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News and Information - West Chicago Sister Cities



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WHAT IS SISTER CITIES?

This is an organization started by President Eisenhower in the 1950's after he saw the devastation caused by World War II. His hope was that if people from different countries got to know each other there would not be war.

West Chicago has a Sister City relationship with Taufkirchen-Vils, a town of about 10,000 people in Bavaria. It is about an hour east of Munich. Anyone who wants to learn more about Sister Cities is welcome to come to our meetings, the 1st Thursday in the month from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Pal Joey's. Due to our trip to Taufkirchen-Vils we will not be meeting in October, but we will be in November. Check our website for further information.

The next two months are going to be very busy as we continue to share information with the community about our organization and provide programs of interest to as many as possible.

Saturday, September 11th, we will be providing \$50.00 gift cards to the Kruse House for their auction. Some of our members will be meeting the lucky recipients and telling them about our wonderful group.

During the next week we will be meeting with the Humanities and Social Studies Division of the West Chicago Community High School. Rudy spoke to one of their classes in the spring about his experiences during the war (story following). Some of the books and DVD's we have bought for the library may be of benefit to the teachers in their classrooms and their students.

Several years ago the Chamber choir from the high school, journeyed to Taufkirchen and stayed with families there. Both the swing band and the Manner Chor have enjoyed their visits to the music departments of the high school. If our Taufkirchen friends are interested we may be able to have an art exchange and set up penpals between our schools. Contact has also been made with the German teacher at the high school to see how we might work together.

Friday, September 18th, we will be showing "Run Lola Run." Some of us originally saw this movie when Mr. Turnbaugh, at the high school, showed it to his English class. The movie takes place in modern times and won several awards in Germany. It is in German with English subtitles. If you want to add to the ambiance by bringing something to munch on or drink, feel free. Please let Sandy know if you are going to bring something.

Saturday, October 3rd, the West Chicago City Museum has asked us for a display about Sister Cities. We will be putting items into the library display case, October 9th. If anyone has any items pertaining to Taufkirchen or Germany that can be put in the display case please let Carol Vignes know. The display case is locked. The items will be taken out Sunday, October 18th. We are hoping we can use the same displays for our May-pole presentation to the Mayor. All are welcome to help to put these displays together. Contact Don.

Wednesday, October 14th, we will have our Open House at the library in the Program Room on the 1st floor. It will be from 7 p.m. to 8:30. It will be an opportunity to feature the books and DVD's we have bought for the library as well as share information about Sister Cities. We will have some Lebkuchen from Suzette's Creperie in Wheaton as well as other German desserts. Since we will be showing our slideshow you will want to come and bring your friends.

Monday, October 19th, at 7 p.m., the city will be honoring us with a 10th anniversary celebration. All are invited. Come in your German apparel or your Sister City apparel. Let everyone know who we are. It won't take long and it will be great fun. You might even be on TV. ◆◆◆

THE BEST

We are all excited about our **trip to Germany** October 1st to October 10th. This trip is for the 10th anniversary celebration of our sister city relationship. For some of us it is the first time we have journeyed to Taufkirchen. For others it will be a time to connect with old friends. Our German friends have a great trip planned for us. The night we arrive we will be a part of an anniversary celebration of the reunification of Germany. The Swing band, which was here a few years ago, will be playing.

After church, for those who are interested, on Sunday, a bus will be taking us to Munich for the last day of the October Fest. Our other trips will be to Rothenburg and to Wirtenburg to see their old towns, visit a wine cellar and to go on an English speaking tour. Other days we will be with our host families and visit Taufkirchen sites such as the schools, an arts and craft fair and of course the lovely 10th anniversary celebration itself. Our old friends from the Mannerchor will be playing.

Wish you could go? Maybe two years from now. In the meantime think about hosting when the citizens of Taufkirchen visit us next year.

In our next issue, stories of our trip to Taufkirchen. ◆◆◆



My name is Rudolf "Rudi" Rust, born on January 24th 1926 in Gleiwitz in Upper Silesia, Germany. Silesia is now part of Poland.

During and after the war I kept a small diary that was always with me.

During Hitler's rule we were strictly organized in our youth. The 10 to 14 year olds were called the young folks. The age group 14 to 18 had to join the "Hitler Youth". I joined the branch called the "Flight Hitler Youth". Flying was always my dream. We had weekly meetings and the attendance was mandatory. In the wintertime we built Model Airplanes and during the summer vacation we were actually flying Gliders. At age 15 in 1941, I made my first tests for the "A" then another one in 1942 called the "B" test with a total of about 136 flights.

