

INDUCTION – FORT DIX, NJ.

On June 25, just twenty days after my brother Chuck and I graduated from high school, we reported to the Induction Officer at the Trenton Train Station. A group of us then boarded a train and traveled to the Army Induction Center in the Armory at Newark, New Jersey. We immediately underwent a thorough physical examination which I failed, due to albumen in-balance. I was detained overnight, but Chuck passed, and was sent on to Fort Dix, NJ. The next day I passed, and was also sent to Fort Dix, being assigned however, to a different unit. That was the first time that we, the twins, had ever been separated in our eighteen years.

On one of those first days in the Army while I was at Fort Dix, I was assigned for over-night duty with the Officer in Charge. Just the two of us were in the Company Office when about midnight, he told me that he was going into the adjoining office to nap and to wake him as needed. It wasn't long, however, before he came back saying that he was awakened by another terrible nightmare, the result of his experiences in battle. What an impression that made upon my young mind. I wondered what lay ahead of me.

CAMP CROFT, SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

After a few days orientation and receiving Army uniforms, I was sent to Camp Croft in Spartanburg, South Carolina. How well I remember that trip on a train without air conditioning being pulled by a steam engine with billowing black smoke streaming into the open windows. We ate c-rations out of a can and slept overnight on the floor or up on the baggage rack or slouched in our seats. The weather was very hot – typically July-like, and Southern-like.

Upon arriving at the camp, I was assigned to an Infantry Company preparing for battle in the South Pacific. Though the war in Europe had come to an end, we were still fighting the Japanese. We trained in the red earth of that area, which became like clay when it rained. Our Company Commander had been in battle and wanted us to be well prepared. Though always demanding, he nevertheless was always at the head of the march or drill, and gained a lot of respect from all of us. Someone in the Company liked to sing, and so, as we jogged from place to place, we all chanted the songs heard all across camp. Most other companies did the same.

The procedure went something like this:

The sergeant or captain would call out, "Sound off."

The soldiers' response was, "One, Two."

Sergeant - "Sound off,"

Soldiers' Response – "Three, Four."

Sergeant - "Cadence Call"

Soldiers' Response – "One, Two, Three, Four, One Two----Three Four."

The next chant might be like this one:

Sergeant – "You had a good home but you Left." (as Left foot struck the ground)

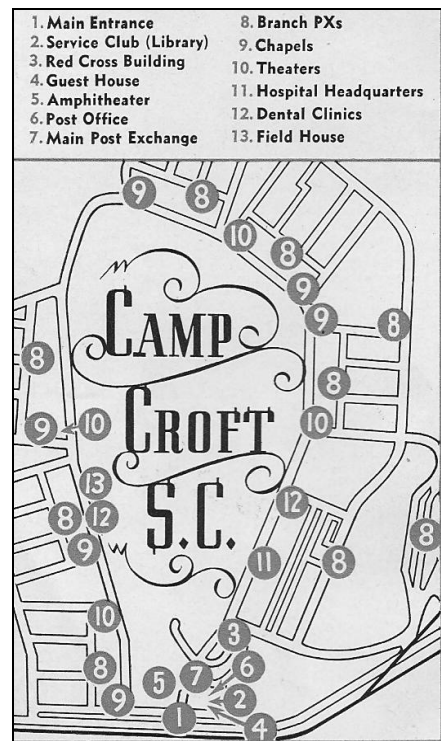
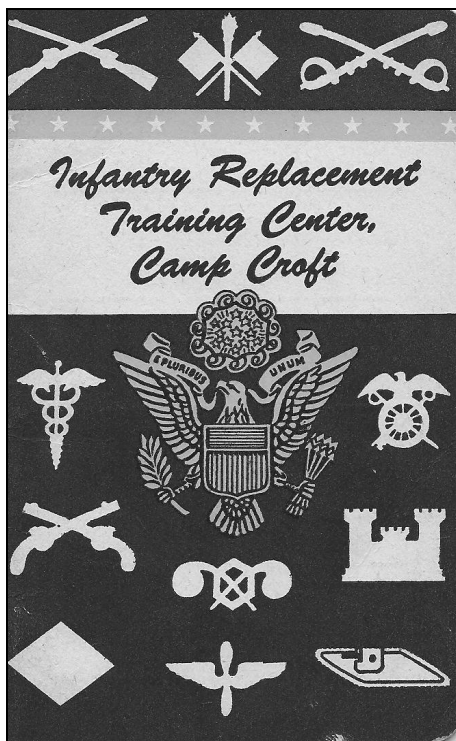
Troops - "You're Right." (as Right foot struck the ground)

