



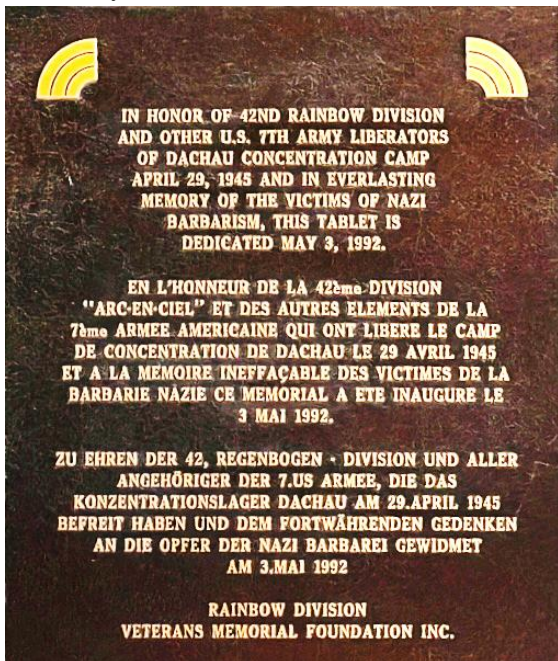
DEDICATION OF THE DACHAU MEMORIAL PLAQUE

May 3, 1992

Delivered by Theodore A. Johnson
Past RDVF President

Dear Friends of the Committee and Guests, We cannot express in words how honored we are to dedicate the Plaque in memory of the Liberation of this camp by the 42nd Rainbow Division and other Seventh Army units so many years ago. We like to believe that we all were here that day - General Linden and those who took the camp; those who cleared the way from Africa and Normandy and the Rhine; those we left behind in hospitals; and especially, those who lay beneath crosses and stars in cemeteries at St. Avold and Epinal and all the others across the globe. Yes, everyone who believed in Freedom was here that Sunday in April.

April 29, 1945 started for us as a day of high hopes. The war in Europe was fast coming to its end. All we needed was to survive a few more days. It was a feeling of high expectation and hope. But, the liberation of Dachau changed that feeling. For those who saw it with their own eyes and for those who heard the news that spread like wildfire through the troops; excitement and hope turned first to disbelief and horror, and then to sadness, and then to anger; and then to regret that we couldn't have come sooner. It was here we learned the ultimate reason of why we fought. Only the joy of you who were liberated saved that day for us.



(continued on page 3)

REVEILLE

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CAMPAIGNS

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

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Happy Spring and welcome to another wonderful edition of the Rainbow Reveille. I have so much to cover, so I will just get right to it.



I am very proud to announce that we are actively supporting the memorial and events of the **80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Dachau** to be held on-site, May 4th. Under the leadership of RDVF Vice-Chairman and past Division Commander, MG (ret) Harry Miller, he and Rob Giordano, RDVF Memorials Officer, will personally attend the ceremony and are directly supporting the multiple events in the days leading up to the event. Also in attendance will be the current 42d ID Commander, MG Jack James, and CSM Arnold Reyes. The Rainbow is represented well at this important event which will be attended by many dignitaries, liberators, and survivors, along with their descendants and families. Thank you, Harry and Rob for leading this charge! We look forward to your report in the next edition of the Reveille.

MG James and the 42d Infantry Division Headquarters will be deploying overseas once again this year. To properly send them off, the RDVF will step up and support their multiple deployment ceremonies across New York, ensuring our Soldiers and their families are appropriately honored. We also plan to travel to the Division's Deployment Station to provide the Division Soldiers with an authentic American Bar B Que meal before they depart for their overseas duty station.

This year marks the **20th Anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom III**, when the 42d Infantry Division deployed to Iraq under the leadership of MG Joe Taluto. It also marks multiple other deployment anniversaries for the 42d Division HQs and affiliated brigades who served in combat missions across the globe in support of the Global War of Terrorism. To celebrate these deployments and honor the sacrifices of all, we will host a reunion at the Saratoga Hilton in Saratoga Springs, NY on September 19-21, 2025. The timing is perfect as this is also the year where America will announce the installation of the Global War on Terrorism National Monument on the National Mall in Washington D.C. To help us celebrate these historical milestones, we have asked MG Joe Taluto, past Division Commander and Honorary Permanent President of the RDVF, and Michael "Rod" Rodriguez President/CEO of the GWOT Memorial Foundation to both serve as keynote speakers for the reunion events. Some of you may remember Rod was featured on the cover of the May 2024, Legion Magazine. To top it all off and if technology and timing cooperate, we will attempt to live-stream with MG James during the event so he can provide remarks from the front. All in all, we expect this to be a memorable reunion. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us in Saratoga in September! To learn more about the GWOT memorial:

