

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Wesley J. Duiker

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2014-037

Wesley Duiker, a B-26 pilot in the European theater in 1945 who also served in the post-war occupation force, 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 16 & Oct 23, 2014

Location: Duiker residence in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:02 + 1:33 / 2.03 + 1.55 = 3.58 hrs

Session 1: Early life, training as B-26 pilot and combat missions in Europe in 1945

Session 2: Post-war experiences in occupied Europe, and return to the states

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 10, 2014.

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

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Abstract

Wesley Duiker, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2014-037

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Wesley (Wes) Duiker was born in February, 1924 in Orange City, Iowa, and grew up in small towns in Iowa, and later in upstate New York. Wes was the son of an American Reformed Church minister, and following his graduation from high school in 1941 he attended Hope College in Holland, Michigan with the intent of becoming a minister. In November, 1942 he quit school and enlisted in the U. S. Army Air Force.

Duiker began his military training in Fresno, California, then for the next two years progressed through a series of flight training courses at various posts. By the end of his training he received his wings as a B-26 Marauder pilot, a twin engine bomber. In late 1944 he received orders to Europe, and he and crew members flew a B-26 to France, but over a route that took them to Brazil, then across the Atlantic Ocean to Africa before heading north to Europe. Duiker flew his first mission from a base near Dijon, France on April 10th, 1945, and by early May and the end of the war he had logged eleven more missions. For the next year Duiker served in the occupation army at a variety of different locations, including Belgium and Germany. He spoke at length about this experience, and his extensive travels throughout Europe. His most memorable experiences included seeing the Dachau Concentration Camps, and observing one day of the Nuremburg War Crimes trial while General Alfred Jodl was being tried. He returned to the United States in June, 1946.

Subject Headings/Key Words: B-26 Marauder; bombing missions over Europe; Dachau Concentration Camp; Nuremburg War Crimes Trial; post-WW II Belgium; post-WW II Netherlands; fraternization with Germans in post-war Germany; growing up during the depression; American Reformed Church during the 1930s; Lourdes, France;

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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