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.
Dear Sir,

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, a former BROM 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 Brussels for some reason and that we all went to the parade formation that we were to march in Class A uniforms and that we all knew how to march so he let us do it just as though we all knew each other. At that time, we were well fed with an abundance of eggs and meat and 600 km, we would be trucked to the Ansbach BAHOF and arrive in the early afternoon and leave at 0700 hrs. Then we got on the route and the time of arrival and what we were to do when we got to the train station where we would get off the train and all but stripped and then loaded and off the train to the reception point.

We were informed the next day at the formation that our unit was the best unit in the parade. Another episode I tell you was concerning a Saturday inspection. No sooner had the inspection team left our road than one of them came back and asked me for my name. You could say that I was a little bit 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 Cpt. First Sergeant (post personnel). He informed me to go

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.