<https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/team/executive-leadership/>

It's Scholarship season again and Tammy Hicks and her committee are seeking applications. Please note that we are looking to support undergraduate applicants only. As Scholarship Chair, Tammy brings decades of dedicated teaching experience earning the distinction of Master Teacher. This combined

RAINBOW REVEILLE

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THE RAINBOW REVEILLE

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PLEASE SEND NEWS ITEMS TO: REVEILLE

EDITOR: Suellen R. McDaniel (address above)

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with her long service as a faithful member of this committee will assure the RDVF yet another great scholarship program year. Please tell all our college eligible Division Soldiers and Rainbow Descendants about this wonderful opportunity. To learn more about this program please go to the link <https://www.rainbowvets.org/rdvf-scholarships> and download the scholarship application and instructions.

As stated in previous Reveilles, we are in development for a new RDVF Website. This process has become a significant effort, more than I knew at the onset. But as this is an “all-volunteer” committee of very busy people, it is taking longer than anticipated. It will be well worth it when completed and we hope to launch this summer. Rest assured we are getting closer, and the final product will provide our members, families and the public with access to our important RDVF resources and mission information and will also serve as a tremendous research resource to dive deeper into our Division’s History. I hope to have a more comprehensive update and timeline in my next chairman’s message.

Needless to say, I continue to be amazed by the great work that’s being done each day to advance our mission and charter. Thanks for all the great work by our members, board and committees in keeping the RDVF a meaningful and viable organization. On behalf of the RDVF membership I wish to send a special THANK YOU out to Suellen, for her continued tireless support and exceptional work in providing these wonderful Reveilles each quarter. I’ll close with wishing everyone a happy Memorial Day as we take time in remembrance of those who selflessly served our nation so that we may have the freedoms we enjoy today. Please also take a moment on May 4th to remember the victims of the Dachau Concentration Camp and the sacrifices made by our Soldiers for their liberation.

Until the next Reveille – Rainbow, Never Forget! Gary Yaple, RDVF Chairman

RAINBOW CELEBRATES V-E DAY WITH PRAYER

From the Stateside issue, Rainbow Reveille June 1945

With the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division of the Seventh Army in Germany immediately after the official news of Germany’s unconditional surrender was released, thousands of 42d Infantry (Rainbow) Division troops attended simple all-faith services in their bivouac areas in the shadow of the Bavarian Alps. They offered thanks to the Almighty for the end of hostilities and paid reverent tribute to their dead comrades.

At Palling, Germany, where the Rainbow Division’s forward command post was set up, 200 G.I.s prayed in a dandelion-studded field. Chaplains of all three faiths stood beside the small white Arc on which was placed the Christian Cross and the Hebrew Torah.

Backgrounding the Arc, Rainbow Division flag bearers carrying the 48 state flags, stood in a huge semi-circle.

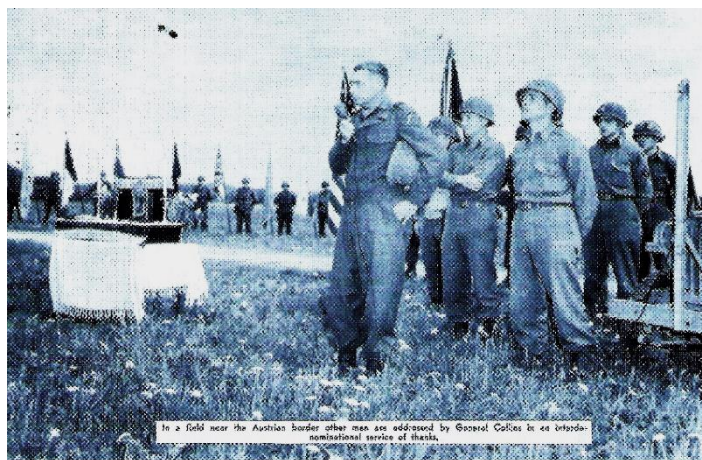
A European polyglot of liberated slaves stood on the balconies and hung from the windows of the cottages surrounding the field. They did not understand the language of the service, but the spirit of worship is universal. On the fringes of the Yank congregation, British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Russian and French liberated prisoners of war joined their Rainbow liberators in prayer.

When Taps was sounded for those who had fallen, the freed slave laborers joined the soldier congregation in bowing their heads in tribute. And when the Star-Spangled Banner was played by the Division Band, concluding the ceremonies, they snapped to attention in tribute to Old Glory.

