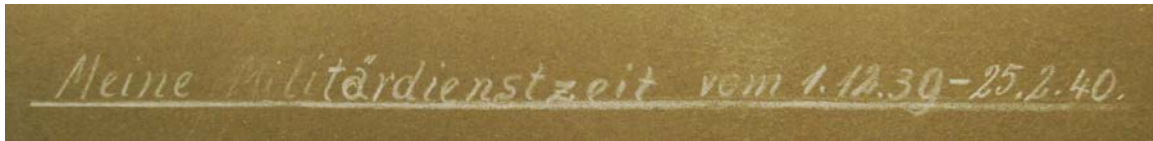


**Guide to the
MS-197: Meine Militärdienstzeit
[My Military Service]**



**Jesse Siegel '16, Smith Project Intern
July 20, 2016**

MS – 197: Meine Militärdienstzeit

(1 scrapbook)

Inclusive Dates: 1939-1945

Bulk Dates: 1940-1942

*Processed by: Jesse Siegel '16, Smith Project Intern
July 20, 2016*

Provenance

Purchased from Between the Covers, 2014.

Biographical Note

The presumed creator of this album is unnamed, but is referred to as “The Weimar Officer”, was called up in the winter of 1939, probably as a replacement officer for the 37th Antitank Battalion of the 1st Panzer Division. He passed through a period of training and bonding with his fellow soldiers at Mühlhausen, at either the General Fuchs Barracks¹ or the Wendewehrstraße Barracks, before being sent to join his unit in the Eifel Mountains in March of 1940. He appears to have been part of the baking unit for the battalion. The officer then participated in the major events of the 1st Panzer Division’s long career: the invasion of France, the Battle of Sedan, the encirclement of Allied forces at Dunkirk, and the drive south that ended France’s capacity to fight. Later the unit was transferred East Prussia, taking part in the invasion of Russia, documenting the reception from locals, the destruction of Russian tanks, the harshness of the Russian winter. His tour included momentary breaks, such as a transfer to France and stationing in Greece in 1943. It is after his return to the Russian front that his pictures end, suggesting a very difficult two years during the German retreat from Russia, possibly now in a frontline role. He was imprisoned Graz, presumably after being captured in the 1st Panzer’s defense of the city in April 1945.

Historical Note

The 1st Panzer Division was among the first tank units created by Hitler when he repudiated disarmament in 1935. It would go on to play a key role in many of the major German military campaigns of the Second World War. The 1st Panzer Division was stationed in Weimar, part of the Ninth *Wehrkreis* (military district), that included Mühlhausen, where some of the division’s units, such as the 37th Antitank Battalion, were raised and trained. After participating in the Hitler’s gradual occupations in

¹ Cramer, Karl-Heinz, *General-Fuchs-Kaserne Infanterieregiment 86: Mühlhausen/Thüringen 1938-1946* (Bad Langensalza: Verlag Rockstuhl, 2013), 3.

Austria, the Sudetenland, and Czechoslovakia, the 1st Panzer first saw action in Poland in September 1939. Transferred to the French border, the division was part of the attack through Luxembourg and the Battle of Sedan, as well as the Battle of Dunkirk in May 1940, before helping to defeat the Weygand Line in June. The rest of the division's battlefield experience came on the Russian Front, joining Army Group North in its attack on the Baltic States in June 1941 before being sent to the battle of Moscow that winter. They remained on the Russian Front until being transferred for "resting and refitting" in 1943 to France, later sent to Greece to defeat the expected Allied invasion and were involved in preventing the defection of Italian forces there after Italy's capitulation in September 1943. The 1st Panzer Division was sent back to the Russian Front, where it suffered heavy casualties in retreating from Russian forces, fighting in Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, and Austria. Much of the unit was destroyed at Szekesfehervar in Hungary in January-March 1945, but remnants of the unit survived to retreat into Upper Bavaria and surrender to American forces in May 1945.²

Scope and Content Notes

The collection includes one photo album with 48 pages and 263 pictures, three missing, and two sheets of newspaper, one dated June 1, 1937, and the other dated November 21, 1937. Below is a list of the places visited by the officer in the course of the album that could be identified, and the images he included in the album, including their page numbers. Some of the images, particularly the tank picture on page 10 and the locations depicted on pages 42-43, may be chronologically out of order.

