

James Robert Eddy was born in 1916 in Knoxville, Tennessee. He served in the U.S. military for 30 years, including in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He was an aircraft gunner and participated in operations on Guam, Tinian, and Saipan. After a stroke at age 48 while still in the service, he became a passionate advocate for disabled veterans and played a role in advancing the Americans with Disabilities Act. He passed away on February 2, 2005, in his hometown of Knoxville.

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Mr. James R. Eddy
5333 La Vesta Dr.
Knoxville, TN 37918-3567

5/5/94

I WAS ONE OF THE ORGANIZERS
ALONG WITH THE HEART FOUNDATION
AND U.S. SPECIAL COUNCIL.

JRE.

the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Persistence pays off for grad, 77

Jim Eddy spent 14 years pursuing degree to inspire elderly, disabled

By Sam Venable
News-Sentinel columnist

Jim Eddy isn't headed for a celebration bash on the sunny beaches of Florida. Nor does he have immediate plans to dust off his resume and start applying for a job.

Otherwise, he's like anyone else who just graduated from college. Anyone, that is, who

“I wanted to set an example for people who are elderly and disabled.”

Jim Eddy

is 77 years of age.

“I didn't do this to brag,” says Eddy, who recently received his diploma from Upper Iowa University in Fayette. “I wanted to set an example for people who are elderly and disabled. They can do anything they want if they just keep trying.” Eddy should

know — on all accounts. He spent 14 years in pursuit of his degree.

Little wonder why one of his professors, in a letter from the college, remarked to Eddy, “You've always shown such spirit and optimism in your determination to complete this and remaining course work for your college degree. This goal has meant so much to you, and I've felt privileged to be a collaborator with you for part of the distance.”

“The distance” in Eddy's case goes all the way back to April 1965 when, as an Air Force chief warrant officer, his 23-year career was snuffed by a massive stroke that paralyzed his left side.

Eddy underwent brain surgery and months of intensive physical therapy, was discharged by the military and, essentially, sent home to die.

Not quite. He threw himself into a regimen of physical exercises to strengthen withered muscles. He relearned to write in block, printed letters. He read everything he could find

about overcoming physical disabilities. And he decided to graduate from college.

Eddy already had earned 60 semester hours of college-level credits from the U.S. Armed Forces Institute. But most universities, including UI, would not accept them for credit. In addition, he faced the problem of mobility around campus, as well as adjusting to the fast pace of college classwork. He persisted, though, and finally located Upper Iowa, which not only recognized his grades from the military institute, but also set up a home-study correspondence course.

Starting in 1979 and working on his own, sometimes-limited pace, Eddy completed courses in the principles of public administration, business law, U.S. national government, state and local government, constitutional law, psychology and accounting. He achieved a grade point average of 2.9 and received an associate degree in public administration.

Said Eddy from the office of his Fountain City home: “How much work I did at any one time depended on how I was feeling. I can't use a typewriter, and all of my written correspondence has to be printed, one letter at a time.”

Nonetheless, Eddy, a graduate of St. John Military School, Delafield, Wis., in the class of '34, kept plugging away, completing more than 50 semester hours of study.

A prolific copy-keeper — “It comes from all those years as a military paper-pusher,” he says with a laugh — Eddy has reams of notebooks filled with his course work, as well as correspondence with



Heather Stone/News-Sentinel staff

Jim Eddy holds the diploma he earned from Upper Iowa University.

politicians, newspaper and magazine editors and others. He exchanges frequent letters with actress Patricia Neal, a stroke victim and founder of the Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center.

“You know, when I had the brain surgery (in 1965) and was discharged from the Air Force, I really thought I'd never be able to do anything again,” Eddy recalls.

Fortunately, he proved himself — and a lot of others — wrong. ■

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Filmmakers seek some stories from Depression-era kids

By D.G. Fulford
Los Angeles Daily News

LOS ANGELES — It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.

That's a literary allusion, of course, but times are still that way.

Always have been. Always will be.

History repeats and repeats and repeats until lessons are learned and humanity changes.

Humanity has a greater chance of changing if its voices are heard.

Similar sentiments are behind the American History Project, a documentary film company in search of humanity's voice.

Producers Lexy Lovell and Michael Uys, a filmmaking team out of Brooklyn, are putting together a documentary, tentatively called "Riding the Rails: Children of the Great Depression."

It's going to be the story of a population larger than the filmmakers ever imagined when they set out to do their project just over a year ago.

They put out a call for correspondents in *Modern Maturity* magazine.

"We thought we'd be lucky if we got 30 or 40 letters," Uys said.

So far, they've heard from 2,500 people.

Some days, more than 100 letters come in from men and women who are now senior citizens. They are writing about their experiences from 1928 to 1940.

When they were kids. On the road.

In 1932, U.S. government estimates reported more than 250,000 boys and girls as "homeless wanderers." Some of them hopped on freight trains to escape unhappy family experiences. Others thumbed cross country, picking up what work they could so they could eat.

Some just traveled because they could not resist the call of a hard life that promised adventure.

"I worked as often as I could but seldom stayed anywhere very long because the wanderlust was in me," wrote a correspondent from Englewood, Colo. "I picked string beans in southeastern Pennsylvania, tomatoes and

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peaches in southern New Jersey, strawberries in Maryland, oranges and grapefruit in Florida, peanuts and potatoes in Texas, cut milo maize and sorghum and pulled broom corn in New Mexico. I also knew hunger, cold, nights in jail after having been picked up for vagrancy, beatings by railroad 'bulls,' and scouting likely places to hole up for the night as the sun was getting low in the sky."