The Division Commander, Major General Harry J. Collins, who had called for the division-wide prayers initiated the Palling services by saying that he had hastened to offer thanksgiving “so that the happiness of peace and the strength of God shall again rule the world.”

In a low voice with humility and lacking its usual military authoritative, he thanked God that the Rainbow had accomplished its trying job with a minimum of casualties, and humbly told his soldiers how thankful he was for the job they had done so well.

The Division Chaplain, Lt. Colonel Lyle Bartolomew officiated and was assisted by Captains Eli A. Bohnen and Joseph Delahunt, the Jewish and Catholic chaplains, respectively. Immediately following the combined services, a Catholic mass, with Chaplain Charles G. Erb, was held in the Palling Cathedral.



In a field near the Austrian border other men are addressed by General Collins in an emotional service of thanks.

Photo Caption: "In a field near the Austrian border, other men are addressed by General Collins in an interdenominational service of thanks." From the 42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division History World War II, ed. Hugh Daly, 1946

Excerpted from the
ADDRESS BY DR. DANIEL FISCHER
To Rainbow Veterans and their families
During the annual reunion on July 13, 2001
WICHITA, KS

...For several years prior to 1995 I had felt a need to go back to Dachau, for the 50th anniversary of my liberation from that concentration camp. About 12 months prior to the date of April 1995, I searched for organizations of fellow survivors with plans to return, with no success. Eventually I wrote to the camp known as the Dachau Museum, requesting their help in finding any American group returning for the 50th anniversary. I received a reply to my inquiry from the director of the museum that the only North American organization she was aware of were the "Rainbow Division" veterans.

Up to that time I was not aware of the finer points nor the exact history of the liberation of the camp. I did see American soldiers and their tanks take the camp. There were rumors in the camp of orders having been given by the SS to machine gun all the prisoners on the so-called "appelplatz" – the roll call plaza. We thought a special US Army unit was dispatched to take the camp by surprise.

Eventually I was able to contact the very active "Rainbow Division Veterans Association; and after much correspondence they allowed me to be a member of their group for their reunion and anniversary and to avail myself and my family of their arrangements.

It became apparent that elaborate plans had been made for this celebration by the veterans, the Bavarian Government and the cities of Munich and Dachau. I also became acquainted with the history of the "Rainbow" 42nd Division, which dates back to their actions in the first World War in France and Germany. Their commander then was General Douglas MacArthur, and the liberation of Dachau has now become a major highlight in Rainbow history in WWII. The division was made up originally of more than half the nation's National Guard units with all their colors hence the name Rainbow Division. They have annual reunions in the US and anniversaries at Dachau every ten years.

I remembered the feeling of utter loneliness I experienced at the time of liberation, the terrible depression I felt as a sixteen-year-old weighing less than sixty pounds, who had no family or friends because they were all killed.

Many of the camp's inmates were Ukrainian, Russian and Polish POWs and I felt very alone among them. I began to realize that I was trying to avoid the feeling of being alone in a sea of strangers even if I was with my family. I was an American now and I wanted to be with kindred folks. Without realizing it at the time, I was searching for company that would understand my feelings. Of course my family would be there, my wife, Elaine would come with me and our daughter Tracy could make a stopover in Munich with her husband, Cary on their way to a belated honeymoon. But Dachau to me was a place of renewal and rebirth. I was in Dachau only two weeks prior to liberation. It was here that I regained that most precious of human attributes, freedom, yet I feared being alone there, without a friend.

As I realized that I will be with the liberators of the camp and because of the unique relationship, I felt the need to say my thanks during the five-day course of the festivities. I sat down and put on paper those feelings.

The theme was, thank you, warriors who logged your way to that terrible place. You have given me fifty years of life, a whole lifetime, allowed me to reach adulthood, to become an American, a physician, to get married and have children. And I thanked them for my mother, who at age 39 on that day at the end of May in 1944 at Auschwitz, stepped out of line to see my father, 49, my brother, 13 and myself at 15. She grasped my cheeks and said, "You will survive this" – then turned around and took the arm of her 75-year-old mother-in-law to be walked into the gas chamber. I realized much later that she understood then and there that this was the end of her family, yet she had the dignity and courage to look to the future. I thanked them for all the mothers to whom they have given a future.

[here follows well worth remembering experiences during the 50th Dachau commemoration; if anyone would like a copy of the full text, please contact Suellen McDaniel, REVEILLE ed.]

"...the following day, Sunday, was the formal celebration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camp. It was a dismal, rainy 29th of April 1995. The speeches, including one by the president of the Rainbow veterans, were endless. We stood in the "appelplatz", the old roll call plaza now covered with a tent, while I shed a few tears. The oomph band played the piece entitled, "The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves," from Verdi's opera, "Nabuco", one of my favorite pieces even as the official program sanitized the title to "Chorus of Freedom."

