

*Memories of Royden Edward Conopask*

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SSgt Royden Edward Conopask

Royden E Conopask was the son of Charles and Matilda Conopask, and graduated from the Terryville Grammar School in 1919. He was a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Terryville and was employed by the E. Ingraham Co. in Bristol, Connecticut. He married Evelyn Alice Carragher of 21 Pleasant St., Bristol, and they had a daughter, Roylyn Frances Conopask.

He entered the U.S. Army Air Force on June 25, 1942 at Hartford, Connecticut, and became a mechanic gunner on an A-20 Havoc Medium Bomber, in the 9th Air Force.

In the ETO, he served with the 670th Bomber Squadron, 416th Bomber Group, 9th Air Force, RAF Wethersfield, Essex, England (AAF Station 170). The unit began combat operations against the French and Low Countries Coasts in March 1944. He flew aboard A-20G "Havoc".

He had made staff sergeant on Feb. 12, 1943, and flew on 45 missions in the European Middle Eastern Campaign, the air offensive over Europe and the Battle of Normandy.

ON 19 May 1944, he was an armorer-gunner aboard a USAAF A-20G, tail number 43-9696, on mission #49 to attack coastal installations at Benerville, France.

On the return trip home, flying through a thick overcast, Lt Joseph Crispino's plane spun out of control. He ordered his two gunners, SSgt Thomas I. Walsh and SSgt Royden E. Conopask to bail out. These men never got out of the aircraft and were killed when the plane crashed.

Lt Crispino jumped and parachuted to earth with a leg fractured when his body was thrown against the plane's tail assembly. He was transferred to an Evacuation Hospital to convalesce.

The aircraft crashed on return near Biggin Hill, England.

Crew:

- Pilot - Lt Joseph C. Crispino
- Gunner - SSgt Thomas I. Walsh, KIA
- Gunner - SSgt Royden E. Conopask, KIA

The remains of the two gunners KIA May, 19, 1944, were interred at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Cambridge.

SSgt Royden E. Conopask flew 45 missions

SSgt Conopask's family was presented with a placque of appreciation on Friday November 8th, 2013 at Manross Library in Forestville during its annual Veterans Day program.

He left a wife, Evelyn, in Bristol, Connecticut.