

Image Caption Form







Vincent Speranza





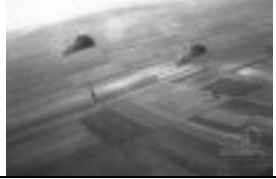












Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project







Interview on July 14, 15 & 20 July
Interview # VR2-V-L-2010-031

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman standing together. The man is wearing a suit and the woman is wearing a patterned dress.	<p>Frank and Frances Speranza on their 25th anniversary, April 29, 1942. (Narrator's photo)</p>
A black and white photograph of a young boy standing in front of a wooden building, possibly a house.	<p>Vince at age 16, standing outside his home in Staten Island. (Narrator's photo)</p>
A black and white photograph of a young man in military uniform standing in front of a building.	<p>Vince at Basic Training in Fort Benning, Georgia, which he attended in 1943. (Narrator's photo)</p>
A newspaper clipping featuring two small portraits of a man in military uniform and columns of text. The text is partially legible and mentions 'Private Vincent Speranza'.	<p>The newspaper article announcing Private Vincent Speranza's graduation from the Army's Parachute School in Fort Benning, GA in 1944. (Unknown newspaper. May be restricted. Patrons desiring to use this photograph should contact the ALPL Audio-Visual Curator.)</p>









	<p>The Belgian physician, Dr. Govaerts, and his wife. Dr. Govaerts worked on the American casualties in the Bastogne church, turned into a makeshift hospital, during the height of the siege. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>The caption scribbled on the back reads "The Airborne Coons" Steve Pentek is in the front, and Vince in the back, taken on March 23, 1945, in France. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza in France on March 23, 1945, between campaigns. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza strikes a pose while on occupation duty in Niedercherkhin, Austria following the war. July 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince and a group of replacements to his unit get their picture taken at Berchtesgaden, Germany in 1945. Vince is in front on the left, next to Private Soto. In the back are Privates 'Smiley' (name unknown), Smith and Shipley. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza, showing the results of strenuous exercise and the rigors of war, gets his picture taken while stationed in Bavaria in the summer of 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>








	<p>Steve Pentek and Speranza while on pass in Rheims, France in August 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Following the war, while stationed in Auxerre, France waiting for shipment home, Speranza participated in one more practice jump on Sept 17, 1945. The next six photos is part of a series Vince took during the jump. This one was taken on the ground before the jump, with full equipment. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>"This was taken just before we loaded on the plane," a C-47 transport, wrote Speranza. Auxerre, France. Sept 17, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>In the air right after the jump, showing his fellow jumpers, with his camera turned upward. Auxerre, France. Sept 17, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>In the air right after the jump, showing the drop zone below him. Auxerre, France. Sept 17, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>This photo was taken right after Speranza left the plane, with the camera turned around for a self-portrait. Auxerre, France. Sept 17, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>The final shot in the series. A fellow paratrooper spills the air out of his chute after hitting the ground. Auxerre, France. Sept 17, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>








	<p>Vince Speranza outside Rheims, France, while on pass. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince and buddy Doe Willis on the Queen Mary during their return to the states in December, 1945. Speranza spent the bulk of the voyage below deck pulling mess hall duty. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince and Jerry Reagan (a childhood buddy) after the war, taken outside the Reagan family home in Staten Island in December of 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince with his buddy Tony Lobat prior to Vince's shipment overseas in the spring of 1944, while on pass in Staten Island. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza and an airborne buddy while on leave, on the town in New York City in December, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince and Joe Willis get a studio portrait taken while on leave in New York City. (May be restricted. Patrons desiring to use this photograph should contact the ALPL Audio-Visual Curator.)</p>
	<p>Photo taken of Vince and his buddies at Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe restaurant at the Paramount Hotel in New York, circa in December, 1945. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p></p>

	<p>Vince and other paratroopers celebrate at the Diamond Horseshoe in New York City, in December 1945. (May be restricted. Patrons desiring to use this photograph should contact the ALPL Audio-Visual Curator.)</p>
	<p>Speranza joined the Merchant Marine in March of 1946, serving in the U.S. Army Transport Command aboard the General M. B. Stewart (AP-140). (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>101st Airborne Division reunion, Columbus, Ohio. September 1948. Left to Right: Vince Speranza, George Russell, Howard Bronc. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Iva and Vince Speranza in 1952, while the couple attended a wedding outside his family home in Staten Island. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Iva Leftwich in 1947, outside the U.S. Marine Hospital in Staten Island. Vince met her at the hospital where she worked as a nurse. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince and Iva enjoy a vacation at Natural Bridge, Virginia in 1949. (Narrator's photo)</p>

