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Earl C. Rathke



Earl C. Rathke was born March 10, 1920 and grew up in Rochester, New York during the Great Depression. He had a paper route and worked in the family hardware store.

Earl joined the Army Air Corps in November, 1942, when he was 22 years old. He married Doris in March 1943 and then was stationed in Europe. He was a Second Lieutenant and co-pilot of a B-17 bomber.

Earl's plane was shot down by shrapnel in February 1944 while he was on his sixth mission (the target was a ball-bearing factory in Schweinfurt, Germany).

He parachuted into enemy territory and was held captive in a POW camp (Stalag Luft 1) for 15 months. He returned home after the war, and he and Doris went on to have two children. He and Doris live in Colorado Springs and have four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



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