

# THE 95TH DIVISION HISTORY

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# 1918

## Activation



The initial activation of the 95th Division was begun at Camp Sherman, Ohio, September 5, 1918. The activation order directed the Division's composition to include the following major units: the 189th Infantry Brigade, the 190th Infantry Brigade, the 170th Field Artillery Brigade, the 358th Machine Gun Battalion, the 320th Engineer Battalion, the 620th Field Signal Battalion and the 95th Division Trains. The organization and training of all units except the 320th Engineer Battalion and the 95th Division Trains was fully under way at the time of the Armistice.

Brig. Gen. Mathew C. Smith, commander of the Division during it's brief World War I history, received orders early in December, 1918, to demobilize the Division, and this demobilization was completed December 21, all officers and men being discharged or transferred.

From this date to the Division's activation during the Second World War, the unit existed as an organized reserve division with headquarters in Oklahoma City.



# 1942

## Training

The Division's World War II pre-combat history extended over more than two years of training and travel throughout the breadth of the United States and to include later the United Kingdom and France. Early in its post-activation period, the Division indicated a high degree of personnel intelligence for Army division as the result of Army General Classification Test scores. It was rated equally high in physical fitness tests which were conducted following the completion of basic training. Its performance on three sets of maneuvers, laid the groundwork for a latent combat efficiency.

The Division's World War II history can be said to have begun when Maj. Gen. Harry L. Twaddle was named commanding general in March, 1942. Later Brig. Gen. Robert L. Spragins (afterward a major general commanding the 44th Infantry Division) was named assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Ward H. Mans was appointed commander of Division Artillery, and Col. Donald W. Brann (later to become a major general) was named chief of staff.

An enlisted cadre was drawn from the 7th Infantry Division and was trained for organizational duties in June and early July, 1942. A cadre of junior officers was supplied by the various officer candidate schools and the 2nd, 31st, 38th, and 43rd Infantry Divisions. The Division was ready to become a part of the Army, and its activation was climaxed by formal ceremonies at newly-constructed Camp Swift, Texas, and by the arrival of filler replacements July 15.

An early group of inductees from crowded midwestern reception centers began drilling immediately after arrival July 10 and were able to stage a review on activation day.

As a blazing Texas sun shone down on the assembled Division nucleus and many civilian guests, including Texas' Governor Coke Stevenson, General Twaddle proclaimed his command an active part of the Army of the United States. The Division's component units were activated the same day: the 377th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Col. Francis A. Woolfley; the 378th Regiment, commanded by Col. Allison J. Burnett; the 379th Regiment, led by Col. Marlin C. Martin; Division Artillery, commanded by Gen. Mans; the 420th Quartermaster Battalion (subsequently reorganized as the 95th Quartermaster Company), the 320th Medical Battalion, the 320th Engineer Battalion, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, the 95th Signal Company, the 795th Ordnance Company, (5th Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the Military Police Platoon.

Upon the arrival of all filler replacements it was found that slightly more than eighty per cent of the Division's enlisted personnel were from the Midwest, the Chicago area predominating. Personnel turnover reduced this figure subsequently, but the Midwest held its majority or plurality throughout the Division's period of activation.

Regular Army, National Guard, Reserve and Selective Service troops all contributed to the Division, with the last named the largest source. Previous to the Division's activities, a provisional Division staff was assembled at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for preliminary training and organization. Regimental, battalion, company and battery commanders had reported to Fort Benning, Georgia, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for a one-month training course.

Until August 2, the Division's recruits were broken into the military regiment as individuals, undergoing the customary physical conditioning and indoctrination preliminaries. But on that day a seventeen-week basic training program was launched, aimed at simultaneous training of individuals and small units. The Division's GI's were introduced to a fate that met millions of the nation's new soldiers. There were road marches, they scrambled over obstacle courses, hit

the dirt, learned about first aid and military courtesy, the dual-business end of a rifle - bullets and bayonet; they scanned maps and took azimuths; they hiked, patrolled and drilled, both close-order and extended; they heard military sounds-in-the-night and how to muffle them; they matched shelter-halves to pitch their tents, then striking the canvas to roll their packs again, there was calisthenics, squad problems and company problems, all this and much more made up the fast-flying transitional period from rookies to basically trained soldiers and teams.

July 23, 1942, the Division was passed from control of the VII Corps to direct control of the Third U.S. Army, then commanded by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger. The change was occasioned by departure of the VII Corps for maneuvers. When the maneuvering 2nd Infantry Division selected a cadre for the 102nd Infantry Division, a month of further training was necessary before the cadre could join its new division. It was thus transferred to the 95th Division to receive this training.



