

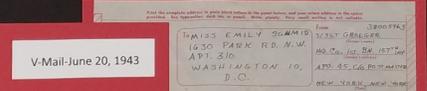
Raymond Groeger

World War II
Raymond Groeger
45th Infantry Division
"The Thunderbirds"
157th Regiment
158th Field Artillery Battalion



Raymond Groeger

V-Mail-June 20, 1943



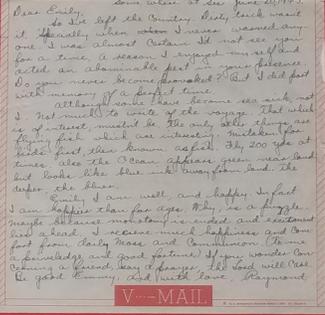
Letter and photos compliments of Emily Groeger





Raymond Groeger (right)
Unknown Soldier (Left)
Munich Germany VE Day, May 8, 1945

V-MAIL



Raymond Groeger

Raymond Groeger was Born October 25, 1917. When the war began he was attending college in Greeley, Colorado at LNC. Rather than face the possibility of being drafted, Raymond decided to enlist after one year of college. He enlisted on January 22, 1941. Assigned to the 45th Division, he was sent to train at Camp Pickett, Virginia.

Raymond met his future wife Emily shortly before being sent on deployment when she was visiting Washington D.C. with a friend. Emily has described it as being love at first sight.

The V-Mail shown to the left was the first letter of correspondence that he sent to Emily after they met. It was sent June 20, 1943. Raymond was sailing to North Africa on the 45th Infantry's first deployment since World War I. The letter is one in which young love has blossomed and a young Raymond is feeling a sense of adventure for things to come. This was the beginning of an amazing journey both for him as a soldier and the two of them as a couple.

The "Thunderbird" division was deployed in late June of 1943 to North Africa. The following month, the division landed in Sicily, where it engaged Axis troops in combat. After advancing up the Italian peninsula, the 45th landed at Anzio in February of 1944, where it withstood repeated German assaults against its positions. Cutting across the country, the unit was sent to southern France in August of 1944. It quickly advanced through western France, reaching the German border by the end of the year. In March of 1945, the "Thunderbird" division crossed the Rhine River and headed southward. On April 20th, it captured the city of Nuremberg and on April 30th, Munich. (Information provided by the United States Holocaust Museum)

On April 29, 1945 the 157th Infantry, of which Raymond was assigned, was the first to encounter the Nazi Jewish concentration camp of Dachau and were the first to witness the horrors and atrocities that had occurred there. Raymond's Division then made its way into the heart of Nazi Germany, all the way to Hitler's Eagle's Nest.

During the war the 45th fought 511 days of combat. Raymond was awarded the Purple Heart for an injury in which he received shrapnel in his shoulder.

Raymond and Emily continued their letter writing throughout the war and afterwards they married. After the war Raymond went back to college to finish his education and enjoyed a wonderfully prosperous life. They settled in Woodland Park in 1976, had 14 children and 31 grandchildren. He became a family doctor in the area. He passed away on December 7, 1990, and is buried at the Woodland Park Cemetery.

His wife Emily still lives in Woodland Park and enjoys spending time with her family and sharing her scrapbook memories of the life she had with husband with her grandchildren so that they will always remember their adventures.



The 45th Infantry and the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp

V-MAIL



45th Division News

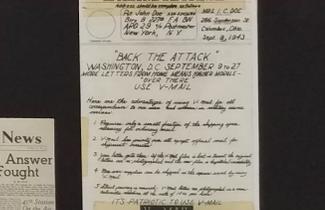
Dachau Gives Answer To Why We Fought

Munich Is Largest City 45th Ever Has Captured



View of the Dachau concentration camp, after liberation, Germany, April 29, 1945.
- 125 Holocaust Memorial Museum

V-MAIL



THE CALL TO DUTY

JOIN THE ARMY

FOR HOME AND COUNTRY





Raymond Groeger was born October 25, 1917. When World War II began he was attending college in Greeley, Colorado, at the Colorado State College of Education (now the University of Northern Colorado). Rather than face the possibility of being drafted, Raymond decided to enlist after one year of college. He enlisted in the US Army on January 22, 1941. He was assigned to the 45th Infantry Division and sent to train at Camp Pickett, Virginia.

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Emily still lives in Woodland Park and enjoys spending time with her family and sharing her scrapbook memories of the life she had with Raymond with her grandchildren so that they will always remember their adventures.



Emily Groeger is pictured in front of the Letters Home Exhibit at the Woodland Park Public Library with Rampart Library District director Michelle Petrazzoulo. November 10, 2018