

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Gerald Raschke

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

Interview # VR2-V-L-2018-045

Gerald Raschke, a tail gunner on a B-26 bomber who flew 61 combat missions in Europe, 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:

Dates: Jul 27, Jul 30 & Oct 29, 2018

Location: Illinois Information Service (IIS) Studio, CMS, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): Mark Suszko, Tom Craven, IIS videographers

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

**Transcript
being processed**

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:14 + 1:45 + 1:51 / 1.23 + 1.75 + 1.85 = 4.83 hrs.

Session 1: Early life and Army Air Force training as a machine gunner on a B-26

Session 2: Aerial combat as a B-26 tail gunner flying out of Sardinia and Corsica

Session 3: Aerial combat while the 320th Bomb Group was based in France

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 27, 2018.

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

Abstract

Gerald Raschke, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-L-2018-045

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Gerald (Jerry) Raschke was born on August 28, 1924 in Omaha, Nebraska, where his father worked in the rail yards. In June 1943 he joined the Army Air Force, leaving his sweetheart behind in Omaha, and received training as a machine gunner on a B-26 Marauder medium bomber. Once his training was complete, Airman Raschke and his crew were sent to the Mediterranean Theater and assigned to the 320th Bomb Group, which was then stationed on the Italian island of Sardinia.

On one of the first missions Raschke's pilot flew in August 1944, he was killed. Because of that, Raschke's crew was split up, and he ended up flying on a variety of aircraft over the next year. While stationed at Sardinia Raschke's bomb group flew missions over Italy, mostly attacking bridges, rail yards, ammunition dumps, troops concentrations and other targets near the front lines. Later in 1944 the 320th moved to Corsica, part of France, and continued to fly missions over Italy. In November 1944 the unit moved to Longvic, near Dijon, France. Raschke eventually flew sixty-one missions before being sent home in late April 1945. During those missions the aircraft he was on crash landed three times, but no one on his aircraft was ever injured or killed, although the unit suffered heavy losses, both in the air and on the ground. Raschke was in England on May 8 when the war in Europe ended. By July he was back home, and in 1946 married Mildred Astleford, the sweetheart he had left behind. Many years later, Jerry wrote a memoir about his experiences, which included the mission records for almost all of his flights.

Subject Headings/Key Words: medium bomber missions in European theater; B-26 bomber; 320th Bomb Group during World War II; tail gunner experiences on B-26; pre-war life in Omaha, Nebraska; Longvic, France; Longcourt chateau, France; combat missions over Italy; combat missions over Germany; flying in flak; Red Tail squadron in Europe; shooting down ME-109;

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