

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Cecil K. 'Tuck' Belton

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2012-042

Cecil Kenneth 'Tuck' Belton, a B-17 pilot who was shot down over Holland in January, 1945 and spent several months with the Dutch underground, 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 30, 2012 Location: Belton residence in Springfield, Illinois

Date: Nov 16, 2012 Location: Belton residence in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Anne Anderson and Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 97 pgs Total Time: 1:55 + 2:14 + 0:37 / 1.92 + 2.23 + 0.62 = 4.77 hrs

Session 1: Growing up in Tallula, IL during Depression & training as a B-17 pilot

Session 2: Experiences as a downed pilot with the Dutch underground in early 1945

Session 3: Belton's return to the United States & life after the war

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 15, 2013.

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

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Abstract

'Tuck' Belton, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2012-042

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Cecil Kenneth 'Tuck' Belton was born on November 2nd, 1922 in Tallula, Illinois, and grew up poor due to a mining accident that had disabled his father. Belton graduated from Tallula High School in 1940, worked for a while, and then attended a year at Illinois Teacher's College before enlisting in the Army Air Force in the summer of 1942. He married his high school sweetheart, Virginia Atterberry, in July, 1943. By January, 1945 he was piloting a B-17 on bombing runs over Germany, assigned to the 452nd Bomb Group, which flew out of Deopham Green, England.

On January 20th, 1945 Lieutenant Belton was shot down over northern Holland after returning from his fifth mission. He was the only crew member to survive, and was taken in by the Dutch underground. For the next several months he stayed with the underground, sometimes going on missions with them and moving from place to place as they eluded the Germans. His comrades made an ID card for him, and he passed as 'doofstam,' in other words, as deaf and dumb. Finally, fifty some pounds lighter, they were able to smuggle him into southern Holland, which was under Allied control. Belton was flown to Paris where he was interrogated, then flown to England, then shipped to the United States, arriving in New York City April of 1945. He returned to Holland in 1978, and hosted several of his fellow Dutch underground members in 1980 in his home in Jerome, Illinois. Tuck passed away on January 15, 2014.

Subject Headings/Key Words: experiences with Dutch Underground during WW II; B-17 pilot; being shot down over enemy territory; 452nd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force; Deopham Green, England; Tallula, Illinois; growing up during Great Depression in central Illinois; tulip bulbs; Virginia (Atterberry) Belton; Jerome, Illinois; Springfield, Illinois

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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