Sergeant - "You had a good home but you Left." (as Left foot struck the ground)

Troops - “You’re Right.” (as Right foot struck the ground)
 “Jody was there when you Left, - You’re Right.
 “Jody’s livin it up in the Shack - You’re Right
 “There ain’t no use in going Back - You’re Right
 “You won’t get home ‘til the end of the War,
 “In nineteen-hundred, seventy-four” – You’re Right,
 “One, Two, Three, Four, - One Two – Three Four.”

Some of the other chants should not be repeated here.

Camp Croft was about six miles south of the city of Spartanburg in the beautiful countryside where cotton fields and peach orchards had been abundant in previous years. The site had been selected by U.S. Senator James Byrnes who lived in Spartanburg for many years. He managed to convince the Army Department and Congress that this was a prime location for one of the fourteen Infantry Training Camps across the US. As a result, 203 families had to be moved. For those who couldn’t find a suitable home, the Army built twenty prefabricated houses at an approximate cost of \$1000 each.



Camp Croft Handbook



Typical Army Office Building at Camp Croft



Typical Barracks at Camp Croft



Theater where we had many lectures and training films



Bill Zulker



On about the fourth week of training we were ready to test our firearms at the firing range about five miles from the camp. Of course, we had to walk there, which was a part of our training and conditioning for battle. It was not something that we looked forward to each day for about a week, but I remember one time when we got a nice surprise. It was the normal procedure for us to have a ten-minute break every hour whether we were in class sessions or on a drill. So as we trudged down the road toward

the firing range, our sergeant ordered us to take a break – and it was right alongside a peach orchard. We helped ourselves to delicious juicy peaches and took care of our other bodily concerns while there. I hope that the Army compensated the farmer for his loss, but it may have been property that the Army had already acquired.

Rainy days at camp were devastating. Training activities continued just as they did on sunny days. Lying in the wet red clay on our bellies while aiming our rifles at the imaginary Japs facing us, left us with a thick coat of mud on our fatigue uniforms. The rain did not wash off the mud but seemed to make it soak in deeper. When we returned to the barracks everyone dashed to the few wash basins to wash our fatigue-uniforms by hand and hang them on hooks over our bunks to dry. At times it was easier to stand in the showers fully clothed and wash off the mud. The next day we were to appear in clean fatigues. The problem came when we had two or more rainy days in succession. Even if the first uniform had not dried, we had to wear it because it was clean. We only had two sets of fatigues.

Another interesting experience was when we had to take the swimming test. Everyone was required to pass the test or take swimming lessons. At the designated time, several platoons of twenty or thirty soldiers marched or jogged from the barracks down the road to the swimming pool wearing a raincoat over a pair of khaki under-shorts. The raincoats were rubber and stifling hot under the blazing Southern sun on a July day. But we made it! Any benefit we had from swimming in the pool quickly vanished under the steaming hot raincoats.

CHUCK AND I RECONNECT

As stated above, Chuck and I had been separated on the first day of our induction at Newark. Though both of us went first to Fort Dix, I was sent on to Camp Croft and he stayed a while longer at Fort Dix. Several weeks after I had been in Camp Croft, he appeared, and was assigned to a Quartermaster Unit. Someone in the military then told us that if twins requested to be together a transfer could be made. I guess both of us had to make the request to our Company Commanders. At that time he was just beginning training and I was well along in my training with the Infantry. I think it was about my tenth or twelfth week with only three or four more to finish. It would have been impossible for him to catch up so it was suggested that I be transferred to his unit and pick up where he was. I did. Quartermaster Unit training was quite different. It was the supply department for the Army keeping records of what was needed, where, and how much. They were not expected to enter battle, and thus their training would be different.

From that time on, we spent a lot of time in classrooms learning how to use a typewriter, a calculator and such. How glad I was in later years when I began to write term papers in college and seminary to have developed the typing skill in the Army.

Battle preparedness was minimal in the Quartermaster Company. Nevertheless, when my new unit headed for the artillery range as I had already done, the sergeant in charge assigned me to daily duty with the kitchen staff to help deliver noon-day meals right to the firing range. It meant that I HAD TO RIDE THE TRUCK with the food and kitchen equipment, while passing Chuck and the others marching along the road. Of course, they might still be able to get some peaches en-route!

