

Camp Adair, Oregon

I arrived from Lincoln, after ten days leave after Officer's Candidate School, at Camp Adair, Oregon, and reported in to the Adjutant, 70th Infantry Division Headquarters.

This was Tuesday, July 18, 1944. I was Assigned to the 274th Infantry Regiment, Company D, Heavy Weapons Company, as a Mortar Section Leader, a position assigned to a 2nd lieutenant.

I arrived at D Company either on the 18th or 19th July, reporting into the Company Commander. My good friend, John M. Peters, from Omaha, was assigned to the Company, and was given command of the 1st platoon, 30 mg machine guns. John was with me from 1st year ROTC in Lincoln (He was a Beta from Omaha) and we were together all the way through basic training, ASTP, OCS, and assignment to D Company. He was wounded in action, but survived, the following March/April, 1945, while in the Spicheren Heights area on the German border near Saarbrücken. Having a long time friend with me during all this time made it much easier to be in the army and active duty. Many of our Nebraska ROTC Infantry men were assigned to the 70th Inf. Division and various battalions in the 274th, 275th and 276th Infantry Regiments. So I was continually seeing friends from home all through those days until April when John was wounded. Lt. Eldon R. Buerge, also from basic training days, was the 3rd Platoon Mortar platoon leader and I served under him. He was with me and in Dog company until the company was broken up in August, 1945. He was the last man to serve with me from our Basic Training Days. He was an ROTC man from Iowa University.

A good number of the office candidates in our 335 class were ROTC men from a lot of schools. Some were from Ol Mississippi, some from Clemson, South Dakota, Iowa etc.

The attached papers shows my arrival at Camp Adair, 18 July 1944, and assignment to Company D, 274th Infantry, as a mortar platoon section leader.

HEADQUARTERS 70TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
Camp Adair, Oregon

18 July 1944

MEMORANDUM TO: Commanding Officer 274th Infantry

Rokahr, Ernest J. 2d Lt. Inf. Res. O 553 882, having reported  
this date for duty with the 70th Division, is assigned to your  
organization.

*Co D*  
*Master Section*

*E. C. Brett*  
EDWARD C. BRETT,  
CAPTAIN, A.G.D.,  
ASST. ADJ. GEN.



I do not remember much about those few days at Camp Adair. John Peters, Eldor R. "Shorty" Buerge and I was in the same company. I was delighted to be with John who was a friend from Lincoln since 1940. John was from Omaha and we were in ROTC together all those years, took basic training together, ASTP, OCS and then to be assigned the same Division, Regiment, and Company made it a lot easier for me in the army. We were together all the way until John was wounded along the Metz highway, near Spicheren Heights, France, March, 1945. Shorty Buerge and I were together until the Regiment broke up in August 1945. We did not get along too well together. We had a conflict of personalities since Basic Training at Camp Roberts. But, it never prevented us from doing our jobs. He was a strong leader and deserved the accolades he received. He was from a town in Iowa outside of Sioux City.

We were in Camp Adair only a few days or not more than two or three weeks at most. Almost immediately after reporting in, the regiment was moved by troop train to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, for final training and preparation for moving overseas. I do not remember anything about those days in Oregon. I do remember being nervous about reporting to the D Company company commander and my first assembly with the company. I remember when reporting in to the Division Hqs, and being assigned to D Company, that meeting with John Peters and me included a Captain Underwood, who was the Division Personnel Officer or in that office.

