitude 69°, 55 Min. West. The weather is holding. It is clear, and our entire convoy is spread out in a perfect formation for all eyes to see.





An aerial photo of one of the earliest UG convoys taken in November 1942 U.S. Navy (photo 80-G-474788)  
A convoy moves eastward across Atlantic bound for Casablanca, Africa, ca. November 1942.

*From Wikipedia.com:* The UG convoys were a series of east-bound trans-Atlantic convoys from the United States to Gibraltar carrying food, ammunition, and military hardware to the United States Army in North Africa and southern Europe during World War II. These convoys assembled in Hampton Roads near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay and terminated in various North African locations as Axis forces retreated from 1942 through 1945.<sup>[1]</sup>

There are three Navy escort vessels about a mile out in front with the usual transport grub. I could sure go for some of that kind of food myself.

Trailing our ship are three standard Livery ships. They are all pitching and plowing, bow down and bow up, through the heavy swells. I can make out that there are soldiers on their decks and from where I stand, they all seem to be hanging on tightly to the railings and whatever else is handy, like so many people riding “The Bug” at Palisades Amusement Park! I don’t envy them, our ship isn’t much better. Already, buckets have been set up at the most convenient places for those who can’t make it to the railing or the latrines. There is a bucket where I’m standing just amid ship and already, there are four GI’s huddled about it taking turns.

I am aware of our ship’s direction and its probable position by the location of the sun. The course changed at 1 p.m. to 92°. This is almost due east. The sun at dawn is just about dead ahead, indicating a due-easterly course. I have also recognized a change in the ocean’s color, it has gone from the brownish-green, off the Jersey coast, to the beautiful light blue of the Gulf Stream, which we are now crossing. In my judgment, we are about 100 miles off the Virginia and North Carolina coasts. If the convoy continues more or less on this bearing, it will pass just about 120 miles north of Bermuda and just south of the Azores. This course will give us good air cover from both of these islands, though hardly not a moment passes that the thought of U-boats

isn't on my mind. Anything that indicates the possible employment of air surveillance is an additional comfort.

The enlisted crew on this ship are very casual and friendly. They are like all the Coast Guard vessels I have ever visited. Since taking over my librarian duties, I have made several friends and gotten invitations to see their quarters as well as their nightly movies. Of the latter, I only attended one, and I didn't stay for the conclusion because the screen was set up in a compartment almost at the ship's bow and the rocking and bucking, at this point, was so bad, that I couldn't keep myself from spilling onto the deck, even if I sat on it! In regard to their quarters, one of the engine room gang showed me how he washed his work clothes over a railing next to his cabin. He tied all the dirty stuff to a hawser and trailed it over the side!

I understand that we will now receive a Typhus shot. I don't know why we didn't get this at Kilmer. I guess the medics couldn't fit it in, but this will not be of any help to those of us who already feel lousy from seasickness. A little swelling and fever at this time is totally unwelcome. Somehow, though, I am lucky again and not bothered by any ill effects.

To wile away some time, Parrish and I go on deck and check our buddies out with our "bet I can guess the number that you will pick" game. It's really very simple, but if it's introduced just right, the people who take part in it think you have E.S.P. or something, or that you're some kind of a super-magician. It's fun, especially when it works, and it usually does work more than 60 percent of the time.

A paper pad is used. On the top sheet, four numbers are written 1 to 4. This is done with the player looking on. Following this, the player is then told to choose any one of the four numbers and circle it. Before he is allowed to do this, though, he is told that we know exactly which number he's going to pick. To prove this, we tell him we have already written down this number on the next sheet of paper. The player, of course, will not believe this and we may have to offer him some further assurance of our ability. At any rate, when he finally does circle his choice, it will most likely be the number 3. This number seems to be chosen more than any other. Then, when we peel back the sheet of paper to reveal the number 3 that we have already written on the next page, he will be amazed and beg for an explanation of just how this marvelous feat was accomplished! Ever now and then, somebody will pick the numbers 1 or 4. When they do, this is when we just shrug our shoulders and tell them that the probably reason for them making this "radical" choice is the fact that they must have "officer" material in their background. Thus, they are probably governed by erratic behavior.