Bill Zulker in fatigues July 1945



I don't remember a lot about the training. It was routine and what one would expect – a lot of drilling, instructions in handling equipment, lectures, training films, and a constant endeavor to make us physically fit for battle. Above all was the training in obedience and strict military discipline.

By December, we were nearing the end of our training with just one more thing to do. We went on a three-day bivouac in a wooded area during one of the coldest weeks in South Carolina. It was snowing as well. Chuck and I took our two halves of a pup-tent and fastened them together as they were designed, gathered up as many pine needles as we could, and laid them on the ground under the tent to help ward off the cold. Having listened to some of the other soldiers who had been through that stage, we also had a good supply of candles. It is amazing how much warmth they provided in the tent.

I don't know if the cold temperature was the reason, but this bivouac was one of the weakest parts of our training. The fact that the War had ended in September or that the officers, many of whom had been in battle, were now exhausted or didn't see the reason for harsh training, we accomplished very little during those three days. Shortly thereafter, our training came to an end and we were ready for a forty-five day furlough back home. We spent Christmas 1945 at Camp Croft and then started a home-ward journey on a troop train.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CAMP CROFT

Camp Croft was a major training camp for the US Army. It covered 16,929 acres and had about 600 buildings. Five Regiments with sixteen battalions were stationed there. The base had a Station Hospital, Medical Dispensaries in each regimental area, a

Main Post Office with additional mail rooms in battalion areas, and nine Post Exchanges with the Main PX featuring a restaurant. All PXs had a barber and tailor shop. There were six chapels, eighteen chaplains, four theaters featuring the latest movies and entertainment, and an Amphitheater. I remember attending just one USO show.



Amphitheater for lectures and USO entertainment shows

The camp newspaper “The Spartan” – so named because of the nearby town of Spartanburg – gave the following facts and figures in the issue of December 6, 1945: 6,000 loaves of bread are baked daily; seventy-five tons of food are delivered daily to the mess halls including five tons of potatoes; 92 mess halls; 90 buses operated daily between the camp and Spartanburg; the dental staff at one time operated with 57 officers; the motor pool had 288 vehicles of which 129 were jeeps; There were 321 barracks capable of housing 19,115 men.

The huge Field House seated 1,800 for basketball games, or 2,500 for boxing or stage shows. Twelve bowling alleys and six pool tables were also available in the building. There were three swimming pools serving different regiments, as well as the Station Headquarters.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

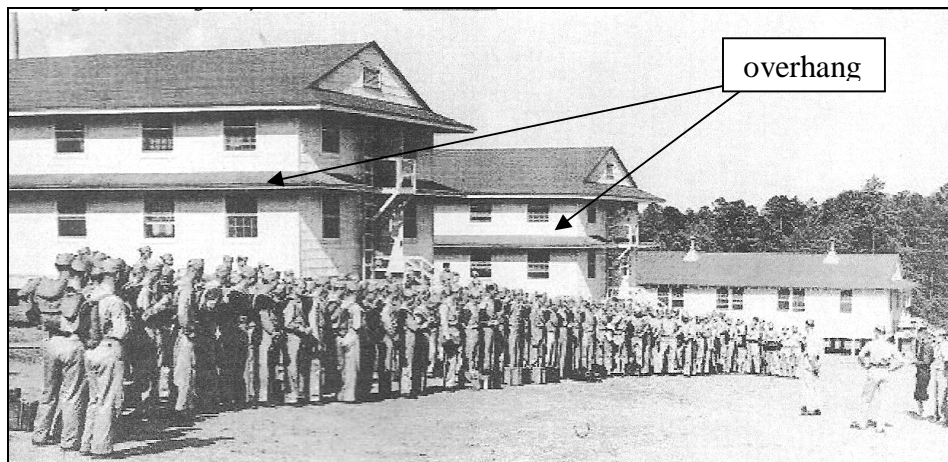
It seems strange for us today in 2010 when we carry individual cell phones that in 1945, at Camp, we had to go to the “Telephone Center” on the base in order to make a phone call. A telephone attendant assisted us in making the calls. Individual booths were assigned for the caller when the contact at the other end was made. Few other public phones were available at times, but you still had to place the call through an operator.



