



AAFES *the go where you go!*

AAFES

HISTORY PROGRAM

Conducting and Preserving Historical Interviews,
Photos and Documents

The AAFES History Program collects and archives personal stories, photos and documents from AAFES associates and retirees who have supported the U.S. Military in peacetime and wartime. The program also encourages input from military members, dependents and veterans who want to tell their stories of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.



AAFES History Preservation Project

This publication provides guidelines and tips for AAFES associates, retirees, military members and veterans wanting to contribute their experiences with AAFES during employment or deployment. These documents are also designed for those wishing to interview fellow associates, retirees, military members or veterans.

Your contributions to this project will be a vital part of AAFES' history and future. All contributions will become a permanent part of AAFES' history archives. They will also be used for future research and possibly be made available for public viewing on the AAFES history web page.

The inclosed forms will make it easier for you to conduct interviews or send your memoirs to the AAFES history program at AAFES Dallas Headquarters.

This Publication contains:

- Mission statement and items collected
- Information on recording interviews
- Biographical and other important forms
- Required forms
- Questions for interviews
- Guidelines for memoirs

Santa arrives by elephant in Bangkok, 1972



AAFES History Program Mission

The purpose of the AAFES History Program is to identify, collect and preserve photographs, memorabilia and documents pertaining to the origins, programs and policies of AAFES and make them available for research.



Yokota Main Store, 1986

For more than 100 years, AAFES' mission has been to support the men and women of the Armed Forces around the world during military operations.

“WE GO WHERE YOU GO” epitomizes AAFES' mission, particularly when our service members are stationed far away from American shores.

The AAFES History Program collects stories and documents from retirees and associates. The program also documents military members, veterans or dependents and their experiences with AAFES at home and abroad.

Of special interest are the more recent conflicts from Vietnam until OEF/OIF.

Collecting AAFES' history

The focus of the AAFES History Program is on audio, video and written memoirs of personal experiences pertaining to AAFES. The program welcomes photos, documents and artifacts (on an individual basis.) Please contact the staff historian if there is an artifact you would like to donate. Recording, memoir, memorabilia and photo/document donations can be sent

to: AAFES
PL-C Staff Historian
PO Box 660202
Dallas, Tx 75266-0202

Note: The program does not accept items on loan.



Edwards AFB, 1997

What happens to the items you submit?

Donated artifacts, photos or interviews with the proper release/donation and biographical information release forms:

- The AAFES History Program (AHP) will send a letter of receipt.
- All material will be logged and archived for future reference and research.
- Some recordings and materials will be made available to the public through the headquarters building and the AAFES History web site at aafes.com, about aafes.

Information on recording interviews

When conducting or participating in a recorded interview, it is recommended to use an external microphone. Place the microphone in front of yourself or the person to be interviewed. A tripod will be needed for the use of a video camera.

Set the microphone six to 12 inches from the person being interviewed and test for sound quality by asking the person to speak, stopping the tape, rewinding and playing back.

When making a video, focus the camera on the upper body of the person being interviewed. Have the view wide enough to capture hand gestures. Be mindful of the lighting. Do not video tape in front of a window or other bright light behind your subject, or you may not be able to distinguish their features on the recording. To avoid shadows on the face, direct and even lighting is recommended.



The location of your interview is almost as important as the equipment you use. Find a quiet area. Rooms with soft surfaces such as carpeting and upholstery provide better sound quality and fewer echoes. Avoid chiming clocks, humming fluorescent lights, hissing air vents, ringing phones, or background noises from television, radio or other conversations.

Be sure to remove the “erase tabs” on the audio or video cassette to avoid accidental erasure, or to prevent accidental recording over the original.

Munich, 1973

More information on recording oral history

Recorded interviews should last 30 to 90 minutes. Introduce each recording with the date, location and names of persons present. Spell out names that may be unclear. Interview questions enclosed in this document will give the interviewer ideas on what to ask.

Photographs, letters or other documents can be useful to help the subjects memory. If the subject is willing to donate the photos or documents they will add value to the interview. Original photos and documents are preferred, but high quality legible copies will be accepted.

Complete the biographical form in advance so you will have important information to use during the interview. Review the interview question form and select appropriate questions. When conducting an interview, be a good listener. Encourage the speaker by smiles or nods. If you do not understand a comment or terminology used, be sure to have the interviewee clarify.

Other tips when conducting an interview:

Keep the tape recorder or video camera running throughout interview. Never record secretly.

Keep questions uncomplicated and short.

Avoid questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no.”

Encourage interviewee with nods rather than audible responses such as “uh-huh.”

Don't begin interview with painful or controversial topics.

Be patient and give the interviewee time to reflect on his or her answers.

Be yourself. Don't pretend to know more about a subject than you do.

Remember, obscene or offending language or comments cannot be used.

Kosovo, 2003



Biographical Form

In order for your information to be filed in AAFES' archives, this form must be filled out and submitted with your interview or donations.

First Middle Last Maiden Name

Check one

Associate ____ Retiree ____ Military service member ____ Military Dependent ____ Veteran ____

Address _____

City _____ state _____ zip _____, _____

Telephone (_____) _____ e-mail _____

Place of Birth _____ Birth Date _____

What department(s)/branch of service were you employed? _____

Title of last position held _____

Did you deploy? _____ If so, where and when _____

Locations of employment or service _____

Did the military member, veteran or deployed associate sustain combat or service-related injuries?

____ If so, when and where? _____

Medals or special service awards _____

Are photographs included? ____ If so, please fill out the photograph log sheet

Are manuscripts or documents included? ____ If so, please fill out the manuscript form

Please use back of form to include additional information.

