

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Winton Solberg

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2008-076

Winton Solberg, an Infantry lieutenant in Europe during WW II, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview date & location:

Date: November 7, 2008 Location: Solberg's office in the University of Illinois
Library, Champaign, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Michele McHugh & Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 42 pages Total Time: 2 hr 27 min / 2.45 hrs

Accessioned into the ALPL Archives on November 19, 2008.

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

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Abstract

Winton Solberg, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2008-076

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Winton Solberg was born on January 11th, 1922 in Aberdeen, South Dakota, where he grew up, the son of a policeman and later the local sheriff before he died in an accident in 1939, when his mother was appointed sheriff. He recalled well the hard times imposed by the Great Depression, including bank closings and the Dust Bowl. Upon graduating from high school, Solberg enrolled in the University of South Dakota, with the intention of eventually becoming a lawyer. He also enrolled in ROTC, and following Pearl Harbor and graduation, he was sent to the Army's Officer Candidate School in Ft. Benning, Georgia, where he received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry in May of 1943. He spent the next year training recruits at Ft. McClellan, Alabama, then was shipped as an individual replacement to England. He landed on Omaha beach in September of 1944, then was shipped to the front via Le Mans and Paris.

Solberg was assigned as a Heavy Weapons Platoon Leader in the 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, in early October. He soon saw action in Belgium and later Germany, with his first heavy combat on November 16th. The 29th Division was on the northern flank of the bulge during the Battle of the Bulge, but saw little action during the epic battle. Solberg moved with the 29th as it fought through central Germany from March through May, ending up on the Elbe River, with the Russians on the opposite bank. He performed various duties immediately following VE Day, including command of a German POW camp. Solberg discussed the Army's non-fraternization policy, attending the Nuremberg War Crimes trial for a day, and his impression of the German people. Following the war, Solberg attended Harvard University on the G.I. Bill, eventually earning his Ph.D. in Intellectual History, spending the bulk of his career teaching at the University of Illinois. He passed away on July 10, 2019.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Great Depression; Dust Bowl; Aberdeen, South Dakota; University of South Dakota; Pearl Harbor; ROTC training; Ft. Benning; Officer Candidate School during WW II; 115th Infantry Regiment; 29th Infantry Division; Red Ball Express; combat actions in Belgium and central Germany; Victory in Europe (VE) Day; Nuremberg War Crimes trial; fraternization policies in post-war Germany; dropping of the Atomic Bomb in Hiroshima/Nagasaki; G.I. Bill; Harvard University; teaching at West Point

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