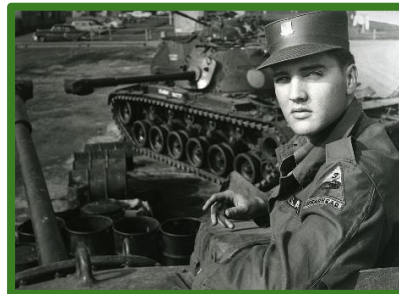


Elvis – the army years

Quick facts

Elvis Presley was officially inducted into the U.S. Army (28 March 1958)

- On this day, Elvis reported for active duty after being drafted.
- He entered basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, before later being stationed in Germany.
- This moment marked a huge turning point:
 - It temporarily paused his film and music career
 - It solidified his public image as humble, disciplined, and patriotic
 - It changed his life personally — including meeting Priscilla Beaulieu overseas
- Elvis could have taken a special services role (easy, celebrity treatment), but he refused, choosing to serve as a regular soldier — something that earned him massive respect, even from critics.



Timeline

MARCH 1958 — ENTERS THE ARMY

24–28 March 1958
Drafted at peak fame
Gets iconic military haircut

🔑 *Transformation begins: Rebel → Respectable*

AUGUST 1958 — PERSONAL TRAGEDY

Mother Gladys Presley dies
Elvis returns home on emergency leave
Deep emotional breakdown

🔑 *Turning point: Emotional maturity & vulnerability*

OCTOBER 1958 — DEPLOYED TO GERMANY

Sent to Friedberg, West Germany

Lives in Bad Nauheim
Serves as a tank crewman

🔑 *Lives largely like a normal soldier despite fame*

1959 — MEETS PRISCILLA

Meets Priscilla Presley (age 14)

Begins relationship that shapes his future

🔑 *Future wife enters his life*

1958–1960 — MUSICAL EVOLUTION (QUIETLY)

No official recordings
Practices piano and vocals
Influenced by Mario Lanza
Develops smoother, deeper singing style

🔑 *Seeds planted for his 1960s sound*

MARCH 1960 — RETURNS HOME

Discharged from Army;
Welcomed as a national hero
Relaunches career:

TV special with Frank Sinatra
Hits: *Stuck on You, It's Now or Never*

Film: *G.I. Blues*

🔑 *Reinvention complete: Teen idol → Global legend*

1959–1960 — MILITARY PROGRESS

Works hard, follows orders
Promoted up to Sergeant
Maintains excellent service record

🔑 *Earns respect beyond celebrity status*

1958–1960 — INNER CIRCLE & LIFE

Surrounded by close friends (Memphis Mafia)

Father Vernon Presley joins him
Tension over family dynamics

🔑 *Support system grows — but so do personal conflicts*

1958–1960 — HIDDEN STRUGGLE

Introduced to amphetamines
Used to stay awake during duties

🔑 *Beginning of long-term dependency issues*

Digging deeper

So he liked Mario Lanza?

Elvis Presley was a devoted fan of Mario Lanza, regarding him as one of his vocal idols and frequently listening to his records, particularly during his time in the Army in Germany. The Mario Lanza songs and performances Elvis liked especially included:

- **"Be My Love"**: Considered a favourite of Elvis.
- **"O Sole Mio"**: Lanza's version inspired Elvis to record his own version, "It's Now or Never".
- **"The Student Prince" (Album)**: Elvis specifically mentioned this soundtrack album as a favourite.
- **"Serenade"**: Highlighted as having a significant impact on Elvis's style.
- **"Golden Days"**: Another song from *The Student Prince* that influenced him.
- **"I'll walk with God"**: Enjoyed for its operatic style.
- **"Ave Maria"**: Mentioned as a favourite.

