

Short Bio

Author Kurt Vonnegut was born on November 11, 1922, in Indianapolis, Indiana, and graduated from Shortridge High School before briefly attending Cornell University. Upon his departure from Cornell, he enlisted in the United States Army, attended basic training at Fort Bragg, and studied mechanical engineering at the University of Tennessee for seven weeks during February and March 1944 as part of the short-lived Army Specialized Training Program. Due to an urgent need for infantry troops abroad, Vonnegut was reassigned to the 106th Infantry Division, where he served as an intelligence scout in France. On December 19, 1944, Vonnegut was captured by German forces during the Battle of the Bulge, and following his capture, Vonnegut would serve on various work details, mainly in Dresden, where he would survive Allied bombings. Liberated by Soviet forces in May 1945, he would return home and become the author he's known as today.

Extended Bio

Kurt Vonnegut was born on November 11, 1922, in Indianapolis, Indiana, to architect Kurt Vonnegut Sr. and his wife Edith. In 1936, he would enroll in Shortridge High School, where he would fill the role of co-editor of the school newspaper, *The Shortridge Echo*, alongside a future writer on the *I Love Lucy* television series, Madelyn Pugh. It's here that Vonnegut began to develop the ability to write for a broad audience rather than a single teacher, which would be incredibly influential in his future endeavors as an author. Upon graduating from Shortridge in 1940, he enrolled at Cornell University, where he became managing editor of the student newspaper, the *Cornell Daily Sun*, before dropping out due to poor grades.

Following his departure from Cornell, Vonnegut enlisted in the United States Army and reported to Fort Bragg for basic training in 1943. Following basic training, he would study mechanical engineering at both the Carnegie Institute of Technology and the University of Tennessee as part of the Army Specialized Training Program, a short-lived program designed to provide a steady flow of specially trained soldiers to feed the war effort abroad. Vonnegut studied at the University of Tennessee for seven weeks in February and March of 1944. During this time, his courses included shop practice, for which he received a grade of 85, and thermodynamics and calculus, both of which he received a grade of 68.

Due to the pressing need for Infantry Soldiers overseas, the Army Specialized Training Program would be largely discontinued, and Vonnegut would be assigned to train with the 106th Infantry Division at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. In December of 1944, Private First Class Vonnegut and his unit, the 423rd Infantry Regiment, would arrive in Le Havre, France, before receiving orders to head towards St. Vith. It's here where German soldiers would take him prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge on December 19, 1944. Following his capture, he would be assigned to various work details, including one in which he worked in a malt-syrup factory and was housed in a slaughterhouse in Dresden. In May of 1945, Vonnegut and fellow POWs would be liberated by the Soviet army. While he is best remembered today for his career as a writer, including his writing of notable works such as *Slaughterhouse-Five*, a book heavily inspired by his experiences as a POW in Dresden, Kurt Vonnegut was heavily influenced by his military service, and these formative years made his future career as a successful author possible.

Works Cited

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