

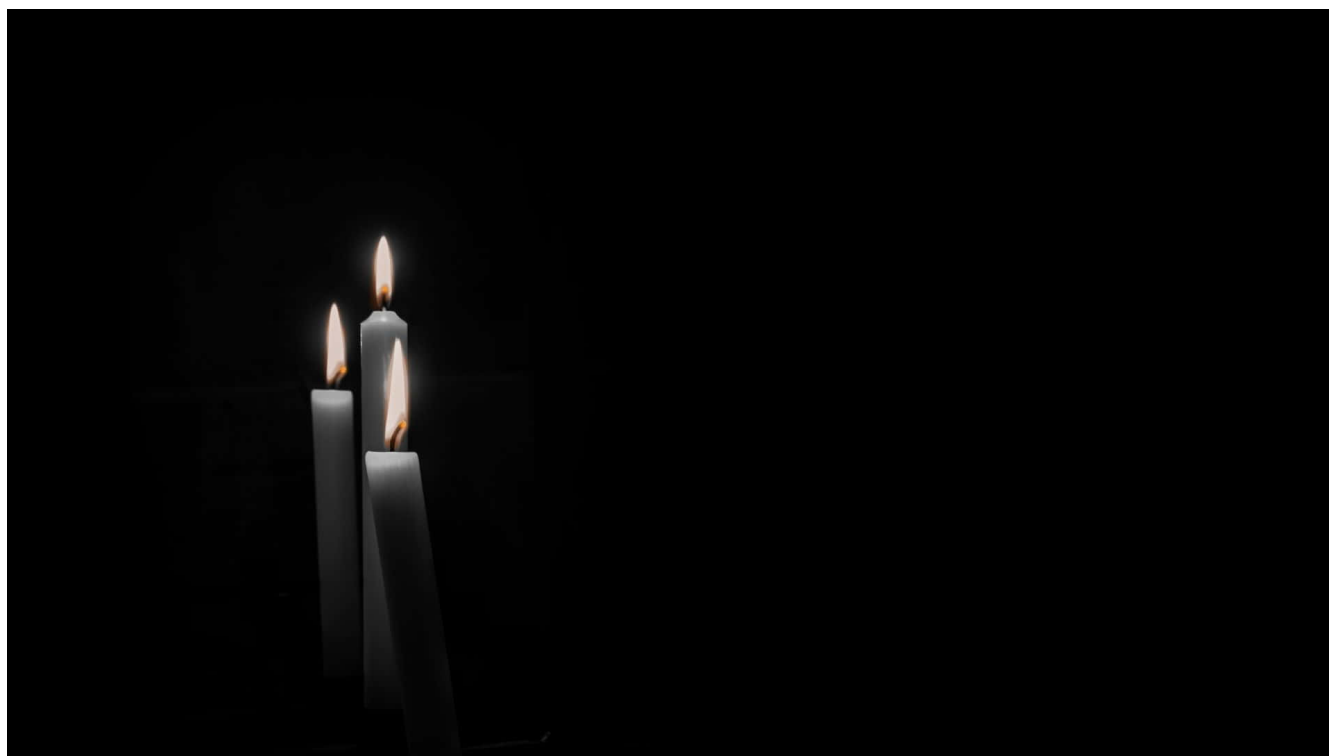


Rolf Eduard Peters

OAM, DC, MCS_c, FICC, FACC, FPAC

22 April 1932 - 30 November 2025

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of this masthead's Executive Editor.



As a titan of our profession Rolf's Chiropractic story is well documented. Instead of repeating that, he asked that I publish this piece which is his 'Pre-Chiropractic' story.

My-story-Germany 1932 - 1949

Prologue

Krefeld is a beautiful city in the State of North-Rhine Westphalia, across the Rhine River from Düsseldorf, the capital city of this State.

The town originated in Roman times when the legions founded the military camp of Gelduba (today the borough of Gellep). Records first mention Krefeld itself in 1105 under the name of Krinvelde.