Release Form

AAFES History Program

SOUND ARCHIVES AND DOCUMENT GIFT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FORM

In consideration of the commitment that the AAFES History Program has made to preserve the heritage of AAFES, I hereby donate in form and content all rights to the video and or audio tape recorded interview(s) given or sent on _____, together with any supplementary materials listed on the attached forms.

I confirm that I have the authority to grant the above the rights to the AAFES History Program.

AAFES shall have the right to use, reproduce, distribute and give access to the material for any purpose whatsoever and may use my name and or likeness in connection therewith.

Interviewer

Narrator

Si

Print name

Print name

Address

Address

Audio/Video Recording Log

Name of interviewer (if applicable)

First Middle Last Maiden Name

Name of interviewee

First Middle Last Maiden Name

Address of interviewer (if applicable or different from the subjects address)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____, _____

Telephone (_____) _____ e-mail _____

Recording format (please check)

Video type:

VHS _____ 8mm _____ High-8 _____ Digital _____ other _____

Audio type: Cassette _____ CD _____ Digital _____ other _____

Date of recording _____

Location of recording _____

Corresponding materials

Are you sending other materials along with the recording? _____

If yes, please fill out the document or photo logs.

Please fill out topics covered in recording _____

Please use back of form to include additional information.

Photograph Log

Photos should first be numbered with a soft #1 pencil on the back. Please do not use a pen a marker.

Name of person donating photos:

First Middle Last

If more than four photos are to be submitted, please make a copy of this form and continue listing photos.

Photograph #1

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Photograph #2

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Photograph #3

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Photograph #4

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Memoirs and Document Log

Fill out this form when submitting written memoirs or documents, letters and other printed and written manuscripts. This form will be used in conjunction with the biographical and release forms.

Name of person submitting documents

First Middle Last

Full name of person about whom the document relates:

Type date(s) of when document(s) was originally produced _____

Type of items submitted (circle those that apply):

Account books Letters Diaries Scrapbooks Other _____

Number of items submitted: _____

If these items are copies of the originals please verify if the original copies are held.

Note: The AAFES History Program encourages original copies be donated for safe storage and preservation.

What are the most important topics and events described in the documents? _____

Artifact Gift Form

If you have an historical item you would like to donate to the AAFES History Program, please contact the AAFES historian. Fill out this form and include it with your donation. Artifacts could include (but are not limited to): AAFES uniforms, memorabilia and souvenirs collected from overseas service or deployments.

Name of person donating items

First Middle Last

Type of item and date it was purchased, found or given as a gift

Date or era when the artifact was originally produced

If it is a souvenir, where did it come from and what is the story of its origin

Conditions

The owner absolutely transfers full title by signing below. All gifts are outright and unconditional.

Signature

Donor _____ Date _____

Printed name _____

The AAFES History Program would like to thank you for your gift.

Questions for interviews

Use the following guidelines when conducting interviews. It may be helpful to split the interview into segments. Remember, you can discuss any event or time period that occurred in your life or the life of the interviewee. The only rule is that it must involve AAFES in some way.

Core Questions

Administrative Questions (all interviews)

1. Full name
2. Position/Location assignment/Branch of service
3. Number of years with AAFES/military service

Questions for AAFES associates (try to focus on one major event during the period of your service or employment)

1. What were your major initiatives during _____(time period or event) and how did you get these initiatives accomplished?
2. What was your greatest challenge?
3. What were your most significant accomplishments?
4. (Management question) Did you make any major organizational changes? If so, why? Did you see a need to change the organization, staffing, budget or responsibilities of your office?
5. Is there anything you would like to add?

Questions for deployed associates or military members (focus on one war, conflict or major disaster that you or your interviewee were involved in. Example, The Global War on Terror)

1. During the time of _____(war, conflicts, fire or major disaster) where were you located and what was your position?
2. After _____(event referred to in interview) what roles did you play in the support of troops during this time?
3. Please discuss your most significant contributions to this part of our history.
4. What is your most memorable experience in regards to AAFES' support of the troops during this event?
5. Were you or any of your fellow deployees wounded by hostile fire? If yes, explain this event and what was the outcome...were any awards incurred?
6. Is there anything you would like to add?

Guidelines for memoirs

The AAFES History Program would like as much as your story as possible. Ten pages would make a good start and longer will also be accepted. Typewritten, double spaced text is easiest to read. Memoirs are best when they address a wide variety of events. The smallest details and thoughts are of great interest to researchers.

Getting started

Jog your memory by gathering up photos, maps, letters, etc. from the time period you would like to write about. Think about where you were and what you did on a specific date. Example: Where were you on Sept. 11?

Develop a time line

Write down all the places you went to during this time period. Add the dates to the best of your recollection.

Create a list of topics

You may want to develop a list of topics. Think about the positions you held or the people you served or worked with.

Ideas for writing a memoir

Sit down with your mementos and photographs around you and try to write a page or two a day.

Start with information about yourself. When did you start working with AAFES and what was your position?

Write about your service experiences. Why did you begin working with AAFES? What skills did you have? What skills have you learned?

For civilians serving the military, how did serving the military change your life? Did you travel? What did you do? How did you feel about supporting the troops in times of peace or in times of war? If you supported the troops in exchanges overseas, how did it feel to bring a bit of home to the troops?

For military shopping the PX/BX, how did your exchange privileges effect your deployment or your PCS? If stationed overseas, did the exchange bring you some comforts of home? Did you develop a relationship with the staff? How did it feel to walk into a PX in Germany or eat a Whopper from the Burger King in Baghdad?

Write your most memorable experience serving the troops or being served by associates working for AAFES.

These are just a few ideas. You might also want to touch on changes occurring at AAFES due to restructuring, drawdowns or new technologies.



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Dallas, Tx 75266-0202