



Biographies of Elmer Reis and Milton Schloss

Elmer Reis (1917-2009)

Elmer Reis was born in 1917 as a fifth-generation Cincinnati. Elmer was working as an officer at Cincinnati Police Division when he enlisted in the United States Army in 1941 at age 24. In the Army, Elmer served in the 4th Armored Division under General Patton in a Military Police unit. The 4th Armored Division relieved the 101st Airborne Division in the Battle of the Bulge and Elmer's unit was the first to cross the Rhine River into Germany. On April 4, 1945, Elmer was among the American troops that liberated Ohrdruf, a subcamp of Buchenwald concentration camp. This was the first concentration camp liberated by the U.S. Army. The discovery of Ohrdruf opened the eyes of many American soldiers to the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

For his service in the U.S. Army, Elmer was awarded a Bronze Star; Purple Heart; American Campaign with 5 battle stars; a European, Africa and Mid-Eastern Campaign medal; and recognition for several other military achievements. A Presidential Citation and French Croix de Guerre were awarded to the entire 4th Armored Division.

Following WWII, Elmer remained in active duty until June 1946 and served as a U.S. Army Reserve member until 1973. At home, Elmer continued his law enforcement career in Cincinnati and obtained a law degree from Salmon P. Chase College of Law. He married Esther in 1945 and they had a daughter, Carol. Elmer never forgot about what he witnessed at Ohrdruf during WWII and he devoted the rest of his life to advocating for social justice.

Milton Schloss (1913-2007)

Milton Schloss was born in 1913 to a German Jewish immigrant family that first settled in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1880. After studying at the University of Michigan, Milton returned to Cincinnati to work for Kahn's & Co., a meat business founded by his grandfather. Milton married Mary Louise (Telker) Schloss in 1941 and the couple was expecting their first child when the United States entered WWII.

With the U.S. at war, Milton felt it was his duty to fight for the Jews of Europe, and he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942. Schloss served from 1944-1945 in the 4th Armored Division. His infantry unit participated in the Normandy Invasion, the Battle for Eastern France, the Battle of the Bulge, and the battles for Germany and Czechoslovakia. Milton witnessed Nazi atrocities when his unit liberated Ohrdruf, a subcamp of Buchenwald concentration camp. Understanding some German, Milton listened to some of the prisoners at Ohrdruf tell their stories for the first time. For his service in the U.S. Army, Milton received a Bronze Star, six service stars, and recognition for several other military achievements.

After the war, Milton returned to the family business and served as CEO of Kahn's meat company from 1948-1966. Later in his career, he worked for the University of Cincinnati Business College until 1987 and retired in 1991 as the CEO of the John Morrell Company. After the death of his first wife, Milton remarried Frances (Huttenbauer) Friedman Schloss. The couple had three children and two stepchildren. Schloss was a strong advocate for the State of Israel, even calling himself the First Reform Jewish Zionist in Cincinnati. Never forgetting what he witnessed at Ohrdruf, Milton continued to support Holocaust education and shared his story publicly throughout his life.