My family was near me, I was not alone, not lonely and not depressed. The Rainbow Veterans were all around. I had friends in Dachau.



(L) Rainbow Veteran Morris Eisenstein, H/222; (R) Dr. Daniel Fischer

From The Palm Beach Post story 1 April 2012

Unbreakable Bond Links Two Soldiers

<https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/2012/04/01/unbreakable-bond-links-2-soldiers/7761328007/>

Continued from Page One
DEDICATION OF THE 42nd DIVISION DACHAU
MEMORIAL PLAQUE
May 3, 1992

Our President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died only a few days earlier had called the attack on Pearl Harbor, "a date that will live in infamy." Today, we say that April 29, 1945 should be a date that lives for infinity.

One of your own, Nerin E. Gun wrote in *THE DAY OF THE AMERICANS*: "... to all of us who became brothers in that short instant of liberation, you will always be the Unknown Soldier, the Myth. And it matters not whether today, in your garage in Minnesota or Wyoming, you scarcely remember the episode of that afternoon in the course of an almost endless expedition. Even if you should read these lines, you won't be able to understand what your brief appearance meant to us." Those words were beautiful but they were not prophetic. The Rainbow Division Association and its Memorial Foundation are pledged to remember the men who died and the causes for which they fought. And, we are here today to assure you, and all who will listen, that we have never forgotten!

But, remembering alone is not enough. President Abraham Lincoln may well have been speaking to us today when he dedicated a National Cemetery at the Civil War Battlefield in Gettysburg for those who fell on both sides. He said, "...It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that those who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us...that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain...and that government of the people, for the people and by the people shall not perish from the earth."

No, just remembering is not enough. Today, even in the United States, we see seeds of that old evil springing up again and we see it here, in Europe as well. Perhaps we have taken it for granted that it was too awful to happen again. Yet it is not too late to keep our pledge. Schools in the U.S. are beginning to institute studies of history and the humanities to show what really happened and how and why civilized people can fall under that spell of evil. Further, Holocaust Museums and studies have grown with greater significance both here and in the U.S. In our party here today are grandsons of a WWI Rainbow veteran and a WWII Rainbower, both who are now in the service of our country.

Rainbow feels a special responsibility to continue to tell the story over and over again, and to find ways to tell it to generations to come when we are no longer here to testify in person that it can and did happen. And, if by this simple act of dedication and remembering today, we have been able to carry that message one step further, it has indeed been a wonderful day. All of us in Rainbow thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Soldiers, Airmen must be ready for anything **Maj. General Jack James** **Commander, 42nd Infantry Division**

Reprinted From The Guard Times Vol. 17 Number 4



As the new commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, I am honored to lead the men and women of our division. The Rainbow Division has a proud history of service that began in World War I and continued through World War II and the Iraq War. Today, our division headquarters is preparing to deploy once again to the Middle East and command Army forces in the region.

I've also had the privilege to command the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade and the 53rd Troop Command. I have developed tremendous respect for the way our 11,000 Army National Guard Soldiers handle every mission they are given.

I've also come to deeply respect the professionalism of our New York Air Guard Airmen members.

No matter what uniform we wear, where we serve, or whether we are traditional or full-time Guard members, one of our primary focuses must be readiness.

We have to be ready to respond to emergencies here at home. This means being ready to handle expected emergencies like flooding or snowstorms, and unexpected ones like the pandemic support or migrant support missions.

This also means undertaking federal domestic missions, like those along the southwest border, which claimed the lives of two of our Army aviators in March of 2024.

We have to be ready to deploy overseas to deter adversaries. This means being ready to support NATO, as the Soldiers of the 222nd MP Platoon have done in Poland, or as our Airmen do when they fly MQ-9 missions or supplies and people around the world.

Finally, we must be ready to fight and win our nation's wars. After years of supporting the Global War on Terror, we all have to be ready to fight an enemy like Russia or China.

This means our units must be interoperable with our active duty counterparts and ready to plug into any Army corps, joint force, or Air Expeditionary Wing at any time in any part of the world.

All of this revolves around our people. As Major General Shields, our adjutant general has consistently emphasized, people are our top priority.

To meet our missions, we need enough people. Recruiting and retaining new Soldiers and Airmen is a non-negotiable priority. Soldiers and Airmen remain in uniform when they are challenged with quality training, career opportunities, and exciting and rewarding deployments. I challenge our leaders at every level to make this happen.