Mühlhausen, Germanz (1-2) Wittlich, Germany (3), Moseltal, Germany (4-6), Irzich, Germany (5), Zeltingen, Germany (5-6), Bernkastel-Kues, Germany (5), the Eifel Mountains, Germany (7), Boullion, Belgium (8), Chevenges (Cheveuges), France (9), Auxi-le-Château, France (9), Monument Aux Morts des Armees de Champagne, France (10), Châlons-en-Champagne, France (11), Besançon, France (11), Belfort, France (12), on the Loire, France (13), Paris, France (14-15), Versailles, France (15), Rastenburg, Germany (16), Wartenburg, Germany (17-18), Tannenburg Memorial, East Prussia (19-20), Tilsit, East Prussia (21), Tauragė, Lithuania (22), Ostrov, Russia (23); Kalumus, Russia (24-26, 43); Chadovo, Russia (29); Kalininsky District (?), Russia (32) ; Kolesnikov, Russia (37, 43); Loos, France (40); Graz, Austria (44)

Pictures

(All captions in bold are the original captions provided by the officer; all other captions and translations are provided by Jesse Siegel)

Meine Militärdienstzeit vom 1.12.39—25.2.40. in Mühlhausen i. Thr., My period of military service from December 1, 1939, to February 25, 1940 in Mühlhausen in Thüringia: barracks with small monument in foreground (1), soldiers in wintercoats

²Mitcham, Samuel W, *The Panzer Legions: A Guide to the German Army Tank Divisions of World War II and Their Comanders* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 37-42.

