

94<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY MEMORIAL SERVICE

64<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REUNION

NEW ORLEANS

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*A GRATEFUL GENERATION THANKS THE GREATEST GENERATION*

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Many of these comments are drawn from the messages of Reverend Manning who served as Chaplain for the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division for many years.

A Memorial Service gets its name from the word, "memory." It is a time to remember our dead – and our living. It is a time to remember our Almighty God and the abundant grace He has shed on America. It is a time to remember your contribution to the victory of World War Two; and it is a time to remember that you are part and parcel of the great history of these United States of America.

### **Statistics of the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division:**

- Activated: 15 September 1942
- First infantry division to receive the Expert Infantry Badge
- Overseas: 6 August 1944
- Campaigns: Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe
- Days of combat: 209

### **Combat Chronicle**

The 94th landed on Utah Beach, France, on D-Day plus 94, on 8 September 1944, and moved into Brittany to relieve the 6th Armored Division and assume responsibility for containing some 60,000 German troops besieged in their garrisons at the channel ports of Lorient and Saint-Nazaire. The 94th inflicted over 2,700 casualties on the enemy and took 566 prisoners before being relieved by the 66th Infantry Division on New Year's Day 1945.

Moving east, the 94<sup>th</sup> began attacking German positions, but soon you were called upon to help stop the Arden Offense. In an amazing feat, the Third Army disengaged from the enemy and swung north to support the Battle of the Bulge. No army in history has swung so far so fast. You went from the most inactive front to the most active front in 12 days!

On 7 January 1945, you took up positions in the Saar-Moselle Triangle facing the Siegfried Switch Line. You shifted to the offensive, 14 January, seizing Tettingen and Butzendorf that day. The following day, the Nennig-Berg-Wies area was wrested from the enemy; severe counterattacks followed. This area is where you earned your first Presidential Unit Citation. (The second one was bestowed later for action in Lampaden.)

Butzendorf, Berg, and most of Nennig changed hands several times before being finally secured. On the 20th, an unsuccessful battalion attack against Orscholz resulted in loss of most of two companies. In early February, the division took Campholz Woods and seized Sinz.

On 19 February 1945, the division launched a full-scale attack with all three regiments, storming multiple woods with names like Monkey Wrench, Campholz, Adenhelz, and

Bonholz, then taking the heights of Munzigen Ridge, to breach the "impenetrable" Siegfried Line!

Moving forward, the 94th Infantry Division secured the area from Orscholz and Saarburg to the confluence of the Saar and Moselle Rivers by 21 February 1945. At Ayl, General Patton ordered to cross the Saar immediately, against the advice of many of his officers. Many men and material were lost during the very ill-prepared Saar crossing. Two of the three crossings sites were eventually abandoned due to heavy and pinpoint German artillery and machinegun fire. After establishing the bridgehead, the 376th regiment was detached to assist the 10th Armored Division in the capture of Trier. By 2 March 1945, the division stretched over a 10-mile front, from Hocker Hill on the Saar through Zerf, and Lampaden to Ollmuth. A heavy German attack near Lampaden achieved penetrations, but the line was shortly restored, and on 13 March, spearheading the XX Corps, the division broke out of the Ruwer River bridgehead by ford and bridge. Driving forward, the 94th reached the Rhine on 21 March, where it fought in the Battle for Ludwigshafen. Ludwigshafen was taken on 24 March.

On 3 April, the 94<sup>th</sup> took responsibility for containing the western side of the Ruhr Pocket, from positions along the Rhine. With the reduction of the pocket in mid-April, the division was assigned military government duties.

It was in that status when hostilities were declared at an end on 7 May 1945. From mid-June until the end of November, the division served the military government in Czechoslovakia.

The 94th Infantry Division was inactivated on 9 February 1946.

Your Awards:

- 2 Presidential Unit Citation
- 1 Medal of Honor
- 54 Distinguished Service Crosses
- 2 Distinguished Service Medals
- 510 Silver Stars
- 10 Legions of Merit
- 12 Soldier's Medals
- 2792 Bronze Star Medals
- Thousands of Purple Hearts
- Untold number of scars, both physical and emotional

If the officers had lived long enough to attest to your bravery, many more citations would have been issued.

Four Highways are named in your honor:

- Highway 94 in Colorado
- Highway 94 in New Jersey

- Highway 94 in New York
- Interstate 94 in Michigan

Days in Combat: 209

Casualties:

- 1,156 killed
- 4,789 wounded
- 963 mission in action
- 26,638 prisoners of war taken

Historians say the Third Army captured 6,484 square miles of enemy territory, 3,072 cities, towns and villages, and that no greater achievement had ever been done in so limited a time! You initiated battles during weather so bad the Germans didn't think it was possible to attack!

You were famous for being able to do the impossible...

Nathan Prefer says in his book *Patton's Ghost Corp*, the "units of the Third Army faced an enemy that outnumbered them, as well as having more and better armored support and better individual equipment...in addition, Third Army headquarters imposed serious restrictions upon their operation...and yet after a costly infantry battle the 94<sup>th</sup> opened the way for the massive sweep into Germany!"

The 94<sup>th</sup> found themselves spearheading both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Armies! Other than the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, there is no known recorded army history in which one division spearheaded two armies at the same time. The fact that the 94<sup>th</sup> spearheaded the Race to the Rhine enabled them to be the first to reach the Rhine on 21 March 1945.

