

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Joseph Rank

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))  
Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project

Interview # VRV-V-D-2015-078

Joseph Rank, a Naval Officer who was assigned to a destroyer and a cruiser during the Vietnam War, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 5, 2015      Location: WILL-TV Studio X, Campbell Hall, Urbana, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Cassidy Williams and Stretch Ledford

Technical Support (videographer): WILL Staff

Transcription by: Illinois Public Media staff

Edited by: Illinois Public Media staff

Total Pages: 26 pgs.      Total Time: 1:22 / 1.37 hrs.

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

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# Abstract

## Joseph Rank, *Veterans Remember*, VRV-V-D-2015-078

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Joseph Rank from Urbana, Illinois was born on June 19, 1947 in Moline, Illinois. Rank was an ROTC student at the University of Illinois from 1965 to 1969, and was commissioned an ensign in June. He was then assigned to the USS Lyman K. Swenson (DD 729) a WW II era destroyer, which was based in San Diego, California. From March through September, 1970 the ship operated in Vietnamese waters. Rank's primary assignment was as an anti-submarine warfare officer, but since there was no real threat from enemy submarines, he spent much of his time as a fire control officer for the Swenson's 5-inch guns. He was responsible for sixty gunners' mates and fire control technicians who operated the guns and the analog computers which controlled the guns. His position as junior officer meant he was responsible for the training, evaluation and counseling of the sailors under him. He also took turns serving as a line officer, standing a watch on the bridge and giving steering orders to the helmsman. The ship spent one hundred and forty-five days at sea, then make port for thirty-five days for repairs and to receive provisions; ports of call included Hong Kong, Osaka, Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines.

In the spring of 1971 Lieutenant Rank was reassigned to a much newer ship in Bath, Maine, the guided missile cruiser USS England (DLG 22). The USS England deployed to Vietnam in spring of 1972. In July, 1972 Rank was reassigned as a Navy ROTC instructor at the University of Illinois where he also worked on his master's degree. He went on to make the Navy a career, retiring in 1989. Rank emphasizes the confidence and leadership skills he gained from the Navy. He talks about how his career in the military shaped his life and how it also shaped his view of the Vietnam War and the world.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Joseph Rank; U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War; Naval ROTC at the University of Illinois; military leadership; U.S.S. Pueblo; USS Lyman K. Swenson (DD729); Conning officer; draft during the Vietnam War; Communists; Gulf of Tonkin incident; submarine warfare; USS England (DD 365); Line Officer; underway replenishment;

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