On 1 October 1373 Emperor Karl IV signed the Certificate declaring Crefeld a City, giving it the right to hold markets, hold courts, and to build walls with gates to protect its inhabitants.

About 1680 a group of Huguenots, French Protestants who were being persecuted in France, arrived in Crefeld, brought with them the Art of Weaving, which became a very important part of the economy of Crefeld, as they started to produce both Silk and Velvet, still one of the most important products of the city.

In 1681 the U.S. State of Pennsylvania came into being as a result of a royal land grant to William Penn.

Penn looked for people to help populate Pennsylvania and a group of Mennonites, that had settled in Crefeld migrated in 1683 to Pennsylvania where they founded Germantown, now a part of Philadelphia.

Until 1925 it was still listed as Crefeld, then the name was changed to Krefeld.

My story

I was born in Krefeld on 22 April 1932. My father was Franz Paul Peters, my mother's maiden name was Friedericke Petronella Heyer.

My father was a travelling salesman for a Neuss food company called Schramm who manufactured noodles and various other food substances. My mother had worked as a switchboard operator for the Telegraph and Telephone Division of the Post Office Department of Krefeld.

They lived in an apartment on the Ostwall, Krefeld. I assume it was too small for three of us, so they moved to 57 Blumenthal Strasse, a two-story building where our home was on the second floor.

In 1935 we had holidays in the Moselle valley and visited Cochem Castke, where I sat on one of the ancient cannons.

The following year, 1936, we had our holiday in the Bavarian mountains, including Garmisch and Munich.

In 1938 a no-fault divorce law was signed on 6 July 1938, effective 1 August 1938, which granted the right to a unilateral divorce, and my father took advantage of that. I have no idea what his reason for the divorce was, but perhaps my mother had too many 'headaches' as she suffered from migraine and spent many hours in a darkened bedroom.

As my father no longer lived with us we had to move in with my grandmother who had a largish apartment at 58 Mörser Strasse, just a few blocks away.

Also in 1938 I started to go to Primary School. I was being bullied for a while, until I got mad, took my belt off and swung it hard at one of the bullies. The buckle hit him on the head, drew blood, and I had to front the Principal. I have never been bullied since.

Four years later I started High School. There were two types of High School. The Real Gymnasium which was co-educational and taught science and other modern subject, also languages: English, French and Latin. The other was the Ernst Moritz Arndt Gymnasium, which was not co-educational, and taught Religion, History, Art History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Art, Drawing, Physical Sports, and as languages German, English, Latin and Greek.

One year our class went on strike in order to force the Education Department to substitute the French Language for the Greek language.

The Education Department concurred, but in order to punish us it would only take place the following year, and not cover us.

I had spent 7 years in that school by the time we left for the United States.

My leaving certificate showed that I had attended the Ernst Moritz Arndt Gymnasium from 22 June 1942 until 15 September 1949. My grades were: Religion C; German C; History C; Art History B; Geography B; Latin C; Greek C; English C; Mathematics C; Physics C; Chemistry C; Biology B; Music C; Drawing B; Sports B; Handwriting C.

I did not graduate, in German Abitur. In the US the Leaving Certificate was accepted as graduation from High School, while Abitur counted as 2 years of college education.

On the social side it was standard that after gaining the Abitur one would take a course in dancing at the local Dance Academy.

Since I did not obtain the Abitur I would need in the future to learn the different dances on my own (which I did at the Arthur Murray Dance Studio in New York)

I have no idea who told my mother to enrol me in that school rather than the Real Gymnasium. My school was basically teaching for the higher professions of Religion, Law, Medicine.

I served as an Altar Boy in the Roman Catholic Church St. Franciscus which was only one block away.

A big part of the Cultural Life was the Stadt-Theatre, the City's Theatre.