During my time at Camp Croft there were three different Camp Commanding Generals starting with Major General John H. Hester, then Brigadier General Lee S. Gerow, and finally Major General William M. Miley. Unfortunately, I do not remember the names of any of my Company Commanders or the names of any other officers. Apparently, such information has little interest to the 18 year old, and takes on significance only in later years. It would be interesting to know more about each of them. I do know that both Gerow and Miley had been in the fighting in Europe and were highly respected among the troops.

During my basic training I remember one very large military parade before one of the Generals, but I don't know which one.

Presently, in 2010, Camp Croft, the former military camp, is now Croft State Park covering 7,000 acres.



Barracks at Camp Croft

Saturday mornings were spent cleaning the barracks – mopping the floors, cleaning the bathrooms, and washing all windows. Note the overhang between First and Second Floors. That is where one of us stood each Saturday to wash the windows.

Glad Sack

By Sgt. Buddy Morgan

Joe Bolo was in to say "farewell". He will be leaving Croft in a short time, and so he decided to tell about his overseas experiences for a parting shot. Feeling that it might bring back memories to the lads who have been over, and at the same time, be valuable to those who have yet to go, I recorded this talk in his own words:

You know (this was Bolo speaking). I'm one of the fellows who is fighting to make the world safe for Superman and Dick Tracy—and Miss Lace. I was placed in 1-A. The next time I want to be in 2-B; 2-B here when the draft board is drafted, and 2-B here when they come back.

The fellow who examined me was a horse doctor. He asked me if I ever take fits. I answered, "No." Only when I stay in a saloon too long."

The doctor had examined 200,000 men, but he told me that I was the most perfect physical wreck he had ever seen.

I went to reception camp, Fort Dix, and some guy said, "Look what the wind blew in." I said, "Wind nothing. The draft's doing it!"

Then they gave me my clothes. The only thing that fit me were my dog tags. They had two sizes—too big and too small. As soon as you put them on you feel like fighting everybody. The shoes were so big that I turned around three times, and they didn't move.

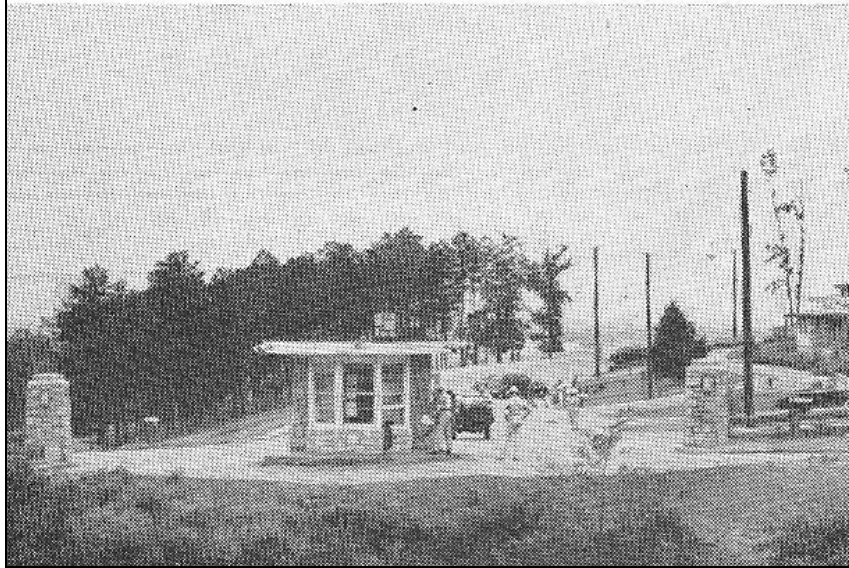
I was on the boat 15 days. I had six meals a day—three down and three up. I leaned over the rail all the time. I was in the middle of one of my best leans. The Captain rushed up and said, "What company are you in?" I answered, "I'm all by myself."

About Camp Croft

CAMP CROFT, considered by many to be one of the most beautiful camps in the country, is located in the Piedmont region of South Carolina, six miles from Spartanburg and 90 miles from Columbia. The camp is an Infantry Replacement Training center.

Camp Croft was named in honor of the late Major General Edward Croft, once Chief of Infantry, who was born and reared in nearby Greenville, S. C. Plans for construction were started in mid-December of 1940, and the post was officially activated by Colonel Louis A. Kunzig, then post commander, on Feb. 10, 1941.

