

WWI Profile: Jesse Lee Fayette Inman 1891-1935



U. S. Official Photo. Rainbow doughboys greeting Monsieur and Madame Jacques Boleaux, who had been held prisoners four years by the "Boche" in Briuelles, Ardennes France. Nov. 6, 1918

Photos contributed

French liberated citizens greet Rainbow Doughboys, Nov. 6, 1918.



U. S. Official Photo. A Procession of Yankee Tanks going forward in the Argonne

42nd Division tanks in Argonne, Oct. 1918.



Pvt. Jesse L. Inman.

By NORMA ECKARD
GUEST COLUMNIST

*Jesse Lee Fayette Inman
Freeland, Brunswick
County
U.S. Army, Private
Served: May 27, 1918 –
May 9, 1919
Overseas: July 31, 1918 –
April 25, 1919
Wounded: Sept. 29, 1918*

Jesse Lee Fayette Inman was born and raised in Freeland, N.C. A partial family tree is located in Family Search. Jesse's brother Joel "Joe" Robert Inman also served in WWI.

Jesse's WWI Draft Registration shows he was single, living in Ash, and working on the family farm.

Jesse and his brother Joe were ordered to report for duty on May 27, 1918, along with 35 other men from Brunswick County. Included in the 37 were John Hillery Caison, David Bertram Frink and Zade McLoud Williams (N.C. WWI service record not found). Jesse, John, David and Zade were sent to Camp Jackson, S.C., to train with the 81st Division, but transferred to the 42nd Division in August. (His brother Joe Inman was honorably discharged with a Surgeon's Certificate of Discharge in September, classified as 33-1/3 percent disabled.)

Jesse Lee Fayette Inman and John Hillery Caison became replacements for Company A, 168th Infantry, 42nd Rainbow Division. David Bertram Frink was assigned to the 166th Infantry and Zade McLoud Williams to the 167th Infantry, all with the 42nd Division.

Previous posts described the formation and training of the 42nd Rainbow Division, along with the months in France up to Aug. 17, 1918, when the Rainbow Division, victorious in many battles, was finally given a chance to rest and re-supply. Replacements such as Pvts. Caison, Inman, Frink and Williams arrived to serve with the battle hardened troops. Those drafted at a late date such as these men were typically not trained and never even held a rifle before boarding ships to France. They were given uniforms and sent overseas quickly, which earned them the gruesome nickname, "cannon fodder."

Pvt. Caison's WWI Profile described the St. Mihiel Offensive, the first all-American offensive of the war, along with casualty totals. Pvt. Inman was reportedly slightly wounded during the operation on Sept. 29. No details are available.

On Oct. 1, 1918, the 42nd Division withdrew and went south. They were a shock division now, elite troops, and must wait until they were needed.

Note: Source information

for the diary entries can be found at bottom. Corporal Sherwood served in the 67th Artillery Brigade of the 42nd Rainbow Division from April 12, 1917 until May 10, 1919.

"This gang doesn't act like lambs going forth to slaughter. In fact, we are happy that the Rainbow is going into the line. We turned into blankets early to the sound of a fierce cannonading from the distant battle front, and in my sleep I dreamed, not of war, but of home and loved ones waiting there, of those at home who really suffer and endure more of the mental agony than we who are in the midst of the war."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 3.

Along the way, when troops ask their outfit, they sometimes respond with pride, "Rainbow."

"This always has the desired effect of creating a wholesome awe and respect among the bystanders who watch us pass, and many are the remarks of encouragement and references to our past victories addressed to us."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 4.

"In our path lay the four-year-old trenches and defenses of both French and German. What a picture of desolation! We came into what had been a great forest, now shorn of life. What few trees remaining standing are naked, burnt and scarred. Gas has killed every living thing. Our engineers are busy building bridges across this forsaken country, for shell holes are so thick that a gun or even a cart can't start across it without upsetting. In fact, it is all a foot soldier can do to walk across it."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 6.

The 84th Brigade (167th Infantry of Pvt. Frink and 168th Infantry of Pvt. Inman) relieved the 1st Division in the front lines north of Exermont on Oct. 13, 1918. Their attack began at 5:30 a.m.

"The Rainbow attack today netted four kilometers and a great number of prisoners, but our losses exceeded a thousand. For the first time since we have been on the line in this drive the fog cleared away today and a great rainbow emerged from the clouds. Our men regard this as an omen of good luck, and shout to each other encouragements and orders to press on."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 15.