Very short afterwards, our company boarded a troop train bound for Ft. Leonard Wood. The train moved north to Portland and up to Seattle. Then cross country on the Great Northern Railroad route to Minneapolis-St. Paul, down to St. Louis, and eventually into Rolla, Missouri, and Ft. Leonard Wood. I am not sure when we arrived there but I was definitely there July 31 1944. Col. "Shooting" Sam Conley, of Van Wert, Ohio, was the Regimental Commander. The Battalion Commander was Lt. Col. James "Jim" Willis, of Rome, Georgia. The D Company Commander was Captain Ralston Hawkins. The days were spent in field training, practice manouvers and various forms of preparation and equipment cleaning etc. One day the entire company assembled and each man had to fill out of will on a form provided for by the army. I signed Capt. Hawkins's will as witness. Several years later, while here in Los Angeles, I received a letter from a lawyer from somewhere in Georgia, as I recall, asking me about that will and the circumstances of its being prepared. Apparently Hawkins had died and this was the only will the family found. I replied telling the lawyer the circumstances of our preparing wills that day at Ft. Leonard Wood and my signing as the witness. I told him that at the time it was very definitely a legal document, that it would still be in force of no subsequent will could be found. This happened in the 1960s or 1970s. I never heard from the lawyer thanking me for my statement.

Lt. Col. Willis had always had his big car with him and he had driven from Camp Adair to Ft. Leonard Wood in it. He knew that he had to get that car from Ft. L. Wood to Rome, Georgia. So, to solve the problem of how to get the car there and to find someone to drive it there, he devised the following plan. He selected me to drive the car to Rome enroute to Ft. Benning. He got me assigned to an Officer's Motor Course, at the Infantry School. I would drive the car to Rome, drop it off at his wife's house, and then I would

continue on to Ft. Benning by bus. I cleared Ft. L. Wood on 23 August and proceeded to Rome, Georgia, in Willis's car. Bussed to Ft. Benning and checked in for the Motor Course. I was given a certificate showing completion of the Officer's Motor Course, No. 41, 25 August – 21 November, 1944. I stayed there only until 23 October when I was called back to Ft. Leonard Wood, as the Regiment was about to move out for overseas.

I do remember I celebrated my birthday on September 17, 1944, with dinner at one of the big hotels in Atlanta. I had gone up there with an officer friend, we picked up two girls in the lobby of the Henry Grady Hotel on Peach Street, and proceeded to the Biltmore Hotel. I picked up the tab. I was 22 that day. Actually, it was Saturday, September 16, 1944, that I celebrated my birthday. I had a 24 hour pass from Ft. Benning. The Henry Grady Hotel was sort of a "pick up" place for gals. Local gals would congregate in the lobby and officers would come there to pick them up. When at OCS earlier in the year, one weekend, several of us Officer Candidates had a pass to Atlanta, and we rented a huge suite on the top floor of the Henry Grady Hotel and we all slept on the floor. I don't remember how many of us there were, but there was 6 or 7 or 8. We all pitched in a few dollars to pay for the room. This was one of my adventures in Atlanta during OCS.

My orders to return to Ft. Leonard Wood are dated 23 October, 1944. My railroad transportation orders back to Missouri via train are dated 31 October, so I probably left Benning that day and arrived back in Missouri November 1 or 2.

R E S T R I C T E D

- SYMBOLS: FPS - First permanent station  
 TDN - Travel directed is necessary in the military service  
 WP - Will proceed to  
 TPA - Travel by officer or his dependents by privately owned automobile is authorized. DS for officer's travel is authorized, par. 1e, AR 605-180  
 PAC - Pursuant to authority contained in  
 UP - Under the provision of

*Assignment orders to  
75<sup>th</sup> Inf Div*

HEADQUARTERS THE INFANTRY SCHOOL

SPECIAL ORDERS)

Fort Benning, Georgia

E X T R A C T

NO....160.....)

4 July, 1944

13. Following 2D LTS, Inf, are reld from atchd unasgd 3d Stu Tng Regt, The Inf Sch, this sta, asgd orgn and WP sta as indicated, FPS. UP AR 605-115 and PAC par 17, AR 625-5, a delay of ten (10) days is atzd (in addition to atzd travel time) being considered in interest pub sv. TPA. TDN. 501-31 P 431-01, 02, 03, 07, 08-212/50425. Auth: Ltr Hq R&S Comd, AGF, file GNRSPA 210.31-Inf Sch, sub: "Assignment of Officer Candidate Class #335", dated 27 June 1944.

