

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with James E. Smith

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

Interview # VR2-V-L-2007-026

James E. Smith, a B-17 pilot in Europe during World War II, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview date & location:

Date: Friday, November 2, 2007 Location: IL Information Services Studio,
Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko, IL Information Services

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 15 + 22 = 37 Total Time: 1 hr, 10 min + 1 hr 33 min / 2.65 hrs

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

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Abstract

James E. Smith, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-L-2007-026

Biographical Information & Synopsis: James E. Smith was born on June 7, 1919 in Lockport Township, Illinois, west of Joliet. Jim graduated from high school in 1937, and enrolled in Morton Junior College in Harvey, Illinois. He then headed west to Cheyenne, Wyoming and worked for United Airlines. It was there that he first learned to fly. In June of 1941 he was drafted into the Army, serving for a time in the field artillery, then transferring to the Army Air Force after Pearl Harbor. He spent the next two years in flight training, eventually being assigned to B-17s as a pilot. He arrived at Kimbolton, England in October, 1943, assigned to the 527th Squadron, 379th Bomb Group, 8th Bomber Command of the 8th Air Force. His first mission was against the ball bearing plants at Schweinfurt, Germany. Smith eventually flew 25 combat missions over Germany and France as the pilot of 'Ruthie,' including missions against the Ruhr valley, the Kiel Canal and submarine pens at Bremen. He returned to the states in early 1945, where he served for the remainder of the war.

Topics Covered: WW II pilot of B-17 'flying fortress'; Morton Junior College; Lancaster Airport, California; Luke Airfield, Arizona; Kimbolton Airfield; Eighth Air Force, Europe; 527th Bomb Squadron; 379th Bomb Group; Schweinfurt, Germany; General James Doolittle; Luftwaffe; submarine pens at Bremen, Germany; Ruhr Valley air raid; Kiel Canal air raid; Abbeville air raid; air raid on Halberstadt, Brunswick and Oschersleben; enemy flak; USS Bremen;

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