Every Soldier and Airman can help bring more people into our ranks by sharing your pride in serving our state and nation with others. Share your story with your peers and others who look for a purpose in their life.

We must also guarantee that every man and woman in the ranks is treated with dignity and respect. Everybody is a vital teammate, playing a role in defending the Nation. Leaders at every level must support our Soldiers and Airmen, help them grow, and maximize their professional and human potential. My charge to every leader, from sergeant to colonel who reads this, is to be a role model and be the mentor our Citizen Soldiers and Airmen—men and women both—deserve.

Above all, "Be Ready for Anything." You never know. You cannot predict. But for some, the call will come. You don't know what the call will be, but you have to be ready for it. This means you must maintain the highest level of personal readiness—ready to fight—ready to act—ready to respond—at all times. At any time.

On January 28, 2024, an armed drone struck Tower 22, a U.S. military outpost in Jordan. Fourteen members of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion were there. Three Army Reserve Soldiers were killed and 47 others were wounded. Soldiers of the 101st ESB moved quickly to ensure the signals network was still up and functioning, and then moved to provide medical care to other Soldiers. I commend our 101st Signal Soldiers for their timely and courageous actions.

They were ready. You must be ready. Our task now is to prepare the Rainbow Division for its next deployment. This is a big effort that's benefitted from strong support from the Joint Force Headquarters and staff. We thank everyone for their strong support to the Rainbow Division team as it writes the next chapter in its storied history!

Always Ready, Always There

Jonathon T. Molik RDVF Historian

National Guard military service comes in various forms. As Reville readers know all too well, this can be direct combat, but can include disaster relief, diplomatic partnership efforts, and military honors events, among others. The National Guard embodies each day our current motto: *Always Ready, Always There*. We are well trained and prepared for these missions. Yet occasionally leaders call for us to serve in an environment for which we have no training. Mind you I said no training, not some, not a little...none. This is the environment the New York Military Forces, and specifically Soldiers of the 42 Infantry Division, finds itself in now. And which environment is that you ask? Prison.



On February 18, 2025, thousands of New York State Corrections Officers (CO) walked off the job, beginning what Governor Hochul called an illegal strike. The state needed help, so they called the National Guard.

In short order, Army, Air Force, and New York State leaders, many from the famous Rainbow, gathered to plan and execute the given mission: get to the affected facilities and maintain order...now. Within hours, servicemembers were at armories, trucks were fueled, and UH-60 Blackhawks departed airfields to execute the required tasks.



Troops at Stewart Airport load some of the crates containing 10,000 half pints of milk for helicopter transport Monday to the Greenhaven Correctional Facility at Stormville. Three choppers were used to airlift the milk to the prison, one of 33 state facilities being struck by corrective officers.

You may be thinking, this is neat Jon, but as a historian, how does this story relate to Rainbow history? Good question. Answer: today's prison mission is not our first.

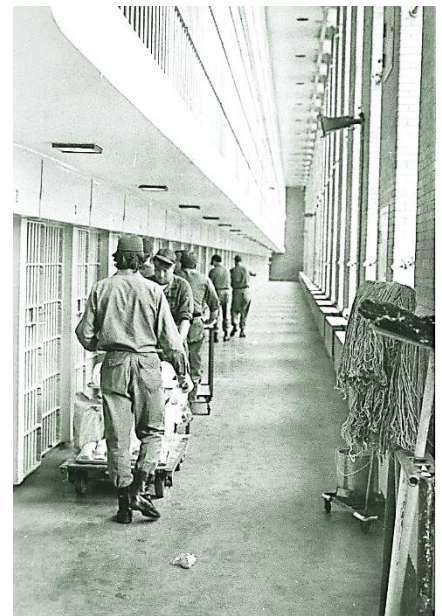
In Spring 1979, then-Governor Hugh Carey ordered approximately 8,000-10,000 New York Military Force members (the numbers fluctuated), the majority of whom were Rainbow soldiers, to occupy facilities striking COs had abandoned in Operation GOLD PLUM. It was the largest prison strike in American history at the time. Almost all 7,000 New

York State COs left their posts. National Guard leaders successfully deployed all assigned personnel to 29 of New York's 33 state-run facilities in under 48 hours, a remarkable feat for a parttime force.

Rainbow veterans like Captain (Retired) Scott Gallerie and Command Sergeant Major (Retired) John Willsey recall their time in the prisons as junior enlisted Soldiers fondly. Both served during the strike as Privates First Class and remember with glee receiving Sergeant's pay, which was the standard at the time. As I stated before, the Army provided no training for the mission—Mr. Gallerie was a Telecommunications Center Specialist and Mr. Willsey worked in finance within the U.S. Property and Finance Office—yet both attacked the mission head on. They carried mail, couriered memos, served food, and most importantly, watched out for each other in what turned out to be a sometimes-chaotic environment.