65TH INF DIV, CP SHELBY, MISS

BARNWELL, EDWARD S.	0554138	HARMAN, JOHN E	0552413
BOLLER, JOHN C	0552148	HARAMIS, GEORGE T	0552412
BORCHARDT, HOWARD W	0552147	HILL, EUGENE M	0552140
BROWN, ROBERT R	0552406	IRWIN, CLYDE C	0553867
CAMPBELL, HERBERT D	0552145	KAGEORGE, PEDRO W	0552411
CHRISTENSEN, WALTER H	0552405	LEHR, LEWIS W	0552995
CURTIS, FRANCIS M	0552701	MARVIN, HENRY H JR	0553874
DUDA, CHARLES J JR	0552993	MASSEY, JOHN R	0552135
ECKERT, GEORGE F	0552404	MC NUTT, ROBERT D	0553872
ELY, CHARLES L	0552142	ROPER, VICTOR K	0552130

100TH INF DIV, FT BRAGG, NC

ABRAMS, MURRY	0552123	JAMES, GERALD B	0552781
AMDS, ROBERT T JR	0554136	LACY, WILLIAM W	0554154
ATWELL, JAMES A	0553685	MC DOWELL, FRANK H	0552117
BARNES, JACK K	0553666	MC VEIGH, FRANKLIN J	0551703
BILDER, JOSEPH JR	0552407	MYERS, STANLEY D	0552410
DWYER, JEREMIAH H	0552700	SCHREYER, CHARLES E JR	0552115
FAIRLY, JOHN L JR	0554146	STILLWAGON, THOMAS	01326267
FLAUM, SALEM	0553865	THOMPSON, WALTON R	0552114
FRANKLIN, NATHAN M	0547341	VERRILL, HERBERT S	0552113
HOLLAND, DONALD W	0554150	WILLIAMS, VINCENT G	0552694

69TH INF DIV, CP SHELBY, MISS

BARBER, WILLIAM E	0554137	ROPER, VICTOR K	0552696
COLLINS, JAMES L	0552702	SETTLER, WILLIAM R JR	0552720
COX, RAY D	0552729	PAYNE, WILLIAM V	0552133
CURRIE, ROBERT A	0554144	PERCY, WILLIAM J	0553876
FARRAR, ARCHIBALD A	0554147	PETERS, GEORGE B	0554153
GIST, WILLIAM W III	0552994	PHILIPS, EDWARD C	0554160
GRIFITH, JENNETH E	0552139	POAT, RICHARD B	0554161
HOWARD, THOMAS P JR	0554151	POWELL, JAMES C	0552717

par 13, SO #160 (TIS)(4 Jul 44)(Cont'd):

69TH INF DIV, CP SHELBY, MISS (CONT'D)

JEFFRIES, MC CHESNEY H	0554153	REECE, EUGENE K	0553881
KNEEDLIK, STANLEY M	0552137	ROBERTS, EUGENE T	0552715
KOHL, FRED B	0552136	ROMAN, LOUIS J	0552714
LASHLEY, EVERETT R JR	0552697	SHARPE, JAMES D	0552128
MC CALEP, FLOYD L JR	0552723	SIDFRID, LE ROY O	0552127
MC CORMICK, WILLIAM E	0548303	TURNER, THOMAS A JR	0552958
MC DONALD, RAY W	0553674	WERTS, MERRILL H	0552126