My mother always had season tickets for us, which gave us 4 comedies, 4 dramas, 4 operettas and 4 operas, During the bombing, as listed below, the Theatre was destroyed, and the auditorium of the Girls High School was used to serve as the theatre.

World War 2 started in 1939, and my home town was affected by that. Each house had one basement room that was fortified with extra heavy doors and breaks in the walls to the house next door which were then refinished with a half-brick escape wall, so one could travel from house to house after breaking that wall with sledgehammers, located on both sides of this escape wall, in case one would not be able to get out due to bombing damage.

The Bombing of Krefeld

Krefeld was bombed on several occasions during the Second World War (May, June and September 1940, July 1941), but the worst attack was on 22 June 1943. In 1943 the Allies decided that the quickest way to end the war was to make the German economy collapse and the German people lose faith in Hitler and the war. To do this the Allies heavily bombed factories and military production facilities ('moral bombing'). According to the US bombing survey, the target area was 1000 feet around the aiming point of the attack and throughout the war only about 20% of the bombs hit the target they were aiming for. To help, the German government made sure that each house had sandbags and water.

Also the German government built communal bunkers, which could house hundreds of people if need be.

The bombing of Krefeld on 22 June 1943: 705 aircraft participated, (262 Lancasters, 209 Halifaxes, 117 Sterlings, 105 Wellingtons, 12 Mosquitos). 44 aircraft were lost. The raid was carried out before the moon period was over and the heavy casualties were mostly caused by night fighters. The raid took place in good visibility and the Pathfinders produced an almost perfect marking effort, ground markers dropped by the Oboe Mosquitos being well backed up by the Pathfinder heavies. 619 aircraft bombed these markers more than three quarters of them achieving bombing photographs within 3 miles of the centre of Krefeld. 2,306 tons of bombs were dropped.

A large area of fire became established and this raged, out of control, for several hours. The whole centre of the city (approximately 47% of the built-up area) was burnt out. A total of 5,517 houses were destroyed. 1,056 people were killed and 4,550 injured. 72,000 people lost their homes; 20,000 of these were billeted upon families in the suburbs, 30,000 moved in with relatives or friends and 20,000 were evacuated to other towns.

Besides the heavy bombs literally thousands of incendiary bomblets were dropped starting fires with their contents

In later years I met Reuben Kuebler from Utah in the US. He had been the navigator of the plane that dropped the flares signifying to start bombing. It was the first time the US Airforce used what they called Carpet Bombing, in which half the bombs were dropped then flown a 270 degree turn and dropped the other half.

With the bombing referred to above, after the last people of the house were in the shelter, my mother closed the heavy door and noticed that the rear of the house no longer existed. An air-mine had touched it and blown it up. We had heard no explosion, because the loud screaming of the air raid siren obliterated any sound of explosion. Their fuse was triggered by the shock of landing, with the bomb exploding after a 17-second delay. As the bomb was not in a crater, the force of the blast would disperse laterally, causing extensive damage. The British called these devices *air-mines*, a synonym of the German term *Luftmine*.

The idea for using air-mines was to damage roof structures in the neighbourhood by blowing roof tiles off and thus create openings for the dozens of incendiary bombs filled with white phosphorus to create severe fires.

The 4 lb (1.8 kg) incendiary bomb, developed by [ICI](#), was the standard light incendiary bomb used by [RAF Bomber Command](#) in very large numbers, declining slightly in 1944 to 35.8 million bombs produced (the decline being due to more bombs arriving from the United States). It was the weapon of choice for the [British 'dehousing' plan](#). The bomb consisted of a hollow body made from aluminium-magnesium alloy with a cast iron/steel nose, and filled with [thermite](#) incendiary pellets. It was capable of burning for up to ten minutes.

As we could not exit the cellar through the usual way so we had to escape through the escape wall to the next building. We tried to go one wall further but were unable to get through there. An explosive bomb had hit that building and all 13 people were dead.