I was 17 when drafted in August 1943 from High School. By the end of the year we received our Air Force uniforms including weapons in Radom, a city near the Russian border. One day at night we had to line up on the runway at Radom Airport. We left with the Military Train for France.

I found out that this train would be stuck in Gleiwitz, my hometown, for several hours. Since our house was close to the train station I took a chance to quickly go home and hug my parents. This was the last time in my life that I saw and talked to my father.

My parents made up a package with food and things to share with my "comrades" on the transport to France. I made it back to the train in time and nobody noticed my

absence. We arrived in France on February 10th 1944.

My Brother Josef Rust, a first Lieutenant in the Artillery branch of the Army found out where our unit was stationed and visited me in Toulouse. It was a great surprise and I could not believe my eyes seeing him in France. He made the only photo I have in my Airforce uniform.

Our new Quarters in France were in Dreux and Rennes right in the mountain area.

We were tested medically and physically to be accepted as Paratroopers. It was a rough training program. We were climbing and jumping walls to see if we withstand the impact of the parachute jump. Since we passed all examinations we were accepted as Paratroopers in the 5th Division of the Airforce. We received our Paratroopers Uniforms complete with high jump boots.

June 6th 1944 was the start of the American and British invasion into France.

Our Division was not far away but we were not ready for combat yet. But occasionally we went on special missions.

On the 12th of July 1944 we had to recover our wounded and fallen comrades from the "Nomansland". This is the area between the American and German frontlines. We wore large Red Cross armbands and had no weapons. The guns became silent. After this mission was completed the guns went off again.

The Normandy with all the Hedge-

rows is extremely dangerous for combat. Snipers were hidden everywhere and the mortar fire had no end. Visibility was very short.

On July 20th 1944 we moved very close to the frontlines. That night our paratrooper platoon took over all the foxholes of the SS. They had retreated and it turned out to be a terrible night. I recall an incident I will never forget. I took over a nice big Foxhole. It was just perfect for me, I felt safe and it was large enough for two.

There came a Master Sergeant from our unit and ordered me to start digging a brand new foxhole and he moved into this nice safe one I already claimed. I had no choice but had to start digging my new hole to have some cover.

Two days later, we were Carpet bombed, by about 3000 planes. When it was safe to leave our foxhole to look around, I saw my very perfect foxhole was now a very large crater. A heavy bomb hit right on top and nobody survived.

The 25th of July 1944. Our Battalion was surrounded and we received fire from all sides. We were near St. Lo and Saint Mere Eglise. We had no choice but to surrender.

A unit from the US 8th Infantry Division took us prisoner at 4:45 PM. Everything was taken from us except our lives. We received food and water right away. We were taken to a very large tent Hospital.

Our camp was set up by US Hospital personal. The Sergeant took several 5feet high stakes and drove them into the ground to outline our area. He wrapped banding material

from the medical tent around these stakes and the POW Camp was finished. We set up Army Pup Tents and received blankets to keep us warm. There was no barbed wire just that cotton band. I don't recall any guards either. I was very impressed. Our US Sergeant in charge was looking for somebody that spoke English. I was tested and got the job as the official Interpreter from the beginning and I enjoyed it very much.

We were given the Army Newspaper "Stars and Stripes" to be informed what's going on. We found out for the first time about the existence of the concentration camp in Auschwitz.

On the 10th of August 1944 we were assigned to a special work detail for about one week. We were driven with Weapons Carriers, one size larger vehicle than the Jeep, steep down to the Omaha Beach where the troops landed on June 6th 1944. Under American supervision we recovered the fallen Heroes from the first waves of the invasion and brought them to their proper resting place "The Omaha Beach Cemetery".

On the 26th of August 1944 we were moved to a different tent hospital about 5 miles from St. Lo. It was larger, more like a tent city. It was announced that a troop entertainment group from America will perform in that Tent Hospital to cheer up all the soldiers. We helped to build the stage for this special event. And also got an invitation from the Captain to enjoy the show along with the American soldiers. The main attraction was the appearance of singer Dinah Shore. It turned out to be a very good show and everybody gave the troop a lot

of applause and cheers. It was difficult to understand that just a few weeks ago we were fighting on the Battlefield under the most dangerous conditions. We all were treated well had plenty of food and were allowed, for the first time, to write a letter to our family at home.

