

**CALIFORNIA MILITARY DEPARTMENT HISTORY PROGRAM
2814 B Street
Sacramento, CA 95816**

**The Institute of Heraldry, US Army Historic Data File
980th Field Artillery Battalion**

Digitized 30 August 2018

- - - Somewhere in Germany

For U.S. Artillerymen of the 980th F.A.Bn., October 24, 1944 was a memorable date. It was then that the War Department lifted the lid on the censorship that had confined the activities of the Battalion to the secret list, since its initial landing as the first American heavy artillery to come ashore in Normandy, on Utah Beach in the early days of the invasion.

For 140 action filled days, men of the 980th F.A. Battalion, that was the formerly the 1st Battalion of the 144 gr. F.A., remained on a constant combat status and sweated out official word that their presence on the continent and the numerous firsts that they had obtained might be published - - - - all the way from the beachhead to the gearter Reich. The 980th F.A.Bn. is still on a combat status --- they've nver been otherwise --- but now it can be told.

Now it can be told how the 155 m.m., gun battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel Harold C. Welch of Santa Barbara, Calif, was the first artillery to cut the Cherbourg Pennisula by fire; how it was the first artillery to fire on a military target in the city of Cherbourg; how at 0830 hrs. on September 11th, it was the first unit to fire into Germany on a target at Bildchen, a suburb of Aachen.

Leading elements of the Battalion came ashore on June 7th (D+1). That was Battery "B" with a cub plane and a flying staff-sergeant (now 1st. Lt.) from the Battalion air section. The cub, famed as field artillery's flying observation post, proved invaluable in the Normandy hedgerow country.

Battery "B" reconcounteracted and occupied positions at Turqueville, Neuville au Plains, and Bardeinville in the initial securing of the beachhead. The ancient tranquil towns of Normandy stirred uneasy in the hot June sun as the "long Toms" thunderingly announced their presence. The cannoneers (of which I am one) all had their Blue French Phrase books, but they were too occupied at this date to worry about them. There was only room on the beach for one heavy gun battery in the beginning. The remainder of the Battalion landed on June 12th (D+6) and immediately went into position in the vicinity of still-smouldering St. Mere Eglise. It was here that Battery "B" rejoined the unit.

The invasion was nearing its second week when the Battalion displaced to new positions nearer Barneville. It was from here that Cherbourg Pennisula was first cut by fire. Foot troops completed the beach later and on the 19th of June the Battalion moved into new positions 5000 yds in front of the foremost light artillery in the vicinity of

Negreville. It was from here that they were able to fire into Cherbourg, and fire they did, being the first artillery to shoot into the city.

From here the battalion concluded the campaign of the Cherbourg Peninsula, participating in the famous counterattack and headed south to take up positions at Picauville, where on July 4th they participated in the multi-gun Independence Day salute. Also from the position the battalion supported the infantry advance to La Haye De Puits and the taking of Hills 121 and 131.

On July 7th, positions were taken up in the vicinity of Coigny and then the battalion moved to the neighborhood of Tribehow. After days in softening German positions by massed artillery, the bombers came, thousands of them, giving the Germans the most devastating evidence of allied air supremacy. To protect these bombers the battalion fired at all known locations of anti-aircraft guns. This was at the St. Le Perieses break through.

Positions near Gerisy-La-Salle, Le Missial Amey, Hamby, and Villedieu Le Poels followed rapidly. Then in a position in the vicinity of Mortain the battalion encountered stiff enemy resistance. The German Generals planned to drive through Mortain to split the American forces. It was the initial German trust that cut off the last Battalion and here began the most intensive American artillery bombardments yet experienced. For seven days and nights this battalion moved east and north to close the Palaise Gap with firepower from a position near the vicinity of St. Michel-Les-Andaines.

Position followed position, Chartres, Alencon, Courville, Sur Eure, Bauray, Villeneuve Le Conte, the Seine and Marne Rivers, Chateau Theirry and Suissions flashed by in rapid succession.