So it was a matter of getting out of the cellar. My grandmother was the last one to make it out to the street, and as she stepped out the entire stairwell collapsed. One minute later and she would not have survived.

I remember that we had to be very careful not to step into the flaming white phosphorus which covered large areas of the street.

We made it to the Bismarck Platz where we rested until day break. We could hear the bellowing of cows that had been injured and were not too far away.

We had survived.

The following day we made our way to Traar, a village just north of Krefeld, where we stayed with a distant relative for a while.

My mother made her way every day into the city to hound the authorities regarding housing. One day she returned and had received a small apartment at 16 Dürer Strasse, in an area that had escaped any bomb damage. It was only one block removed from a sporting field, which eventually housed hundreds of unexploded bombs.

For my grandmother she got quarters in an Elder Home operated by Catholic Nuns.

With the new apartment in a different part of town, I made many new friends of my own age.

One of them was Horst Nöthen. Both his parents played hockey, in the men's and women's senior teams.

There were 6 of us, and we joined CSV 1910, the Crefeld Sports Club 1910 in the Hockey Division of that Club. It also had divisions for soccer, handball and athletics.

Our group made up ½ of the Junior team in 1946. In the 1946/47 season we lost every match. In the 1947/48 season we won half of all matches, in the 1948/49 season we won all matches. At the beginning of the 1949/50 season I played 3 matches, scored 3 goals, before my mother decided to move to the US.

That really hurt, as in 1950 my team went to England and won every match

During the off season we had to participate in the Athletic Department, running long distance, 5000 meters, which I liked, and also in the sprint division, 100 meters. I was never any good at sprinting, the best time I ever did was 12.6.

Our group was separated by the Moltke Square. One of our girlfriends lived there. We would congregate in front of her house and banter with her sitting in the bay window of her home. An older sister kept supervising her.

During winter I spent a lot of time at the Ice-Sport Centre, skating during week days and watching ice-hockey matches on weekends.

In February 1945 I was playing in the front yard of our house. The front yard had an 18 inch high double brick wall which divided the front yard from the sidewalk.

I had counted more than 1000 bombers flying to the Ruhr district. When they returned I noticed a Lockheed Lightning change course in direction of me. I dove behind the brick wall while machine gun bullets hit the front of the house. I had survived.

On 2 March I happened to be in the ground floor apartment of the House Manager, who had a beautiful daughter named Irmgard who was my age.

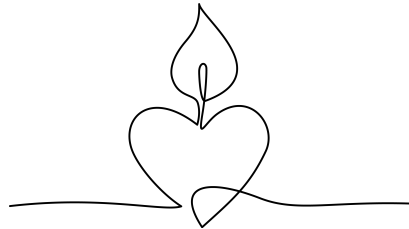
I was leaning against a kitchen cupboard when an Artillery shell exploded in the backyard and a 15 cm large piece of shrapnel hit the kitchen cupboard a hand's breadth behind my back. Again I was very lucky.

On the other side of the street, just one block away, was the headquarters of the military commander. He was brilliant in supplying each military vehicle with sufficient fuel to cross the Rhine with the last vehicle blowing up the bridge.

The following day, 3 March 1945 US troops entered Krefeld, among them the later U.S. Secretary of State [Henry Kissinger](#).

Their tanks stopped on every corner and fired their machine guns for a minute or more down the street.

They took over the house next door, and installed a kitchen on the ground floor, where I was able to scrounge extra food, because they always cooked considerably more than they needed.



And then came Palmer, an early marriage, and then his partner for life, Mary Ann Chance. With due respect to MAC, I am sure she would agree with me including this pic which is rarely seen.

Dated 27 August 1957, this shows a young Rolf celebrating his marriage to Gwendy Hagler.

For our history buffs, I have it on good authority that this was the only wedding ever performed in BJ's auditorium at Palmer College.