At Camp Swift the distinctive 9-V insignia was adopted, replacing the 1934 denoting the Division's initially Oklahoma and Kansas constituency. The new insignia was designed by Lt. Col. Leland B. Kuhre, the first World War II commander of the 320th Engineer Battalion, when members of the Division staff were assembled at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas before activation. It was approved by the War Department in August. In color and design, the insignia was especially appropriate, the red-white-and blue symbolizing the national character of the Division which represented virtually every state; the Arabic "9" artillery red, inter twined with a white Roman five for V-for-Victory, and both on an elliptical background of infantry blue.

From its inception the "victory" theme of the insignia was recognized and largely inspired the Division's nick-name, "Victory Division" selected in September 1943.

1943

## Fort Sam Houston

After moving 70 miles to historic Ft Sam Houston training continued. Movement to the Leon Springs Military Reservation presented at first a round-trip hike of eighteen miles with full field packs. Later, troops were transported out in trucks, returning to the main post by foot after completing the two-week training stretch. Camp Bullis was the military reservation's base camp. Camps Cibolo, Sheel, Stahl, Panther Springs and Wilderness were built or prepared to accommodate the various units; Cibolo for the infantry, Sheel, Stahl and Panther Springs for field artillery and Wilderness for the 320th fighting Engineer Battalion and the 320th Medical Battalion. Training included village fighting in mock villages constructed by the engineer battalion. "Branntown" was a North African type village named for the Division's then chief of staff "Kuhreville", a German type, was named for the first commander of the engineer battalion and the designer of the Division shoulder patch. Troops were introduced to the bangalore torpedo and flame-thrower as training shifted to the assault of fortification facsimiles which served as the only targets until the Division fought at Metz less than two years later.

For one March training specialty, river crossing exercises, the Division was diverted from Leon Springs to the Guadalupe River at Seguin. Here, again, the Division's top utility soldiers, the men of the 320th Engineer Battalion, mainly sponsored the exercises, first demonstrating a crossing and then cooperating with the infantry units in subsequent crossings under simulated tactical conditions. Meanwhile the combined unit training was predicated largely on regimental combat team exercises, a series of eight being held in accordance with Army Ground Force directives.

A series of "D" problems through most of May marked the next advance in training, a transition between the practice of training and the application of maneuvers. Involving all units, the "D" problems were the Division's first sham battles and "dummy scrimmages. Umpired by officers of the VII Corps, the minor maneuvers posed conditions similar to those which were to be experienced in the soon-to-come Louisiana exercises.

The tank-and-truck-torn maneuver ground loomed ahead in Louisiana. During the period June 18 through June 24 the Division moved along the Old Spanish Trail by motor and rail to a bivouac area northeast of the village of Many in western Louisiana, near the Sabine River which forms most of the Texas-Louisiana border. A series of four "flag" exercises began June 28 and ended July 7, the purpose of the problems being to afford the division commander additional time to improve the teamwork of the Division before the test of competitive maneuvers. As troops acclimated themselves, it was apparent early that Louisiana weather, terrain and insects would offer more formidable opposition than any of the maneuvering and opposing divisions. Proving ground for most World War II divisions and lesser units, the Louisiana maneuver area was living up to its reputation as a "grill ground" to test both the tactics and stamina of the Division.

A broad variety of tactical situations were staged between the Red and Sabine Rivers, the latter being crossed by the 95th Division -- a training forerunner of what was to come in the European Theater.

The Division was directed to move into Camp Polk, east of the town of Leesville, Louisiana, near which the Division was situated at the end of maneuvers. At Camp Polk, the Division newspaper, *The Journal*, was instituted during maneuvers. A Journal sponsored contest resulted in the nickname of the Division, "Victory Division". But the Division post-maneuver training was cut short when orders were received to move the California Desert Training Center.

The Division began its California directed movement October 11, preceded by an advance detachment which took over Camp Coxcomb in the California desert. Coxcomb was a tent city, spread out in rectangular unit areas along a stretch of desert grass-studded sand, sloping slightly to the east from the piles of corrugated rock that had been named the Coxcomb Range.

Thirteen weeks of training were scheduled, beginning November 1. The scope of the desert area was such as to afford the Division its best training ground up to that time. For the first time, the Division could use live ammunition for most of its training problems. Bangalore torpedoes boomed through the night as troops learned to blast gaps in field obstructions, while many other phases of field work were covered in the "swing shift" training periods. Close battle conditions were simulated with considerable realism during artillery rolling barrage demonstration, when infantry troops were progressively deployed 150 yards behind the artillery barrage and light aerial bombardment.

