

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Keith Larson

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

Interview # VRK-A-L-2010-017

Keith M. Larson, a U.S. Navy seaman assigned to an LST during the Korean War, 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: Apr 12, 2010 Location: Larson residence in Springfield, IL

Date: Apr 14, 2010 Location: Larson residence in Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:22 + 2:12 / 2.37 hrs + 2.2 hrs = 4.57 hrs

Session 1: Larson's youth during WW II and early service in Navy off Korea.

Session 2: Service with U.S. Navy off coast of Korea on an LST

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 7, 2010.

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

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Abstract

Keith Larson, *Veterans Remember*, VRK-A-L-2010-017

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Keith Larson was born on September 11th, 1930 in Springfield, Illinois, and grew up in nearby Jerome. He shares his memories of Pearl Harbor, growing up during World War II, and the closing acts of the war. Larson graduated from Springfield High School in 1948, and after working for a few months, joined the Navy at the end of 1948. Following Basic Training at Great Lakes Naval Training Center near Chicago, Larson was assigned to the USS Wackimaw, a fuel tanker assigned to the Atlantic Fleet. He was discharged in early 1950 due to Congress's severe underfunding of the military. In July 1950, following the beginning of the Korean Conflict, he was recalled to active duty, and sent to Astoria, Oregon, where part of the Navy's mothball fleet was stored.

Larson was assigned to LST (Landing Ship – Tank) 1077, which had been launched at the end of WW II but mothballed shortly thereafter. LST 1077 soon was steaming to the Sea of Japan to perform missions in support of ground forces in Korea. LST 1077 arrived in early December, 1950 and assisted in the evacuation of X Corps troops from Hungnam and other northern ports, sometimes loaded with equipment, other times with North Korean refugees and even Communist POWs. Over the next several months the ship performed a variety of duties, often shuttling supplies from Japan to Korean ports, but also transporting a heavy artillery unit and a DUKW (amphibious boats) to the Inchon harbor. In early 1951, the ship's propeller became entangled in a Korean fishing net, which eventually led to LST 1077's return to the states for repair. Larson took this opportunity to return to Springfield to get married, then joined the rest of the crew as they headed back to Korea to perform more support missions. His tour of service ended in July, 1952, and he returned to Springfield and civilian life.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Jerome, Illinois; WW II scrap drives; LST (Landing Ship – Tank) 1077; LST operations during Korean War; Korean refugees; integration of the Navy; life in the Navy during Korea War; impressions of Japanese during American occupation; impressions of Korean civilians during the war; crossing the equator; Turkish soldiers during Korean War

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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