20th of September 1944. Still in Pup tents but the rain season set in.

24th of January 1945. Celebrated my nineteenth birthday working. First snowfall.

23rd of March 1945. We were moved to Chamigneuilles, there was a large food depot, and I worked the night shift and also as an interpreter.

May 7th 1945 was the end of World War 2.

On the 24th of May 1945 I was asked to join the POW Trucking Company soon to be developed. We would be trained in a military truck driving school near Paris for about 4 to 6 weeks. Everything went fine. We were issued the licenses to drive all the American wheeled vehicles available in France. It was fun to drive those big trucks in the narrow streets in Paris.

July 7th 1945. Everybody in our camp had to donate blood and we received special treatments afterwards.

On 21st of December 1945 we were moved to Epernay. It was a large Champagne Factory we had to change into living Quarters for the American Personal and all the POW's. Christmas 1945 was real nice. We were surprised with a holiday show that everybody

enjoyed and we all received presents.

24th of January 1946. I enjoyed my 20th birthday very much.

March 1946. Our trucking company works very well. We have a Motor Pool for the 50 trucks that's protected by polish guards. On the American side, Captain William Gantt was in charge, supported by Sargent Brotzki, Sargent Meurer, Sargent Jacobsen and Sargent Scheer. We had a French-English interpreter and 2 Dispatchers scheduling and coordinating those trucks daily to meet the requirements of the military. We also have truck mechanics responsible to keep all these trucks in good working order. Every truck had a weekly maintenance day and 6 days on the road. POW Lt. Schulz is in charge of all POW drivers, mechanics, dispatchers, schedulers, and office workers. We never experienced any problems. We drove mostly our 3 axis 6x6 heavy duty trucks wherever the US Army needed us. For instance: Quartermaster, Food., PX Depots, Railroad pick ups, moving Army personal from work to their Living Quarters, moving a large gasoline and bomb depots .to new locations etc.

2nd of April 1946. Now the mail service is working. I received the first letter from my family. I was missing in action for 20 months.

Discharge on July 16th 1946. We all worked our jobs during the day and had orders to have all our documents and paperwork finished for our POW discharge scheduled for the next day. Everybody was involved including our American supervisors.

On the following day, as projected, all required documents and paperwork for discharge were ready and as promised we left France at 11:45 PM by train towards Germany.

On the 18th of July 1946 we arrived in Mühlheim (Main). Since my hometown Gleiwitz is now in Poland it was not possible to return. Our new home is now Mühlheim. We are displaced persons DP's and have to begin a new life.

My dear mother, brother Josef and Ernst were so surprised and happy when I knocked on their door. This was a welcome I will never forget.

The Russian Soldiers entered our hometown Gleiwitz on January 24th 1945.

My mother Sophie could not convince my father Adolf to leave Gleiwitz for the west before the Russians entered our town. She cried and told him: Adolf we have to leave right now or you will be real sorry. You cannot trust the Russians. The truck for the escape trip for the West was all packed but my father refused to leave. His said, I was good to everybody and treated all my people fair and well and my home is here.

When the Russians entered Gleiwitz they did a lot of damage inside our house. They told my mother that she is a capitalist and set fire to our Paper Manufacturing Plant and forced her to view the destruction until it was completely destroyed. She was forced to work as a cleaning lady for the Russians.

My dear father Adolf was taken to Krakau in Poland on March 7th 1945 were many people

from Gleiwitz were held captive. On March 18th he arrived in the concentration camp in Altchev near Woroshilowgrad . He died there on March 29th 1945. He was only 53 years old.

Name change: On my Birth Certificate: Rudolf, Adolf. Vincent, Ruzyczka, Rust. My Father was the president of the Papermills and Paper Manufacturing Companies in Silesia. The Government did not tolerate a Polish name in this position. He had to change it into Rust in 1940.

Conclusion
Considering my treatment as a POW and also working with the Americans side by side for 14 month after the end of WW2 we decided to immigrate to the US and we became citizens on November 29th 1960.

Short diary from 1941-1946 by Rudolf Rust

There Is a New Brochure About Taufkirchen in English Available!

Bodo Gsedl made a new brochure of Taufkirchen and translated it into English. Right now there is only a PDF on his website:

http://www.bodo-gsedl.de/resources/tfk_brosch_eng_web.pdf