T/Sgt. M. George Vanicek wrote the Division song, "The 95th Marches On, " was later published and copyrighted. "Prelude", a forty-page pictorial training history of the Division, was distributed to troops early in February.

Late in December, 1943, General Dunkelberg left the Division for a new assignment in the Aleutians, being replaced as assistant Division commander by Brig. Gen. Don D. Faith, former commander of the Women's Army Corps. The Division was then directed to move to the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania.

# 1944

## Indiantown Gap

The advanced party arrived at Indiantown Gap, February 12, with the entire Division closing in the new station February 25. Having boarded trains in California's temperate winter climate, Division troops were not altogether prepared for the subzero weather that met them when they detrained in Pennsylvania. The weather couldn't chill the troops' enthusiasm for their new station, however, with the easy accessibility to several metropolitan areas (New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore) probably Indiantown Gap's leading virtue in their eyes.

Outstanding in the Division's latest training program was the series of exercises conducted in the West Virginia Maneuver Area. Besides combat teams, parts of all special troops units went through the mountain climbing exercises, while selected personnel attended the pack and assault schools. The pack schools afforded the Division's mule-skinners a chance at their trade. Seneca Rock offered a 928-foot climb or descent to the cliff scalers who hung Tarzan like by their nylon ropes. "Rappels", "traverses" and "chimneys", among other terms, were added to the GI vernacular. The West Virginia training was generally regarded by veteran officers and enlisted men as the most rigorous single phase training undertaken by the 95th Division.

The influx of new men was heavy at Indiantown Gap. The Division received 4,000 troops from the drastically curtailed Army Specialized Training Program, half of this number being sent later to other units. Besides this total 2,190 other enlisted men were added to the Division's rolls at its Pennsylvania station.

Later in March the 95th Division Artillery received a commendation for having attained the highest division artillery score in Army Ground Force battalion firing tests since the inauguration of a new form of tests in November, 1943. Also in

March, the Division newspaper made another advance, *The Journal* becoming a six-page weekly. A few weeks earlier, *The Journal* became a four-page weekly, marking an advance over the newspaper's previous history when it had been an every-other week publication.

April 1, Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson (later Secretary) visited the Division on an inspection tour which lasted most of the day. After witnessing a cross-section of troops in their various training exercises, Mr. Patterson and his party reviewed the entire Division in a steady rain. To newspaper reporters present at the time, Mr. Patterson said, in part, "I am sure that dispatches from the battlefield will recall the 95th Division to my mind with the greatest pride". That rainy-day statement was to be fulfilled eight months later. Late in April, *The Journal* jumped to an eight-page weekly, thus ranking among the largest divisional newspapers.

In early May, 1944, another change in the Division's command replaced General Mans, who moved up to the command of Corp Artillery, as Division Artillery commander with Col. Mark McClure. Col. McClure had been Division G-3 at the time of the Division's activation. Three occasions in May and June put the 95th Division's on display for the nearby and visiting public. A Mothers Day observance honored the mothers of seven Division men, drawn by lot from the seven major units. The mothers were guests of the Division for a three-day program which was featured by a radio broadcast and review of the 379th Infantry Regiment. Sunday, May 28, the Division and the post were host to the governors of 37 states and the Virgin Islands, plus other nationally prominent politicians, who were attending the thirty-sixth annual Governors Conference held in nearby Hershey. Combat Team Seven was reviewed by the governors, who also witnessed a display of military equipment. June 15 was marked by the most spectacular demonstration of the fundamentals of foot-soldiering ever staged by the Division. More than six thousand visitors beheld a four-hour exhibition as the Division's part in the first national observance of Infantry Day.

June and most of July found the 95th Division treading unmistakably toward an overseas movement. Personnel and equipment received equal attention. Speculation ended a few days before June 25, when an advance party left Indiantown Gap and sailed for the European Theater of Operations. June 29, the Division was on its way to battle, and most troops enjoyed their remaining respites in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Units began moving to the staging area at Camp Miles Standish, Massachusetts, July 18, two trains daily, and all units had closed in by July 27.

