



Wisconsin Veterans Museum Research Center
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VETERAN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

These sample questions have been designed for use as a question set for a particular veteran. Notes may be taken on the right hand side of the paper during the interview and space has been left for additional questions specific to the experience of each veteran. Notes would include information to pursue when the veteran pauses, and names and places for the veteran to spell at the end of the interview. Direction of the interview should be determined by the biographical information about the veteran. Additionally, interviews with women, ethnic minorities, officers, and career military personnel must include relevant questions.

Introduction for the beginning of the tape.

This is an interview with _____ who served with
the _____
during _____. This interview is being
conducted at _____ at the following address:

on the following date: _____.
The interviewer is _____.

1. Tell me about your background and life circumstances before entering military service.
 - year born
 - hometown
 - education
 - parents and family situation
 - _____

2. Describe your entry into military service.

- what you were doing
- why entered, whether drafted or enlisted, & how you felt about it.
- how and where entered
- into what service unit
- why that unit
- induction interview and physical
- any stories?
- _____

3. Tell me about your basic training.

- where
- describe the camp and its facilities
- what trained for
- time span
- memorable instructors or buddies
- recreation
- any stories?
- _____

Note. Questions 4 & 5 are quite dependent upon both the conversational style and experiences of the particular veteran being interviewed. At this point, many will just talk at quite some length and your job will be simply to clarify and get places, names, etc. Some will mention prisoner of war experiences, some injuries and war wounds; the point here is to “go with the flow,” pursue in detail, and then follow-up with specific questions not addressed.

4. Tell me about your first assignment or station.

- how you got there – stories, feelings
- where – first impression, describe & stories
- your duties – explain
- if combat, how did you feel, what did you think
- memorable experiences
- memorable people
- any stories?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Describe further assignments or duty stations.

- how you got there – stories, feelings
- where – first impression, describe & stories
- your duties – explain
- if combat, how did you feel, what did you think
- memorable experiences
- memorable people
- any stories?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Note: After the veteran finishes describing the core of their military experiences, now is the time to pick up the pieces by addressing the following information that may not have been discussed earlier.

6. Describe your life in the military.

- What kept you going through all of this?
- Was there something you did for good luck?
- Describe a typical day.
- How did you and your buddies entertain yourselves?
- Any pranks?
- Were there entertainers?
- Describe your sleeping and eating facilities.
- What was the food like?
- What did you do on leave? Any good stories?
- Any funny or unusual stories?
- _____
- _____
- _____

7. Tell about your discharge from the military.

- End of war: where, when, how did you think and feel?
- End of tour – how did you feel?
- What happened before you were actually discharged?
- What was your homecoming like?
- How did you feel when you arrived at home?
- Any problems?
- _____

8. What did you do after you left the service?
- Back to work or to school?
 - What is/was your career?
 - Veteran benefits?
 - Medals or citations?
 - Any injuries/ disability compensation?
 - Did you continue any close friendships you made in service?
 - _____
 - _____
9. Did you join and become involved in any veterans organizations?
- Describe the organizations and your participation?
 - Have you attended any reunions?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
10. Looking back, how do you feel about your military and war experiences?
- What has it meant to your life?
 - _____
11. Anything else to say?

Be sure to thank the veteran, answer any of their questions, and sign and date the *Statement of Gift and Release of Rights* form!