

Oral History

Student Question Guide



Interviews with individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event can provide interesting details or perspectives that might never be found in a textbook. One way to learn more about life in the military is to ask a veteran, someone who has actually served in the Armed Forces. Each veteran has their own unique story. Listed below are some helpful tips and some possible questions for your interview.

- Come to the interview with plenty of questions prepared.
- Speak clearly and at a reasonable speed.
- Be polite and respectful of the fact that sometimes it can be difficult for veterans to talk about their experiences; especially if it was during a war.
- Never ask questions like, “How many people have you killed?”
- If possible, record your interview and then write down the responses to the questions later when you have more time.
- Make sure to thank the individual.

Possible Questions:

What is your full name and highest rank?

What branch of the Armed Forces did you serve in?

What unit were you in?

Joining the Military and Training:

Where and when did you join the service?

Why did you join the military?

Where did you receive your training?

What was training like?

Is there anything unusual about it that you remember?

Daily Life and Missions:

Where were you stationed?

What did you do on an average day?

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Daily Life and Missions Cont.

Please describe what life in your unit was like.

What do you remember most about your time in the military?

What was your most important piece of equipment? Why?

What was the food like?

What was the hardest thing that you had to get used to?

Please describe your unit's mission and your recollection of your duties within it.

What is the best story you like to tell about your service?

Recall any unique traditions in your unit.

What was the most important thing your unit did?

Combat:

If you took part in combat action, tell where, when, and against whom.

Please describe your first combat experience and your reaction:

How did you and your unit regard enemy troops as fighters?

Leaving the military and life afterwards:

When did you leave the service and why?

Were you involved in any community organizations before or after your service?

What did you do after you were discharged?

What to do with your Interview:

Create Fine Art:

Use the stories you heard to inspire a piece of art. Paint a picture, make a sculpture, or write a poem.

Perhaps gift the veteran with your finished work. Share your work with us, we'd love to see it.

Email Melissa Tyer, MTyer@FDMuseum.org.

Submit your Oral History:

There are lots of groups online that are looking for oral histories. Ask your parents to help you find a location to submit your oral history.