To highlight the desire Soldiers had to support the mission is the story of Sergeant Gayle Nedelka, future Major (Retired) Gayle Carpenter. Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) policy did not permit female Soldiers to work in male prisons at the time. Sergeant Nedelka argued to her supervisors that she was as capable as any other to do the job. Eventually, leadership allowed her to serve in an administrative role with the chaplains, in a male prison, as her mission. That is Rainbow determination.

Interestingly, there are similarities between the 1979 strike and ours today. Incarcerated Individuals—referred to as inmates previously—were pleasantly surprised, then and now, to have received professional and courteous treatment from military members. (You might remember, 1979 is only a few years after service in Vietnam ended, and the public had a certain perception of the military coming out of that conflict.) Today's servicemembers serve meals, guard posts, and deliver medication, just like their predecessors decades ago. One major difference, however, does stand out. Strikers in 1979 were not pleased to see the military replace them, even temporarily, while they negotiated. Many were angry, with some resorting to throwing stones and damaging vehicles, which led to the National Guard's repeated use of airlift for transportation and resupply. This is not the case today as strikers have been respectful and appreciative.



National Guard senior leaders, as well as New York's citizens generally, considered the operation that supported the seventeen-day so-called Wildcat Strike a success. Even though New York's Military Forces had no corrections training at all, they relied on their military training in Planning, Operations, Sustainment, and Execution, as well as their experience in combat and non-combat scenarios, to meet the challenge at hand. Rainbow officer Michael P. Kessenich reported servicemembers worked two million hours, drove 300,000 miles in 1,100 vehicles, served 400,000 meals, and flew 2,000

helicopter sorties over 78,000 miles.¹ Injuries were minor and most importantly, National Guard members kept New Yorkers, incarcerated and free, safe.

Sergeant Major Troy Antal, a Rainbow combat veteran and current 42 Infantry Division G2 SGM, said it best when he told me during this prison mission, “National Guard service is so unpredictable. I have walked in Iraqi sand, climbed Afghan mountains, shoveled Buffalo snow, and filled sandbags along the Hudson. I love being a Rainbow soldier and helping any way I am asked.”

I am confident the Rainbow soldiers in 1979 felt the exact same way.

Photo One :

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/28/nyregion/guarding-the-prison-guards-new-york-states-troubled-disciplinary-system.html>

Photo Two : news clipping from the New York Times

Photo Three :

<https://www.facebook.com/Village.of.Dannemora>
2-108 Infantry Battalion Soldiers feeding prisoners.

Footnote 1 :

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1979/05/06/issue.html>

An Invitation

to the Unveiling of a Memorial
to the 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division
in Steyr, Austria

Steyr, Austria was peacefully handed over to the U.S. forces on May 5, 1946. The occupation of Upper Austria was taken over on 26 February 1946 by the Rainbow Division, the 42nd Infantry Division of the U.S. Armed Forces.

In honor of this infantry division, you are invited to attend the unveiling of the memorial stele on Friday, 9 May 2025 at 1400 hours Annabert 6 (next to the St. Anna vicarage).

Yours faithfully, Marcus Vogl
Mayor of Steyr, Austria

The story of the large, faded painting of a Rainbow Division shoulder patch insignia on an old stone wall next to the St. Anna vicarage will be fully described in a later issue to include history and photos of this historic memorial.

This welcome information and history is courtesy of Dr. Phil. Doris Hörmann, BA MA Steyr Archivist and Historian.

A Rainbow Story of Friendship TEC4 Vernon Breen and PFC Curtice Mathews By Erin Faith Allen

Even in war—perhaps especially in war—friendship is forged in seemingly ordinary moments that remain mighty and defy any test of time. Such is the bond between TEC4 Vernon Breen and PFC Curtice Mathews of Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 222nd Infantry Regiment.

Their story begins in the dust of Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, where Curtice arrives in April 1944. Standing 5'11" with a lean

frame of 151 pounds, brown hair, and brown eyes, the young man from Bronxville, New York soon makes a decision that forms a connection still remembered.

In those early days at Camp Gruber, Vernon's father drives down to Oklahoma from Chicago every chance he gets to be close to his son. The two of them soon discover a rock on the perimeter of the Gruber grounds where they can leave notes for each other—a simple link to connectivity amid a homesick military routine.