The fortress city of Laon was last sizeable place encountered by the battalion in France and on the 4th of September they crossed the Belgium border. In the vicinity of Mens the battalion captured many prisoners, for an artillery unit, bringing the total for the battalion since July 7th to 250.

Next on the route of the battalion was Charleroi, then Leige. It was from the next position in the vicinity of Herve that the Unit fired the initial rounds of the current war into Germany, firing at a railroad overpass in Moresnet, Aachen, Germany at 0830B on the 11th of September, 1944. It was a harassing mission assigned by higher authorities.

Eupen was the last city passed through in Belgium, and on the 17th of September the battalion crossed the border into Germany. It was 92 days from the time the leading elements of the battalion landed on the Utah beach to the time it crossed into the Reich. During this time six enlisted men of the unit had received battlefield commissions,

two Captains had been promoted to Majors and two Lts. to Captains.

As the 1st Battalion of the 144th Field Artillery, the 980th F.A.Bn. was a California National Guard Unit, Headquarters Battery, Battery "B" and Service Battery were formed in Bakersfield. Battery "A" was formed in Santa Marie, and Battery "C" was redesignated from Battery "E", 143rd F.A. in Santa Barbara. There are many men from Pennsylvania, New York and Iowa in the battalion, however, every state is represented. After intensive training in the U.S. the battalion embarked for the British Isles, arriving there in January 1944, where it was stationed until the start of the invasion.

QUARTERMASTER ACTIVITIES
CAMERON STATION, U. S. ARMY
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

IN REPLY

REFER TO:

QMACH 424.2 & 421.4
980th FA Bn

21 APR 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:


SUBJECT: Rescission of the Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery
Battalion

1. The coat of arms approved for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion by letter SPQRD 424.2 980th F.A. Bn. the Office of The Quartermaster General, 24 November 1943, is rescinded this date.

2. This rescission is in accordance with Lineage for the 185th Infantry Regiment, California National Guard dated 6 September 1951, which was verified by the Office of the Chief of Military History 18 April 1956 as being a current history on the organization.

3. The 980th Field Artillery Battalion inactivated November, 1945, was reorganized and Federally recognized 27 August 1947 as 3d Battalion, 185th Infantry Regiment, California National Guard. As an organic element of the regiment, the organization is no longer authorized a separate coat of arms. Records indicate a distinctive insignia was not approved.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


JOHN G. GOODLETT, JR.
Major, QMC
Chief, Heraldic Services Division

HERALDIC

FILE
9 MAR 1967


SPQRD 424.2
980th F.A. Bn

11 July 1944.

SUBJECT: Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion.
TO: Commanding Officer, 980th Field Artillery Battalion,
APO 250, c/o Postmaster, New York, N. Y.

1. By direction of The Secretary of War there are furnished herewith the following blazonry and description of the Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion approved by letter SPQRD 424.2 980th F.A. Bn, this office, 24 November 1943; also painting of the coat of arms.

BLAZONRY

SHIELD: Per bend or and gules, in chief a fleur-de-lis of the second, in base a grizzly bear of the first passant within a bordure gules and or.

CREST: None.

MOTTO: Vincimus (We conquer).

DESCRIPTION

The 980th Field Artillery Battalion was redesignated from the 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery per AG 320.2 (2-5-43) OR-I-GN-M, dated 8 February 1943. The 980th Field Artillery Battalion is entitled to a streamer in the colors of the Victory Ribbon without inscription.

The design is that of the coat of arms for the 144th Field Artillery within a bordure to indicate descent of the 980th Field Artillery Battalion from that organization. The shield is divided red, the color of Artillery, and yellow, the color of Artillery guidon markings. The fleur-de-lis represents service in France and the bear alludes to the nickname of the organization.

2. It is requested that acknowledgment of receipt of the painting be made to this office by separate letter, this letter being retained for your files.