## Embarkation

Loud speakers warned troops as soon as they detrained that they were "now in a secret area". In the two weeks that followed, processing of clothing and equipment followed. A full round of lectures occupied all hands so they were advised about ship security, abandoning ship, censorship, finance, sanitation, conduct overseas and other pertinent subjects (including "gangplank fever"). Physical fitness was maintained through road marches, obstacle course-running, and athletic contest. Boston became the latest metropolitan mecca for the Division, but it wasn't long before the restriction lid was clamped down and the big ships tied up. The ultimate rail movement of thirty-five miles to the Boston Port of Embarkation was negotiated, trains running conveniently onto the dock. Traditional Red Cross doughnuts, coffee and orangeade helped calm any stomachs that might have quaked at the gangplank's forbidding slope. Troops were squared off according to number and then began the fateful file of pack-and-bag-laden men up the plank, responding with first names and initials to the check-off of surnames. The U.S.S. Mariposa sailed August 6, with the 378th Infantry, 358th, 359th, 360th, Field Artillery Battalions and the 320th Medical Battalion aboard. The U.S.S. West Point (formerly America) embarked August 9 with all remaining units of the Division. Prior to sailing, troops "came up for air" on the sun deck, looking long at the Boston waterfront and getting in their last whistles at American girls. As the ships wound out through the antisubmarine-

netted harbor, the last visual contact with the United States faded out with the dimming lights of the city and Massachusetts' North Shore. The voyages were generally serene and the Division enjoyed, save for unavoidable overcrowding, the shipboard life so novel to most everyone. Motion pictures, standing in lines at the ship's stores and reading occupied most of the troops' time. With the ships taking about the same time to cross, they docked at Liverpool, England August 14 and 17, respectively. Thus, these dates became highly significant in the Division's history. They marked the first arrival of the Division on any foreign soil in any war. For a probable majority of the Division's personnel, Liverpool's docks represented their first foreign footing. Staggering under maximum loads, troops made their way up a long ramp and to the waiting English trains with their European-made cars. Traveling southeasterly through the Midlands, all eyes peered and necks craned at the alternating rustic and industrial vistas that were framed by thick green hills. The Division's destination was Winchester, in Hampshire, oldest English city, capital during King Alfred's reign and legendarily synonymous with King Arthur's Camelot. The advance party had been at its busiest in drawing the Division's vehicles from various pools. The 378th Infantry, minus the 1st and 3rd Battalions, Division Headquarters and Headquarters Special Troops, 320th Medical Battalion, 95th Quartermaster Company and 95th Signal Company were quartered in Winchester. The 377th Infantry, 379th Infantry, Division Artillery, 795th Ordnance Company and 95th Reconnaissance Troop were located at Barton Stacey Camp, about twelve miles northwest of Winchester. The balance of the 378th Infantry was scattered in quaintly named localities east and northeast of Winchester. Armsworth House Camp, Brighton Wood Camp, Bishop's Sutton Camp, New Alresford, Tichborne Park and Cheriton. The 320th Engineer Battalion was located at Northwood Park, about three miles northwest of Winchester. Under the Ninth U.S. Army, which was soon to be operating in Brittany, the Division staged its final preparation for commitment on the Continent.

By September 1, the Division had received certain attachments, most of which joined G-2 Section for the purpose of expanding the Division's intelligence facilities. These specialist included a Photo Interpretation team, a Military Intelligence team, two Interrogation-of-Prisoners-of-War teams and an Order of Battle team. Also added to Division Headquarters were a G-5 Section (Civil Affairs) and an Air Support Party, which was attached to the G-3 Section.

The last leg of the Division's trek to the ground-operational sectors of the European Theater was begun September 8. From that date through September 11 troops trucked to Southampton's great channel port twelve miles south of Winchester, or to Weymouth, about forty miles southwest of Southampton. As a criterion of the task ahead, they carried live ammunition. Units moved in the general order of Combat Teams Seven, Eight and Nine, special troops being intermingled. All artillery units, the 795th Ordnance Company and the 95th Reconnaissance Troop embarked from Weymouth, the remainder leaving from Southampton. First indication of Southampton's importance as a bombing target were the silvery barrage balloons swinging high on cables around the harbor. Signs of the blitz were still here, though sufficient time had elapsed to allow nearly fully repair of the dock area. The Division, with all its vehicles, boarded Liberty ships, LST's and converted British commercial vessels. Passage across the English channel was delayed two and three days for most units as, following embarkation, it was necessary to lay both in and outside the harbor pending availability of debarkation facilities at the landing point. Southampton ships anchored in the Solent, off the inner shore of the Isle of Wight just outside Southampton's bay. While portable radios carried the news that the Ninth Army was then in field in France, troops steadily dieted on C-Rations and waited for their "show to get on the road". By September 14, however, the last of the boats had gotten underway-in convoy, the Division's first travel in a train of ships. Late that afternoon the tail ends of the convoy arrived off the Normandy coast, sailed past Cherbourg and anchored with the predecessors near Omaha Beach to await debarkation the next morning.