All of the soldiers we play have chosen number 3, and on this particular day, we feel that we will go over the top with a 100% batting average. Not so. Our score is broken three times in succession by shipboard marines who all choose number 1. While we are doing this, though, the marines tell us that their boxer can't wait to get into the ring with our regimental light, heavyweight. I have seen the marine boxer, and I am impressed. From all outward appearances, he looks the part. He's tall, trim, and muscular and has bulldog features – truly exudes the aura of a champion. I'm thinking that our boxer is going to be slaughtered. Well, we shall see, and soon, because preparations are being made to set up the ring amid ship on a platform above the main deck.

At night, most of us stay on deck as long as we are permitted. The air has gotten considerably warmer and the sky is clear and full of stars. Parrish is well-versed on the heavens and is able to identify just about every well-known cluster. He gives us a short lecture on these and, although interesting enough, it reminds most of us of our camping days hiking with the Boy Scouts, which in turn, reminds us of our families and happier days. He is soon silent, and we, too, are thinking our own personal thoughts.

The ship is moving along at a nice pace, but the seas are so long and large that it is more like climbing up and down rows and rows of endless liquid hills. These swells make the convoy look like a fleet of toy boats bobbing on a Central Park lake.

**Monday, November 27, 1944**

Latitude 36°, 38 Min. North, Longitude 63°, 49 Min. West. Course 92, almost due east at 14.5 knots. We are some 600 miles off the Virginia and North Carolina coasts, directly north of Bermuda.

The weather remains clear and sunny and, although I am not happy to be going overseas, I am certainly enjoying the ship's ride. There is just nothing (as far as I am concerned) that is as pleasing as a ship at sea, especially one that is at a comfortable cruising speed. Fourteen-and-a-half knots must be the epitome for the Black, because she is rising, falling, yawing, and heeling so regularly and predictably, that it is pure joy for me to stand next to her rail and watch her bow glide over each large swell. It is so relaxing, but only for those of us who are born sailors. For those already sick, Crosson, Kujawa, and McGahen, it is pure torture with no end in sight!

There is just something grand and majestic about watching the dawn and seeing the sun as it rises out of the sea to the east. I'm wondering just how many of these I'll see before the ship brings us to our destination. That it IS Europe, we are all pretty certain. But what country in Europe, is still speculation. No one has any word on that and the company officers are just as much in the dark on this as we are. In fact, since we left New York, I have not seen any of our officers except our weapons platoon leader, our only West Point graduate, Lt. Daly, and he, for just a few minutes while he borrowed a book from my seagoing library. Daly is a rather quiet person, sort of a loner. I know he hasn't made much of an impression on his platoon. None of his people have anything to say about him, pro or con. He seems to be knowledgeable enough and like all West Point people I've ever met, very alert. Maybe it's just that he's new and hasn't settled in yet.

There will be another abandon ship drill at 1:30 p.m. for us troops. Before this happens, however, the ship makes several emergency turns first to port, and then to starboard. I couldn't learn why this happened, whether it was just an exercise or if some U-boat had attempted to torpedo us. In any event, all is calm and in order now, and we are again secured for the abandon ship drill to take place in a few minutes.

Physically, I'm beginning to feel very uncomfortable. The last shower I had was the night of the 21<sup>st</sup> (November) at Kilmer.

Sleeping in the same clothes every night hasn't helped the situation, but no one else is doing any better, either. We are not allowed to even sponge ourselves off at the latrine sinks. All we are permitted to do is wash our face and hands, brush our teeth, and, of course, shave. I know from past experience, yachting on Long Island Sound, and as a Cadet at Admiral Farragut Academy, that a saltwater bath is no substitute for a fresh water soak. The salt never rinses off, and after it, the body soon becomes sticky and itchy. In short, whatever temporary pleasure was gained, it is soon lost. In spite of all this, though, I still feel that I MUST get under some water soon if for no other reason but to change the odor that I am convinced is emanating from my body.

