

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with J. Harold Beard

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

Interview # VR2-A-L-2011-033

John Harold Beard, a motor sergeant in an artillery unit in the European theater 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 dates & location:

Date: July 27, 2011

Location: Beard's residence in Roseville, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Robert Young, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center

Edited by: Janice Culp

**Transcript being
processed**

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:58 / 0.97 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 4, 2011.

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

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Abstract

J. Harold Beard, Veterans Remember, VR2-A-L-2011-033

Biographical Information & synopsis: John Harold Beard was born on December 4th, 1917 in Monmouth, Illinois, part of a family with three sisters and one other brother. When the storm clouds for World War II were building in 1940, Harold received a low draft number, and decided to enlist in the Illinois Army National Guard, joining Service Battery of the 123rd Field Artillery, part of the 33rd Infantry Division. The unit was federalized on March 1st, 1941, and sent to Camp Forrest in Tullahoma Tennessee. Harold then received auto mechanics training at Ft. Sill Oklahoma, and follow-on training at Fort Lewis, Washington, and the Normoyle Ordnance Depot in San Antonio Texas. In August, 1943 he shipped to the Hawaiian Islands for guard duty, the Kessler Field Mississippi, where he received pilot training as an aviation cadet. The military terminated the program, however, and Beard was sent to Camp Shelby Mississippi, where he was assigned as a motor Sergeant in the 869th Field Artillery Battalion, part of the 65th Division. Harold passed away on April 9, 2014.

On January 9th, 1945 Beard's unit sailed for Europe, and arrived at LaHavre, France on January 22nd. The 65th spent five months in combat throughout Germany. Beard had the opportunity to tour the concentration camp at Ordruff, Germany (part of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp), and saw first-hand the horribly atrocious deeds that the Germans had committed against the Jews and others. Beard was discharged on Oct. 25, 1945 and returned to his civilian life in Illinois.

Topics Covered: Monmouth Illinois; Camp Forrest Tennessee; Ft. Sill Oklahoma; Ft. Lewis Washington; Kessler Field, Mississippi; 869th Field Artillery Battalion, 65th Division; Camp Lucky Strike in LaHavre France; Saar Moselle triangle; Autobahn; Ordruff Concentration Camp, Germany

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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