

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with John Beechler

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

Interview # VRK-A-L-2013-026

John Beechler, a Korean War veteran who saw action at Outpost Harry in April 1953 before being seriously injured, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember – Korean War* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 7, 2013      Location: Quincy Veterans Home, Quincy, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Susan Burke, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Cheryl Wycoff and Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 49 pgs      Total Time: 1:31 + 0:35 / 1.52 + 0.58 = 2.1 hrs

Session 1: Early life, military training, and early experiences in Korea in 1953

Session 2: Combat action at Outpost Harry in April, 1953 & recovery from injuries

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 4, 2013.

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

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# Abstract

John Beechler, *Veterans Remember*, VRK-A-L-2013-026

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** John G. Beechler was born in December, 1929 in Springfield, Illinois, where he also grew up. He was raised by his mother, and grandparents and times were tough for the family. He followed World War II closely, even trying to enlist although he was underage. He graduated from Lanphier High School in 1949, and when he heard about the North Koreans invading South Korea in June, 1950, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He attended Basic Training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and because of high test scores and proven ability, he was accepted into the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. Once he earned his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in February, 1952, he attended the U.S. Army Jump School, and then was posted to the 11th Airborne Division stationed at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. After six months, he volunteered for duty in Korea.

En route to the west coast, his train derailed, and Beechler stepped forward and helped organize rescue efforts for many of the passengers. He arrived in Korea in January, 1953 and was assigned to the 39th Field Artillery Battalion, part of the 3rd Infantry Division [ID], then manning the center of the UN line near the Iron Triangle. He served his first two months as a forward observer with a Greek infantry battalion which was attached to the 3rd ID. When the forward observer assigned to the infantry company defending Outpost Harry was killed in early April, he immediately transferred to that unit, and occupied the observation post some four hundred yards in front of the Main Line of Defense. For the next several evenings, his position on Outpost Harry was shelled by the enemy. On the night of April 24th, the Chinese attacked. Despite a vigorous defense, with Beechler calling in devastating fires on the enemy, the Chinese eventually made it into the trench line. Beechler was seriously injured, and later evacuated from the position to a MASH unit, and then flown to Japan, where he recuperated from his wounds. After a short stay at Tripler Army Hospital in Hawaii, Beechler finished his recuperation at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. He was awarded the Silver Star and a Purple Heart for his gallantry at Outpost Harry. John passed away on March 8, 2014.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Outpost Harry; infantry combat in Korea in 1953; Forward Observer during Korean War; serving with the Greeks during Korean War; Silver Star; Purple Heart; growing up in Springfield, Illinois during the depression and WW II; Field Artillery Officer Candidate School during the Korean War; Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri;

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