posing (1), soldiers posing with officer in snow (1), soldiers posing with officer in front of barracks (1). **Die Stubenbelegschaft**, the room staff: **am M. G.**, in the military area, practicing using machine guns (2), soldiers posing in snowy woodland (2). **bei guter Stimmung.**, to be in good spirits: group in the bunk room (2), dress up as Muslims or French Foreign Legionnaires (2). **Spaziergang**, a walk, officers posing in front of small monument(2), **mit der Soldaten-Braut.**, with the soldier's bride: four young women in a garden (2), officer and wife in snowy wood (2). **Beim Feld-Ers.-Truppenteil Bäckerei-Komp. 26.2.40**, at the first field unit, bakery company, February 26, 1940: **Wittlich** barracks parade ground with band (3), **III. Schicht**, third shift: 2 photographs of baking unit (3). **beim exerziern.**, at exercises: 2 photographs of troops in the woods (3). **Heitere gemütliche Abende**, serene, comfortable evenings: 2 staged photographs of unit (4), posed party scene, with sign "Absicht von Clemo—" (4). **Sontagsurlaub**, Sunday vacation: unit on hike (4). **Spaziergang durchs Moseltal.**, 2 photographs of men in vineyards (4). – **in den Weinbergen-**, in the wine mountains: soldiers on the road among the mountainside vineyards (5), overlook of valley and town (5), **Irzich**, view of town of "Irzich" from west bank of the Mosel (5), **Zeltingen**, 1 photograph (5), **Bernkastel-Kues.**, 2 photographs (5). **Gasthaus zur Post in Zeltingen**, Inn at the Post Office in Zeltingen, (6), **Moseltal**, Mosel Valley: 3 photographs of the mountains and soldiers hiking (6). **Spaziergang an der Eifel.**, walk in the Eifel Mountains: 4 photographs in the mountains, two of posed group photos of soldiers (7). At a restaurant in the mountains (7). **Abmarsch von Wittlich nach Frankreich**, marching off from Wittlich to France: 2 photographs of soldiers by trucks (8). **"Bouillion"**, Bouillon, Belgium: 2 photographs of burned out homes along the river (8), soldiers with horse (8). **Im Einsatz**, in deployment: **"Chevenges"**, Cheveuges, France: baking machines covered from air attack (9), dead animals in a field (9). **"Auxi le Chato"**, Auxi-le-Château, France: 2 photographs of encampment disguised from air attack (9), 2 photographs of men at play and at rest (9). **Panzer**, tank: (1 missing photograph), destroyed BT-7 (possibly photograph misplaced from Russian campaign) (10). **Bunker und Gefangene**, bunker and prisoners: French prisoners by the side of a road (10), German soldier posing by French bunker. **in der "Champagne"**: 2 photographs of German soldiers posing at the Monument Aux Morts des Armees de Champagne, France (10). **Backplatz "Charlon zur Marne"**, 2 photographs of trucks and warehouses at backing place at Châlons-en-Champagne, France (11). **"la Verden"**: soldiers playing with bicycle (11), truck warehouse (11). **Veste Basangson**, Besançon, France: cityscape of town (11), soldiers milking cow (11). **"Veste Belfort"**, Belfort, France: 4 photographs of deserted street scenes from Belfort, ruined house, artillery post (12). **Beim Intendanturrat**: at the commissariat council: 4 photographs of men at lunch, cleaning clothes (13). **And der "Loire"**, on the Loire River, view of bridge (13). **Besichtigung von "Paris"**, Sightseeing in Paris: 4 photographs at or from the Eifel Tower (1 missing) (14). **"Paris"**: 3 photographs of Arch de Triumph and other landmark, (15). **"Versailles"**, 2 photographs (15). **Offiziers-Kasino Rastenburg**, officers mess, Rastenburg, East Prussia: 2 photographs of officer in snow (16), 2 photographs of group photos at the mess (16), 2 photographs at weapons cleaning (16). **Barackenquartier in Wartenburg**, barrack quarters in Wartenburg, Germany, 3 photographs of men in bunk rooms, 2 photographs of the town (17). **Backeinsatz in Wartenburg**, bakery deployment

