

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Admiral Ron Thunman

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

Interview # VRC-V-L-2017-011

N. Ron Thunman, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Submarine Warfare when the RMS Titanic was discovered in September, 1985, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember – Cold War Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Mar 20, 2017 Location: Union Theater, Abraham Lincoln Pres. Museum

Interview Format: Digital video

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

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): Sam Cooper, Abigail Davis & Jeff Navins,
ALPM staff

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

**Transcript
being processed**

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:36 / 0.6 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on May 30, 2017.

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

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Abstract

Ron Thunman, *Veterans Remember*, VRC-V-L-2017-011

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Nils Ronald (Ron) Thunman was born on February 26th, 1932 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Admiral Thunman, a career naval officer, was interviewed about his entire career in an interview conducted in 2012 and 2013. This new interview was a collaboration between the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum, conducted in order to support an exhibit at the Reagan Museum on the finding of the RMS Titanic by a team led by Dr. Robert Ballard in September, 1985. At that time, Admiral Thunman was Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Submarine Warfare working at the Pentagon. Prior to that, Thunman had over twenty years of experience with submarines, including command of the attack submarine USS Plunger, command of a Fleet Ballistic Submarine Squadron based in Guam from 1974-1976, and command of the entire submarine force for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. He also had several tours where he worked closely with Admiral Hyman Rickover, who is widely considered to be the ‘father of the nuclear navy.’

Admiral Thunman’s relationship with Dr. Ballard began in 1982 when Ballard’s company was contracted to help the navy find two sunken submarines, the USS Thresher and the USS Scorpion. Thunman reluctantly allowed Ballard to use his deep sea underwater robot craft, the Argo, to locate the RMS Titanic, but only after he had located the Thresher and Scorpion. Thunman discusses the mission at length, and the occasion when he informed his superiors, including Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, about Ballard’s finding of the storied Titanic.

Subject Headings/Key Words: RMS Titanic; Dr. Robert Ballard; USS Plunger; USS Scorpion; USS Thresher; Admiral Hyman Rickover; Secretary of the Navy John Lehman; President Ronald Reagan;

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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