

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Wilbur Fawns

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

Interview # VRK-A-L-2017-010

Wilbur Fawns, Jr., a Korean War veteran who served with a combat engineer battalion during the last year of the war, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember - Korea* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: February 27, 2017 Location: Wilbur Fawn residence in Williamsville, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:19 / 2.32 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 28, 2017.

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

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Abstract

Wilbur Fawns, Jr., *Veterans Remember*, VRK-A-L-2017-010

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Wilbur Fawns was born on April 28th, 1932 in Petersburg, Illinois, and grew up in the small town of Williamsville, Illinois where his father operated a gas station on historic Route 66. He attended high school in Williamsville, and began working at his father's gas station at an early age. When he was sixteen, he also worked at the International Shoe Company in nearby Springfield, but found time for sports as well, especially baseball and basketball. Following graduation from high school in 1950, he worked at odd jobs while he waited to be drafted, which occurred in October, 1952.

Fawns attended basic training at Ft; Leonard Wood, Missouri. While there, he witnessed a tragic accident when his platoon went through the infiltration course, resulting in the death of one of the recruits. During his second eight weeks at Ft. Leonard Wood he received training as a combat engineer. By early 1953 Private Fawns was on his way to Korea, with a short stopover in Japan. He disembarked at Inchon in March, and made his way toward the front, where he was assigned to Headquarters Company, 14th Engineer Battalion, 1169th Engineer Group, which was part of the 8th Army. Although an engineer by training, he was assigned to the unit's reconnaissance section and often was sent into no-man's land at night to collect intelligence on the enemy, North Koreans in that part of the line. While in Korea, he had one harrowing experience where he was grabbed by enemy guards while on business at the armistice talk site at Panmunjom, fearing he would become a POW. Fawns returned to the United States in late 1954 and was immediately discharged. He soon joined his father at the family's gas station in Williamsville, and married shortly after returning home.

Subject Headings/Key Words: engineer duties during the Korean War; 14th Engineer Battalion, 1169th Engineer group; Williamsville, Illinois; engineer reconnaissance section; basic training infiltration course during Korean War; training accidents during basic training; Panmunjom, Korean (Peace Village);

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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