

Picture This...

This web site strives to provide the most accurate visual and historical documentation as possible, and you can help in this quest. Many of you have photos of your experience in Germany and could contribute valuable images that will both, help complete that historical record, as well as bring a lot of enjoyment to those who served at your site.

The issue is how to get the photographs in to a useful format that we can use on the website. And the only way to do that is to use a scanner which will convert them into digital form.

File Formats...

However, a discussion of how these images should be scanned and saved is in order. But first a bit of history.

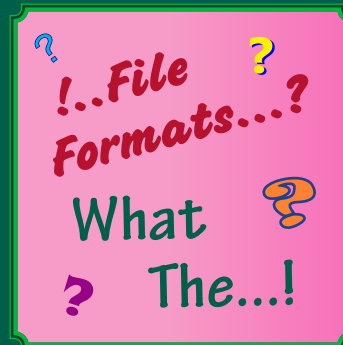
The camera manufacturers have conditioned the average consumer into using the ".jpg" image format, because that was what served them in their marketing schemes. The .jpg image format results in images that are small in file size, which allows more images to be stored on a camera memory card. It's their way to give the consumer the most bang for their buck, but it also short changes the images.

The .jpg Format...

The .jpg image format was originally devised in order to

create photographic images for the web that could be reduced into small file sizes. Small file sizes were essential because at that time we were all using painfully slow 28.8 and 56.6 internal fax/modems to connect to the internet, so small files sizes helped to make that experience relatively faster.

However, what is not revealed is that using the .jpg image format, and by saving them over and over, actually degrades the image quality, and here is why...!



The way a .jpg file is made smaller is with the saving process itself. An algorithm was incorporated into code that would look at the file and its color relationships and make compromises of elimination, meaning that color data would be eliminated. The less data the smaller the file size.

So file compression is a compromise between file size and picture quality. However when this process is used and the data is lost it can never be retrieved. In fact, as previously stated, the more times a ".jpg" is saved the more image data that is lost, and the image continues to be degraded over and over again.

I have placed two contrasting examples on the following pages. The first, on page 3, is a ".jpg" that has been saved about 8 or 10 times and the second, on page 4, is an enhanced working ".tif" that has been saved many times while

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creating the final image. It is still as clear and crisp as the first time it was saved. So when finished it will then saved as an optimized .jpg, and upload it to the website.

Please Note: You can use the back and forth page arrows to get a good idea of the difference.

File Formats...

If one is to get the maximum benefit of their images they should be saved in a file format that does not use any data compression in any way.

The best file format that should be used in scanning is the "tif or "tiff" (Tagged Image File Format) Using "tiff" or ".tif", at a resolution of either 300 or 600 ppi (pixels per inch), which insures that the maximum amount of image data is available.

If you look at the resolution of a .jpg you will see that its default size is generally 72 ppi. That gives one little chance for good image data or enhancement.

In other words, one does all of their work in the ".tif" format, then if web images are needed, it can saved as an optimized ".jpg" and uploaded on to the website

To sum up... The ".jpg" file format should be avoided at all times, if possible. Even when I am forced to deal with a

.jpg file I immediately save it as a .tif" in order to salvage the remaining data! should add that everything discussed above applies to digital cameras as well. General consumer cameras usually only offer a .jpg option. If that is the case, then try to use the highest .jpg setting possible. That way images will at least have a higher resolution.

The best file option is the "RAW" format, but that option usually on comes with cameras that start to get pricey, and the photo file size starts to increase. But memory cards are so inexpensive that, if you want to get the most of your photo archives, then it's worth it.

Many guys have sent me their photographs, which I then scan, returning them promptly and in tact. Like the photo on pages 5 and 6. There have never been any problems with this option.

I am happy to discuss any of the above information, so feel free to give me a call.





Farmer's Fields on The Heuchelberg



Farmer's Fields on The Heuchelberg



Annual Service Practice on Crete

This photo was scanned on my Agfa Snapscan 1236 Flat Bed Scanner at 1200 ppi and saved in the TIF file format. I then took it into Photoshop for the repair and restoration (next page). The photo was taken in December 1968. Scanning in a high resolution TIF, as opposed to lower resolution "JPG", allows for far image data to work with in restoration, as well as creating a more richer and detailed image.



Annual Service Practice on Crete

This is the photograph after it was taken into Photoshop and restored to level that makes it a much more enjoyable viewing experience. I think that everyone would agree that working with an image that has as much data as possible really does make a big difference.