

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Francis Callaghan

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2016-002

Francis Callaghan, a World War II Army Engineer serving with a pontoon bridge company in the Philippines, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jan 14, 2016    Location: Callaghan home in LaGrange, Illinois

Date: Jan 22, 2016    Location: Callaghan home in LaGrange, 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: 1:36 + 1:23 / 1.6 + 1.38 = 2.98 hrs.

Session 1: Early life, training as an engineer, and unit's service in Leyte, Philippines

Session 2: Service with 530th Engineer Co. in Luzon, and rescuing relatives

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 21, 2016.

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

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# Abstract

Francis Callaghan, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2016-002

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Francis Callaghan was born on September 25, 1924 on the south side of Chicago, and grew up in the South Shore neighborhood of the city, attending parochial schools. He was drafted in 1943 shortly after his high school graduation, and attended Basic Training at Camp Beale, California. He was subsequently assigned to the 530th Engineer Light Ponton Company (a bridging company that used pneumatic pontons on which to lay bridging material), in which he served for the entire war.

Callaghan's unit shipped overseas in April, 1944, headed for New Guinea, traveling independent of a convoy. The unit continued its training while in New Guinea while also becoming acclimated to the tropical climate of the western Pacific. In October through December, 1944 the unit supported the XXIV Corps in its combat operations in the liberation of Leyte Island, the first Philippine territory retaken by the Americans. Callaghan witnessed Japanese aircraft and kamikazes attack the fleet during the initial landings. In January, 1945 the unit traveled by LST (Landing Ship-Tank) to the Linguyen Gulf, off the Coast of Luzon Island. Once on land, the unit constructed a major bridge across the Agno River, and generally supported the 40th, and later the 37th Divisions as the Americans pushed south toward Manila. In early February, while the unit was constructing a bridge across the Pasig River in Manila, Callaghan ventured out on his own, searching for several cousins who had spent the war in Japanese internment camps. He found Sanford (Sam) Ladic (who had been a mining engineer prior to the war) and his three young daughters at the Bilibid Prison. Ladic's wife was in the hospital at nearby Santo Tomas Prison. Both camps were in the suburbs of Manila. Conditions in these camps for the American civilian prisoners were deplorable, but not nearly as severe as for the military survivors of Bataan and Corregidor, who Callaghan also encountered while searching for his relatives. Francis returned home to Chicago in early 1946, and spent much of the rest of his life as a mason, brick layer and general contractor.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** 530th Engineer Light Ponton Company; bridge building operations in the Philippines during WW II; Sanford Ladic; Bilibid Prison (for American civilian internees in the Philippines); Santo Tomas prison; Mary Ann (Ladic) Koucky; combat in Manila; Leyte operation; training in New Guinea; atomic bomb; St. Ignatius School in Chicago

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