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An Interview with George Cordier

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Veterans Remember Oral History project

July 20, 2007

Interview # VR2-V-L-2007-009

George Cordier, a Marine veteran of the Pacific theater in WW II, was interviewed on July 20, 2007 as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project. This interview was part of a special video series on World War II co-hosted by WILL-TV (PBS affiliate in Champaign IL), to highlight the upcoming broadcast of Ken Burns' new documentary, *The War* in late September 2007.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 20, 2007 Location: The Cordier Residence, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko and IIS Staff

Transcription by: Compass Rose, Chicago, IL

Edited by: Mark R. DePue; Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteer

Total Time: 1 hr, 11 minutes

Total Pages: 24 pages

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 12/24/2007.

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

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Abstract

George Cordier, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-L-2007-009

Biographical Information & Synopsis: George Cordier was born in Breckenridge, Pennsylvania on November 22, 1917, where he grew up. As a young man, he moved to Canton, Ohio and was driving buses there when he met and married Dorothy Vitavec on September 24, 1941. By September of 1942 George and Dorothy were parents, and in September of 1943 George was drafted into the Marine Corps. He went off to basic training at Parris, Island, South Carolina while Dorothy stayed at home with their son Richard. George started the war as a signal corps wireman in the 3rd Joint Assault Signal Company. The unit went to Guadalcanal for training, then participated in the invasion of Guam as part of the 3rd Marine Division. George describes his duties in combat as a wireman, and his injury (shrapnel wounds in the shoulder) after only a couple of days of service on Guam. He recuperated at a naval hospital in the New Hebrides for a couple of months, then was sent to Guadalcanal where he was reassigned to serve as a cook for officers, including a general, an assignment that took him to the Philippines following the initial invasion of the island chain. He spent the rest of the war cooking for officers, a pretty good assignment as George remembers it.

After the war, he returned home to Dorothy, raised a family and continued to drive buses, primarily in California. After retiring, he moved to Springfield, Illinois to be closer to his children, and became active in the effort to build a World War II memorial at Oak Ridge Cemetery near Abraham Lincoln's tomb in Springfield, the state capital. George passed away on May 25, 2012.

Topics Covered: 3rd Marine Division in World War II; 3rd Joint Assault Signal Company; Parris Island; wireman during WW II; battle of Guam; service in the Philippines; serving as a cook during WW II;

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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