

STEP 1. LEARN ABOUT VHP

The Collections

The Veterans History Project collects first-person accounts of military service in World War I, World War II, the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. We also accept stories of service during other conflicts within this time frame.

Go Online to Register

Go to our Web site at www.loc.gov/vets to learn more about our project. There, you can register the collection you wish to submit. Once we've received your registration information, you will receive a reminder of what we accept and how to submit your collection. You may also submit your collection without registering, but this may delay our receiving and processing your collection.

Accepted Media and Format Standards

Audio and Video Recordings

The Library of Congress encourages you to submit original, unedited materials, and to use the highest quality equipment available. Materials falling outside the accepted scope will be disposed of or returned to the donor. The only original format we do not accept is micro-cassettes. Recordings must be at least 30 minutes long. Include one interview per recording.

Please turn to page 15 for details on accepted audio and video media and formats.

Documents and Photographs

In addition to oral history interviews, we also collect:

- Narratives, memoirs, and wartime diaries or journals of at least 20 pages
- Letters (10 or more)
- Official military documents (please mark out military serial or Social Security numbers to ensure privacy), official military or other instructional or informational pamphlets
- Photographs or two-dimensional artwork (10 or more)
- Original maps

In the absence of an interview, a submission may constitute several of these items. Quantity restrictions on items do not apply if they accompany an interview. If electronic copies of original materials are available, submit them on CD or DVD *together with* the original documents or photographs. Use .txt or .rtf formats for text files and .tif or .jpg for images (300dpi, scanned at 8 bits per channel). **Please do not copy protect any CD or DVD.**

What We Cannot Accept

- Microcassettes or MP3s
- Photocopies
- Objects, such as medals, canteens, uniforms, helmets, dog tags, flags, weapons, or military equipment
- Framed materials
- Published works, including books, newspapers, and magazines
- Three-dimensional artwork (sculpture, fiber arts)
- Interviews done on behalf of veterans
- Group interviews, unit histories, or written compilations of veterans' stories
- Collections of veterans who performed military service for other countries

Other repositories may accept these donations. Please check with them.

Contact us if you have any questions.

We encourage you to retain high-quality copies of materials for your own personal use and enjoyment.

NOTE: Contact us regarding donations on behalf of living or deceased veterans.



STEP 2. BE PREPARED



What Equipment to Use

Please use:

- High quality or digital audio or video equipment. Digital is preferred.
- See page 15 for acceptable audio and video formats.
- An external microphone.

Please do not use:

- Mini or micro audiocassettes.
- Microphone built into a camera or audio recorder, unless necessary.

NOTE: We strongly urge you to make two copies of the interview, one for yourself and one for the veteran. VHP cannot make copies of material already submitted.

Where to Interview

- Interview the veteran in a quiet area with soft surfaces (carpeting, upholstered furniture) for better sound quality.
- The interviewee should be in a fixed seat, not a rocking chair or recliner.
- Avoid background noises: chiming clocks, hissing air vents, air conditioners, ringing telephones, televisions, radios, computers, or noisy pets.
- Set the microphone six to twelve inches from the interviewee.
- Do not videotape your subject sitting in front of a window or bright light.
- Focus the camera on the upper body of the interviewee.
- Do not use the zoom feature on the video camera.
- Test your equipment for sound levels to make sure your subject is audible.

Before You Start

- Do some homework. Try to learn in advance where and when your veteran served. If the veteran was involved in a specific campaign or battle, research it.
- Ask the veteran if he or she has any materials to bring to the interview. Personal photographs, letters, or other records of service might be useful in jogging his or her memory. Originals of these materials may also be donated as part of your veteran's collection.
- If the veteran has not filled out our Biographical Data Form prior to the interview date, you may want to work with him or her on it before you begin the interview. This may give you some ideas on questions to ask later.
- Have a brief conversation with your veteran before you start recording. Even if you know your interview subject, it will help to relax both of you.

NOTE: The Veterans History Project does accept self-interviews by individual veterans. The Project does not accept interviews of groups of veterans.