70TH INF DIV, CP ADAIR, ORE

BERGE, ELDEN R	0552105	MC CASHLAND, BENJAMIN W	0553870
BOTTORFF, JOHN G	0553862	MC DONALD, DONALD A	0552162
BURKE, DONALD E	0552034	MC FADDEN, CHARLES R	0552054
BURLEIGH, DALE E	0552033	MESHER, WAYNE T	0553876
CARLSON, KEITH D	0552762	MILLER, CHESTER C JR	0552053
CASSIDY, FRED J	0553863	PERRY, RICHARD S	0552048
CLARE, TRUMAN E A	0553864	PETERS, JOHN M	0553880
COOKE, EDWIN D JR	0552032	POPOVAC, DANIEL O	0550616
CROWSON, EDWARD R	0553668	ROKAHR, ERNEST J	0553882
DE LORME, JAMES P	0553869	SAFFORD, JOHN T	0552998
DURKEE, HARRY D	0552163	SCHOLLANDER, DONALD A	0552164
LANCASTER, WARREN E	0553868	TE SELLE, JAMES W	0553883
MALASHOCK, IRVING	0553873	WARDELL, ROBERT H	0551903
MATTOON, FRANK J	0553875	WEISS, SHELDON	0542204
MC BRIDE, BILLY B	0553869	WENDT, CHARLES S	0552110

66TH INF DIV, CP RUCKER, ALA

BEARDEN, WILLIAM A	0553076	HALL, MARTIN B JR	0553670
BOGAN, RALPH K	0553078	HOLT, ERNEST E JR	0551298
BOWLES, JAMES P	0552122	JAMES, JOHN E JR	0552698
BROGDON, JAMES E	0553667	LINN, DONALD L	0553088
BROWN, DAVID E	0553079	MARTIN, RODDY A	0553673
BUMBARGER, THOMAS V	0554139	REHDER, GEORGE S	0552116
BUNCH, JOHN C	0553081	REID, JOSEPH S JR	0553090
CLONTZ, RALPH C JR	0554142	REYNOLDS, EDWARD H	0552659
COCKER, JOHN W	0552703	RHAME, JOSEPH B	0552658
CROWELL, ANDREW H JR	0554143	THOMPSON, WILLIAM F	0552655
CURTIS, JOHN M	0552120	TINDAL, WILLIAM M JR	0552654
DENNY, HERMIN B	0442379	WILLIAMS, GUY H	0552646

By command of BRIGADIER GENERAL WEEMS:

OFFICIAL:

THORNTON CHASE,  
Colonel, A.G.D.,  
Adjutant General.

*Thornton Chase*  
THORNTON CHASE,  
Colonel, A.G.D.,  
Adjutant General.

## How I was "Hung" in Mainz, Germany

This story begins on Sunday, April 1, 1945, and ends at the end of May, 2005, 60 years later. And it's a story that is truly amazing when one thinks about it. Actually it is a story of "coincidence." An example of what can happen on a "continuing" basis and all based on strange and amazing coincidences all coming together years and years later. To start the story, we must go back in time to World War II, Europe, Germany, and to Mainz, Germany, to be exact.

Our company had been occupying Kaiserslautern, in the Rhein-Provinz area of western Germany. The Third Army had crossed the Rhine River at Remagen and was heading under General Patton across Germany and into Czechoslovakia. Our 7<sup>th</sup> Army under General Patch made a direct right flanking movement which put our 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division into Army reserve. We were playing now catch-up and mop up. For all intense and purposes our real fighting days were over. We were organizing to be the Army of Occupation now in western Germany. From Kaiserslautern we were ordered to proceed east to Mainz, Germany, a move of about 50 kilometers or so. I am now reproducing some paragraphs from my book which I wrote in 1947-48 just after the war which covers this move to Mainz.

"The word received from higher headquarters said we were going to the Mainz area. All the men, including myself, were quite excited about the prospects of this move. Although I liked it very much in Kaiserslautern, I wanted to get further into Germany and to see more of the country. I don't know if all the men shared my enthusiasm for travel in Germany or not. Lt. Berge had gone out the day before the move along with the regular "advance-party" personnel from the company Headquarters and I didn't see him again until he met us outside of Mainz to guide us into the new company area. We move out this time in battalion motor convoy which was made up of over forty vehicles. We followed the main highway from Kaiserslautern to Mainz. The countryside in this Rhineland area is beautiful with its rolling hills, scattered picturesque villages and green forests. I soon discovered the reason why the country looks so inviting... there are no billboards, no hamburger stands, or filling stations to mar the beautiful scenery (I like these American inventions, but have you ever driving from Washington DC to Baltimore) and we could look for miles over the rolling country as we drove along. The day was excellent for traveling, and in the open jeeps, the weather, which was now warm and sunny, was particularly inviting.

