

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jack Leininger

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

Interview # VRV-A-L-2020-064

John A. (Jack) Leininger, an Army Medivac pilot who served in Vietnam from July 1967 to July 1968, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember – Vietnam Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Nov 17, 2020 Location: Leininger home in rural Marseilles, Illinois

Date: Nov 24 & Dec 7, 2020 Location: ALPL recording studio, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:43 + 2: 28 + 2:01 / 1.72 + 2.47 + 2.02 = 6.21 hrs

Session 1: Early life, basic training, officer candidate school and flight school

Session 2: Experiences flying Medivacs in Vietnam from July 1967 to July 1968

Session 3: Reflections on service in Vietnam, coming home and a life in IL Army NG

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 30, 2021.

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

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Abstract

Jack Leininger, *Veterans Remember-Vietnam*, VRV-A-L-2020-064

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: John A. (Jack) Leininger was born on February 21, 1942 in Bloomington, Illinois, and grew up in the small farm community of Varna, Illinois, where his mother ran a small restaurant. Jack attended public school in Varna and spent much of his spare time helping in the restaurant. He graduated from Mid-County High School in 1959, and worked at a lumber yard following graduation. His employer encouraged Jack to attend the University of Illinois, hoping that Jack would return to the business as a manager, which he did for a time. In 1962 Jack married Jackie Krueger, and in January 1966 he entered military service, opting for a program as an army aviator. He attended basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and went through Warrant Officer training and initial flight training at Mineral Wells, Texas. Following advance flight training at Ft. Rucker, Alabama, he went through training as a Medivac pilot, in part so he could be in the U.S. when his son was born.

Warrant Officer 1 Leininger deployed to South Vietnam in June 1967, serving his first few months with the 45th Air Ambulance Company in Long Binh province, part of the Army's III Corps area. Jack flew the H-class Huey helicopter during his entire tour in Vietnam. In early January he was reassigned to the 571st Air Ambulance Detachment in Quang Tri province, the northern most province in South Vietnam. The next several months, during the Tet Offensive and beyond, he was kept very busy, many days flying multiple Medivac missions. During Tet he supported operations during the battle for Hue, the siege at Khe Sanh and throughout the province. He discusses these missions, and the life of a Medivac pilot in detail. He enjoyed a mid-tour leave in Hawaii with his wife and baby son in April and returned to Vietnam until the end of his tour June 1968. During Jack's year in Vietnam he flew 1,227 Medivac missions, delivering over 2,700 casualties to aid stations and hospitals. After a few years a civilian, Leininger returned to the military, first in the U.S. Army Reserves and later the Illinois Army National Guard, serving as the site manager for the National Guard training area at Marseilles, Illinois.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Vietnam war era Medivac pilot; Varna, Illinois; 45th Air Ambulance Company; 571st Air Ambulance Detachment; Tet Offensive; flying Medivac missions; battle for Hue; siege of Khe Sanh; Warrant Officer basic course; Army flight school; return to the United States; Bob Hope show

Notes 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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