"I talked to a sergeant whom I had known back in

Lorraine. He told me that replacements had filled the great gaps in the lines of the old regiments until only non-coms and a few officers remained of those who had come across with the Division. He said the new men were filling the places well and got right into the spirit of the Division."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 17.

"The captain read an order this morning to the non-coms of the battery stating that since our infantry has been so terribly shot up it will be necessary for each artillery outfit to furnish 68 privates, seven non-coms, and one officer to go into the line as infantry on the next advance. Every man volunteered to go over the top with a rifle and doughboy pack."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 22.

"Replacements are coming in regularly now to fill up the gaps in our ranks caused by losses in action. At first, the men of this outfit hated the idea of rank outsiders getting into this volunteer outfit, but of course it has to be done. Then we are Americans after all, and all have one purpose – to win the war – so we have assimilated the green drafts from the States and find that, generally speaking, they make good soldiers. The new men bring into the outfit news of the States and what the folks at home are doing. They also bring along various training camp songs and jokes."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 24.

The 42nd Division broke through the Hindenburg Line in that area and was relieved on Oct. 31 by the 2nd Division. Troops of the 42nd still held the front line but the 2nd Division passed through the lines and attacked the morning of Nov. 1.

"The hard-boiled Rainbow infantry doesn't like the idea of letting the marines make the attack. [Nov. 1] Many Rainbow doughboys pressed on in spite of orders to hold up and let the marines filter through."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Oct. 31/Nov. 1.

The Division moved further north, past the areas that had seen years of fighting.

"The villages we now occupy are not demolished and ravaged by war like most of the communities we have been used to seeing along the front. Aside from a few bullet marks and an occasional shell hole, these are peaceful looking villages and hills. These

villages had been occupied since 1914. The French peasants were overjoyed. They hung out of their windows hastily made replicas of "The Stars and Stripes" and wept and laughed and sang.

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Nov. 4.

The enemy was in full retreat. The 42nd attacked once more from Nov. 7 until Nov. 10 when they were relieved by the 77th Division, ending their participation in the war. It is not known whether Pvt. Inman was in combat during that time.

"The air is charged with expectancy today, as we await word of peace. At eleven, the great rumble of artillery and small arms was stilled. Eleven o'clock! How strangely solemn, almost painful to ears long accustomed to the din and tumult of the front! Our men seem strangely silent. Our thoughts in this hour of triumph cannot but turn to those missing comrades who have shed their blood yielded up their lives for America. We think, too, of their sorrowing mothers who will have no sons to welcome home."

Diary of a Rainbow Veteran, Nov. 11

The 42nd Division had suffered nearly 15,000 casualties during the war. Its total days of combat have been claimed as the highest of all-American divisions during the war at 264 days.

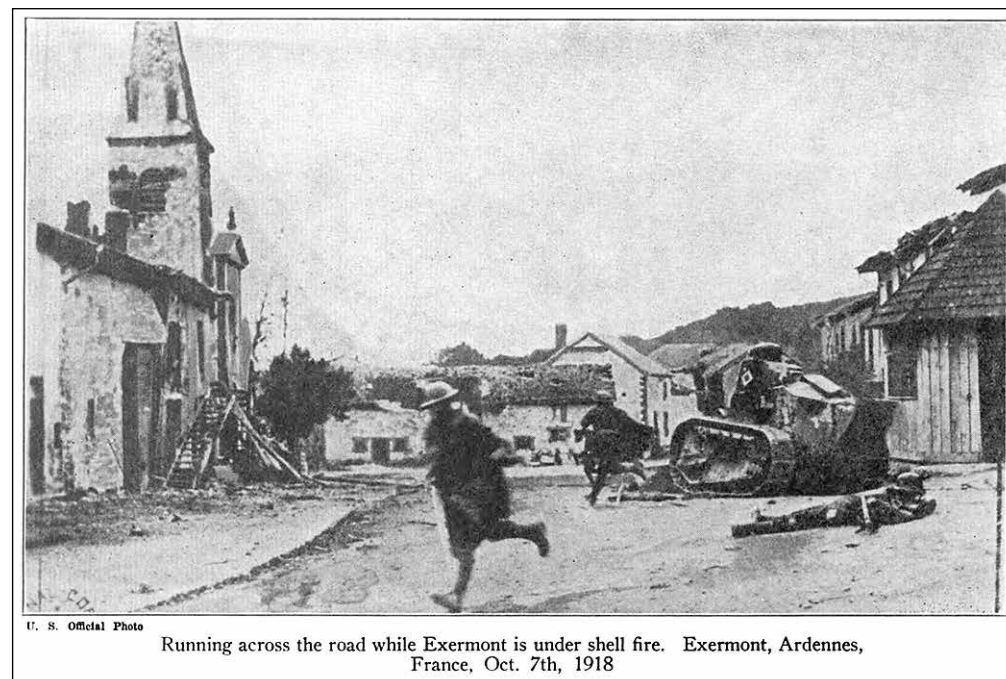
Their service not complete, they were chosen for the Army of Occupation and began marching for Germany on Nov. 20. The first troops crossed into Germany on Dec. 2. They remained there until they left to return to the U.S.