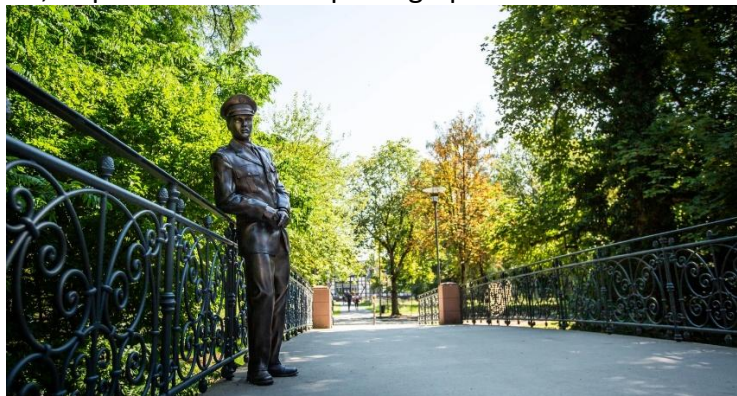
Additionally, Elvis was influenced by Lanza's **"Torna a Sorrento"** (which inspired "Surrender"). Elvis often imitated Lanza's operatic style in his own ballads, such as "Can't Help Falling in Love".

So you want to know about Bad Nauheim?

While stationed at Ray Barracks in Friedberg in 1958, Elvis Presley lived off-base in Bad Nauheim, frequenting local spas, cafés, and picturesque lakes. Key, authentic locations included his home at Goethestrasse 14, the Hotel Villa Grunewald, the Usa Bridge, and nearby Hattsteinweiher lake for leisure, making these top tourist spots today.

Key places in Bad Nauheim and Friedberg

- **[Goethestrasse 14 \(Bad Nauheim\)](#)**: The private house where Elvis lived with his family during his time in Germany.
- **[Hotel Villa Grunewald \(Bad Nauheim\)](#)**: Elvis stayed on the second floor when he first arrived; Room 10 remains in its original state and can be booked.
- **[Ray Barracks \(Friedberg\)](#)**: The U.S. Army base where Elvis served.
- **[Elvis Statue and Bridge \(Bad Nauheim\)](#)**: A bronze statue stands on the bridge over the Usa River, a spot where he was photographed in 1959.



- [Elvis Presley Platz \(Bad Nauheim\)](#): A plaza dedicated to the singer.
- [Café Bienenkorb \(Bad Nauheim\)](#): A local cafe he was known to visit.

Recreation and Leisure Places

- [Hattsteinweiher \(Usingen\)](#): An artificial lake with a sandy beach visited by Elvis in the summer of 1959.
- [Gederner Lake \(Gedern\)](#): A spot 35 km from Friedberg where he enjoyed breaks.
- [Spa Park \(Bad Nauheim\)](#): The scenic town centre park with traditional spa architecture.

Annual Events

- [European Elvis Festival \(Bad Nauheim\)](#): Held annually in August near the anniversary of his death, celebrating his time in the town.

While in Germany, Elvis was known to drive his BMW R69 motorcycle and interact with local residents, making the town of Bad Nauheim a significant part of his personal history and a major pilgrimage site for fans.

So the Memphis Mafia were in Germany?

Key aspects of the Memphis Mafia in Germany in 1959 included:

- **Key members present:** Lamar Fike and Rex Mansfield, who accompanied Elvis from Memphis, were present. Red West visited at times. Joe Esposito met Elvis during his army service in Germany and became a trusted member of his entourage.
- **Living situation:** Members of his entourage stayed nearby or with him, with them often staying at the Park Hotel in Bad Nauheim.
- **1959 Activities:** The entourage was involved in Elvis's 14-day leave to Munich and Paris in June 1959, featuring Lamar Fike, Rex Mansfield, and Charlie Hodge. He stayed at the Hotel Prince De Galles in Paris, visiting nightclubs like the Moulin Rouge. Earlier, in March 1959, they accompanied him on trips to Lake Starnberg, Bavaria.
- **Key personal associations:** Elisabeth Stefaniak was also hired by Elvis to handle fan mail and was part of the inner circle in Germany.