These are romantic-sounding memories of a rough time in America; a rough time for kids and families. History repeats and repeats and repeats. These stories resound today.

In a world where brilliant illustrator Maurice Sendak publishes a children's book about the disenfranchised, the voices of the past echo and echo and echo.

"Riding the Rails" will draw connections between the children of the Depression and children today who have had to struggle for survival in an adult world of difficulty and disadvantage," Uys and Lovell propose. "The backdrop has changed from the rail yards to the inner cities, but the prevailing questions remain the same."

They would like to hear from you if you lived this life.

They are primarily interested in hearing from minorities: African-Americans, Asians and American Indians.

"So far, the people we've heard from have been overwhelmingly white," Lovell said.

From all the stories they've heard, they know that on the road, this wasn't the case.

Here's the address:
The American History Project,
300 Hicks St., Brooklyn, N.Y.
11201.

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(Both relate to operation on Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.)

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James R. Eddy
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Eddy, James R.
World War II

Eddy, James R. K
f

COPY

August 31, 1984

Mr. James R. Eddy
5333 Lavesta Road
Knoxville, TN 37918

Dear Mr. Eddy:

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I am glad to have met you and I enjoyed the two visits with you in your home.

Sincerely yours,

John Dobson, Librarian
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September 14, 1989

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5333 Lavesta Road
Knoxville, Tennessee
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We are putting this in the mail this afternoon, and hope you will receive it on Friday or Saturday. The vagueries of the postal service make us all a little uncertain as to what we can expect.

Yours truly,



D. Strong Wyman,
Assistant

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5333 La Vesta Dr.
Knoxville, TN 37918-3567

5/5/94

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ALONG WITH THE LEAF FOUNDATION
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World War II

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Sept. 9, 1986

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Libraries

Special
Collections

Prof. Stanley Weintraub
Institute of the Arts and Humanistic Studies
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

Dear Professor Weintraub:

Your name has been brought to our attention by James R. Eddy, a donor of World War II materials catalogued as part of the growing collection referred to in the enclosed brochure.

Mr. Eddy was an aircraft gunner in the War and is interested in providing you with information. As he is seventy and has lost, through a stroke, his capacity for writing easily, and can print only with effort, he records messages on a reel-to-reel recorder. If he knew what sort of information you need, he says he will be glad to tape it for you. He can be reached as follows:

Mr. James R. Eddy
5333 Lavesta Road
Knoxville, TN 37918

At any rate, he asked if we would send you his name and explain his limitations, as he would like to respond to your request for information. At the same time he agreed that it would be good to notify you of the presence of the collection here, in case you might want to come and research the material in it.

I'm sure Mr. Eddy will be very happy to help you with his own reminiscences.

Sincerely yours,

D. Strong Wyman, Assistant
Special Collections

DSW:fp
encl.

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KNOXVILLE, TN 37918

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ON GEN JAMES

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James E

3/30/88
Date

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Donor's Signature

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KNOXVILLE 37916

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James R. Eddy
Donor's Signature

Eddy, James

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August 31, 1984

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5333 Lavesta Road
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September 14, 1989

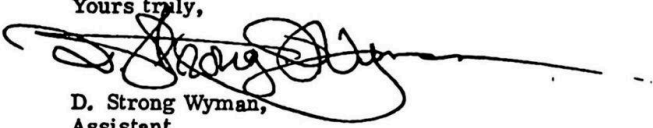
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Yours truly,


D. Strong Wyman,
Assistant

October 28, 1991

Mr. James Eddy
5333 Lavesta Road
Knoxville, TN 37918

Dear Mr. Eddy:

Dr. James Lloyd recently told me that you wished to contact the Eagle Squadron Association but were unable to get an address for that organization. It is Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater and Science Center. 1875 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, 97101.

I hope this information will be of help to you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Toni L. McDaniel, Executive Assistant
Center for the Study of War and Society.

January 17, 1991

Mr. James R. Eddy
5333 Lavesta Road
Knoxville, TN 37918

Dear Mr. Eddy:

Thank you for loaning us the copies of the **Badger Gazette**. I found them very interesting, and have added copies of them to our collections.

If there is anything I can do for you, please let me know. I hope to see you Monday, February 4th, for our next Brown Bag lunch. Mike Birdwell will be joining us to speak on "Sergeant York: The Man, the Myth, the Movie".

Again, my thanks. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles W. Johnson, Director
Center for the Study of War and Society

CWJ:eb
Enclosure

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

November 9, 1989



College of
Liberal Arts

Department of
History

Mr. James R. Eddy
5333 Lavesta Road
Knoxville, TN. 37918

Dear Mr. Eddy,

As a friend of the World War II Veterans Project and our new Center for the Study of War and Society, I wanted to let you know about something which we have planned. On Monday, November 20th, at 4:00 p.m., the Center is sponsoring a public lecture by Dr. Robert L. O'Connell in the Senior Analyst in the U.S. Army Intelligence Agency and the author of a very exciting new book, Of Arms and Men. He has titled his talk, "Why Men Make War," and it promises to be thought-provoking and stimulating.

The lecture is sponsored by a generous grant from Col. John B. McKinney (USA Ret.) and will be followed by a small reception at the Center's offices in the old Main Library across the street from the University Center. Parking should be available in the garage at the University Center.

I would like it very much if you could join us for the lecture and the reception both to hear the lecture and to see our new facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles W. Johnson".

Charles W. Johnson, Director
Center for the Study of War and Society

CWJ/ljm