Pvt. Inman left Brest, France, on April 18, 1919, with the other members of the 168th Infantry. On May 9, 1919, he was honorably discharged.

Jesse Inman returned to his family in Waccamaw Township (1920 Census) to continue farming. He married Virginia Dare King the next year. The 1930 Census shows him living in the same area with his wife and working on his own farm. There were no children.

Sadly, his wife passed away in 1931 at age 26 from an embolism after surgery. Jesse also passed away at a young age, 42, in 1935. They were both laid to rest in New Britton Church Cemetery in Ash. No military honors are shown.

Sources:
Reilly, Henry J. (1936).
Americans All, The Rainbow at War: Official History of the



U. S. Official Photo. Running across the road while Exermont is under shell fire. Exermont, Ardennes, France, Oct. 7th, 1918

42nd Rainbow Division in the World War. Columbus, Ohio: Heer.

Sherwood, Elmer W. (1929), *Diary of a Rainbow Veteran*, Terre Haute, IN: Moore-Langen.

Thompkins, Raymond S. (1919), *The Story of the Rainbow Division*. NY: Boni & Liveright.

World War I American Battle Monuments Commission (1944). *42d Division Summary of Operations in the World War*. Washington DC: GPO.

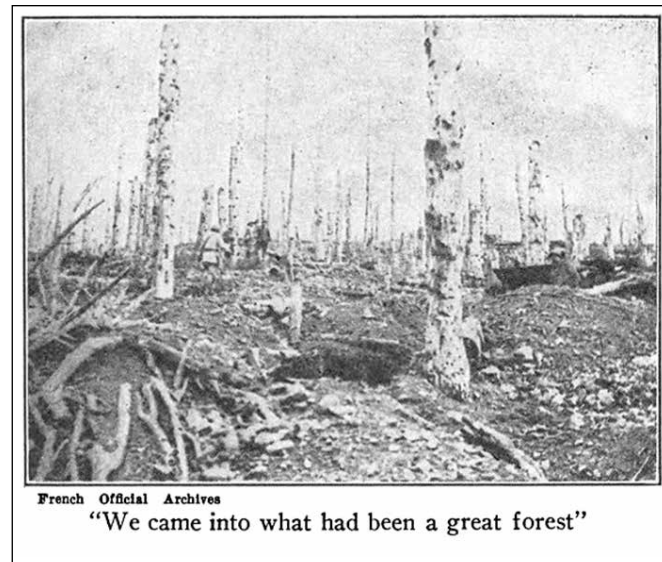
If you would like to help us honor Jesse Lee Fayette Inman or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email Friends of Ft Caswell Rifle Range at ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com or go to caswellriflerange.com.

A future fundraiser, Oktoberfest, is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 12, at the Caswell Beach town public service fa-

cility building (fire station) to raise funds for publishing the book of Brunswick County men and women that served in WWI; to continue historic preservation of the rifle range memorial; and to honor Brunswick County WWI veterans. There will be authentic German food and drink as well as a dance with music by The Back Porch Rockers. A Polka Dance Contest and Best Dressed Oktoberfest Outfit will be awarded.

The Friends of Ft Caswell Rifle Range are in need of vendors to participate in the Oktoberfest in Caswell Beach event from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12. More information will follow soon.

Another Roll Call is planned for Veterans Day, Monday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. beside the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range Memorial in Caswell Beach. The public is welcome.



French Official Archives
"We came into what had been a great forest"

Meuse-Argonne Great Forest, 1918.