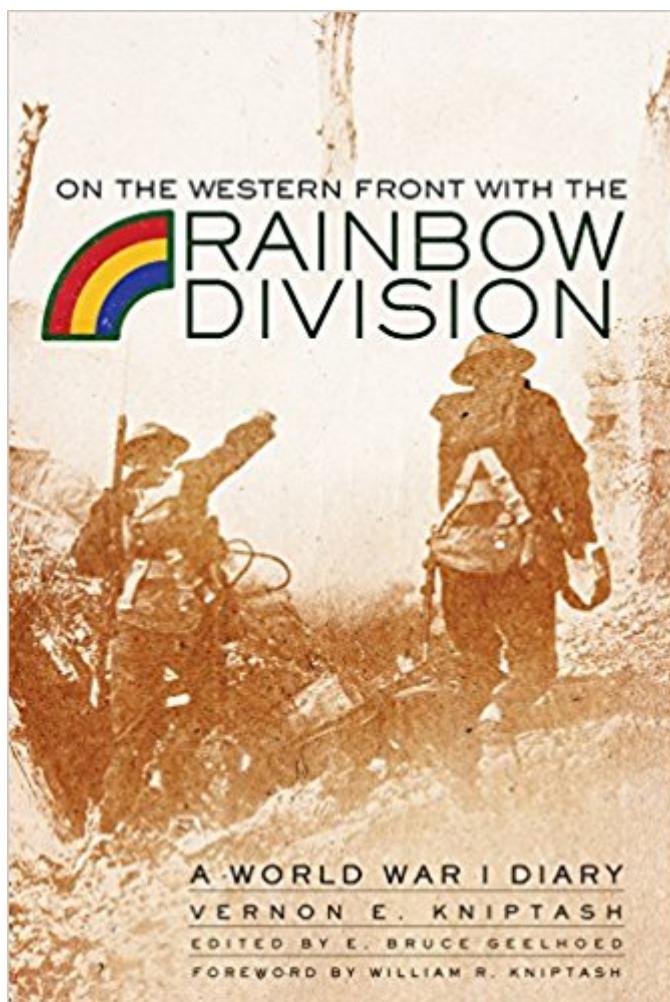


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On The Western Front With The Rainbow Division: A World War I Diary



Synopsis

An ordinary soldier's day-by-day account of the Great WarVernon E. Kniptash, an Indiana national guardsman who served in the Rainbow Division during World War I, observed firsthand some of the Great War's fiercest fighting. As a radio operator with the Headquarters Company of the 150th Field Artillery, he was in constant contact with French and British forces as well as with American troops, and thus gained a broad perspective on the hostilities. Editor E. Bruce Geelhoed introduces and annotates Kniptash's war diaries, published here for the first time. With clarity and compelling detail, Kniptash describes the experiences of an ordinary soldier thrust into the most violent conflict the world had seen. He tells of his enthusiasm upon enlistment and of the horrors of combat that followed, as well as the drudgery of daily routine. He renders unforgettable profiles of his fellow soldiers and commanders, and manages despite the strains of warfare to leaven his writing with humor. Readers will share Kniptash's ordeals as he participates in the furious effort to stem a major German offensive, followed by six months of violent combat and the massive Allied counteroffensive that ended the war. Because Kniptash was called to remain with the Army of Occupation in Germany after his unit was shipped home, his diaries cover the full extent of American participation in the war.

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Customer Reviews

Vernon E. Kniptash was the grandson of German immigrants who--unlike most of their German American contemporaries--did not support Germany in the years before the Great War. After Armistice, he returned to his job as a draftsman with an Indianapolis architectural firm. E. Bruce

Geelhoed is Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. He is coeditor of *The Macmillan-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1957-1969*.

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Diarist Vernon E. Kniptash had a fine sense of humor and was a keen observer, that much is evident by reading only a few pages of this wonderful diary. However, upon delving deeper, the reader will be rewarded with a very candid view of the war from the perspective of this young man who served in Headquarters Company, 150th Field Artillery Regiment, 42nd Division. Along with the usual descriptions of marching and fighting, Kniptash, who kept this diary for his entire term of service, also records his impression of officers in his unit. He is not afraid of criticizing those he deems unfit or needlessly harsh (West Point graduates are given a particularly harsh review). Reading Kniptash's account of his time in the post-war Army of Occupation of Germany, one can sense his frustrations and alternating feelings of joy as rumors of a return to the United States come and go. His post-war accounts are particularly interesting and poignant. I highly recommend this book to readers interested in the history of the American Expeditionary Forces. Peter L. Belmonte *Days of Perfect Hell: The U.S. 26th Infantry Regiment in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October-November 1918* (IL) (Voices of America)

Found this gentleman's journal fascinating. As a young man, he displayed great courage, patriotism, decency and wit in his writing ... most importantly, gave me an appreciation of how infantry closely followed all aspects of the war with hopes of returning home sooner. Wouldn't have imagined that information would have been passed along so quickly.

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