

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Paul Blanchette

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

Interview # VRK-A-L-2008-030

Paul Blanchette, a Korean War era veteran who served on occupation duty in Japan, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 23, 2008      Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, Mass.

Edited by: Ann Countryman, ALPL Volunteer; Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 46      Total Time: 1 hr 53 min / 1.88 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on

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

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## Abstract

Paul Blanchette, *Veterans Remember*, VRK-A-L-2008-030

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Paul Blanchette was born on May 20, 1934 in Bradley, Illinois, near Kankakee. His father worked as a general maintenance man, but with eleven children, it was a hard life growing up. Paul discussed life on the home front during World War II, working at the Roper Stove Company, and dropping out of high school early. Instead, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in late 1951. Paul received training in general maintenance skills, then volunteered for service in Korea. He was sent, instead, to Japan for occupation duty, working as a unit armorer (small arms maintenance) for the 3rd Engineer Company, in the 3rd Marine Division. He was stationed on Camp Okubo, a small compound between Nara and Kyoto. Paul talked extensively about occupation duty in Japan, including relations between American military personnel and the Japanese people.

Blanchette returned to the United States in 1954, and worked in a variety of jobs over the next few decades, including as a policeman in Kankakee, as a salesman, and in a variety of management positions. In the mid 1980s he found himself out of work, and turned to an old family friend from Kankakee, George Ryan, then Illinois' Lieutenant Governor. Ryan helped Blanchette get a job with the state, specifically at Central Management Services.

**Topics Covered:** Life on the home front during World War II; the Roper Stove Company; Marine Corps basic training; U.S. Marine Corps on occupation duty in Japan; rationing in Japan; Japanese-American relations; Japanese bath houses; Okubo, Japan; 3rd Marine Division; integration of the military; George Ryan;

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