## France

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September 15, 1944, training over, home far behind, the Division moved to France and bivouacked from 1 to 14 October near Norriey-Le-Sec preparing to enter the combat line.

The Division now became a part of Lt. Gen. Patton's Third Army, a part of the 20th "Ghost" Corps. They entered the line in 19 October in the Moselle River bridgehead sector, east of Moselle and south of Metz. They patrolled the Seille River near Cherminot and were repulsing enemy attempts to cross the river.

The 2nd Battalion, 378th Regiment's first try at offensive action lasted three days, three days in which the Maroun Marauders had uncorked Fort Yutz and the more formidable Fort d'Illange, Thionville east of the Moselle and three more towns, all in the face of stiff German opposition. No sooner had the 378th's 2nd Battalion finished the Thionville bridgehead operation than the unit became part of Task Force Bacon, together with the 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry; the 95th Reconnaissance Troop and Company D, 378th Tank Battalion.

Task Force Bacon was commanded by a man who could never hope to win a German popularity contest. He was Col. Robert Bacon, who played so much hell with the Germans they undoubtedly had a bounty out for his scalp. He whipped his troops down the east bank at Moselle into Metz like a lawn mower cutting grass.

The Colonel moved fast, his itinerary read like this: jumping off November 16, Task Force Bacon roared through Tremery, Aysur Moselle, Bousse, Rurange and Montrequienne. Next day, six additional towns felt the Task Force's fiery breath as doughs paced past the halfway point to Metz. Col. Bacon was given a self-propelled 155, but he didn't use it exactly as the books say its supposed to be used. His idea of correct range for the big gun was about 200 yards. Result was that a considerable number of buildings required remodeling later.

Task Force Bacon blazed into the outskirts of Metz the same night, later spanning the Seille River, which streams the city. A pitched battle in the heart of town followed.

Task Force Bacon had its share of heroes. One in particular was Sgt. Walter Low, Company G, 378th Regiment, Smokey Junction, Tennessee, the first 95th G I to receive the Distinguished Service Cross. The action which produced the award was a short, daring and life-saving combination of guts and bluff. Two unmapped pillboxes near Fort St. Julien popped up surprisingly in the path of Company G's advance. While his platoon pressed forward, Low and two others pulled out of the formation to investigate the pillboxes.

When equally surprising machine-gun fire blocked the platoon's front over an open field, the pillboxes completed a squeeze play by pumping lead to the rear of the platoon. The pillboxes had to be liquidated or the platoon was in for a chop-up. A steady stream of fire forced his mates to the dirt, but Low pellmelled squarely on the objective, hand operating the sticky bolt of his M-1. Sixteen Germans occupying the strong point either were scared or bluffed. Nonchalantly, Low flushed them out, frisked them for arms. Advancing on the adjoining bunker, he bagged another 16. Adding the 32 Germans to a passing column, Low rejoined his outfit, which now was free to advance.

Still under the command of Maj. Gen. Twaddle, the Division went on the offensive 1 November, and reduced an enemy pocket of heavy resistance east of Maizieres. On the 8th day of November 1944, it began its march into military history. Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker, 20th Corps Commander, ordered the "Victory Division" to cross the Moselle River and push toward the fortress city of Metz.

The Division launched its main effort at 1000 November 15 when 377th Infantry jumped off to inaugurate the drive down the west bank of the Moselle to the very gates of Metz. The road was straight, flanked by broad, open fields. Artillery and mortar fire raked the advance route, but the 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued their drive to the south.

By nightfall, the 3rd held up in La Maxe. The 2nd slugged it out in the outskirts of Woippy, only three miles from Metz. Tough to crack, Woippy finally was cleared before dark, and the 2nd surged forward along the road to Metz.

Meanwhile, the 3rd was having its headaches near Fort Gambette. A request for that "extra ten percent" was passed along the line November 17. No urging was needed. With Metz in sight, the Division felt sharp.

# Metz

Metz, the queen city of Moselle, had withstood all attacks by military forces since 451 A. D., and the Germans intended to maintain this record. The original fortifications, completed before 1870, consisted of an inner ring of 15 forts and an outer perimeter of 28 steel and concrete bastions built by the Germans in 1912. In 1941, the Germans improved and modernized the installations. The forts were reinforced with 210 MM guns and 105 MM guns placed in revolving steel turrets which would withstand fire from high velocity direct-fire weapons. Rarely was there more than one entrance to each fort, and only a direct hit on a turret by a 500-pound bomb would cause any damage.

