

Rudolf Johann Kratzert

You were born, on 25 April, 1898, in the city of Karlsburg, in Transylvania, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Although most of the people in Transylvania spoke either Hungarian or Romanian, you grew up in a German-speaking community composed of “Saxons” who had migrated from western Germany and the Low Countries more than eight hundred years ago.

In the First World War, you served in the army of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When, at the end of that conflict, the Austro-Hungarian Empire dissolved, you became, along with most other Transylvanian Saxons, a subject of the Kingdom of Romania. As such, you supported the actions of the Romanian government that helped to overthrow the Communist dictatorship established by Bela Kun in Hungary in 1919.



In 1940, you took advantage of a new rule that allowed Romanian subjects of German descent to enlist in the German Armed Forces and joined the German Air Force. Two years later, you found yourself on the Russian Front, commanding the 11th Company of the 3rd Parachute Infantry Battalion (11/Fallschirm-Jäger Rgt. 3). The summer of 1943 found you in Italy, in command of the parent battalion of your old company, III/FJR 3.

Fallschirm-Jäger Rgt. 3