The Coast Guard has been encouraging us to use the salt-water showers. They say that they have even provided a "special soap" specifically designed for salt water for our comfort and convenience. However, they also let us know that the water temperature will be at local sea temperature as there is no means to heat it. That part is acceptable enough since the ship IS moving through the Gulf Stream, heated water that is varying between 68° and 75°F. It will be cool, but I can manage it. But the soap! Who are they kidding? In fifteen years, of all the soaps I've ever tried, there's never been ONE that worked satisfactorily in salt water. Neither the salt nor the soap would rinse off completely. Thus, when I finally did take my shower, I didn't stop itching until two weeks later when I finally received a short, fresh water shower.

### **November 28, 1944**

Latitude 36°, 27 Min. North, Longitude, 57°, 22 Min. West. At 9:07 a.m., I am jolted out of my after-breakfast lethargy by shock waves vibrating through the hull with loud explosions. It takes me a few moments to grasp what is happening. Our deck guns are firing, and at a very rapid rate. Since we had no forewarning, all of us are gripped in a sudden spasm of fear. Before any of us can react, the p.a. system tells us not to be alarmed. The ship's gunners are having a practice run, firing everything they have. The bombardment will last for about nine minutes, which it does. Eighteen, five-inch shells and a total of 420 rounds of 20mm are also expended. I had never been that close to naval fire in my life, and I don't mind saying that this, my first experience, was very frightening.

The noise and the suddenness of it all, quickly reminded me of the ordeal my sea captain father, Robert Spearing, Jr., had just survived some two years and seven months ago when his ship, the Waterman Freighter, *S.S. Bienville*, was attacked and sunk in the Bay of Bengal, India, on April 6, 1942, by a Japanese Naval Task Force.

<https://www.russpickett.com/history/ssbien.htm>

To see an image of the *S.S. Bienville* and much more, please visit this webpage; the names of the actual Japanese aircraft carrier and the battle cruiser that took part in sinking the *S.S. Bienville* are named; photos below.

There had been the distant sound of naval gunfire at 7 a.m. that alerted him to the fact that his unarmed ship would soon be attacked. Having joined the Navy at the age of 16, he had seen action in that service from *Vera Cruz*, where he operated a machine gun and took a few wounds while securing a portion of the landing area to World War I, where he rose to the rank of Lt. Senior Grade and served as one of the navigating officers aboard the famous troop transport (originally owned by the Germans), the *George Washington*. This ship made nine round-trip voyages to France without incident, and because of its service to the allies, all of the officers, including my father, were decorated in person by King Albert of Belgium. The sound of naval artillery was something that he could readily identify. Thus, when at 7 a.m. on April 6, 1942, his radio operator suggested that the noise they were hearing was thunder, my father quickly corrected him and told him to listen in immediately for any distress signals. The radio operator then asked if this was indeed the sound of gunfire, was he, the captain, scared? My father told him that he sure was, and that if he, the radio operator, had any sense, he had better be scared, too! Upon listening in, the radio operator quickly discerned that ten allied Merchant vessels were under Japanese attack.

The action that ensued after this exchange is best described in my father's own, unadorned report to the Waterman Steamship Co. dated November 30, 1943, as follows:

(The statement below is exactly as original)

