

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with John Knoepfle

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2019-043

John Knoepfle, a naval officer during World War II who served as a small boat officer on the USS Deuel, an attack transport ship, 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: Aug 5, 2019

Location: Knoepfle apartment in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:14 / 2.23 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives October 29, 2019.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

John Knoepfle, *Veterans Remember - WWII*, VR2-A-L-2019-043

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: John Knoepfle was born on February 4, 1923 in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he grew up and attended Catholic schools. He graduated from St. Xavier High School in 1941 and enrolled in Xavier University in the fall. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, he attempted to enlist. For the next couple of years, he continued at Xavier, but as part of the Navy's V-12 program, a program for future naval officers. He officially enlisted on December 12, 1942. Thereafter, he spent twenty-six weeks at Dartmouth University, going through his basic officer training at the nearby Naval Indoctrination Training School, but also taking several English classes at the University. John was commissioned in June 1944 and was then posted to Plattsburg, New York (near Lake Champlain), where he received training as a small boat officer.

Following that training, Ensign Knoepfle was sent to a naval base at Coronado, California, and was assigned to the USS Deuel (APA 160), an attack transport ship. His specific duty was to lead eight Landing Craft – Vehicle, Personnel (LCVP - also known as Higgins boats), onto the beach. His ship helped transport and land the 5th Marine Division at Iwo Jima, and during that time he was injured, hit by shrapnel in his leg. He recovered while on the USS Deuel, and by April they were supporting the landings on Okinawa. It was there that his injury flared up again. In the process of healing, a vein and artery in his leg had grown together. He was sent back to a series of hospitals in search of a surgeon who could perform the necessary and delicate operation. That operation finally occurred at Great Lakes Naval Training Center near Chicago. The Navy then went through a series of discussions about whether and when Knoepfle should be discharged. While that was being sorted out he attended classes at Xavier University, majoring in English. He was discharged in July 1946, and devoted the rest of his life to his poetry and to teaching, much of it at Sangamon State University. He passed away on November 16, 2019.

Subject Headings/Key Words: St. Xavier High School; Xavier University; USS Deuel (APA-160); navy operations at Iwo Jima; Navy V-12 program; naval operations at Okinawa; Great Lakes Naval Training Center; Naval Indoctrination Training School at Dartmouth University; Plattsburg Naval Training School; medical condition where veins and arteries fuse together;

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