



Railsplitter Obituary



Henry Alfred Kissinger

27 May 1923 – 29 November 2023.

Henry Alfred Kissinger[a] (May 27, 1923 – November 29, 2023) was an American diplomat and political scientist who served as United States Secretary of State from 1973 to 1977 and National Security Advisor from 1969 to 1975, in the presidential administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Kissinger underwent basic training at Camp Croft in Spartanburg, South Carolina. On June 19, 1943, while stationed in South Carolina, he became a naturalized U.S. citizen. The army sent him to study engineering at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania under the Army Specialized Training Program, but the program was canceled and Kissinger was reassigned to the 84th Infantry Division. There, he made the acquaintance of Fritz Kraemer, a fellow immigrant from Germany who noted Kissinger's fluency in German and his intellect and arranged for him to be assigned to the division's military intelligence. Kissinger saw combat with the division and volunteered for hazardous intelligence duties during the Battle of the Bulge. On April 10, 1945, he participated in the liberation of the Hannover-Ahlem concentration camp, a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp. At the time, Kissinger wrote in his journal, "I had never seen people degraded to the level that people were in Ahlem. They barely looked human. They were skeletons." After



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the initial shock, however, Kissinger was relatively silent about his wartime service.
[23][24]

During the American advance into Germany, Kissinger, though only a private, was put in charge of the administration of the city of Krefeld because of a lack of German speakers on the division's intelligence staff. Within eight days he had established a civilian administration.[25] Kissinger was then reassigned to the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), where he became a CIC Special Agent holding the enlisted rank of sergeant. He was given charge of a team in Hanover assigned to tracking down Gestapo officers and other saboteurs, for which he was awarded the Bronze Star.[26] Kissinger drew up a comprehensive list of all known Gestapo employees in the Bergstraße region, and had them rounded up. By the end of July, 12 men had been arrested. In March 1947, Fritz Girke, Hans Hellenbroich, Michael Raaf, and Karl Stattmann were subsequently caught and tried by the Dachau Military Tribunal for killing two American prisoners of war. The four men were all found guilty and sentenced to death. They were executed by hanging at Landsberg Prison in October 1948.[27]

In June 1945, Kissinger was made commandant of the Bensheim metro CIC detachment, Bergstraße district of Hesse, with responsibility for denazification of the district. Although he possessed absolute authority and powers of arrest, Kissinger took care to avoid abuses against the local population by his command.
[28]

In 1946, Kissinger was reassigned to teach at the European Command Intelligence School at Camp King and, as a civilian employee following his separation from the army, continued to serve in this role.[29][30]

Kissinger recalled that his experience in the army "made me feel like an American".

Ironically although he has won a Nobel Peace Prize, Kissinger has also been criticized for his actions globally and has been called by some a "War Criminal".

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Henry Kissinger, future U.S. Secretary of State, was assigned to Company G, 335th Infantry Regiment, 84th Division while serving in the U.S. Army at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana.



Henry Kissinger stands at right with other American soldiers as they befriend a group of German children during World War II.