*New York, N.Y.*

*November 30, 1943*

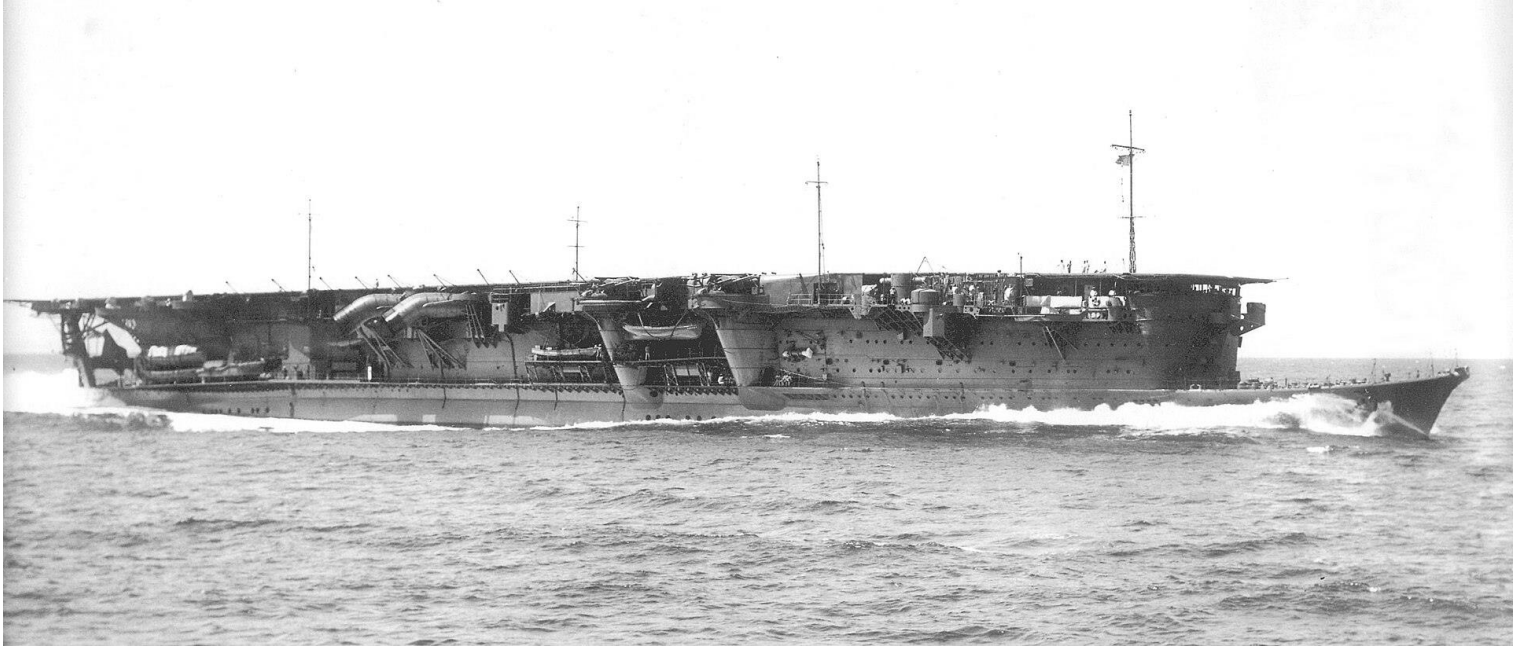
*The S.S. "BIENVILLE" sailed from Calcutta, India, at Midnight, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and made convoy at the mouth of the Hoogley River at 6:00 P.M. of the 5<sup>th</sup> when convoy was broken and vessels proceeded independently at their best speed. We were proceeding along the East Coast of India bound for Columbo.*

NOTE: (As the Japanese were rapidly closing in on the above area, these skippers thought they might fool any small Japanese attack force if they appeared to be under protective escort, a bluff that they soon realized was ridiculous and dangerous. A convoy without escorts, and theirs was one to be had, would quickly be unmasked and sunk. A decision was reached that it would be best for all concerned to split up and each ship make a run for it.)

