

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Gene Jaeger

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VR2-A-L-2012-016

Gene Jaeger, a young naval officer assigned to an LST that saw action at Sicily, Italy and at Normandy, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Apr 30, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Date: May 21, 2012 Location: Jaeger residence in Henry, Illinois

Date: June 12, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Jan Culp and Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteers

Total Pages: 127 pgs Total Time: 2:01 + 2:03 + 1:41 / 2.02 + 2.05 + 1.68 = 5.74 hrs

Session 1: Early years, assignment to LST #400, & movement to Mediterranean

Session 2: LST operations & landings at Sicily, Salerno, & preparations for D-Day

Session 3: LST operations on D-Day and beyond, final months in the U.S. Navy

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 8, 2012.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

© 2012 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Gene Jaeger, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2012-016

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Eugene ‘Gene’ Jaeger was born on October 6th, 1920 in Ottawa, Illinois, and grew up in Geneva, Illinois, the son of a state bank examiner. He graduated from Marmion Military Academy in Aurora, Illinois in 1937 and from Notre Dame University in 1942. He wanted to be a Navy Aviator, but, after failing the eye exam, he instead took an abbreviated officer training course at Princeton University. Upon graduation, he was assigned to LST (Landing Ship-Tank) 400, a new class of ships designed to support amphibious landings. By May of 1943 LST 400 was in a convoy steaming toward the Mediterranean Sea, with Ensign Jaeger serving as the Communications Officer and Watch Officer.

LST 400 supported the Sicily landings in July 1943, and the landings at Salerno in September 1943. By November, LST 400 sailed to England and spent the next several months preparing for the D-Day Landings. On June 6th Jaeger’s ship was in position off the coast of Normandy, and by the end of the day had discharged its load onto Utah Beach. Over the next several months LST 400 made roughly 50 round trips, delivering ammunition, fuel, and other supplies. It made one supply run up the Seine River during the Battle of the Bulge, and, later in the war, was configured to deliver railroad cars. At the end of the war in Europe LST 400 returned to the states. Once in New Orleans (via New York City), Jaeger received orders reassigning him to San Francisco and the USS Sardonian. He spent the next several months trying to marry up with the ship, and, in the process, spent time at a base in Guiuan, the Philippines and Shanghai, China. In March of 1946 he was finally shipped home to Illinois. Gene passed away in March of 2017.

Subject Headings/Key Words: LST (Landing Ship-Tank) operations in Europe during World War II; LST 400; D-Day operations; supply operations for Northern Europe; Invasion of Sicily in July, 1943; landings at Salerno, Italy; Mulberry harbor system during D-Day; bank crisis during the Great Depression; convoy procedures in Atlantic during WW II; Marmion Military Academy; Naval officer training at beginning of WW II;

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. “Fair use” criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955