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## Fred Rosenbaum, 1926-2010

**By The Oregonian Editorial Board**

January 12, 2010, 4:12PM



Courtesy photo

Fred Rosenbaum in 1945

He said it to everyone, from Air National Guardsmen deploying to Iraq to the at-risk kids attending the summer camp he established at Camp Rilea.

"America," he would say, "is the greatest country in the world." To the young ones, he would add, "You can go as high as you want to."

Fred Rosenbaum went high indeed, but the real story of his life is the way he repaid his obligation to all the people who helped him arrive at those sunny moments in 21st-century Oregon. He knew he was blessed to rise from persecution to honor and he would not let that blessing stop with him. It was his lifelong practice to pass it along.

Rosenbaum and his parents were living an increasingly fearful life in Vienna in 1938. Approaching intersections, his parents sent Fred -- then Fritz -- ahead, to see whether Jewish adults could safely cross the open space. One day, the students at his school were told that the Nazis were coming, and 12-year-old Fritz scrambled out the window and ran.

He was swept up in a shining English moment, the Kindertransport, when the Anglican church opened its arms to children fleeing Nazi-controlled Europe. He lived in various households in England for

about 18 months. One at a time, his parents escaped to join him. It was a triumphant but tragic passage: Fred and his parents reached America, but his grandparents died in a concentration camp.

In America, Fred joined the U.S. military and served in the Philippines before the war ended. He came home to Portland; worked for his father, a jeweler's representative; and took college courses. In 1953, he joined the Oregon Air National Guard as a junior officer.

Rosenbaum joined civic organizations, performed charitable work and rose through the Guard ranks to brigadier general. For 13 years, he served as chairman of the Housing Authority of Portland.

From this experience, he launched a summer camp for disadvantaged kids at Camp Rilea. The camp, now known as Camp Rosenbaum, gave some of the kids their first taste of the forests and first views of the ocean. Even long after retirement, Fred would come to visit, and tell the kids that they could overcome any difficulties and succeed in this country.

Later in life, he made it a mission to forge relationships with military officials in Austria. Delegations from the Oregon Air National Guard went there, and Austrians came here. For Fred, it provided experiences to overcome the memory of his childhood flight. When he left, he was a fearful child. When he returned, he was an officer, a civic leader and a gentleman.

Even in the last year of his life, as the cancer gained, he would pick up the phone and call The Oregonian. "We've got to do something to help these kids coming back from the Middle East," he would say. "We need to make sure they can stay in their houses." He said he would talk to his banker friends to make sure veterans would have a friendly contact at the bank.

He died early Tuesday morning, attended by Jane, his wife of 54 years, and his children. It was peaceful, a

friend said. They'd had time to say goodbye.

The rest of us might look for ways to say, "Thank you."

We might find them in the form of a disadvantaged child, or of a soldier in uniform. We might find them in our former adversaries.

Or, always, in our own families.

**(For more on Fred Rosenbaum, see the entry at Oregon at War)**

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