*On the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> I was called at 4:00 o'clock and took over the bridge, relieving the Chief Officer, that he may take star observations. Half an hour before dawn, we resumed a zigzag course and day broke clear with just a light breeze. Having plotted the ship position I was just leaving the bridge when at 7:00 A.M. I heard the report of what I thought to be heavy gun fire. I had the Radio Operator called and advised him to listen in, and in a few minutes he advised me that the air was jammed with numerous S.O.S. messages of the ship's that were being bombed by airplanes. I sounded the general alarm and had all hands report to boat stations and cautioned them that we might encounter an air raid as enemy planes were active in the vicinity, and ordered them to keep under cover and wear their life belts. I then dismissed them and ordered them below. At 7:15 A.M. we heard planes overhead and a few seconds later sighted two medium (Japanese) bombers approaching from the East. The Chief Officer, Mr. Bermans, and Deck Cadet Robert Carliss were on the bridge with me and we distantly saw the planes drop their bombs and watched their flight toward the ship, when we thought they were getting too close we all made a break for cover. I may state here that the "BIENVILLE" was unarmed, having sailed from the U.S. shortly after war had been declared. One bomb struck a direct hit in #2 Hatch, blowing the hatch wide open and setting fire to the cargo, and giving the sensation of having run full speed into a solid rock. The "BIENVILLE" shook from stem to stern, compass adrift in its gimbals, drawers in the chart desk spilled out on deck, electric fans*

*blown off bulkheads. In general, everything not riveted in place was blown adrift. We had 500 monkeys in cages, lashed on #3 Hatch. The explosion parted the lashings and there were monkeys running wild all over the ship.*

(These were Rhesus Monkeys, the ones needed in the States for Polio experimentation.)



The Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carrier Ryūjō underway on 6 September 1934.

Unknown author - 広島県呉市海事歴史科学館所蔵品[1]. Photo from the Archives of the Kure Maritime Museum.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_aircraft\\_carrier\\_Ryūjō#/media/File:Japanese\\_aircraft\\_carrier\\_Ryūjō\\_underway\\_on\\_6\\_September\\_1934.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_aircraft_carrier_Ryūjō#/media/File:Japanese_aircraft_carrier_Ryūjō_underway_on_6_September_1934.jpg)

*No one had been injured and in remarkable time Mr. Bermans, Chief Officer, had organized a fire fighting party and had three hoses fighting the fire in #2 hatchway.*

(Also, my father told me later that Chief Engineer Geissler reported that he had all under control in the engine room and that the ship could still make three knots.)

*At 7:15 I sent out an S.O.S. giving my position as 20 miles S.E. of False Cape and the result of the raid. I altered course directly into the shore and was on this course when the planes made a second sweep over us.*