STEP 3. THE INTERVIEW

How to Conduct an Interview

Every interview is different. Each veteran will recall his or her own experiences, some more vividly than others. Your job is to make the interviewee feel comfortable and guide him or her through their story of service.

- Keep your own comments to a minimum and let the veteran do the talking.
- Do not interrupt.
- Keep the interview moving. However, if the veteran is telling a significant story, do not push him or her along.

IMPORTANT: Begin your interview by announcing:

- The name of your veteran.
- His or her birthdate.
- War served in and branch of service.
- Highest rank achieved.
- Date and place (town and state, but not address) of recording.
- The interviewer's name and relationship (e.g., relative, friend), if any, to the interviewee. Also, the name of anyone present assisting in the interview.
- The interview is being conducted for the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

NOTE: Do not ask for personal information such as home address, phone number, Social Security number, or family names.

What to Ask

Here are a series of suggested topics. **This is an outline—not a script to be followed to the letter.** Let your veteran tell the story in his or her own way.

1. A Few Biographical Details.
 - Where and when veteran was born.
 - Family details: parents' occupations, number and gender of siblings.
 - What veteran was doing before entering the service.
 - Other family members who served in the military.
2. Early Days of Service.
 - How veteran entered service—draft or enlistment.
 - If enlistment, why and the reason for choosing a specific branch of service.
 - Departure for training camp, early days of training.
 - Specialized training, if applicable.
 - Adapting to military life: physical regimen, barracks, food, social life.
3. Wartime Service.
 - Where veteran served.
 - Details of the trip abroad, if applicable.
 - Action witnessed, or duties away from the front line.
 - If applicable, emotions relating to combat—witnessing casualties, destruction.
 - Friendships formed and camaraderie of service.
 - How veteran stayed in touch with family and friends back home; communication from home.
 - Recreation or off-duty pursuits.
4. War's End, Coming Home.
 - Where veteran was when war ended.
 - How he or she returned home.
 - Reception by family and community.
 - Readjustment to civilian life.
 - Contact with fellow veterans over the years; membership in veterans' organizations.
5. Reflections.
 - How wartime experiences affected veteran's life.
 - Life lessons learned from military service.

Writing a Memoir

The Veterans History Project accepts previously written memoirs as well as memoirs written specifically for the Project. Submission of a memoir must be accompanied by a Manuscript Data Sheet. For more information and guidelines, go to our Web site and download our Memoir Guidelines.



For more information on how to conduct an interview, go to our Web site and click on "Participate in the Project."

STEP 4. HOW & WHERE TO SEND IN YOUR COLLECTION



- **Make two copies of the interview** (one for you, one for the veteran) and copy any other items you are submitting. (We are unable to make copies of any items once you have submitted them.)
- Make sure you fill out all the forms marked **REQUIRED**. (Additional copies of the forms may be printed from our Web site.) If you need guidance in completing the Audio and Video Recording Log, go to our Web site and click on How to Participate, then Learn About the Audio and Video Recording Log.
- Please send original materials and forms to the Library of Congress **via a commercial delivery service** such as UPS, Federal Express, or DHL. (You do not need to use expedited delivery.) Due to security procedures, U.S. Postal Service mail to the Library of Congress is screened. Unfortunately, this process damages paper and melts plastic materials such as audio and video cassettes. Send collections to:

Veterans History Project
Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20540-4615

DO NOT SUBMIT MATERIALS BEYOND THOSE SPECIFIED. Should any part of the collection be found to include materials that the Library of Congress deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or elsewhere within the Library, the Library may dispose of such material in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for the Library's collections.

STEP 5. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR COLLECTION AT VHP



When VHP receives your materials, we do the following:

- We check the required forms. If any are missing or incomplete, your materials go “on hold.” We will contact you and request that you complete these forms. Your collection cannot be processed until we receive all required forms.
- We send you an acknowledgement note card within six months of receipt of the collection.
- Once all required forms are received, we enter basic information about the veteran into the VHP database. Please note the following:
 - Biographical and service information are made public on the VHP database, which is accessible through our Web site (www.loc.gov/vets).
 - Processing a collection may take as long as six months due to the extraordinary public response to our project. Please refrain from contacting VHP regarding the status of your collection for at least six months after the date of submission. We appreciate your patience.
- Your collection will be carefully stored and maintained in keeping with professional archival standards. This will ensure that your materials will be preserved for use by generations to come.