Main entrance, Camp Croft



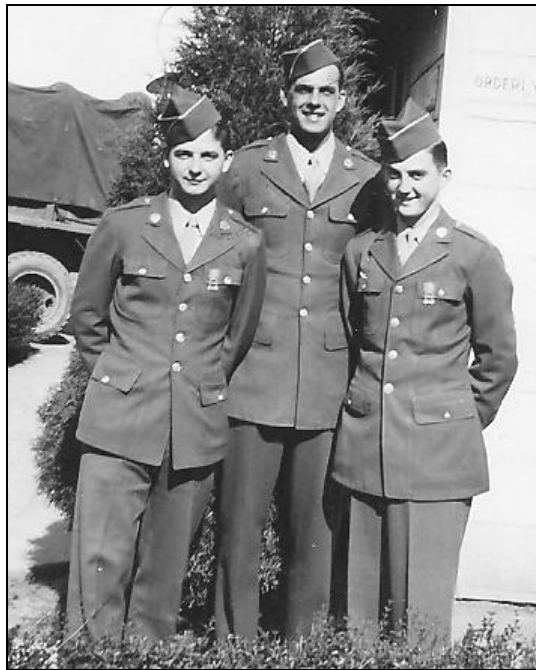
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Just six miles from Camp Croft was Spartanburg, a fairly large city, the location of Wofford and Converse Colleges. We all gravitated to the city whenever we could get a pass to leave the base. Most Sundays were free and after the first few weeks of training we usually got free some time after lunch on Saturdays. Normally, we did not have to return until late Sunday night. Commercial busses ran from the base to Spartanburg every half hour. In addition to finding the USO Club where we could relax, have donuts, coffee

or soda, I looked for a church. At that time, Chuck had not yet joined up with me. After one or two visits to denominational churches I found a very small store-front church whose service was much like the Church of the Open Bible at home in Trenton. I liked the music and the preacher, Rev Harold Horne. His wife, Jackie played the piano and sang. The two of them were so accommodating and encouraged us to return. The church itself was so simple. It was just a former store on a side street, one room, folding wood chairs, a slightly raised pulpit, pulpit desk, and a piano. No organ, no stained glass windows. In fact, there were no windows, but the service was just what I wanted at that stage in my Christian journey.

The pastor, his wife, and others in the congregation became our family away from home. It wasn't long before they were entertaining us in their homes on Sunday afternoon or taking us to a musical song-fest at other churches, which in that area they simply called "Sings". Several musical groups from various towns or churches showed up to perform. Though it was meant to be a praise and worship service, everyone knew that it was a performance. The different groups tried to outdo the others. Some things haven't changed in the Christian community. Then our new friends began driving us back to the camp after Sunday night services when they heard that otherwise we would be riding the bus with a lot of drunken soldiers.

Sometime during that summer, after my brother Chuck had joined up with me at Camp Croft, we found another soldier who liked to sing. We became "The Soldiers Trio" and sang at the church. Maynard Morgan was a bit older but we related well until he began to make advances to the pastor's wife.



Soldiers Trio

Chuck Zulker - Maynard Morgan - Bill Zulker
Camp Croft Gospel Team, South Carolina

Camp Croft Gospel Team to Conduct Service at Central

The Camp Croft Gospel team will again conduct an evangelistic service tonight at 7:30 at the Central Church near Morgan Square, it was announced today.

Sermon topic by one member of the team will be, "For Me to Live Is Christ."

Everyone is invited to attend this special service in which soldiers from Camp Croft will sing.

Though I don't recall these services, this newspaper clipping is in my files for some good reason.. I must have been the speaker because that has been my life's verse since May 1944.

Along the way, we made friends with Lee Webster and his wife, as well as Horace Jones, tenor soloist with "the Bright Spot Hour" radio program in Greenville. Horace was a wonderful, pleasant and devout Christian. Later, in 1947, after I had started Trenton (NJ) Youth For Christ, we had Horace come to sing for us. Here we are together - Bill - Horace Jones - Chuck - 1945.



Horace Jones



MY MUSICAL CAREER BEGINS ?

One day while I was in Spartanburg, I saw a trombone for sale in the window of a pawn shop. Wow, I thought. Here is my chance to become a musician. I bought it and occasionally practiced blowing it out behind our barracks in a wooded area. I didn't get far because I didn't have anyone to teach me. Nevertheless, I went on dreaming.