Key Findings:

A wide panoramic photograph capturing a large military company assembled outdoors for a formal group portrait. Hundreds of soldiers are arranged in meticulously organized rows—seated on the ground, seated on benches, and standing—stretching across the frame. The men are positioned in front of light-colored, wooden military barracks under a partly cloudy sky. The composition is highly structured and symmetrical, conveying a mood of discipline, readiness, and uniformity typical of military yard-long portraits.

Historical Background:

This photograph captures Company A of the 54th Infantry Training Battalion at Camp Wolters, Texas, during the rapid expansion of the US Army prior to American entry into World War II. Following the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, the US initiated its first peacetime draft. Camp Wolters was activated in early 1941 as an Infantry Replacement Training Center (IRTC) to process and train these new draftees. Taken in August 1941, just four months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, these men were part of the crucial buildup of forces. The presence of water-cooled machine guns indicates heavy weapons training. Genealogists can use the specific names provided (Capt. Edward Bernard, 1st Sgt. Roy T. Dyke, Staff Sgt. Vernon Savor) and the unit designation to locate muster rolls, draft cards, and subsequent WWII service records for these individuals.

Estimated Date:

August 1941.

- **Confidence:** High
- **Reasoning:** The date 'AUG 1941' is explicitly inscribed on the negative by the photographer. The summer uniforms and the pre-Pearl Harbor mobilization context perfectly align with this exact date.

Estimated Location:

Camp Wolters, Texas, USA.

- **Confidence:** High
- **Reasoning:** The location is explicitly written on the photograph itself. Camp Wolters is located near Mineral Wells, Texas, and served as a major Infantry Replacement Training Center during this period.

Visual Clues:

Text: The bottom edge contains white handwritten text on the negative: 'CO "A" 54TH INFANTRY TRAINING BN. CAMP WOLTERS TEXAS. AUG 1941.' Below this is 'CAPT. EDWARD BERNARD, COMDG.' The bottom left reads '1ST SGT. ROY T. DYKE' and the bottom right reads 'STAFF SGT. VERNON SAVOR'. A studio mark on the far right reads 'WEAVER 50552 C'. A guidon on the left displays 'RC', crossed infantry rifles, and '54A'. **People:** The soldiers are wearing US Army summer service uniforms consisting of khaki shirts, trousers, and garrison caps. In the center, several men are wearing white uniforms and hats, identifying them as mess personnel or cooks. **Objects:** Three heavy machine guns (appearing to be M1917 Browning water-cooled machine guns) are mounted on tripods and displayed prominently in the front row. **Environment:** The setting is a flat, unpaved dirt or sand parade ground. The background features standard-issue, temporary wooden military barracks with pitched roofs, characteristic of rapid WWII mobilization construction.

Technical Details:

This is a silver gelatin panoramic print, commonly referred to as a 'yard-long' photograph, exhibiting a warm sepia or faded black-and-white tone. The physical print shows significant signs of age and wear, including prominent vertical creases where it was likely folded, surface abrasions, and minor edge deterioration. The panoramic format was highly popular for military unit photos during the World War I and World War II eras, requiring a specialized rotating camera to capture the wide field of view.