

## TOP TIPS FROM RECENTLY HONORED HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE INTERVIEWERS:

- 1) Establish a comfort zone: Help the veteran feel relaxed and as comfortable as possible. If you can, conduct the interview in surroundings familiar to him or her.
- 2) Stress the purpose of the Veterans History Project: Remember that the Veterans History Project was created for historical purposes. We are building a national research collection and we are honored to hear their stories. Share that with the veteran.
- 3) Get down to business: Be careful not to do too much pre-interview. If you can, get the biographical information by having them fill out the form. That way they will not run out of things to say during the actual interview.
- 4) Practice good listening skills: Let the interview be guided by the veteran. The only way to know what question to ask next is if you know what the veteran just said. Follow-up questions are necessary to enrich the story, e.g., how? why? what was that like?
- 5) Be patient: Never put the veteran on the spot about dates and places. Many times particular battles were not given names until long after the events occurred. It may help to do a little research before or after the interview so that you have some background information and can fill in the missing information.
- 6) Know how and when to close: When the interview is winding down, ask for a few words of wisdom from the veteran. You will often find that they have thought about it and have prepared some remarks. This gives them the opportunity to share something they think is important.
- 7) Time is of the essence: Our nation is losing veterans at a fast rate, particularly World War II veterans. Ask the veteran you are interviewing to participate by interviewing their friends. They can be the best spokespersons for the Project, as they have just told you their stories.
- 8) The Veterans History Project is about veterans: Consider each story to be the most important story. One Veteran at a time, and one family at a time.
- 9) Less is more: It does not take much to participate in the Veterans History Project. With merely some time to listen, a good microphone and a cassette recorder, you, the veteran and his/her family can become part of history.
- 10) How to recognize success: A good interview is when the interviewer says the least and the interview subject says the most.



*Photos of: Diane Kresh and Congressman Moore, Workshop Panelists, Larry Ordner and Sarah Rouse  
Taken by: Roisin Wisneski*

**Honored Interviewers:**

**Lyndle Barnes Jr.**, Buffalo Trace Boy Scouts Council, Southwest Indiana

**Kelly Bergman**, Dean V. Kruse Foundation's WWII Victory Museum

**Andrew "Bud" Fisher**, University of Toledo, Ohio

**Carol Fowler**, Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral Histories, Sea Girt, N.J

**Emmy Huffman, Larry Ordner, and Patricia McClain** with Sen. Richard G. Lugar.

**Harold Phillips and Rebecca Ebert**, Stewart Bell Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library.

**Mary Jungemann**, Southport High School, Indianapolis

**Gary Rhay**, of Eugene, Oregon

**Gertrude Stephenson**, Christopher Harrison DAR in Washington County, Indiana

**Gary Swanson**, Americans Remembered and archived at the Jackson County Historical Society

**Thomas Swope**, host of radio series titled "Legacies: Stories from the Second World War"

**Michael Lloyd Willie**, WRCB-TV Channel 3 Eyewitness News, First Tennessee Bank and Erlanger, University of Tennessee College of Medicine