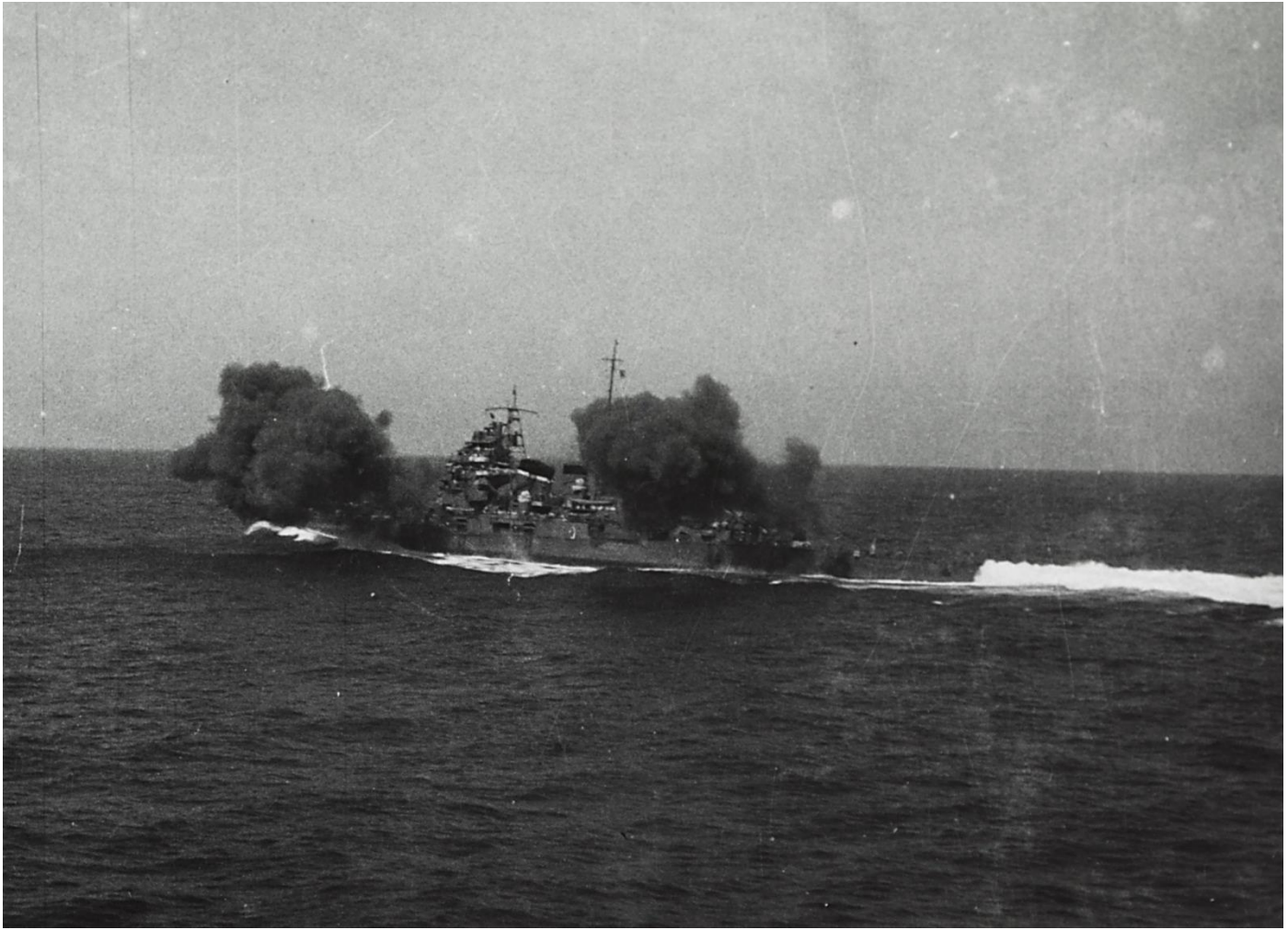
(Shortly after the engineer had made his report that the ship could still proceed, my father told the helmsman to steer directly for the shore, a large mountain peak in the distance to the west made this easy because, as he said, “The more we go this way, the less we’re going to have to swim.”)

*As soon as I heard them approaching, I put the wheel hard over and made a circular course. This time both bombs missed, striking the water, perhaps 300 feet clear on our port hand.*

(For a short time after the planes disappeared, it looked as though the ship might escape, for there was nothing in sight. When a ship suddenly did appear on the horizon, my father mistook it for a possible British cruiser and was about to congratulate himself with the words: “Hurray, the British are on the job!”)

*Then the real trouble started. I sighted a cruiser steaming towards us at great speed, but as she was at right angles to our course and smoking heavily, I could not see her ensign, so I could only hope she was British. Neither could I see the three destroyers or small airplane carriers astern of her in the smoke. But when she failed to make any effort to protect us against the planes or the planes made no effort to bomb the cruiser I was convinced that it must be a Jap cruiser, so, I stopped my ship and again sounded the general alarm and ordered the boats manned and lowered away. By this time the cruiser was within a mile of us and she stopped, put her rudder over and paralleled our course (At this moment, there was no doubt as to the cruiser’s identity, there was a huge rising sun painted on her hull), and at almost blank range, with both*

vessels stopped, the cruiser opened fire with her #1 turret, then #2 and so on to #4. Then as though to make sure of the job #1 fires once more.



Presumed official USN or IJN photographer - Naval History and Heritage Command

Title: Chokai Description: (Japanese Heavy Cruiser, 1932) Firing her 20cm main battery guns, during exercises in 1933.