"Lt. Berge, in his jeep, met us outside Mainz on the main highway. Here the battalion convoy broke up and each company in turn moved by guides to its new assigned area. Our platoon Headquarters trailer was jammed to overflowing with equipment and numerous "liberated" treasures. At my expressed wish, Alex, my driver, had found a small trailer in Morlautern and had repaired it for our c.p. (command post) jeep. Under the T.E (Tables of Equipment) the platoon HQs jeeps have no trailer. And we need a trailer at this

point. Alex was the designated jeep driver and I always occupied the front seat on the right. Sgt. "Doc" Seagle, the platoon medic, and Sgt. St. John or Cpl Allen would ride in the back.

"Rumors had been that we would be billeted directly in the city of Mainz, and as Lt. Berge lead the company convoy through the center of this famous city and on through to the southern edge and on into the next small village of Laubenheim, our morale dropped like a busted balloon. Mainz was in the same condition of ruins as Saarbrücken, although not quite so "Kaput." Lt. Berge told me later the advanced party had searched the entire city the previous day but could find no blocks of houses suitable to house a company of men. For that reason we had to go into the next town down the Rhine, Laubenheim. We stayed there, however, only one night.

"We passed through Mainz on the way down to Laubenheim but did stop for a ten-minute break in the middle of the city. The "Stadtmitte" or center of the city was in total ruins. We passed by the Opera House, which I later verified by post cards, a personal visit, and from the fact opera houses in European cities are usually built on the main public squares. Across the street from the Opera house and Cathedral is the famous Gutenberg Museum which was miraculously hit only once during airraids. The Opera house was completely gutted. The famous Mainzer Dom (or cathedral) was only slightly damaged. This is one of the most famous cathedrals in all Europe and is a classic example of Tenth Century Romanesque architecture. Trolley lines were down over the entire city and we passed around several overturned trolleys in the streets. "

We had strict orders that no photographs were to be taken at any time. The war was still on (for another month) and for security reasons...no photographs. But, during that ten minute break in the center of Mainz, someone (I'll never know who it was, but I think it must have been Cpl. Allen from Houston, Texas, who had somehow gotten hold of a camera and film) took a photo of me in the center of Mainz with the famous Dom just behind me. I was given a copy of that photo is in about 4 x 6 inches on a soft wrinkled piece of photographic paper. How this photo was developed and printed I shall never know. It is a complete mystery to me. I somehow got that photo home where it has been in my World War II photo archives all these 60 years. End of Part I of this story.

### Paris, April 1985

We now fast-ward our story to Paris, April, 1985. Forty years later. I was in Paris on one of my periodic visits to the City of Light. It was a cold rainy gloomy spring day. I had planned to go around to the Opera-Comique to see what was playing and to visit two shops across the street from the theatre. One was a book store specializing in theatre books and the second, the Pagageno, was a well-known store specializing in opera and operetta LPs. It was a small store with a glass-windowed door with two larger front windows on each side. Inside the shop there were shelves along the two sides filled with LPs and books and theatre posters. In the back of the small shop was a counter and

behind the counter sat the lady who ran the shop. In the center of the room was a large square of wooden bins with a collection of LPs. The customer could come and browse "among the bins" to see what LPs were on sale. I was browsing there, minding my own business, when a strange voice beside me said in English "Are you a musician?" I looked to my left and here was standing a man about 40-ish who looked exactly like Rasputin. He had long stringy hair and a long aquiline face. He had on a black leather jacket and wore black leather pants. He spoke in a very German accent but passable English. I thought who is this? We started talking music and immediately got to the subject of singers and opera. He was Joseph Heinzelmann from Mainz, Germany, on a business with holiday trip to Paris.

