

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Judge Richard H. Mills

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

Interview # VRK-A-L-2008-007

Judge Richard H. Mills, a Korean War veteran with the U.S. Army, 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: January 29, 2008 Location: Judge Mills' chambers, Federal Building,
Springfield, Illinois

Date: February 5, 2008 Location: Judge Mills' chambers

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 69 Total Time: 2 hr 3 min + 2 hr 33 min = 4 hr 36 min/ 4.6 hrs

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

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Abstract

Richard H. Mills, *Veterans Remember*, VRK-A-L-2008-007

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Judge Richard H. (Dick) Mills was born on July 19, 1929 in Beardstown, Illinois. He discusses growing up in Jacksonville during the depression and the World War II years, as well as his family's legal heritage. Richard attended Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois, then was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1952. He subsequently received training in counter-intelligence work at Fort Holabird, Maryland. He was sent to Korea in early 1953 and was assigned to the 3rd Counter-Intelligence Corps Detachment, part of the 3rd Infantry Division. Mills' duties included interrogation of captured prisoners of war as well as line-crossers, the term used to describe those in civilian clothes who attempted to cross enemy lines into South Korea. Following the armistice in July of 1953, the number of line-crossers increased, and now included many women and some children as well. Mills returned to the states in August of 1954, and enrolled in Law School at Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Following graduation from law school in 1957, Mills spent the rest of his life practicing law, first in private practice, then as State's Attorney for Cass County, Illinois (1960-1964), Circuit Judge, 8th Judicial Circuit of Illinois (1966-1976), Justice of the Appellate Court of Illinois (1976-1985), and finally as the U.S. District Judge for the Central District of Illinois since August of 1985. He also received his commission in the U.S. Army Reserves in 1961, and served for many years with the Selective Service System (SSS) in Springfield, Illinois. He describes his duties with the SSS, and the process of determining draft deferments and adjudicating draft violations during the Vietnam War. Mills also discusses his confirmation to the federal court in 1985.

Topics Covered: U.S. Army during Korean War; growing up during Great Depression in central Illinois; rationing during WW II; Office of Price Administration – Springfield, Illinois; Illinois College – Jacksonville, Illinois; Fort Holabird, Maryland; Counter-Intelligence operations – Korean War; 3rd Counter-Intelligence Corps Detachment; 3rd Infantry Division; John S.D. Eisenhower; General Douglas MacArthur; General Matthew Ridgway; General Lewis B. Hershey; Syngman Rhee; Mercer University; G.I. Bill; Selective Service System during Vietnam War; draft deferments; State's Attorney-Cass County, Illinois; 8th Judicial Circuit of Illinois; District Judge, Central District of Illinois; Ronald Reagan; U.S. Representative Robert H. Michel; Senator Paul Simon; Senator Alan J. Dixon

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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