



Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Robert Lee Hamm

Part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois
World War II Stories project

Interview # VR2-V-D-2007-052

Robert Lee Hamm, an engineer who served on the U.S.S. Franklin during World War II, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois World War II Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: 23 August 2007

Location: Illinois Public Media, Urbana, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Kathleen Ricker, Illinois Public Media affiliate

Technical Support (cameraman, etc):

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1 hr, 33 min/ 1.55 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on (date).

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

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Abstract

Robert Lee Hamm, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-D-2007-052

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Robert Lee Hamm was born in Elkhart, Indiana on July 17, 1923. To avoid entrance in the Army, Hamm enlisted in the United States Naval Reserves. He received boot camp training in Great Lakes, Illinois. After being transferred to Norfolk, Virginia, Hamm became a plank owner of the U.S.S. Franklin. Hamm traveled from Trinidad, again to Norfolk, to the Panama Canal, and eventually to San Diego. In 1942, Hamm eventually headed to Pearl Harbor, where planes and pilots were loaded on the U.S.S. Franklin

He remained in Pearl Harbor for several weeks for gunnery practice. Hamm was involved in the battles of Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and Iwo Jima. He next sailed to the Marianas, the Philippine Sea, and the Palau Islands. In the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Hamm's hangar deck was hit by a kamikaze plane. Due to the damage, Hamm returned to Pearl Harbor for repairs, and then eventually sailed to Puget Sound, Washington. After the ship was finished, Hamm sailed to San Francisco and San Diego, acquiring a new air crew and new missiles. In 1945, Hamm's carrier plane bombed the mainland of Japan. Shortly after, Hamm's U.S.S. Franklin was bombed twice by a Japanese bomber, causing hundreds of fatalities.

Hamm returned to New York, while the war ended in Europe and Japan. Next, Hamm boarded the U.S.S. Lake Champlain and sailed to South Hampton, England to help return troops from Europe. After acquiring appendicitis, Hamm was discharged in Chicago. Hamm moved to Urbana, Illinois and eventually married and had three sons.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Elkhart, Indiana; United States Naval Reserves; Great Lakes, Illinois; Norfolk, Virginia; U.S.S. Franklin; Trinidad; Panama Canal; San Diego; Pearl Harbor; Battle of Saipan; Battle of Tinian; Battle of Guam; Battle of Iwo Jima; Marianas; Philippine Sea; Palau Islands; Puget Sound, Washington; San Francisco; New York; U.S.S. Lake Champlain; South Hampton, England; Chicago, Illinois; Urbana; Illinois.

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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