We must have talked about 30 minutes "over the LP bins", all about music, and of course I told him about my archive of scores in Los Angeles. He was a writer, wrote translations of operetta librettos for the famous music publisher, B. Schott Sohne, of Mainz, Germany, and he had a radio show in Mainz playing operetta and other music. He was also a professor of music at a local conservatory. He was definitely a jack of all trades in the classical music field. And yes, he, too, had a collection of scores. I gave him my name and address. He said he'd keep in touch.

About three months go by and I am back in Los Angeles on the daily routine. A letter came from Mainz, Germany, one day. I read it. It was from Joseph but I couldn't for the life of me remember who he was, and why I was getting this letter. I wrote back immediately a letter of apology saying I could not remember his name and where had we met. A charming letter came back almost immediately. It was the "Rasputin" I had met earlier that spring in Paris. We started to write regularly and immediately we were able to help each other in our musical work. He sent me as gifts several scores from the Schott library who which he had written current german translations. I think I sent him photocopies of music. And then we started planning my first (of several) visits to Mainz.

The next two or three times I went to Paris and Germany, I made plans to visit Joseph and his wife, Barbara, in Mainz. They had an apartment along the Rhine River in Mainz, but they also had a charming old farm house in a small village up on the hills overlooking the Rhine in a village called Langscheid just above Oberwesel on the Rhine. I visited them three times through the years. On one visit I met them in Mainz and Joseph and I walked around the reconstructed downtown section of Mainz. And we visited the famous Mainzer Dom. I told him the story of my visit to bombed-out Mainz on April 1, 1945. I told him I had a photo of that morning stop-over in Mainz and that I would send it to him.

In due course I did send him a copy of that photo. I'm not sure when that was but I vaguely remember that several years went by before I found the photo again in my war albums and was able to get a copy made. When I did find the photo I took it to my local photo shop where the lady there was able to make a copy using one of those Kodak machines you find in photo shops. The photo, about 4 x 6, came out quite good, and I sent it off to Joseph. I had the impression this was sometime in early 2004.

**Now Spring 2005** At sometime I received a fax from Joseph saying he had received the photo and had taken it immediately to Dr. Frank Teske, head of the Stadtarchive (City Archives of Mainz. He in turn faxed me that he was very excited in getting this photo as it helped to "complete" (as he said) their collection of memorabilia of Mainz during the war. He told me that during the forthcoming months of April and May, 2005, there would be in the City Hall area of Mainz an exhibition to commemorate the ending of World War II in May, 1945. He asked my permission to use my photo in the exhibition and if I could send him the photo on a CD-Rom disc so they could fit up the photo to suit their exhibition requirements. I immediately faxed permission.

Dr. Teske asked me if I could explain the circumstances of my being in Mainz at that particular time on April 1, 1945. I looked through volume I of the book I wrote on my experiences in Europe during World War II (My two-volume story is titled "I Never Had It So Good, an Autobiography of World War II). And there was a two-page section about our company move from Kaiserslautern, through Mainz, and on into Laubenheim on the Rhine near Mainz. I typed up nicely this section of the book and faxed it back to Dr. Teske.

Several months went by and I heard nothing. Then sometime in March, Joseph faxed that the exhibition preparations were progressing nicely. April came and went, but in early May I got an envelope from Joseph one day, said envelope containing some photos he had taken of the exhibition area and one of the panel showing my photo together with the text incorporated with the photo. (See the next following pages.) So here I was... "HUNG" in Mainz for two months. What an adventure!. What a set of circumstances, all culminating in my 1945 photograph being using in a major German exhibition on World War II. None of this would have happened if I had not been in the Papageno record shop in Paris in April, 1985, at that exact moment when Joseph Heintelmann was also in that shop and choose to speak to me. He was obviously curious about the American who was looking for records. Amazing. 30 minutes later and none of this would have happened.

During the later days of June, 2005, I received from Dr. Teske a copy of the catalog of the exhibition and I am including a photo of the page from that catalog showing the panel with my photo and the german legend underneath. The writing at the bottom on the right side of the panel is the translation of my pages from my autobiography about that brief stopover in Mainz that April 1 morning in 1945.