It is Prefer's belief, "Because [the 94<sup>th</sup>] did not participate in a widely known campaign, was not overrun by enemy forces, and did not make a spectacular chase, it is little known outside small circles. Yet that division, and others like it, were the core of the U. S. Army in the Second World War!"

You have been called the Greatest Generation. You were the generation who endured the Great Depression, you fought with courage and valor in World War II. Your sacrifice and service established the freedoms we enjoy today. Your work and innovations fueled the post-war economic boom, bringing a new level of prosperity not seen before in America, or indeed perhaps anywhere else in the world.

But today we are here to remember and honor what you did as soldiers in the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Steve has talked about the achievements of the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. They truly stand alone – a memorial to the blood, sweat, tears, and toil of the men of the 94<sup>th</sup>. Those who study the history of World War 2's divisional activity in the battle for the Rhineland

find that one division stands above and above all other divisions: the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

The effect of your actions had far reaching effects. Leaders on both sides of the conflict were amazed by what you did. Here are a few of their comments:

Major General Walton H. Walker praised the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division with these words: "Your division has most expeditiously accomplished its mission of clearing the Saar-Moselle Triangle and seizing a bridgehead east of the Saar River. In so doing, it made a vital contribution to the capture of the fortified town of Trier. The aggressive and efficient manner in which these missions have been carried out reflects great credit upon the division in keeping with the high traditions of the service. General Harry J. Maloney and the personnel of his command are highly commended for their splendid performance of duty during this operation."

Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering stated in an interrogation following his capture. "When the first break in the Siegfried Line was made near Aachen, the Fuhrer was very irritated. After that came the breakthrough near Trier and that was wholly incomprehensible. We could not believe that these fortifications could be penetrated. That breakthrough and the capture of the Remagen Bridge were two great catastrophes for the German cause.

Since neither Hitler nor the High Command believed that the fortifications around Trier could ever be penetrated, the breakthrough was especially shocking.

Colonel Robert S. Allen states in his book, *Lucky Forward*, that the Third Army broke the back of German resistance west of the Rhine. Men of the 94<sup>th</sup>, you punched such a large hole in the German line of defense that it shattered their entire western defense strategy. Your actions made it impossible for them to establish an organized line of resistance on the Rhine, thus shortening the war by many months and many thousands of casualties.

Men of the 94<sup>th</sup>, you did the impossible. I have seen the land you fought on. I have seen how the German military were entrenched in superior positions, how you were forced to attack in the worst possible conditions. That winter of 1945 was one of the coldest ever recorded. In those freezing February days in the Saar-Moselle Triangle, your clothing was inadequate for the climate conditions; your boots ill-equipped to deal with the constant ice and snow. Your food, if available, was poor; casualties were overwhelming. You were battered and bloody; and still you prevailed. You breached and destroyed the Siegfried Line; you captured the Saar Moselle Triangle; you crossed the impassable Saar River; you captured Trier, that supposedly unassailable city; you created a bridgehead for the drive on the Rhine; you spearheaded the race to the Rhine; and you captured Ludwigshafen. Your actions changed the course of the war.

Commanding General Harry Maloney summed up your actions with these words of commendation to the men of the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division: "This short history of the division is little more than a record of the fighting which you men have done since

arriving in Europe. It can only imply the many brave deed performed; makes no reference to hardships patiently endured and can only hint of the magnificent fighting spirit which has carried you through the toughest battles of the Western Front. It is my prejudiced but well-founded belief that the three actions of smashing the Siegfried Switch Line – clearing the Saar-Moselle Triangle which culminated in the capture of Trier – forcing the Saar River bridgehead, and the 10-day drive to the Rhine were the outstanding actions of the Third's Army advance to the Rhine. I congratulate you on the record you have established. The road to victory has been considerably shortened by your proved fighting capabilities and the will to win."

You are part of a living legend. Just as actions always speak louder than words, your actions show the truth of your character, bravery, courage, fortitude, faith.

We, a grateful generation, thank you, the greatest generation. At this memorial service, we remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. You of the 94<sup>th</sup> remember comrades fallen in battle, and we all remember those who are no longer with us for this service. We who are the beneficiaries of your service and sacrifice thank you; we honor you; and we bless you.

We who are your sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, can never truly know your heroism, courage, selflessness, determination, and great sacrifice. But we are the beneficiaries of it. You changed the world. Because of what you did, in the words of Reverend Manning, "the greatest evil ever recorded in the history of mankind came to a screeching halt with an unconditional surrender. In the death camps, the crematory ovens were shut off. The poison gas showers were padlocked. The trains heading to the death camps stopped running."

The lights came on again all over the Western World, and the light you turned on continues to shine today. We are awed by your courage and valor; humbled by your strength and service; and eternally grateful for yoursacrifice. The words "thank you" seem so insignificant in comparison to your accomplishments, your valor, and your bravery, but those words are all we have. From all of us who are so very proud to call you father, grandfather, uncle, cousin, or friend – thank you for your service; thank you for your sacrifice; thank you. The words "thank you" are far too small – but in those two humble small words please hear the depth of our gratitude and know that you have our highest respect. We remember the price you paid for the freedom we enjoy today. We will never never forget the debt of gratitude we owe to you.