The materials you send will be available at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center Reading Room for use by researchers, educators, family members, and others. An advance appointment is required to view materials. Call 202-707-4916. Reading room hours are 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday-Friday (except federal holidays).

REQUIRED

Biographical Data Form

To ensure inclusion in the Veterans History Project, this form must accompany each submission. **Please use reverse or additional sheet if service was in more than one war or conflict.**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Veteran Civilian _____
first middle last maiden name

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____

Telephone (_____) - _____ Email _____
month/day/year

Place of Birth _____ Birth Date _____

Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male Female

Branch of Service or Wartime Activity _____

Commissioned Enlisted Drafted Service dates _____ to _____

Highest Rank _____

Unit, Division, Battalion, Group, Ship, etc. (Do not abbreviate.) _____

War, operation, or conflict served in _____

Locations of service _____

Battles/campaigns (please name) _____

Medals or special service awards. If so, please list (be as specific as possible): _____

Special duties/highlights/achievements _____

Was the veteran a prisoner of war? Yes No

Did the veteran sustain combat or service-related injuries? Yes No

Interviewer (if applicable) _____

(Please use reverse for any additional biographical information.)

REQUIRED

Veteran's Release Form

(See reverse for Interviewer's Release Form)

TO BE COMPLETED BY VETERAN OR CIVILIAN

(In cases of deceased veterans, to be completed by the donor of the material.)

I, _____, am a participant in the Veterans History Project (hereinafter "VHP") of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. I understand that the purpose of the VHP is to collect audio- and video-recorded oral histories of America's war veterans and of those who served in support of them, as well as selected related documentary materials such as photographs and manuscripts, for inclusion in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. These oral histories and related materials serve as a record of American veterans' wartime experiences and as a scholarly and educational resource for Congress and the general public.

I understand that the American Folklife Center plans to retain the product of my participation in the VHP, including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, voice, and written materials ("My Collection") as part of its permanent collections.

I hereby grant to the Library of Congress ownership of the physical property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to the Library of Congress, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I hereby release the Library of Congress, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

Should any part of My Collection be found to include materials that the Library of Congress deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or for transfer to other collections in the Library, the Library may dispose of such materials in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for the Library's collections.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Printed Name _____

Name of Interviewer (if applicable) _____

Relationship to Interviewer _____

Library of Congress American Folklife Center VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

REQUIRED

Interviewer's Release Form

(See reverse for Veteran's Release Form)

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWERS, RECORDING OPERATORS, AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

(Please circle appropriate category.)

I, _____, am a participant in the Veterans History Project (hereinafter "VHP") of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. I understand that the purpose of the VHP is to collect audio- and video-recorded oral histories of America's war veterans and of those who served in support of them, as well as selected related documentary materials such as photographs and manuscripts, for inclusion in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. These oral histories and related materials serve as a record of American veterans' wartime experiences and as a scholarly and educational resource for Congress and the general public.

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I hereby grant to the Library of Congress ownership of the physical property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to the Library of Congress, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I hereby release the Library of Congress, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

Should any part of My Collection be found to include materials that the Library of Congress deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or for transfer to other collections in the Library, the Library may dispose of such materials in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for the Library's collections.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Printed Name _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if interviewer is a minor) _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____

Telephone (_____) - _____ Email _____

Name of Veteran _____

Organization affiliation (if any) _____

Library of Congress American Folklife Center VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

REQUIRED

Audio and Video Recording Log

1. Name and address of collector or interviewer.

Name of Donor/Interviewer _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____

Telephone (_____) - _____ Email _____

Organization affiliation (if any) _____

2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed as it appears on the Biographical Data Form.