The 95th did not falter in the face of this fire power and slugged its way through the west bank of the Moselle, crossed the river in assault boats, and captured barges under heavy machine-gun and artillery fire from Fort Driant and Fort San Quentin of the Metz chain. Advancing to Bertrange, the Division began working toward the heart of Metz.

Capture of Metz was a rich achievement. The city successfully had weathered every assault since 1944. But the 95th had a plan, and grim-faced Joes made it work. Punching along "88 Boulevard," the Division smacked up against the bristling forts ringing the city. Still, the ring was broken, and this is the way it was accomplished.

The 378th got off to a flying start with one of the most daringly conceived and brilliantly executed trick plays of the entire offensive. Col. Samuel L. Metcalfe, Regimental Commander, Pearsall, Texas, dreamed it up.

Fronting the 378th's entire zone was a series of fortifications including Fort Amanvillers, the three Canrobert Forts and Fort de Feve. East of this line spread the extensive Lorraine fortifications. Taking such an area by an anticipated head-on drive would have been suicide. Col. Metcalfe's plan was to sweep

around the northern tip of the fortifications and approach from the rear, leaving behind a small task force to deceive the enemy into thinking the entire regiment still fronted the forts.



American Artillery and Infantrymen from 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 377<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, move in as America Forces enter Metz, France. The last big German stronghold in France.

The job of providing the phoney front was assigned to Task Force St. Jacques (Capt. William M. St. Jacques, Service Company, San Antonio, Texas), composed of three rifle platoons, one antitank platoon, a squad from an Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon, cooks, clerks, and other Regimental Headquarters and Service Company personnel. This jumbled force was assigned to cover an eight and a half-mile front. They did a bang-up job - with the aid of loudspeakers and other deceptive means.

The hidden ball play worked like a charm. The regiment jumped off at 0800 hours and within three hours had captured the town of Feves. Two hours later it

swept on to take Somercourt. The surge continued, and Saulny, Bigneulles, Plesnois and Norroy le Venur tumbled before the avalanche.



Metz, France, 17 November 1944, Anti Tank Gun Crew HQ Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 377<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

As the Metz campaign drew to a close, with the city rapidly being drained of stragglers and snipers, the 379<sup>th</sup> continued cleaning up the area east of Fort Driant, Jeanne d'Arc, St. Quentin and Plappeville. By November 21, the fall of Metz was something to write home about. The 95<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Troop had made contact with elements of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division which had driven up from the south to complete the squeeze play on the fortress city.

Only two small pockets of resistance remained, and these were being mopped up by the 377<sup>th</sup>. Garrisons in the four big forts across the river were completely cut off. The task of maintaining a death watch on these diehards was transferred to units of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division.

The frosting on the Metz cake was the capture of Lt. Gen. Heinrich Kittel, Commander of the 462nd Volksgrenadier Division and of the Metz Fortress. He was captured by Company K, 377th, which had fought its way up to the southern part of the lie Chambiere.

After capturing the Forts in front of its advance, the Division linked up with the 5th Division on the outskirts of Vallieres, a few miles east of Metz, at 11 o'clock on 18 November 1944. Tanks and Infantry of the two Divisions charged into the streets of Metz the next morning to remove the "die hard" resistors.

One group of 300 Germans made a last ditch stand on the river islands of Chamberieres and Sauley where they held out until the afternoon of the 21st. They surrendered only after a fierce hand to-hand battle with the men of the 95th.

At 1435 on the afternoon of 22 November 1944, Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker reported to Lt. Gen. Patton that Metz was completely secured. It was during the battle for Metz that war correspondents nicknamed the men of the 95th "The Bravest of the Brave". The German defenders gave them another name that the Division carries proudly: "The Iron Men of Metz."

On 25 November, the "Iron Men" and the rest of the 20th Corps moved swiftly eastward, driving the Nazis across the Saar River and out of France. Three days later they were in Germany. They seized a Saar River bridge on 3 December 1944 and engaged in bitter house-to-house fighting for Saarlautern.

Suburbs of the city fell, and although the enemy resisted fiercely, the bridgehead was firmly established by 19 December. At this point, news of Von Rundstedt's attack into Belgium and Luxembourg halted the advance. The battle of the Bulge had begun. Part of the Division moved into an assembly area for possible deployment to the Bulge area, while the rest held Saarlautern against strong German attacks.

In January 1945, the Division began moving and on 2 February moved to Maastricht area in Holland, and by 14 February elements were in the line near that city to relieve battered units of the British 21st Army Group. Nine days later the Division was relieved for another important assignment.

