

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Robert Underbrink

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2016-053

Robert Underbrink, a World War II tanker who arrived in Europe in early 1945, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember – WW II* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Oct 28, 2016 Location: Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville, IL

Date: Nov 16, 2016 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:46 + 1:19 / 1.77 + 1.32 = 3.09 hrs.

Session 1: Early life, army training, and arrival in Europe in March, 1945

Session 2: Occupation duty in Germany, university classes in England and return home

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 16, 2017.

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

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Abstract

Robert Underbrink, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2016-053

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Robert Underbrink was born on May 15, 1926 in Jacksonville, Illinois, and grew up there. He graduated from Jacksonville High School in 1944, and was soon drafted into the U.S. Army. He went through basic training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, and shipped out for Europe in March, 1945. On his way to the front, then in Germany, he was assigned to the 37th Tank Battalion of the 4th Armored Division, assigned at that time to Patton's 3rd Army.

Although the war was still being fought, Underbrink saw little combat except for his convoy being strafed a couple of times. At the conclusion of the war his unit was sent into Czechoslovakia for a time, then was sent back to Freystadt, Germany, near Neumarkt. Following the Japanese surrender in August, Underbrink continued to perform occupation duties, and was then sent to Shrivenham, England where he was able to attend university level classes being taught by American professors. Of the several classes he took, one on architectural history was his favorite, as that gave him a chance to travel the countryside seeing some of England's most significant structures.

Underbrink returned to the United States in 1946 and enrolled in college, using his G.I. Bill benefits. Years later, he earned a degree in Library Science, and spent the bulk of his working career as a librarian. During his time overseas, Robert wrote to his mother frequently. She later donated his letters to the Illinois State Historical Library, and in 2016, over seven decades after he wrote the letters, he began reading them again.

Subject Headings/Key Words: tanker serving in European theater; 37th Tank Battalion, 4th Armored Division; growing up in Jacksonville, Illinois; Shrivenham American University; occupation duty in post-war Germany

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.

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