	<p>Iva Leftwich at Sailors' Snug Harbor in Staten Island in 1947, while she and Vince were dating. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince Speranza while he served as faculty advisor with the student body class president at Curtis High School on Staten Island, where Vince taught for twenty years. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza often expressed himself with his hands, as he did here when talking to a member of the Curtis High School Booster Club at a basketball game in the 1960s. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza joined other veterans of the battle for Bastogne during the 65th anniversary of the battle, in Bastogne on December 12th, 2009. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza and a fellow paratrooper during the 65th anniversary celebration in Bastogne, Belgium in December, 2009. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza with a fellow paratrooper, a member of E Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of <i>Band of Brothers</i> fame, meet up in Bastogne sixty-five years after the Battle of the Bulge. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince Speranza meets a group of Belgian school children at McAuliff's Cave near Bastogne during his visit in December of 2009. He led them with a chorus of <i>Frere Jacques</i>. (Narrator's photo)</p>

	<p>Speranza with two Dutch journalists who were in Bastogne for the 65th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, in December, 2009. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince Speranza with a descendent of General George S. Patton, who commanded the Third Army forces that liberated Bastogne. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Speranza shares dinner in a Bastogne restaurant with two Dutch commandoes recently returned from duty in Iraq. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince and acquaintances he met in Bastogne who acted as his tour guides for the Bastogne battlefield some sixty-five years after the battle. Marco Killian, Vince and Johnny Bona in September, 2009 in a field near Bastogne. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>A bottle of "Airborne Beer" brewed locally near Bastogne, Belgium, to commemorate an incident during the Battle of the Bulge, where Speranza played the central role in the story depicted on the label. The ceramic helmet was designed as the drinking vessel. Speranza only discovered the beer sixty-five years after the battle. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Another shot of "Airborne Beer" brewed locally near Bastogne, Belgium, to commemorate an incident during the Battle of the Bulge, where Speranza played the central role in the story depicted on the label. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>The Bavarian Alps near Berchtesgaden, where Vince was stationed at the end of the war. He was outside the house one morning when he was serenaded by a German woman singing <i>Lili Marlene</i>. (Photo from the book <i>The Epic of the 101st Airborne: A Pictorial Record of a Great Fighting Team</i>. This image is considered to be in the public domain.)</p>
	<p>Empty space.</p>

	<p>Vince stands before a statue in the center of Bastogne on December 29th, 1944. The next day, the statue was destroyed by a German bomb. Only the concrete relief on the front of the pillar, honoring WW I soldiers, remains. (Photo from the book <i>The Epic of the 101st Airborne: A Pictorial Record of a Great Fighting Team</i>. This image is considered to be in the public domain.)</p>
	<p>A map, from the book <i>The Epic of the 101st Airborne: A Pictorial Record of a Great Fighting Team</i>, traces the 101st's journey through Europe from Bastogne thru 1945. The book was assembled by the unit's Public Relations Office in Auxerre, France in 1945. (This image is considered to be in the public domain.)</p>
	<p>A wartime photo showing the street where Vince visited his wounded buddy in the church/makeshift hospital, and then found some beer to quench his buddy's thirst. Vince received this photo from a Bastogne resident when he attended a reunion in December, 2010. (This image is considered to be in the public domain.)</p>
	<p>Vince is deep in discussion with a Belgian reenactor and Herb Suerth, a veteran of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment during a recent visit to in December, 2010. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Kelly Ann Sproul, a professional singer known as the Sweetheart of the British Forces, and Vince share an impromptu performance at new 101st Division Museum in Bastogne in December, 2010. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Kelly Ann Sproul and Vincent Speranza share a moment in front of the camera during Vince's visit to Bastogne in 2009. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p></p>

	<p>Kelly Ann Sproul, with Vince at the mic, at a fund raiser for the British armed forces near Dover during Vince's trip to England in March of 2011. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Kelly Ann Sproul, her mother Kim Sproul and Vince in March, 2011. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Kelly Ann Sproul and Vince Speranza, with the port of Dover, England in the background. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince stands outside the Freshfield Inn in Brighton, England, which he and his buddies first visited in October of 1944 while on a weekend pass. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince stands by the bar in the Freshfield Inn in Brighton, England, which he first visited in October of 1944. After visiting the pub and enjoying several beers in 1944, he was robbed by some 'young toughs'. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince Speranza takes his place behind the bar in the Freshfield Inn, which he first visited in October of 1944. (Narrator's photo)</p>
	<p>Vince spent a night in 1944 in Down Terrace (Queen's Park) after being 'jumped by some young toughs' while on pass in Brighton, England. He found the same park when visiting England in 2011. (Narrator's photo)</p>



In 1944, Vince slept in this park in Brighton, England after being robbed. He found the same park some 66 years later. (Narrator's photo)



Vince rests on a park bench in March, 2011, remembering the circumstances that first took him to Down Terrace (Queen's Park) in October, 1944.



An official military portrait of Paratrooper Vince Speranza. (This photo is in the public domain.)