On 1 March, the 95th was assembled near Julich, Germany, and forced the enemy into a pocket near the Hitler Bridge at Uerdingen. Five days later the pocket was cleared and the Division's elements had advanced to the Rhine. The march into German heartland had begun in earnest.



Infantry men of "L" Company, 378th Regiment, 95th Infantry Division, 9th Army, hug the walls to avoid enemy artillery barrage in Dortmund, Germany, 12 April 1945.

It now became a matter of dates and places for the men of the "Victory Division". On 12 March 1945, they established defenses in the vicinity of Neuss. Assembling east of the Rhine at Beckhum on 3 April, they launched an attack across the Lippe River the next day and captured Hamm and Kaman on the 6th. After clearing another enemy pocket between the Ruhr and Mohne Rivers, the

Division took Dortmund on 13 April and maintained positions on the north bank of the Ruhr. Its final action prior to V-E day included a drive north of Leipzig.

## Post WWII



MG Twaddle, CG of the 95th Infantry Division watches as the men of his division, embark from The Le Haure, France for the return trip to the United States, 21 July 1945.

In July 1945, the Division returned to the United States amidst welcoming celebrations at Boston's harbor. The retraining began for the Pacific Theater, but the atomic bombing of Japan brought surrender of the country and the "Iron Men" were not needed.



The 95th Infantry Division had fought in Europe for nearly 12 months involving 145 days of combat including a continuous period of more than 100 days. The

95th captured more than 439 centers of population, including Germany's ninth largest city, Dortmund.

It had left behind a history of heroism and bravery and accolades of friend and enemy, "Iron Men of Metz," "The Bravest of the Brave." But it had also left behind 6,591 officially recorded casualties.



Maj. Gen. Twaddle, who had commanded the Division during its entire action in World War II, saw the Division inactive on 15 October 1945, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. The 95th Infantry Division remained inactive in the Organized Reserves in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

## And Beyond

In 1952, the Organized Reserve was redesignated as the United States Army Reserve. The same year the Division underwent some other changes, one being the addition of the 291st Regiment, Tulsa, Oklahoma, from the 75th Division. The second change that year for the Division was the withdrawal of assignment of the 377th Infantry Regiment from the 95th and assignment to the 75th Infantry Division. The 377th had headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana since its activation after World War II.

1955 saw further changes to the Division and again changes of assignment of subordinate elements. On 1 January 1955, the 291st Regiment was again assigned to the 75th Infantry Division from the 95th and was subsequently inactivated 31 January 1955. On 30 January, the 377th Regiment was reassigned to the 95th from the 75th and its headquarters moved from New Orleans to Tulsa, Oklahoma on 31 January. The same date saw the relocation of the 379th Regimental headquarters from Hot Springs, Arkansas where it had been since 1947, to Little Rock, Arkansas.

On 1 April 1958 the 95th Infantry Division was redesignated as the 95th Division (Training) and a major reorganization of mission assignments was underway. Personnel trained for infantry combat, artillery, military police and combat support roles, were now to undergo re-training to enable them to train others. The Division had a new role, a new place in the sun as one of the 13 Training Divisions in the U.S. Army Reserve arsenal.

The same year the Division's size increased as the 291st Regiment was reassigned again from the 75th and was redesignated as 291st Regiment (Advanced Individual Training). With the reorganization of the Division all of the Regiments were redesignated. The 95th Regiment became the 95th Regiment (Common Specialist Training) with headquarters at Shreveport, Louisiana. The 377th became the 377th Regiment (Basic Combat Training) as did the 378th and 379th. A new role, a new mission and new Summer Camp training sites.

In 1967, the nickname given the Division by the Germans during the battle for Metz, became the officially recognized nickname of the Division, the "Iron Men of Metz". The Institute of Heraldry approved the adoption of the nickname and a new crest to be worn by all non-regimental elements of the Division.



The crest symbolized and commemorated the crossing of the Moselle River and the breakthrough at Metz by the blue wavy band and the black fortress. The blue wavy band further alluded to the Distinctive Unit Citation the Division received for the action in World War II. The arrow alludes to the letter "V" for victory, and the nickname given the organization.

In January 1968 the Division was reorganized along the lines of the active Army training units in that all Regimental headquarters were redesignated as Brigades.

The Division consisted of the First Brigade (Basic Combat Training), Second Brigade (Basic Combat Training), Third Brigade (Advanced Individual Training) and Fourth Brigade (Combat Specialist Training). Further additions to complete makeup included a Committee Group consisting of instructor personnel teaching common specialties in Basic Combat Training. The Division was now a Fourth U.S. Army General Officer Command (GOCOM) and assumed command of some non-divisional reserve units.