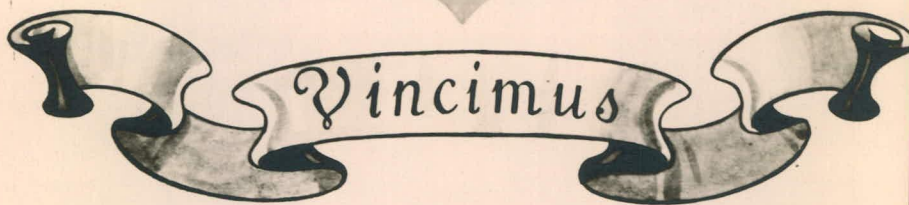
For The Quartermaster General:

1 Incl-Painting
Under Sep. Cov.

GEORGES F. DORIOT,
Colonel, Q. M. C.,
Assistant.

HERALDIC FILE COPY

MICROFILMED



COAT OF ARMS FOR THE
980TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
O.Q.M.G. APPROVED 28 - JUNE - 1944

Arthur E. DuBois
ARTHUR E. DU BOIS, CHIEF, HERALDIC SECTION

MICROFILMED

COPY

2d Ind.

DT:vm

Historical Section, A. W. C., 10 January 1944.

To: WD, ASF, The Adjutant General.

1. The 144th Field Artillery Regiment was originally organized, 4 August 1917, as the 2d Field Artillery, California National Guard. It was redesignated the 144th Field Artillery, 65th Field Artillery Brigade, 40th Division, 3 October 1917. The regiment served overseas during World War I, but did not participate in combat. It returned to the United States, and was demobilized 29 January 1919.

2. Pursuant to 8th Indorsement, War Department, AG 325.455 (7 Mar 36), dated 2 June 1936, the 144th Field Artillery Regiment, California National Guard, was reconstituted, and the personnel and equipment of the 2d Battalion, 196th Field Artillery, were transferred to the 2d Battalion of the 144th Field Artillery.

3. The 144th Field Artillery, California National Guard, was inducted into Federal service, 3 February 1941, and, pursuant to letter, War Department, AG 320.2 (5 Feb 43), dated 8 February 1943, the regiment was redesignated as follows:

<u>Old designation</u>	<u>New Designation</u>
Hq. & Hq. Battery, 144th F. A.	Hq. & Hq. Battery, 144th F.A. Group
1st Battalion, 144th F.A.	980th Field Artillery Battalion
2d Battalion, 144th F. A.	981st Field Artillery Battalion.

4. The Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 144th Field Artillery Group; the 980th Field Artillery Battalion; and the 981st Field Artillery Battalion are each entitled to battle honors, to and including 11 November 1918, as follows:

WORLD WAR:
(Without inscription).

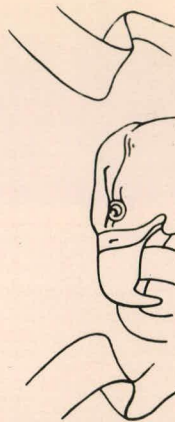
Oliver L. Spaulding,
OLIVER L. SPAULDING,
Colonel, F.A.,
Chief.

Incl. w/d

MICROFILMED

BATTLE HONORS ON STREAMERS
World War - without inscription

REFERENCE	DRAWING NO
Base drawing of eagle	CE 5-6-1
Base drawing with color specifications	CE 5-6-2
Streamers	CE 5-5-2

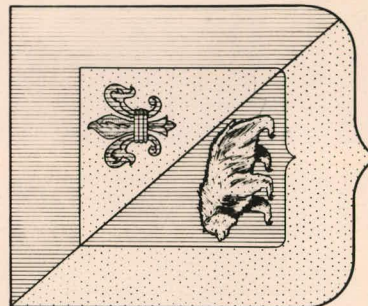


BLAZON

SHIELD: Per bend or and gules, in chief a Fleur-de-lis of the second, in base a grizzly bear of the first passant within a bordure gules and or.

CREST: None.

MOTTO: Vincimus (We conquer).



980TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

PERTAINS TO DRAWING NO	REVISIONS		WAR DEPARTMENT O.Q.M.G.
	NO.	DATE	
			COAT OF ARMS FOR THE STANDARD OF THE 980 TH FIELD ARTILLERY BN.
			SCALE: Full size
			DATE: 28 June 1944
			DRAWN: <i>[Signature]</i>
			CHECKED: <i>[Signature]</i>
			EXAMINED: <i>[Signature]</i>
			SUBMITTED
			APPROVED FOR O.Q.M.G. <i>[Signature]</i> SECTION CHIEF, HERALDIC SECTION
			SPECIFICATION NO.
			DRAWING NO. 5-6-1277

SPCJD 424.2
980th F.A. Bn

24 November 1943.

SUBJECT: Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion.

TO: Commanding Officer, 980th Field Artillery Battalion,
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

1. By the authority delegated to The Quartermaster General by 2nd Indorsement, AG 421.7 Insignia (9-15-42) OR-1, The Adjutant General's Office, 8 October 1942, the coat of arms described below is approved under the provisions of Paragraph 5, AR 260-10, 20 November 1931 for the

980TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

BLAZON

SHIELD: Per bend or and gules, in chief a fleur-de-lis of the second, in base a grizzly bear of the first passant within a bordure gules and or.

CREST: None.

MOTTO: Vincimus (We conquer).

DESCRIPTION

The 980th Field Artillery Battalion was redesignated from the 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery per AG 320.2 (2-5-43) OR-1-OR-M, dated February 8, 1943. The 980th Field Artillery Battalion is entitled to a streamer in the colors of the Victory Ribbon without inscription.

The design is that of the coat of arms for the 144th Field Artillery within a bordure to indicate descent of the 980th Field Artillery Battalion from that organization. The shield is divided red, the color of Artillery, and yellow, the color of Artillery guidon markings. The fleur-de-lis represents service in France and the bear alludes to the nickname of the organization.

For The Quartermaster General:

HERALDIC FILE COPY

GEORGES P. DORJOT,
Colonel, Q. M. C.,
Assistant.

UNRECORDED

BASIC LTR: Sub: Coat of Arms for the 980th FA Bn.

SPQRD 424.2

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS 980th FA Battalion, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, 16 Nov 1943.

TO: QUARTERMASTER GENERAL, (ATTENTION: Colonel Doriot), Washington, D.C.

1. Suggested design for Coat of Arms approved.
2. Mottoes in order of choice with translations are submitted as follows:

<u>Motto</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1. Semper Primus	"Always First" <i>1st Inf.</i>
2. Contendimus	"We Fight" <i>146th Inf.</i>
3. Invictus	"Unconquerable" <i>345th Inf.</i>
4. Per ardua ad astra	"Fight to the Top"
5. On the Way	
6. Vincimus	"We Conquer"

3. Request additional information as to availability of facilities for manufacturing individual insignias for soldiers' uniforms.

For the Battalion Commander:

Burdett E. Haessly
 BURDETT E. HAESSLY
 Major, 980th FA Bn
 Executive



*424.2
 980th Field Artillery Bn.*

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
WASHINGTON

SPORD 424.2
980th Field Artillery
Battalion

2 November 1943.

SUBJECT: Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion.

TO: Commanding Officer, 980th Field Artillery Battalion, Ft.
Leonard Wood, Missouri.

1. In view of the outline history of the 980th Field Artillery Battalion, this organization is entitled to a Coat of Arms.

2. In view of the fact that the 980th Field Artillery Battalion has descended from the 144th Field Artillery, it is suggested that the design of the Coat of Arms of the 144th Field Artillery, within a bordure gules and or, be used as the Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion, as illustrated by Inclosure #1.

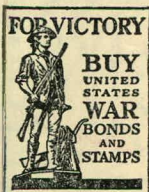
3. It is requested that several mottoes be submitted in the order of preference, together with their translations, if in a foreign language so that they may be checked against those approved for other organizations. The first suitable motto that is distinctive will be reserved for the exclusive use of your organization.

