

# LTC Reuben L. Abramowitz (Deceased)

LTC Abramowitz was a Soldier, trainer and educator who dedicated his life to the U.S. Army Signal Corps. On his official military records he claims his sole occupation in life "Professional Soldier with primary duties as a radio communications specialist and later a Signal school commandant." But LTC Abramowitz was much more than that. To a very real extent, his story is an iconic representation of the epic American journey.

Reuben Abramowitz was born Reuben Abramovitch in the Ukraine in 1902. His family came to America in 1902 and settled in the Lower East Side of New York. Shortly after arriving, the patriarch of the family died leaving the family of five children and a widow who spoke no English. Reuben began delivering flowers

and selling newspapers when he was six. His formal schooling ended when he was nine years old.

In 1916 at the age of 14, he enlisted in the Army (he lied about his age, saying he was born in 1900). By the time he was 17 he was already a war veteran of two wars, having served in the Mexican Expedition and in World War I. In his spare time he read extensively and improved his education.

He arrived at Fort Monmouth in October 1926. There he began a career within a career as an instructor at the U.S. Army Signal School serving in the 15th Signal Service Regiment for over 15 years. As a member of the faculty, he taught thousands of soldiers the technical skills to be Signal operators during the interwar period. He developed a

timesaving method of teaching code and typing and was known as the "Dean of Hangar One." In addition, he spent the summers between 1926 and 1938 teaching Signal communications to cadets at the U.S. Army Military Academy.

In 1942 the 47-year-old NCO was commissioned as a second lieutenant, and quickly rose through the ranks.

His most extraordinary contribution to the Signal Corps came in July 1945 when he was directed to establish a European Theater Signal School at Ansbach, Germany. LTC Abramowitz established a Signal School that brought acclaim, respect and honors from senior commanders for his untiring efforts for producing professional and tactically trained Soldiers. The school graduated an average of 3,000 students each year. He also served as the first installation commander of Ansbach.

LTC Abramowitz retired from the Army after 33 years of service in 1949.

He came to America as a refugee; entered the Army at the age of 14 with only a fourth grade education and went on to become one of the greatest trainers in the history of the Regiment.

In honor of his extraordinary example of professionalism and service to the U.S. Army and the Signal Corps, MG LaWarren V. Patterson, Chief of Signal recognized LTC Reuben L. Abramowitz as a Distinguished Member of the Regiment.

**MG LaWarren V. Patterson, Chief of Signal, recognizes LTC (Ret) Ben Abramowitz, who accepted the Distinguished Member of the Regiment certificate for his father LTC Reuben L. Abramowitz during the 153rd Signal Regiment Ball held at the Augusta Marriott, June 22, 2013.**



Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)  
**Rueben L. Abramowitz**

Dear Sir,

1156 N 9th Street  
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420  
Feb. 10, 1999

Thank you very much for writing to me concerning my son, SFC Vandervelden. I was amazed when I opened the letter, because the first thing I noticed was a name I remember from about 1947. At this moment, I cannot remember the first name but I remember very well the name of Lt. Col. Abramowitz, 7718th EDUCOM Sig School, Ansbach, Germany, and after talking with Frances the other day, we talked about you having your father there with you. I just know that there cannot be any other names like yours around. In any event, I told Frances that I would write to you and tell you some of the things that I know about while attending the school. I feel that they would be interesting even if the Abramowitz that I knew was not related to you. Please bear with me.

One thing that happened (while attending the school) was that there was to be a parade in Nuremberg for some reason and that we, at the school, were to participate in this parade. Col. Abramowitz told us at this formation that we were to march in Class A uniforms and that we all knew how to march so let's do it just as though we all knew each other and had marched together before— no problem. (You must realize that of the several hundred students at the school, we were from all over the European Theatre of Operations). He also stated that we would roll out at 0500 hrs., go immediately to the mess hall and be served steak, potatoes, eggs, and toast, and at 0600 hrs we would be trucked to the Ansbach Bahnhof, entrained and leave at 0700 hrs. Then he gave us the route and the time of arrival and what we were to do when we got there. I mean to say, he told us everything we would like to know and when it would happen. Hell, we did march in the hot sun, and when we got in front of the reviewing stand we had a bond immediately behind us and in front of us, and the one at the reviewing stand. Everyone in our unit attuned themselves to the band behind us and remained in perfect step. It is important to say that there was a myriad of streetcar tracks right there and we had to go around a sharp curve at the same time. We marched at attention for over five miles, past the place where the Nuremberg trials were being held and down to the next train station, whereupon we got on the train and all but stripped and then consumed gallons of beer that was on the train waiting for us.

We were informed the next day at the formation that our unit was the best unit in the parade. Another episode I'll tell you was concerning a Saturday inspection. No sooner had the inspection team left our room when one of them came back and asked me for my name. You could say that I was a little worried about what I had done to deserve a trip to the Office. I went as soon as possible and was ushered into the office and confronted Co. First Sergeant (post personnel). He informed me to go



see someone else, can't remember who, and was told to report to the reviewing stand at the next formation. I subsequently found out that I was the No. 1 pick at the inspection and that there was a General inspecting the school and I was privileged to meet the General and to be on the reviewing stand when the other personnel "Passed in Review". I was of course standing next to Col. Abramowitz.

I have always been impressed with Col. Abramowitz's ability in reading code (ow that is). Actually, his ability to read code was phenomenal. He could read two different channels at the same time, carry on a conversation, and then, he would say, one moment please, and then proceed to type the previous codes he was listening to. He would type with both hands at the same time but using his left hand on the left typewriter and the right hand on the right typewriter, each typing the information from the respective ear. When he caught up with the code he would restart the conversation until he had to stop and type the code conversions again. Remarkable. But, the code speed was faster than 20 words per minute each which is not record speed, however, two codes and an oral conversation all at the same time.

There were other feats, but I can't recall them. I really liked and admired Col. Abramowitz. If he is your father, I sincerely hope that he is well, and I hope you have enjoyed my short stories.

I was a replacement in February, 1946 and reported to the HQ & HQ Co., 37th Tank Bn., 4th Armored Div., located at Stuttgart. Lt. Col. Creighton B. Abrams, Commanding. We eventually moved to Wetzlar and later became the 37th Constabulary. While I was going to Radio School (7718th Sig. Cen.) the 37th was deactivated and after the school, I reported to the 2nd Constabulary Regiment in Augsburg and was there until 17 August 1948.

Thank you again for taking up your time. I know how valuable it is.

Respectfully Yours,  
*Ray Vandervelden*

When COL David Abramowitz was commanding 1/1 Aviation in Ansbach, Germany, he wrote a letter to each one of his soldiers' families. SFC Vandervelden's father received one of those letters. This is his response.