The "Iron Men of Metz" began to amass more accolades, this time ones for the experience they displayed at their new assignment and the expertise displayed by their personnel.

Maj. Gen. Herman H. Hankins replaced the retiring General Massad in 1968. The 95th Division (Training) was now well on its way into becoming the "top" training division in the Army Reserve. The mission assigned was to conduct Basic, Advanced and Common Specialty training for 12,698 trainees. The Division was conducting Annual Training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, a partnership that would last for nearly seven years without a break.

In November 1973, a new Armed Forces Reserve Center was completed and the Division Headquarters relocated from the Center at N.E. 36th and Martin Luther King Blvd., in Oklahoma City to the new facility near Tinker Air Force Base.

The next changes for the Division came in 1975 with Maj. Gen. Walter L. Starks assuming command. The change of Command occurred at Fort Polk, Louisiana amid retirement ceremonies for General Hankins. But the 3,600 man GOCOM, now under Fifth U.S. Army, was still to see further changes.

On 1 August, 1975, the 95th Division Maneuver Training Command (MTC) was organized by Fifth U.S. Army General Order. The 315 strength unit was

organized in Oklahoma City and added greatly to the GOCOM strength and mission capabilities.

The active Army introduced the "One Station Unit Training" concept, OSUT, which was to put the Army's old training centers into obsolescence. The new concept meant that the Division would no longer go to Annual Training as one unit, but would be split among many training centers of the U.S.

The Division was located in three states, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The First Brigade (BCT) is headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma and has elements of the 377th, and 379th in Regiments in its Battalions. The Second Brigade (BCT) is headquartered in Lawton, Oklahoma with elements of the 378th and 379th Regiments. The Third Brigade (A IT) is headquartered in Stillwater, Oklahoma, a move made in September 1975, and consists of only 291st Regiment elements. The Fourth Brigade (CST) is headquartered in Bossier City, Louisiana, a suburb of Shreveport, and includes the 95th Regiment and one element of the 379th. The Committee Group (BCT) is headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas and has no Regimental elements. The 95th Support Battalion was headquartered in Midwest City, Oklahoma with the Division Headquarters, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 95th Division Leadership Academy, and the 95th Division Maneuver Training Command.

On 1 January 1979 the Division was reorganized into an OSUT Infantry Structure. Permanent Order Number 136-5, dated 5 December 1978 called for the deactivation of the 95th Support Battalion and redesignation of the four brigades as OSUT Infantry Brigades and the Committee Group was redesignated as the 95th Training Command.

The mission of the 95th Division (Tng) was to establish a U.S. Army Training Center and conduct OSUT Infantry and Basic Training. The Division will have the capability of receiving and training 20,000 young soldiers in such subjects as military conduct and courtesy, basic rifle marksmanship, chemical biological and

radiological training, first aid, offensive and defensive tactics, patrolling, weapons, land navigation, communications, and drill and ceremonies.

The Division experienced tremendous expansion in October 1984 with the addition of the 4073d US Army Reception Station, in Lafayette, Louisiana with a strength of 809 personnel. The 402d Brigade's effective activation is 16 March 1985 and consists of the Brigade Headquarters and Training Group in Lawton, Oklahoma and five battalions of the 89th Regiment located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Amarillo, Denton, Fort Worth and Wichita Falls, Texas. The mission of the 402d Brigade has been designated to expand the training base for the Army's Field Artillery Training Center located at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

During the period 26 May 1987 through 15 August 1987, elements of the 95th Division (Tng) conducted a Mobilization Army Training Center (MATC) exercise at Fort Polk, Louisiana. This mission constituted a mobilization exercise for the purpose of receiving over 619 new soldiers, in-processing through the Reception Battalion, assignment to training companies, conduct of 8 weeks basic training, out-processing, and shipment of the soldiers to their next duty station. Several previous such exercises had been conducted, but never had the entire process been conducted solely by a Reserve Training Division to include the Reception Battalion, and other CAPSTONE-aligned units scheduled for mobilization at Fort Polk, Louisiana.



For further readings about the 95th Infantry Division, please look here:

<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usamhi/unitHistories/div/95inf.htm>

or

Locate in your library the book,

Ninety-fifth Infantry Division HISTORY 1918 -1946

by George M. Fuerman and F. Edward Crazz, Battery Press, Nashville

Acknowledgment; The 95th Division wishes to express it's thanks to Jerry Gorman for allowing the use of his ribbon images.