

The Rainbow Division

The 42nd Infantry Division is a division of the National Guard and United States Army. The 42nd Infantry Division has served in WW I, WWII and the Global War on Terrorism [GWOT]. The division is currently headquartered at the Glenmore Armory in Troy, New York with the New York National Guard.



Over the history of the 42ID, it came to be known as the "Rainbow Division". Multiple explanations for this nickname have been provided. Douglas MacArthur, once Chief of Staff of the 42ID, is often credited with the name. When the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, it needed to federalize the state National Guard units to quickly build up an Army. Political concerns soon complicated recruiting, and Secretary of War Newton D. Baker authorized a Division to be organized with the best regiments from 26 different states. Major MacArthur, standing nearby, replied "Fine, that will stretch over the whole country like a rainbow."

When formed and activated for WWII, the 42ID was a unique unit, as it was a reconstitution of the Rainbow Division from WWI. Except for the division headquarters, none of its earlier elements had reformed in the interwar period, so the Army Ground Forces filled its new units with personnel from every state. It participated in campaigns in the Rhineland and Central Europe, spending 106 days in actual combat, suffering 5,949 casualties, and taking 59,128 prisoners of war. *[and none of them got a trial!]* It won one unit citation its men received 1,098 individual medals, including one Medal of Honor. It was finally inactivated on 29 June 1946 in Europe.

Since the September 11th attacks, the 42ID has been extensively involved in the Global War on Terror, in both Homeland Security and Expeditionary Operations. The first major deployed effort of the 42ID was to Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba, to provide security to the base. Elements have also deployed to the Horn of Africa and Djibouti and in Iraq. In 2004, the entire "Rainbow" Division was mobilized for service in Iraq. In 2008, parts of the Rainbow Division were sent to serve in Afghanistan.

During the Cold War and through the present, the 42ID and its soldiers have been regularly called upon for Homeland Security missions, including disaster relief (such as Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Floyd) and emergency preparedness (such as Y2K missions). First responders to the 11 September 2001 attacks were members of the 42ID, and led much of the military support to the relief and recovery efforts. The 42ID was part of the relief team for the duration of the effort at Ground Zero in New York City. Soldiers of the 42ID have been regularly deployed within the United States to conduct Homeland Security (HLS) missions. *[[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/42nd_Infantry_Division_\(United_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/42nd_Infantry_Division_(United_States))]*