Name of Veteran/Civilian _____ Birth Date _____
month/day/year

3. Recording format (please check)

VIDEO type: Digital Video Betacam 8mm DVD-Video MPEG-2 VHS

Other _____
(identify)

AUDIO type: Cassette CD-Audio WAV Digital Audio Tape (DAT)

Other _____
(identify)

Do not add labels to DVDs or CDs.

4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes) _____ Date of Recording _____

5. Location of recording _____

6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.

For example:

1:45 enlisted with best friend 22:30 on board troop ship to Europe
2:50 chose Signal Corps and reasons why 26:30 part of 2nd wave at Omaha Beach on D-Day

Minute Mark	Topics presented in order of discussion on recording
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Continue on back or on additional sheets as needed.)



Photograph Log

Original photographic prints should be numbered with a soft (no.1) pencil on the back of the photograph in the lower-right corner. If the back is too slick to write on, enclose each photograph in a labeled envelope. **Please do not use a pen or marker to label prints. Do not use tape or glue on photographic prints.** Photographers should sign a release form when possible. If more than eight photographs are submitted, please make photocopies of the second page of this form to complete.

Name of Veteran/Civilian _____ Birth Date _____
month/day/year

PHOTOGRAPH # 1

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

PHOTOGRAPH # 2

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

PHOTOGRAPH # 3

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

(Continue on back.)

(You may photocopy this side of the form to use for additional photographs if needed.)

PHOTOGRAPH # ____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

PHOTOGRAPH # ____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

PHOTOGRAPH # ____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

PHOTOGRAPH # ____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____

PHOTOGRAPH # ____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Description _____



Manuscript Data Sheet

Please complete this form when donating letters, diaries, and other printed and handwritten manuscripts to the Veterans History Project. It is to be used in conjunction with the required forms.

1. Name of donor.

Name of Donor/Interviewer _____

Telephone (_____) - _____ Email _____

Organization affiliation (if any) _____

2. Name of veteran/civilian.

3. Types and dates of manuscripts submitted, for example:

Diary, November 20, 1942–February 17, 1944; Service records, 1951–1953; Letters, 1969–1972; Commendations, 1991; Unpublished memoir, 2001; etc.

Title of Item: _____

Topic: _____

Description: _____

Title of Item: _____

Topic: _____

Description: _____

Title of Item: _____

Topic: _____

Description: _____

4. Number of items: _____ Is this an exact or estimated figure?

5. Number of pages: _____

6. Describe the scope and content of the manuscripts by addressing the following:

Please identify by name the writers and recipients of the letters and other documents. What is their relationship to the veteran or civilian whose name appears on the Biographical Data Form?

What are the most interesting/important topics and events described in these documents?

7. Have any of these materials been published, or have copies of them been donated elsewhere? If so, please provide full citation of the publication or the location of the copies.

Accepted Media and Format Standards

Audio and Video Recordings

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We will accept the following formats:

VIDEO Formats and Media	
Digital Video (DV)	MiniDV, DVCAM, DVPRO
Betacam	Betacam SP, Digital Betacam, Betacam SX
8mm	Hi8, Digital8, Video8
DVD-Video*#	
MPEG-2*	on CD or DVD Specifications: at least 3Mbps, with a spatial resolution of 702x480 at 30fps; or the highest your set-up allows.
VHS	Super-VHS (S-VHS), Digital-VHS (D-VHS), VHS-Compact (VHS-C) Please note that as of June 2009 , we will no longer accept VHS recordings in any format.

AUDIO Formats and Media	
Audio cassettes†	
CD-Audio*	
WAV*	on CD or DVD Specifications; 44.1 KHz, 16-bit
Digital Audio Tape (DAT)	Please note that as of June 2009 , we will no longer accept DAT recordings.

***Do not copy protect any CD or DVD. Do not add labels to any CD or DVD.**

#VHP prefers video interviews on DVD with minimal indexing, titles, and/or graphics at the highest level your authoring application will allow.

†Use an external microphone.

Please, only one interview per recording.

Contact us if you have any questions.

We encourage you to retain high-quality copies of materials for your own personal use and enjoyment.

NOTE: Contact us regarding donations on behalf of living or deceased veterans.