in Wartenburg: 4 photographs of bakers at work (18). **Besuch des "Tannenberg-Denkmal"**: Visit to the Tannenberg Memorial: 7 photographs of wandering the memorial (19). **"Tannenberg-Denkmal" 1941**, 3 photographs, two group photos (20). **"Tilsit"**: 3 photographs, street scene and encampment at Tilsit, East Prussia. **"Königin-Luise" Brücke**: 1 photograph. **Stadion**: 3 photographs of stadium at Tilsit. **Flußübergang vor „Taugoggen“**, river crossing at Tauragė, Lithuania: 3 photographs of destroyed bridge, houses (22). **Litauer-Tracht**, Lithuanian garb: 2 photographs of Lithuanian civilians, one in traditional garb (22). KV-2 tank (22). **"Ostrow" in Flammen**, Ostrov, Russia in flames: 3 photographs of street scenes, one of burning house (23). 3 photographs of troops at lunch, washing clothes (23). Destroyed KV-2 tank (23). **"Kolonez" am See**, Kolonez on the lake: 6 photographs of Russian village (24). **Kirche "Benino" bei Kolonez**, Church Benino at Kolonez: 8 photographs of gilded Russian Orthodox church, possibly looted (25). **In "Kalmus"**: 4 photographs of encampment at Kalmus and bakery (26), 1 photograph of German soldier posing with downed German bomber (26), 2 photographs of Russian peasant (26). **Schlechte Straßenverhältnisse erschweren den Vormarsch**, poor road conditions impede the march forward: 2 photographs of trucks making difficult headway on roads (27). **Feindliche Panzer**: 2 photographs of destroyed Russian tanks, one a BT-7 (*1 missing*) (27). **Russische Dorfbewohner wandern zurück**, Russian villagers come back: 3 photographs of Russian villagers with wagons (28). **Kinder suchen Pilze**, children seeking mushrooms (28). **Ein Nachtlager**, a night camp (28). **Flachbreche bei „Chadowa“**, flax breakers at "Chadowa": two photographs of huts in village (29). **Beim Getreide dreschen**, at the grain threshing, 4 photographs (29). **Backbetrieb: Fliegerbomben vorm Zelt bei „Norovselje“**, aircraft bomb in front of the tent at „Norovselje“: 3 photographs of bomb crater in the woods (30), 1 photograph of tent (30). **„Syenlangis“**: baking machines on trucks, inside baking tent (30). **Zerstörte russische Papierfabrik u. Elektrizitätswerk**, destroyed Russian paper factory and power plant: 2 photographs (31), **Gräber deutscher Soldaten**, graves of German soldiers: 4 photos of German cemetery in Russia (31). **Im Einsatz in „Kalinin“**, in deployment in Kalinin: 1 photograph of bakery truck (32), 4 photographs of ruined factory and destroyed truck (32). **Unsere Schriebstube—vor und—nach dem Beschuß**, our orderly room before and after the shelling: 2 photographs (33). **Der Wagen brennt—unrettbar verloren**, the truck burns—irretrievably lost: 1 photograph. **In „Bolse-Selitsche“ auf Posten**, in "Bolse-Selitsche" at the post office: 1 photograph (34). **Das Wasser-hol-Komando**, the water carrying detachment: 1 photograph (34). A church in a Russian village (34). **Unser Wagen ist eingebrochen vor „Jelkusina“**, our truck is broken before "Jelkusina": 1 photograph of broken truck, 2 photographs of Russian village (35). **„Gersthina“**, 1 photograph (35), **„Graßnikolm“**, 1 photograph (35). **Knüppeldämme müssen hier helfen**, the log causeways must help here: 3 photographs of soldiers cutting down trees (36), 1 photograph inside timber barracks (36), 2 photographs of road building (36). **Hackenkreuzfahne in „Kolesnikowo“ und Bunker**, swastika flag over Kolesnikovo and bunker: 2 photographs of flooded road and bridge (37), 4 photographs of bunker and defensive construction (37). **Die aufgeweichten Straßen in Russland**, the rain-sodden roads in Russia: 1 photograph of bus in mud (38). **Bauern bei der Feldarbeit**, farmers at the field work: 3 photographs (38). **Fahrt nach Frankreich**, Trip to

France: 1 photograph of soldiers outside boxcar (39), 1 photograph of trucks parked by side of road (39). **Freizeit-Gestaltung**, free time organization: 3 photographs of soldiers at a lake (39). **Unsere Quartier in „Loos“ Frankreich**, our quarters in Loos, France: 3 photographs of house, lake, and yard (40). **Marsch nach Griechenland**, March to Greece: 2 photographs of countryside (41). **Ein Fest—vierjähriges Besten der Kompanie**, a celebration—four years' existence of the company: 3 photographs of band and dinner in an outdoor restaurant (41). **Auf Wache**, on watch: 1 photograph of soldier in sun helmet in park (41). **Junge Russen fahren nach Deutschland zum Arbeitseinsatz**, young Russians travel to Germany for work deployment: 2 photograph of Russian farmhouse (42), 1 photograph of soldiers moving a bus (42), 2 photographs of a group of young Russians (42). 2 photographs of groups of German soldiers (43). **Hundehütte in Kolesnikowo**, kennel in Kolesnikovo: 1 photograph of men in barracks (43), 1 photograph of men in the forest (43). **In „Kalmus“**: 2 photographs of unit, in military and baking outfits. **In der Gefangenschaft in „Graz“**, in imprisonment in Graz: 1 group photograph in civilian clothes (44).

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945—Personal Narratives, German
Germany. Heer -- History -- World War, 1939-1945

Series Description

This collection is one series, consisting of one photo album with newspaper pages within.