

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Edward L. Smith

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

Interview # VRK-A-L-2008-039

Edward L. Smith, a U.S. Army Korean War (1952-1953) and Vietnam War veteran, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 25th, 2008 Location: Smith residence, rural Girard, Illinois

Date: August 14th, 2008 Location: Smith residence, rural Girard, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): N/A

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt & Rosie Camille, ALPL Volunteers

Total Pages: 116 pgs Total Time: 2 hr 14 min + 2 hr 28 min = 4 hr 42 min / 4.7 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 9/10/2008.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
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Abstract

Edward L. Smith, *Veterans Remember*, VRK-A-L-2008-039

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Ed Smith was born on September 5th, 1934 in Springfield, Illinois. As a teenager he dropped out of school and hitch-hiked across much of America. He returned to Springfield and enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard, lying about his age. In 1951, at the age of 17, he enlisted in the Regular Army. Following his training in the infantry, he was sent to Korea in the spring of 1952, and was assigned to the 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. The 38th was stationed in Koje-do Island where it helped put down a North Korean and Chinese POW uprising in several of the sprawling POW compounds. Following this, the 38th Regiment manned a portion of the front line near Old Baldy. Smith was wounded during his first combat action at the front, but never-the-less stayed in the front line for the remainder of his tour in Korea.

Following his tour in Korea, Smith returned to the states, married his home-town sweetheart, Donna, and was stationed in Georgia, followed by a tour in West Germany near the Fulda Gap. Over the next decade Smith was assigned to a series of military posts, including a tour in South Korea in 1960 to 1962, and a tour in Germany in 1965 to 1968 during the Army's build-up in Vietnam. He arrived in South Vietnam in January of 1969, and served as a unit First Sergeant in the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division for six months. He was then assigned as the G-3 Operations Sergeant in the battalion headquarters for the remainder of his tour. He returned to the states in 1970, and after a short tour as a senior enlisted advisor to a California Army National Guard unit, retired from the Army and returned to Springfield, Illinois.

For the remainder of his life Ed worked in a variety of positions, the longest of these being with Lincoln College in Lincoln, Illinois. Over the years, he has suffered from periodic bouts of depression and post traumatic stress disorder due to his experiences in Korea. He often talks to college classes and other groups about his military experiences, finding this to be very therapeutic.

Subject Headings/Key Words: U.S. Army infantryman during Korean War; growing up during WW II; hitch hiking in America; Koje-do POW uprising; 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division; Old Baldy; integration of the military; Camp Gordon, Georgia; Fulda Gap; Hungarian uprising; 2nd Tet Offensive; 27th Infantry Regiment; 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam; Parrot's Beak; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; reception of soldiers in U.S. during Vietnam War; U.S. Army morale problems; race relations in the Army; Lincoln College; Professor Paul Beaver

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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