Donation of Kazutoshi Hando, 1970. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.recrop Catalog #: NH 73024

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_cruiser\\_Ch%C5%8Dkai#/media/File:NH\\_73024\\_Chokai.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_cruiser_Ch%C5%8Dkai#/media/File:NH_73024_Chokai.jpg)

*I never saw Mr. Bermans again after the cruiser opened fire, but Mr. Stoltz and Jaycox, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Officers, were trying to lower the boats. #2 and #4 were well manned and were being lowered when the Japs opened fire and the exploding shells blasted the boats and killed most of the men in them. Mr. Stoltz tried to lower #3 boat, and a shell from a destroyer on the starboard quarter smashed the boat killing more men, and fatally wounding Mr. Stoltz. The entire crew behaved remarkably well, no undue confusion, no cowardize and the watch below in the Engine Room, under orders from Chief Engineer Paul Geissler and First Assistant Engineer Crutchfield secured the main engine, put out the fires in the boilers and secured the entire plant as though they were alongside the dock.*

*The first salvo parted the forward fall on #1 boat and I saw it go by the run and hand it by the fall, but by some miracle it became disengaged and later proved the only means of the survivors reaching shore. When the cruiser and her escorts finally ceased firing, the "BIENVILLE" was already slowly settling, her bottom practically shot out. She settled on an even keel with her American flag flying astern. The bridge was pretty well shot away and the entire midship section of the ship was on fire. I came aft to the Radio Shack and found the Operator, Mr. Rocco Torra, badly wounded, most of his right arm shot away, as he was sending out a message that we were being chased by an unidentified cruiser. Mr. Stoltz, Second Officer, was badly wounded in the abdomen an A.B., Anthony Nich, had both arms shot off at his shoulders. In some manner, Cadet Carliss, Junior Engineer Blake and myself managed to get these men down to the after well deck where we had life rafts and there I found more of my crew, some badly wounded. My Second Cook, Amos Chisholm, had most of his right side missing; another A.B. Eliah Sherris, had bad leg wounds; A messman, Crandall, had head injuries; Mr. Geissler, Chief Engineer, was a bit stunned from a shell burst as he came on deck.*

*Those of us that survived got aboard a life raft and let the ship sink from under us. We tried to launch the raft, but it was too heavy for those of us who could assist in handling it.*

(My father told me that he was actually the last to leave the ship, not because he was the captain, but because it just worked out that way. He was not in the raft, he went over the stern as the ship sunk under him and he was pulled down by the suction. This action, I always believed, added to the difficulty that he later developed in breathing, not that his heavy cigarette consumption and resulting emphysema wasn't also a part of it.)

*During all this time monkeys were everywhere, no longer vicious but seeming to realize that fate and misfortune had given us all something in common, and they too took their place aboard the raft or any floating wreckage. Up to the time of manning the raft and getting a ducking when we were sucked under as the ship went down, I did not realize that I too had suffered injuries, but once on the raft my legs became paralyzed from numerous shrapnel bits and I discovered that my right foot was badly blasted, and several small pieces of shrapnel splinters had hit my face.*

(The truth was that both of the soles of his feet had been split from toe to heel from the concussion of the bomb on the bridge deck, and both of his shins were laid open to the bone, and he later developed chronic osteomyelitis, which needed almost constant medication and many times, days of hospitalization. His ordinary walking days was soon to be over.)

*After the ship sunk we drifted on the raft for about an hour, during which time a Jap plane flew over us at about 500 ft. and we thought they were going to straff us but I suppose they only took pictures.*

*Later, I saw #1 lifeboat, manned by members of the crew that had either jumped overboard or had, abandoned ship on some wreckage, headed toward us and after picking up several survivors they came alongside our raft. We transferred what men we had on board [our Second Cook, Amos Chisholm had died] and we continued searching the area and picking up what survivors we could locate. A final count showed we had twenty-five remaining of an original crew of 43. Later, A.B., Anthony Nich, died and we buried him.*

(Strangely enough, during all this time, and even rowing to shore, not one shark was sighted.) *We began to row for shore late that afternoon and landed the following day about Noon.* (When a search was made for food, which is generally stored aboard lifeboats, such as fresh water biscuits, medical supplies, canvas, etc., all that could be found was several tins of tomato juice and a few boxes of hardtack, no fresh water. The tomato juice must have been as salty as the water. So they all did without.)