Before Vernon and Curtice truly get to know one another, Curtice makes a gesture that cements their friendship. The Breen family story is that on one occasion Curtice somehow transfers his



weekend pass to Vernon, so that Vernon can do more than pass notes ... he can actually spend time with his dad. This selfless act creates a bond between the two young men.

As the Rainbow deploys to Europe, Vernon and Curtice face the harsh realities of war together. They navigate the frozen forests of Alsace, push through the Siegfried, and fight their way into Germany. Their friendship deepens with each passing day, each firefight, and each moment of camaraderie that all young men seem to find between the viciousness of battles.

They almost make it home together.

In the first week of April 1945, the Rainbow is tasked with capturing the historic city of Würzburg. As we all know, this battle presents formidable challenges—a defended river crossing, the imposing Marienberg Fortress overlooking the city, and the deadly pockets of resistance popping up throughout the ruins of the city. Vernon and Curtice are playing their role in the house-to-house combat through the city's ancient streets.

It is during this fierce battle, on April 3, that Curtice is killed when a grenade detonates, and his jeep blows up. He is just 20 years old.

Vernon is devastated. He pushes on into Germany with the rest of their outfit and survives the war, but he never forgets his friend.

Somehow, Curtice's ring is given to Vernon, who keeps it as a lifelong keepsake; aside from his memories, this is a true and lasting link to his buddy. This same ring, along with a few photographs of Curtice, remains a treasured possession in Vernon's family, who still honor the young man whose memory has become part of their family.

Among the personal effects returned to Curtice's family are pieces of his metal identification bracelet, engraved with his full name and serial number, 23 snapshots, a German belt buckle souvenir, nail clippers, and a sewing kit.

In June 1946, Curtice's mother Estelle writes a heartbreaking

letter to the US Army seeking information about her son's final resting place:

Dear sir, my son was killed at Würzburg and was buried in Germany. I have learned that all these men who were buried in Germany have been removed. This has upset me so very much, not knowing where he is buried. Won't you please get this information for me as soon as possible, as it will be such a great comfort. And can you give me some idea as to when his remains will be returned to this country. Also, can the parents visit the graves of their sons? I shall anxiously await your reply.

Each penciled curvature of her letters spell out the weight of a mother's broken heart.

As it turns out, Curtice is not returned to American soil. Today, he rests in the Lorraine American Cemetery at St. Avold, France with far too many other good men who fought the good fight, and who now rest in peace together somewhere over the rainbow.

Photos of Vernon Breen, left; Curtice Mathews, right.

RAINBOW RIFLEMEN

Part VI

By Robert Spearing III, Co. G, 242nd Inf., 42nd Division

In my family, war was a regular topic. No matter which side I turned to, there were plenty of authentic histories and stories of past deeds, and some were very heroic. On my father's side, I could claim a French ancestor, Charles Fagot De La Garciniere. He was a sergeant under Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, and two of his sons, Anatole and Derenville, later served in the Confederate Army.

On our English side was my Confederate great-grandfather, John F. Spearing, a member of the famous Washington Artillery of New Orleans, who served in (and survived) the Battle of Shiloh. His younger brother, Robert McK. Spearing, Corporal Cannoneer of the 1st Company of the same unit, was killed by a Yankee cannon ball passing through his chest at the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862.

If I didn't hear enough from my father's side, then there was my mother's side of the family and here was something very special. Her brother, James Jonas Madison* (James J. Madison had a destroyer commissioned and built in his name in Boston Navy yard in the summer of 1939. This ship, the 425, served throughout World War II and was at the surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay), probably the youngest Lt. Commander in the U.S.N. during World War I, had received the Congressional Medal of Honor for fighting a German U-boat in the North Atlantic. In the course of the battle, he lost his right leg, something that impressed my young mind deeply, especially the day I went to his room and asked him if I could look at his leg. I was, of course, shocked and surprised to see the actual stump. It was something I had never seen before. Although it was perfectly healed, I could see that the surrounding skin had been pulled together and sewn. The leg had been sliced off at the middle of the thigh. Touching the soft tissue, I was sure of one thing, I'd never want this to happen to me, no matter what!

After the firing had subsided, on the *Black*, even as much as several hours later, I was still edgy from being so close to the noise of the ship's weapons during the practice firing. It was so completely different from any noise I'd ever heard on the rifle

range that although annoying, it was never heart stopping. The only other similarly upsetting experience I had ever had that was on a par with the ship's action, was of all places, on the demonstration field at Camp Crowder, Missouri, the new home of the Army Signal Corps.