MAC was Palmer Royalty, being the daughter of Hugh Chance, engaged by BJ Palmer as faculty in 1925. Rolf, an energetic historian, has naturally documented the story of Dr Hugh Chance. See [Hugh Emery Chance JD, a Man ahead of his times](#).



[Impeccable editors](#)

In Australia Rolf and MAC took on the editorship of a nascent newsletter which had aspirations to be a journal of interest to Chiropractors when it grew up. To keep a long and detailed story of success painfully short, I will simply say they took a little newsletter and built it to a highly respected, peer-reviewed Journal of Record, duly indexed in the profession's referent data base the [Index to Chiropractic Literature](#).

Their role transcended mere 'editorship', they became custodians of Australian Chiropractic history and Rolf in particular was a pedantic historian, publishing many papers including a thesis at the level of a PhD on the role of the Palmers in Australia. It irked him and me to the n^{th} degree that RMIT refused to award Rolf with the doctorate he deserved, instead presenting a Master of Science. In hindsight that was my first inkling that RMIT did not deserve to be home of Chiropractic education, as events have now shown.

I have documented their success with the Chiropractic Journal of Australia in two papers, both of which are loaded to this Journal's website. For reference they are:

- [Ebrall PS. One hundred issues over 25 continuous years: The editorship of Chance and Peters. Chiropr J Aust. 2008; 38:123-30.](#)
- [Ebrall PS. The Chiropractic Journal of Australia: A valuable repository of our profession's history. Chiropr J Aust. 2009; 39:34-42.](#)

Rolf and Mary Ann were a fixture at the Association's annual conference and their co-editing went well beyond Mary Ann's lectures to me about the over-use of the comma. They fostered our

profession's writers and gave generously of their time and energy to ensure every issue of the CJA was of the high standard they had set for themselves.

It is a little known fact that the *Chiropr J Australia* was the second oldest, continuously published Chiropractic journal after the journal of the Canadian Association.

On the passing of Mary Ann it became harder to produce the Journal. I stepped-in to assist Rolf as best I could and he generously mentored me to become an Editor. We had several face-to-face meetings with the then Chiropractors Association of Australia but they failed support the Journal in the way we requested. These meetings were minuted, their planned actions denied.

Eventually Rolf retired and the CJA passed through 2 or 3 short-term editors before producing what I see as its final issue in [January 2024](#).

In October 2024 and with Rolf's blessing I responded to a personal invitation of the Directors of the now Australian Chiropractic Association to present to them a path forward for the CJA. Rolf and I worked hard to develop a plan which incorporated growth with service, and the proposal was for the Journal to become the *Chiropractic Journal of Australia and New Zealand*, serving both national associations with a quarterly on-line journal as a member benefit. The artwork was developed and presented for a new cover along with a detailed plan for its website and how we could revitalise those in our profession who want to write, those who need to write, and those who simply have something to say of importance to their fellows.

After my presentation and following the Board's discussion and analysis of my proposal I was informed they valued the idea and supported it, but would advertise for an editor elsewhere, ie it would not be me. The ACA duly advertised mid-2025 and of course the Board appropriated the intellectual property I submitted on their request and have advertised for an Editor, *Chiropractic Journal of Australia and New Zealand*.

It is now 2026, Rolf has moved on and I've withdrawn in dismay from any idea of keeping the CJA alive in some form. The Board of the peak professional body in Australia has failed all tests of propriety and failed its duty of care for a once magnificent journal, published like clock-work for more than 100 issues over more than 25 years and celebrating the eclectic constituents of the profession in Australia and New Zealand.

Sadly, with Rolf's demise, I also count the demise of the excellent Journal he and MAC crafted on their kitchen table in Wagga. In April, this masthead will publish his last paper and close a glorious chapter of Chiropractic's history in Australasia. This Journal is grateful for his leadership as Executive Editor from our inception in 2020, and steps-up our service to the profession.

Phillip Ebrall
Editor



In loving memory, Mary Ann Chance and Rolf E Peters.

