

New statue recalls WWI sacrifice of "Rainbow" Division Guard members

New York National Guard report



The Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Statue. (Courtesy photo)

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TROY, N.Y. (11/18/11) – With the battle streamers and colors of the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division flying, officials from the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Foundation joined U.S. and French military and political leaders to dedicate a memorial Nov. 12 to the soldiers who fought at the Croix Rouge Farm in the summer of 1918.

The division headquarters, whose members served in Iraq in 2005 and which has elements across the northeast, is headquartered at the Glenmore Road Armory.

The memorial, located on the site of the battle near Fère-en-Tardenois, honors the service and sacrifice of WWI servicemen of the 42nd Infantry Division, in particular the men of the 167th Infantry Regiment, an Alabama Army National Guard unit called to federal service in the "war to end all wars."

Sculptured by a British artist, James Butler, the 10-foot bronze sculpture statue depicts an American soldier's carrying a dead comrade from the battlefield.

The memorial is the gift of an Alabaman in the name of his father, Army Sgt. William Johnson Frazer, who was wounded in the battle, which involved a bayonet charge by the 167th Infantry Regiment.

The Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Foundation remembers the service of the 167th Infantry Regiment, part of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division of World War I. Through a memorial in France, educational programs and literature on World War I, it promotes the memory of American involvement in World War I and, more specifically, the Alabama contribution.

The combat unit received its nickname "Rainbow Division" when its first chief of staff, then-colonel Douglas MacArthur described the makeup of the 26 National Guard units within the division as "stretching across America like a rainbow."

"This statue on French soil will remind future generations of American deeds in World War I," said Monique Seefried, President of the Board of Directors for the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Foundation. "The aim of this foundation is to remember the men of the Rainbow in World War I but also to make their history better known. It would be important to ensure that the men serving today in the Rainbow are aware of this memorial and learn that nearly 100 years later, their deeds are not forgotten."

The memorial was erected on grounds that have remained unchanged since the days of the battle. The foundation purchased what remains of the fortified farmhouse of the Croix Rouge and some of the land where the battle took place. The remainder of the land is now owned by the adjoining Croix Blanche Farm.

"It is fitting that this monument will remember the tremendous service and sacrifice of the Rainbow Division's 167th Alabama and 168th Iowa Regiments," said Army Maj. Gen. Steven Wickstrom, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division in written remarks sent for the ceremony. "These Rainbow Soldiers contributed greatly to the liberation of the Chateau-Thierry salient and proved the worth of the American Expeditionary Force in France."

"Let me also add our division's praise to the memorial sculptor James Butler," Wickstrom said. "His insight, vision and work captures the devotion to duty and tremendous sacrifice of our Alabama Regiment and of all servicemen in the Great War."

Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation members joined with Opelika, Ala. Mayor Gary Fuller and City Council President Eddie Smith to represent the Soldiers and descendants of the 42nd Infantry Division at the site of the battle.

"I would like this memorial to the Rainbow in World War I to be also a gesture of appreciation to these new generations and a way to tell them that we won't forget them," Seefried said.

"Today's men and women of the Rainbow Division continue to live up to the legacy of Chateau-Thierry, Champagne, St. Mihiel, the Marne, the Ourcq and the Argonne," Wickstrom said.

"They have done so at ground zero where the towers fell in New York City, in the mountains of Afghanistan and across the cities and sands of Iraq. We are as deeply committed today to the cause of liberty and freedom that filled the ranks of the Rainbow during the Great War."

<http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2011/11/111811-New.aspx>