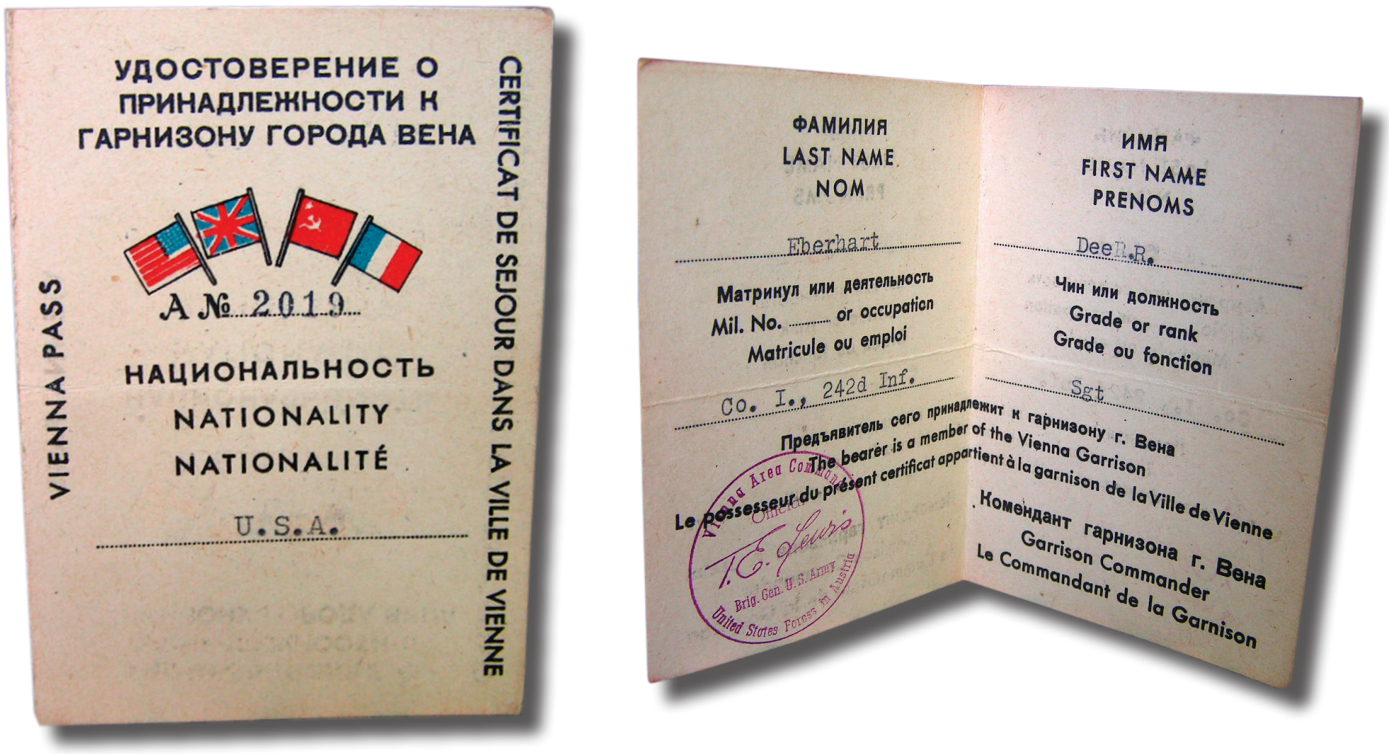

Identity Card

All American military personnel were required to carry these multilingual passes. Immediate post-war Vienna [where I was stationed] was divided into four occupation sectors: American, British, French and Soviet Union, plus an inner city "international zone," where soldiers of the four occupying nations were free to circulate.

-Dee Eberhart, a member of the 42nd Infantry Division (also known as the "Rainbow Division), which liberated Dachau Concentration Camp on April 29, 1945.

This card identified soldiers' nationalities and permitted them to pass from one occupied sector to another. These passes could also be used for identification for going into military clubs.

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Dee Eberhart—
Approx. May 3, 1945, Germany.

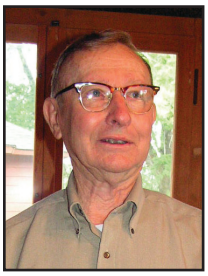
"For a guy that thought I was pretty hardened to combat, to stumble onto the mess at Dachau…I wasn't ready for that."
– Dee Eberhart*

Only ten days after his graduation from Toppenish High School, near Yakima, Washington, Dee Eberhart was called up for service by the United States Army. He trained as a rifleman at Camp Roberts, California and went overseas with a rifle company in the 42nd Rainbow Division. In the Rainbow Division,** Dee served as a first scout in France, Germany and Austria in 1944 through 1945 with the Seventh Army.

On April 29, 1945, his platoon arrived at the large concentration camp complex Dachau. 67,000 prisoners were being held in Dachau – half were in the main camp, while others were in the surrounding sub-camps. The Rainbow Division is credited with the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp.

The Rainbow Division and the International Dachau Committee (a group of prisoners organized from within the camp from many nations) worked together to quickly establish hospital care and food deliveries to the newly liberated prisoners.

Dee's platoon spent the night of April 29th in the town of Dachau and on the next day, participated in the capture of Munich. Dee was in the Army of Occupation in Austria until he returned home for discharge in the spring of 1945.



2006.

Today Dee remains very active with his fellow soldiers from the Rainbow Division. Dee is a member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Speakers Bureau.

**From an interview with James Joyce III, Yakima Herald Republic, 4/23/06.*

****Rainbow Division -** *The 42nd Rainbow Division was formed in August 1917 of National Guard units from 26 states and the District of Columbia. After Chief of Staff Major Douglas MacArthur remarked that the Division "would stretch over the whole country like a rainbow," this group of national guard units became known as the Rainbow Division (Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation).*

"I was a 19-year old American soldier in General Patton's Third Army when we came to Buchenwald in 1945. Revisiting my past while teaching our future became a healing process for me. It helped me overcome the nightmares of my experience as a liberator of that hellish place." - Leo D. Hymas

Leo D. Hymas, seasoned soldier –
Japan, Nov. 1945

After graduating from high school in May of 1944, Leo Hymas was drafted into the U.S. Army and trained as a heavy machine gun operator. In 1945, Leo landed in France and his division was assigned to General Patton's Third Army which advanced into Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Leo was part of the American military forces that entered Buchenwald, a Nazi concentration camp in Weimer, Germany, in April 1945.

Leo witnessed a horrible scene at the camp – over 20,000 starving, ill, and exhausted prisoners. Even with the best possible medical treatment by the Americans, hundreds continued to die.

When the war in Europe ended, Leo was sent to Japan for occupation duties under General Douglas MacArthur. He was honorably discharged May 12, 1946.

2005.

Leo is a member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Speakers Bureau.