*We still had some dozen monkeys on board when we landed and as soon as the boat was beached they all took to the jungles.*

*The natives were friendly and gave us water, coconut milk and food. I managed to get a native that spoke a little English and arranged with him to act as a guide for one of our men to a nearby village where I got a message off to Vizagapatam to the British Naval Authorities and requested transportation inland to a hospital for my crew and myself.*

(Shortly after this, a group of various American missionaries, who were in the area, arrived to render what aid they could while waiting for professional help to arrive. They were a mixed lot of Catholics and Protestants. All they could provide, aside from the usual spiritual assistance, was aspirin and rough, woolen blankets, which were not very soothing covering open wounds and very serious sunburn. My father was huddled under a blanket smoking a cigarette trying to get his mind off his many miseries, when a young Baptist missionary approached and began to question him as to what he, as a captain, thought the reason for his being there was. My father's back went up, he never had any use for the church, religion, or the clergy, but at this moment, he thought he would hold his tongue since this young missionary might not really have meant what he was saying. No one, he thought, could be that stupid or unfeeling. He was wrong. When he told the missionary that yes, he knew why he was here, it was because the Japs had blown his ship out of the water, the missionary corrected him and said, "No, captain, that is not the reason. You are here because you have sinned." Needless to say, the scene that followed that statement is best not recalled!)

*About 8 P.M. of April 8<sup>th</sup>, a rescue party consisting of doctors, four ox carts and eight stretchers with stretcher bearers arrived and after dressing our wounds we started on our way to a hospital. I do not know how the ox carts were, but they could not have been much worse than the stretchers.*

*We finally reached the hospital – twenty-four survivors – but five men were so badly wounded that they died later and were buried in Barumphur.*

(According to my father, these men died because, in addition to being seriously wounded, the first hospital they received treatment from did not have plasma and they were operated on without it. As a result, they actually died from shock.)

*After eight weeks in the hospital (Bombay) where I had three operations on my leg, I was transferred to the sick bay on an Army Transport and finally reached New York on July 13, 1943. Nine of the survivors were sent home on another ship and were torpedoed on the voyage, and although none were lost they did not reach New York until late August.*

*The S.S. “BIENVEILLE” was built in Harriman, Pa. in 1919, and was owned and operated by the Waterman Steamship Corporation of Mobile, Ala.*

I was always proud of my father. I considered him an exceptionally brave man, but as a child, listening to his exploits made me very fearful of combat. I knew that I could never look upon war as he had. No matter how he tried to impress me with its glory, I could not get over the horror that, thrown in with all this dash and slogans, human beings were being killed, maimed, and crippled for life. I was just a kid, not much more than 6-yrs.-old, when I began to develop the strong feeling that one thing I was going to avoid, if at all possible, was ever going to war on a ship or otherwise.

## **STILL TO COME: INSTALLMENT SIX OF RAINBOW RIFLEMEN WILL CONTINUE BOB SPEARING’S WWII MEMOIRS**

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### **2025 RAINBOW DIVISION VETERANS FOUNDATION (RDVF) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The RDVF is proud to continue supporting educational opportunities for undergraduate college students. If students are interested in applying for a 2025 RDVF Scholarship, the application link is found on both the RDVF and the DMNA websites. If the 2025 version is not yet available, the prior version may be used. SAT and ACT scores are not necessary but are helpful.

The RDVF Scholarship traditionally offers scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$6000 annually. The deadline for applications is July 15th each year. We encourage all undergraduate students to apply. Each applicant needs to have a sponsor with an active lifetime membership. One of the most frequent questions asked is, "how do I find a lifetime member of RDVF?" As long as the individual is a current Soldier in a 42nd ID unit, a veteran of a 42nd ID unit, or a descendant of a former member, they can become a lifetime member at any time and then sponsor a family member or another veteran or Soldier. So, look over the application and sponsor your undergraduate this year!

To view the 2025 RDVF Scholarship requirement page and to download and print the application form, please visit <https://www.rainbowvets.org/rdvf-scholarships>

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