I had been stationed there as an instructor and training Sgt. from Nov. of 1942 to July, of 1944. Aside from my regular duties as an instructor in all basic training subjects: Infantry Drill, Rifle Marksmanship, First Aid, Gas Warfare, Military Customs, and Courtesies and Sanitation, I would, from time to time, be sent to learn other military skills. These were things such as: map reading, bayonet drill, and the handling and use of demolitions. In short, in between training cycles and week-long seminars led by our own officers who had taken the same courses at the proper Army training schools, once we learned these things, we were expected to teach them during the next six weeks' basic training cycle.

Thus, I was not surprised, but definitely not happy, when after finishing a six-week cycle with 60 rookies from Brooklyn, New York, First Sgt. S. Thomas told me that I was being sent to a week's course involving the handling of high explosives! Upon hearing that, I decided that I'd best not say anything to my sweet wife, Lillian, who was sharing my Army life at the time, along with me and Bobbie the fourth, my first son, living in a one-room apartment in Joplin, Missouri. She also knew of my loathing for any kind of sudden, loud explosions, even firecrackers!

On the appointed Monday, I appeared at the camp demolitions area. It was a large field to the south of the camp with several rows of bleachers along its east side. I was told to report to Lt. Richard Webb, who, along with a group of select, noncommissioned officers, would be in charge of all classes.

Lt. Webb had not yet arrived from his Neosho Hotel accommodations when I appeared, so one of his staff checked me in and then began to fill me in on just what the demolition course would entail. I didn't like what I heard, at all. Words such as: dynamite, T.N.T., Nitrostarch, composition C, nitroglycerin, Prima Cord, landmines, booby traps, Molotov cocktails, French foo bombs, #1,2,3., dynamite caps, five second fuses . . . These were all words that sent the very chills right up my spine. The more I heard, the more I wished I were somewhere else.



Following this terrifying list, I was given a short, personality profile on the leader of the course, Lt. Richard Webb. He was a Hollywood Motion Picture actor, I believe, with Paramount Studios who, up until that moment, had mainly been screened in supporting roles. He played in the company of such illustrious stars as Veronica Lake and William Holden, among others. Listening to this, I was thinking: "Just what does his film career have to do with Army demolitions?" and "Who cares about his film credits here, anyway? What makes these actors so special, anyway?" But a few minutes later when Webb did appear, I had to admit I was impressed. I'd never seen any young guy that handsome looking in my life. Over six feet tall, with a trim physique, he

was dressed in immaculate OD trousers tucked into shiny engineer's boots and sported a light-colored Air Force jacket with a fur collar that made a dashing frame for his positively even features (wavy blond hair and china-blue eyes), not to mention his exceptionally white teeth. Just looking at him, I began to wonder: "If this guy looks this good, and I've never seen or heard of him before, what must those chaps like Errol Flynn and Cary Grant look like in person?"

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Jonas_Madison

Next installment will be in our July 2025 REVEILLE!

PHOTO OF ACTOR Richard Webb is from

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Webb_\(actor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Webb_(actor))

and this uniform is part of his acting role as *Captain Midnight*, only one of many career starring roles.

RAINBOW DIVISION VETERANS FOUNDATION, INC.

Contributions Received January 2025 -April 2025

Foundation Scholarship Endowment

In honor and memory of Private J.W. Cockrell,
150th Field Artillery, 42nd "Rainbow" Division WWI

100. Dr. (Rev.) Patricia Cockrell Wood, his daughter
100. Charles Eier, his grandson

SAVE THE DATE!!

The Rainbow Division Foundation (RDVF) Presents:

The GWOT/OIF Reunion

19-21 September 2025, Saratoga Hilton, Saratoga, NY

Those who participated in The Global War on Terror (GWOT), 9 11 (any unit) or served during Operation Iraqi Freedom (any unit) are cordially invited to join The RDVF for a 20 Year Reunion to Commemorate our Service to State and Nation.

We have planned a flexible agenda:

19 Sep 25 - Meet and Greet Social (1800-??)

20 Sep 25 - Guided Tour Saratoga Battlefield, self-guided tour NYS Military Museum

Dinner and Cocktail Hour (1800-1900).

Dinner (business casual) 1900

Guest speakers. We are proud to present;

Michael "Rod" Rodriguez, Pres/CEO GWOT Memorial Foundation

Major General (ret) Joseph J Taluto, Commander 42d Infantry Division, Commander OIF III, Former chairman RDVF and

Former Adjutant General, NY

21 Sep - Continental Breakfast

Blocked Discounted Rooms will be available. (Separate cost)

Cost Per Person: \$125.00

Watch the website, rainbowvets.org for sign up and more details.

John J. Wilsey, RDVF Events Coordinator

Rainbow, Never Forget!!