



## **J.R. Drury**

United States Army  
World War II  
508 Military Police Company

I worked in Dallas, Texas, at the North American Aviation company, building airplanes. When I was drafted, I went to Ft. Hood for three months training and then was sent to Ft. Ord, California. We were to have gone to the South Pacific, but orders were changed and we went to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and then to LaHarve, France. On a crowded troop train we rode through France, and into Italy where we were assigned to police the town behind a group of army soldiers. They would capture the town, and we would keep it, take care of our soldiers and prisoners, and do whatever needed to be done.

From there we went into Germany, ending up in Munich. All during that time fighting was going on everywhere. We got to Munich, and they put us into three companies (A,B,C) and I was in B Company. There we had to guard all the towns in that area and police them. We had a large assignment.

Ten miles from Munich was Dachau (Concentration Camp) which was loaded with prisoners. Every day we would go out in trucks, pick up German soldiers, carry them to a town and put them to work. When they worked, we had to guard them. Dachau was something terrible. There was a furnace where they incinerated people and a pile of bones where they had burned and murdered people. There were pictures all over the wall of the people before they were imprisoned and after. We captured one of Hitler's right-hand men but he got loose so they told us to catch him. We caught him immediately downtown in a restaurant. Later, he got away and

went to South America.

After the war ended, my commanding officer asked me to drive the command car to visit “displaced persons” (dp camp). Most of them were Jews, where they had them encamped. We were taking care of them, but the Jews were afraid they would be killed. We had to take care of them and provide for them to keep them from being killed. It was awful. I did that for a year after the war was over, I did that job and went to different towns. It was interesting. In June, 1946, they sent me home, and I retired from the Army. I don’t remember how much the Army pay was, but I sent \$50 a month home to Mom and Dad.

My military experience was good. I weighed 119 pounds when I went in , and six months later I weighed 180. The Army built up your strength. It was really worth something. You’re more mentally alert when taking training.

“When you were in service, Americans really supported the military, didn’t they?” When I was overseas, we had lot of information coming to us from the U.S., and people supported us completely. We got mail quite often. Of course, it was censored.

We had some contact with civilians. The grandmother of one of my buddies was in Naples, Italy. During the year after the war we were given three weeks leave so we went to see her. She had a nice winery and made and sold wine. It was real good.

Travel in the military was an experience for me, because I lived on a farm and had never been anywhere. My wife and I traveled a lot after got married. We went back to Europe several times. I looked for my old barracks in Munich, but an apartment building had replaced them. After the war, I kept up with a couple of my buddies. I never did go to a reunion.

I took advantage of the G. I. Bill and went to the University of Tennessee, and then transferred to the University of Houston. I was there in engineering school for 4 years. After I graduated, I went to work for Charter Oil Company and stayed there for 32 years.

I became a Christian in 1935 when I was 17. I am still trying to live a Christian life. My wife and I came to Tyler six years ago, and after a few months we visited GABC and saw the Gerald Callons who we had gone to church with in Houston. They invited us to become members so we did.