4. Upon return of correspondence to this office, indicating concurrence, approval of the Coat of Arms will be made.

For The Quartermaster General:

Georges F. Doriot
GEORGES F. DORIOT,
Colonel, Q.M.C.,
Assistant.

I Incl.
Incl. #1. Dwg.



WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
WASHINGTON

IN REPLY REFER TO _____

4097-1

copy

424.2-980th Fld. Art. Bn.



MS

*File
1 Keller
9-6-44*

980th Field Artillery Bn.

Incl. #1

SPQRD 424.2-980th Field Artillery Battalion - 2 November 1943

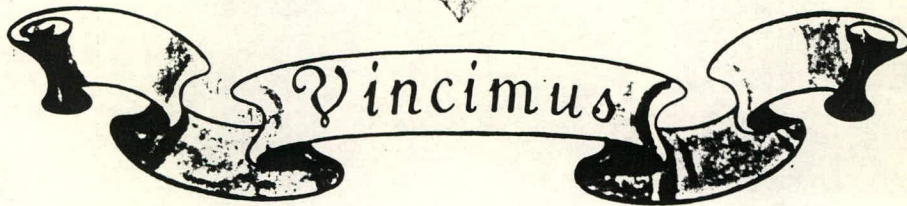
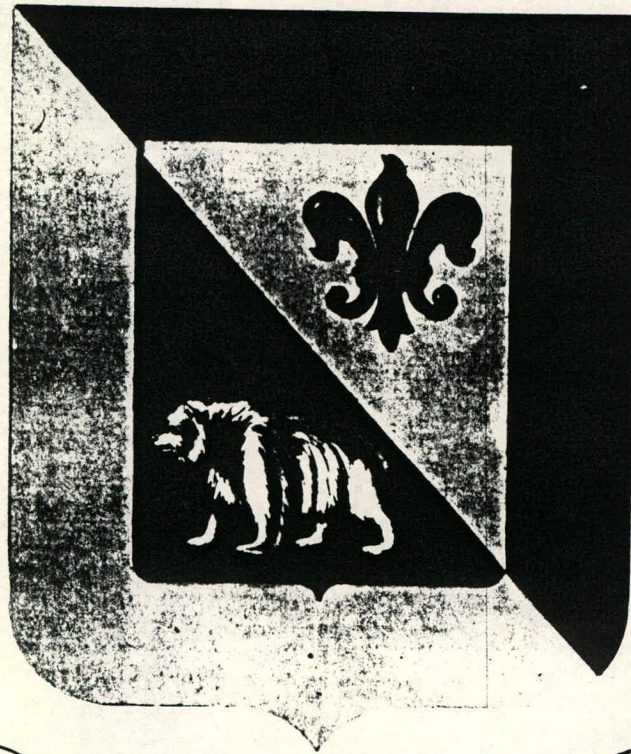
91-5-B

MOTTO: VINCIMUS



COAT OF ARMS FOR STANDARD OF
980TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
FULL SIZE

REFERENCE: Q.M. DRAWING No. 5-6-1277



COAT OF ARMS FOR THE
980TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
O.Q.M.G. APPROVED 28 JUNE 1944

Arthur E. Dubois
ARTHUR E. DUBOIS, CHIEF, HERALDIC SECTION

SPQJD 424.2
980th F.A. Bn

24 November 1943.

SUBJECT: Coat of Arms for the 980th Field Artillery Battalion.

TO: Commanding Officer, 980th Field Artillery Battalion,
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

1. By the authority delegated to The Quartermaster General by 2nd Indorsement, AG 421.7 Insignia (9-15-42) OS-I, The Adjutant General's Office, 8 October 1942, the coat of arms described below is approved under the provisions of Paragraph 5, AR 280-10, 20 November 1931 for the

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BLAZON

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CREST: None.

MOTTO: Vincimus (We conquer).

DESCRIPTION

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For The Quartermaster General:

HERALDIC FILE COPY

GEORGES F. DORHOT,
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Assistant.

SPCWD 424.2
980th F.A. Bn

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Assistant.