

INTERVIEW

It is the interviewer's job to make the veteran feel comfortable and to be a good listener. Each interview session will be unique. The following is an outline (not a script) to help the interviewer guide the veteran through the conversation. Tailor the questions as you and the veteran see fit.

1 Introduction

The interviewer must begin the recording by stating his or her name and organizational affiliation (if any), the veteran's full name, the date and the general location in which the interview is being conducted. Please do not disclose private information such as home addresses, military serial numbers or Social Security numbers.

2 Biographical Details

- a) Where and when were you born?
- b) Who are/were your parents and what are/were their occupations?
- c) Who are/were your siblings? Names and genders? Which, if any, serve/served in the military?
- d) What were you doing before you entered the service?

3 Early Days of Service

- a) In which branch of the military did you serve?
- b) Did you enlist or were you drafted?
- c) If you enlisted, why did you choose that specific branch of the military?
- d) What happened when you departed for training camp and during your early days of training?
- e) Do you recall your instructors? If so, what were they like?
- f) Did you receive any specialized training? If so, what?
- g) How did you adapt to military life, including the physical regimen, barracks, food and social life?

4 Wartime Service

- a) Where did you serve?
- b) If you served abroad, what are some memories you have of that experience?
- c) If you were on the front lines, what combat action did you witness?
- d) If you were not on the front lines, what were your duties?
- e) If you saw combat, how did you feel when witnessing casualties and destruction?
- f) What kinds of friendships and camaraderie did you form while serving, and with whom?
- g) How did you stay in touch with family and friends back home?
- h) What did you do for recreation or when you were off-duty?

5 War's End/Coming Home

- a) Where were you when the war ended?
- b) How did you return home?
- c) How were you received by your family and community?
- d) How did you readjust to civilian life?
- e) Have you remained in contact with or reunited with fellow veterans? If so, who?
- f) Are you a member of any veterans' organizations? If so, which?
- g) What have you done since separating from the military?

6 Reflections

- a) How did your wartime experiences affect your life?
- b) What are some life lessons you learned from military service?
- c) How has your military service impacted your feelings about war and the military in general?
- d) What message would you like to leave for future generations who will view/hear this interview?
- e) Is there anything you feel like we haven't discussed, or should be added to this interview? If so, what?

Sample Interview Questions

The interviewer should begin the interview by stating the following information:

Good morning/afternoon. Today is TODAY'S DATE. My name is NAME OF INTERVIEWER. I am conducting an oral history interview at NAME OF LOCATION in CITY AND STATE with FIRST AND LAST NAME OF VETERAN.

Please state your name and address for the record. [The Veteran/Interviewee will state his/her first and last name along with his/her address.]

Segment 1: Jogging Memory

- Which war(s) did you serve in (WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf)?
- Were you drafted or did you enlist?
- What was your age?
- Where were you living at the time?
- Were you single or married?
- Why did you join?
- Why did you pick the service branch you joined?
- Do you recall your first days in service?
- What did it feel like?
- Tell me about your boot camp/training experience(s).
- Where was your boot camp?
- Did you get to go home on leave after boot camp or did you go straight to your first assignment?
- Do you remember your instructors?
- How did you get through it?
- Did you have any special buddies in boot camp?

Segment 2: Experiences

- Which war(s) did you serve in (WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf)?
- Where exactly did you go?
- Do you remember arriving and what it was like?
- What was your job/assignment?
- Did you see combat?
- Were there many casualties in your unit?
- Tell me about a couple of your most memorable experiences
- What was the weather like?
- Did you have comrades who you remember well?
- Do you remain in contact with them?
- Were you a prisoner of war?
- Tell me about your experiences in captivity and when freed.
- Were you awarded any medals or citations?
- How did you get them?

Segment 3: Life

- How did you stay in touch with your family?
- What was the food like?
- Did you have plenty of supplies?
- Did you feel pressure or stress?
- Was there something special you did for "good luck"?
- How did people entertain themselves?
- Were there entertainers?
- Were you granted 'leave' occasionally?

- What did you do when on leave?
- Where did you travel while in the service?
- Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?
- Do you have photographs?
- Who are the people in the photographs?
- What did you think of officers or fellow soldiers?
- Did you keep a personal diary?

Segment 4: After Service

- Do you recall the day your service ended?
- Where were you?
- How did you get home?
- Did you surprise your family when you came home or were they expecting you?
- What differences did you notice about the world at home (community, family, friends) when you got home to the time you went in?
- What did you do in the days and weeks afterward?
- Did you work or go back to school?
- Was your education supported by the G.I. Bill?
- Did you make any close friendships while in the service?
- Did you continue any of those relationships?
- For how long?
- Did you join a veterans' organization?

Segment 5: Later Years and Closing

- What did you go on to do as a career after the war?
- Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?
- If in a veterans' organization, what kinds of activities does your post or association have?
- Do you attend reunions?
- How did your service and experiences affect your life?
- What similarities or differences do you see in your world as a Veteran compared to that of those currently serving in the military?
- Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?