

Edward Grūzin
3103 Huntmaster Way
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117-111
edgru3103@comcast.net

Luke Martin
Editor 103rd Album of Remembrance
75 Salty Way East
Selbyville, Delaware 19975-9727

February 2, 2002

Dear Mr. Martin,

Thank you very much for your kind letter dated January 22, 2002. Your effort in trying to locate the names of the Soldiers from the 411th who liberated me means a great deal to me. It took many years for me find out which U.S.Army Unit gave me freedom.

As I stated in my letter to Mr. Menuey on 12/17/01, I was incarcerated in Concentration Camp Kaufering camp number 1 near Landsberg. (One of 11 camps in the Landsberg area.) I was transferred there from Lithuania in July, 1944, at the age of 16. The German SS and their Lithuanian helpers murdered many of my Family members. The only crime I committed was; I was born Jewish.

We worked 12-hour shifts building an underground Messerschmidt Aircraft facility, with very little food or winter clothing. People died from Typhus and hunger. We received one slice of bread, which was moldy, and a little soup and one potato for our daily rations. There were no bathing facilities or medical help for the sick.

On April 25, 1945 The German SS took all prisoners who could walk on a death march. I was too weak to walk. I was infested with lice and was emaciated from hunger. The SS guards did not bother with me, my father and others who were near death.

On April 27th 1945 a miracle occurred, we heard some gun fire and a while later the gates swung open and we saw soldiers of the U.S. Army entering the camp. We could not believe that we were free. They gave us fresh bread. I never saw such white bread in my life. When I was in prisoned, I was praying to be free and have enough bread to eat. My prayers came through.

I noticed an SS officer who was taken prisoner by the U.S. Army in his shiny boots. I told him to take off those boots and I give them to my father in exchange for my father's wooden clogs. The Nazi did not comply with my order; an American soldier pointed his rifle in the Nazi's direction, that took care of my request. My father who was near death could not put on those boots. I helped him, as he tried to stand up he collapsed. I wish I knew the soldier's name. I am sure he would remember the incident. This was the only revenge I took upon those murderers of my family and other innocent people.

U.S. Military Ambulance took me to Bad Woerishofen for healing, I stayed there for 3 months. After I recuperated I started searching for the rest of my family. The Red Cross informed me that my mother was murdered in Stutthof Concentration Camp and my brother was murdered in Kovno Ghetto, in Lithuania. Many years later I found out that my older brother was alive and that he returned from a different Concentration Camp in Germany to Lithuania to search for us. Instead he got stuck behind the Iron Curtain for all those years. It was not until 1992 that we were reunited in the U.S.A. After 48 years of separation we did not recognize each other. The last time I saw him he was 18 years old and now here is a man in his 60's with a family of 9 people. This was a reunion that I will never forget. I thank God that he and his family are here and they made a new life for themselves in the greatest country in the world.

I immigrated to the United States in 1949, and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Being an American Soldier was the fulfillment of my life. Can you imagine how much pride and honor I felt in wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army that gave me freedom, new life and hope.

I would appreciate if you would publish my letter in your album at your reunion, so that my liberators for the 411th can read it and get in touch with me. I would like to thank each and every one of them for what they have done for me 57 years ago. I owe so much gratitude to those GI's who saved my life. Had they arrived a few days later I would not have been here to write this letter.

I hope that the world we live in will never forget what happened during WW2 to the Jewish people. No day or night goes by that I do not think about that tragic part of my life. I hope that after I speak or correspond with my liberators I will have some closure.

I would very much appreciate if you would mail a copy to me of your publication where my letter will be printed.

God bless you.

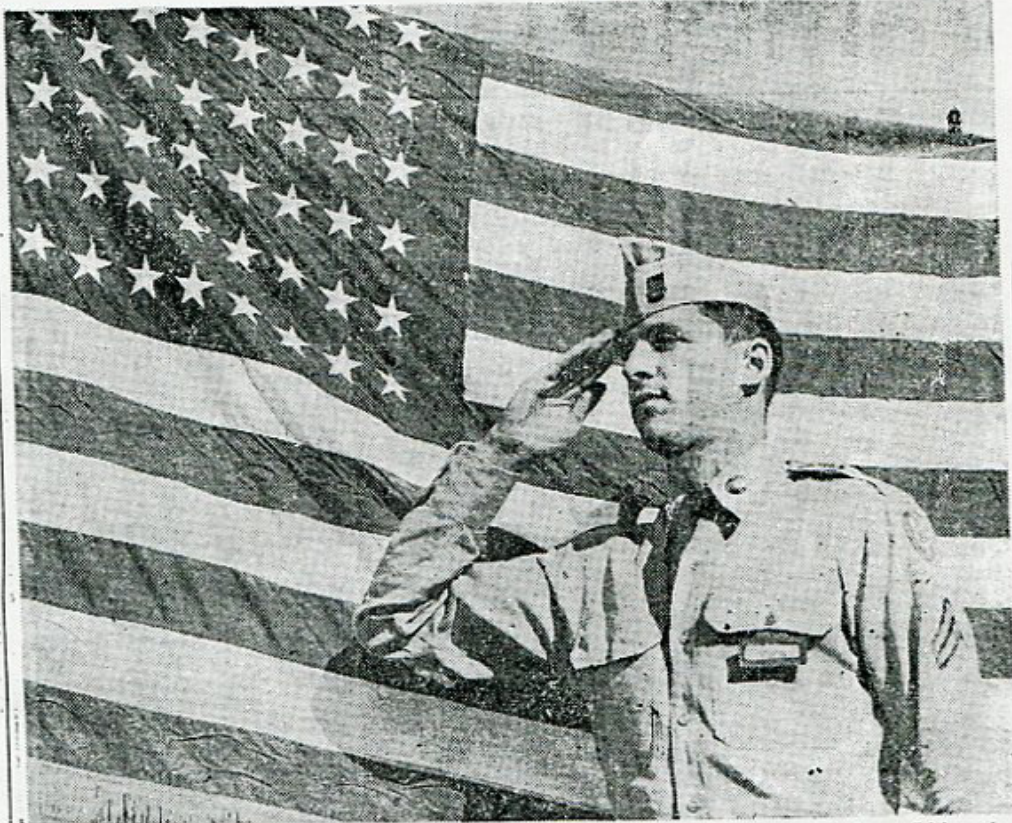
Sincerely,



Edward Gruzin

CC M.L. Ralston
Mel Wright

CITIZENSHIP DAY



FT. JACKSON'S Cpl. Edward Gruzin of Baltimore, Md., a recent emigrant from Lithuania, marks Citizenship Day with a salute to the American flag. Released from a German concentration camp by American Liberation Forces in 1945, he learned that his mother and two brothers were dead, but found his father alive. After four years of waiting, father and son had visas granted, and came to the United States in 1949. Drafted early last year, and now assigned as an instructor in the 8th Infantry Division Supply School, Gruzin says, "I am proud to serve with the army that opened the gates to freedom for my father and me."—(Army photo).