

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with David Wiant

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2012-006

David, a veteran of World War II who served in the Philippines, 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: Feb 20, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

March 9, 2012 Location: David Wiant home in Normal, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:25 + 1:15 / 2.42 + 1.25 = 3.67 hrs

Session 1: Early life and initial military training in the Army

Session 2: Service in Philippines occupation force during the Second World War

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on April 22, 2014.

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

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Abstract

David Wiant, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2012-006

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: David Wiant was born in Monnett, Missouri in July, 1926 and grew up in Brookings, South during the Great Depression. By seventh grade the family had moved to East Lansing, Michigan. Drafted in 1943 at age eighteen, Wiant took his Basic Training at Camp Fannin, Texas, with follow-on training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where he qualified as a Sherman tank driver. On arrival with his tank at Ft Meade, Maryland for deployment to Europe, he was sent, without the tank, to San Diego for deployment to Angeles City, Philippines as a truck driver, arriving in 1945. While in the Philippines, he was involved in operations rooting out pockets of Japanese soldiers in remote locations who were avoiding capture. There was much speculation about the impending final assault on the Japanese homeland until Truman's decision to use the atom bomb obviated the need for a land assault. A new form of uncertainty then dominated their attention – who could go home first.

While waiting for deployment home, Wiant was assigned as an ambulance driver for a local field hospital. Impressed with the professionalism of the medical doctors, he accompanied two physicians to a leprosarium, at a time when leprosy was still stigmatized in the Philippines. Later, he was assigned to guard Japanese General Masaharu Homma, then at Bilibid Prison awaiting War Crimes Trial in Manila. Wiant left Luzon in January of 1947, was discharged, and took advantage of the new GI Bill, during which he met his wife, Joan.

A third interview was scheduled, but regrettably, David was diagnosed with cancer, and died. The Wiant family has provided the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library with recordings of their family discussions with David, which are also archived at the ALPL.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Hobos during the Great Depression; WW II era tank driver; America's military build-up during WW II; preparation for a final land assault on Japan; Igorot tribe of the Philippines; digging out Japanese who resisted capture; leprosarium; Military Police escort duty; Japanese General Masaharu Homma; ancient La Loma Cemetery; General Douglas Mac Arthur.

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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