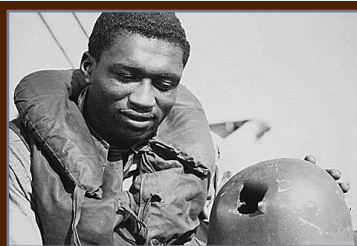


*The Veterans History Project
collects and preserves personal
stories and other documents
from America's war veterans,
and those American civilians
who served in support of them.*



VETERANS
HISTORY
PROJECT

MEMOIR KIT



Guidelines for Writing Personal Wartime Recollections

Library of Congress
American Folklife Center

MEMOIR KIT

Veterans History Project at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

The Kit has four sections:

1. Overview of the Veterans History Project
2. Guidelines for Writing the Memoir
3. Delivering Your Memoir to the Veterans History Project
4. Required Forms

The National Registry of Service honors Veterans History Project participants on the World Wide Web
<http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-registry.html>

This memoir kit provides guidelines and tips to help you write your personal wartime recollections. By donating your story, you will become a valued participant in the Veterans History Project and play an important role in the creation of a collection that will become a permanent part of the nation's record.

The following guidelines and forms are designed to make it easy for you to compile your memoir and send it to the Veterans History Project at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

For additional copies of this kit or our Field Kit for recording oral histories, please contact the toll-free message line at 1-888-371-5848, or email vohp@loc.gov.

The Veterans History Project Web site at www.loc.gov/vets features selected collections and information on how to participate in the project.

The Veterans History Project, an official partner of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, is made possible by the generous support of the United States Congress, AARP (Founding Corporate Sponsor), and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust.

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1. Overview of the Veterans History Project

Americans can learn much from those who served. The Veterans History Project honors our nation's war veterans and those who supported them. This project, created by Congress, is building a lasting legacy of memoirs, recorded interviews, and other documents chronicling the veterans' and other citizens' wartime experiences, and how those experiences affected their lives and America itself. The Veterans History Project pledges to preserve this history for generations to come.

The U.S. Congress voted unanimously for legislation to create the Veterans History Project on October 27, 2000, through Public Law 106-380. The project is funded by the United States Congress and a generous grant from AARP, the project's founding corporate sponsor. The goals of the project are to collect and preserve stories of service, honor those who served, and make it possible to learn about the past through the first-hand accounts of men and women who lived through extraordinary times.

The Veterans History Project collects stories from men and women from all branches of service: the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Merchant Marine with an emphasis on World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. The project also documents the contributions of civilians, such as war industry workers and medical volunteers, who served in support of the armed forces.

SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION

The Veterans History Project collects unpublished written memoirs in addition to audio and video recordings of personal wartime experiences. The project also welcomes diaries, collections of letters, and photographs that tell the veteran's or civilian's story. Maps, home movies, drawings, and other documents are welcome.

The project does not collect or accept objects such as medals, uniforms, or other memorabilia.



Soldiers standing in front of U.S. flag in Italy, 1917 or 1918. American National Red Cross Collection.

Courtesy Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-90849.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR MATERIALS?

After you submit your memoir, together with the Biographical Data Form and Veteran's Release Form:

- VHP will ask you for any missing forms.
- VHP will send you a letter acknowledging your participation and the receipt of your memoir.
- Your memoir will be preserved according to professional archival standards.
- Your name will be entered into the project's National Registry of Service. The Registry lists the names and brief service histories of those for whom the project has documentary materials.
- The project team will enter the information from the Biographical Data Form into the collection database.
- Your materials will be available to researchers, educators, family members, and others at the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress.

2. Guidelines for Writing the Memoir

- The Veterans History Project would like as much of your story as possible: ten pages would be a good start, although more would be preferable. Typewritten, double-spaced text is easiest to read. There is no maximum length—the longest memoir received at the project is nearly 900 pages. Most average around 30 or 40 pages.
- Memoirs are most interesting when they address a wide variety of experiences. The smallest details and thoughts are often of great interest to researchers.
- You are encouraged to include photographs, letters, diaries, or other documents. Original documents are preferred, although high-quality copies are acceptable.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING STARTED

Spark your memory. Before settling down to write your memoir, you might want to spend time gathering together your wartime military papers, maps, letters, diaries, photographs, uniform, and medals. Think about where you were and what you did on specific historical dates, for instance: December 7, 1941—the attack on Pearl Harbor. Where were you when the war ended?

Develop a timeline. Write down all the places you went to during your wartime service. Begin with the place of your enlistment, drafting, or decision to enter civilian service, and end with the place of your discharge, or when you ended your service. Add the dates to the best of your recollection.

Work on a list of topics. You may want to develop a list of topics to write about. Some memories may have been very powerful, and others more everyday. Although some experiences may have been painful, they may be the ones that make the story most worth telling and preserving.

Think about the people you served or worked with. Add to the timeline the names of all the people you recall being with, or serving under. If you are still in contact with them, consider talking with them about shared experiences to refresh your memory.

START WRITING

Professional writers will tell you that writing requires discipline. With your previously developed note cards or timeline in front of you, try to write a page or two, or more, a day.

Start with personal information about yourself: When and where were you born? Where did you live? What did you do in the days before you enlisted or were drafted? What made you decide to serve? What was your family like? How did you look?

Write about your early service experiences: Why did you join? Where were you located? What was boot camp or training like? Describe your first days in the service, or as a civilian war worker. Why did you choose your particular branch of service? What special skills did you have? What special skills did you learn?



U.S. tankmen PFC Rudolph Dotts (on ground), Pvt. Maynard Lindweaver (center), and tank commander PFC Hugh Goodwin (in turret) guard a roadblock on the Naktong River front in the Taegu area of South Korea, 1950. International News Photos.

Courtesy Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-122652.

Please note that when you donate your story to the Library of Congress, you still own the publication and other rights to your intellectual property.

Write about your active duty or your civilian service: Where did you serve? What job assignments did you have? Did you have combat experience? Were there casualties in your unit or on your ship? Were you afraid? Were you wounded? How were the food and provisions in general? How did you pass the time? What did you do for recreation? How did you celebrate holidays? How did you stay in touch with loved ones, family and friends?

Don't forget to tell us your recollections about the day your service or the war ended: Where were you? What did you do in the years afterwards? Did you maintain your friendships? Are you a member of a veterans' or other association? How did your military or civilian service influence your life?

If you were a civilian: Many of the previous questions apply to you, too. What did you do? Why did you get involved? How did you feel about your role in the war effort? Did you meet many people in the armed forces? Did you travel as a result of what you did? Did you learn new skills?

Caution: Although candor makes for a great memoir, extremely derogatory statements may be regretted later.

DEVELOPING A TABLE OF CONTENTS

Although not required, a simple Table of Contents for your memoir will greatly enhance the value of your submission. It will help researchers quickly identify the general content of your contribution.

3. Delivering Your Memoir to the Veterans History Project

Don't forget the required Veteran's Release Form and Biographical Data Form

By sending your memoir to the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress, you are making sure it will be preserved, and will provide extraordinary educational opportunities for future historians and researchers.



Sailors "at home" in crew quarters of ship bound for North Africa on the way to invade Sicily during World War II, July 1943. Official U.S. Navy photograph.

Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
LC-USZ62-98979.

Of course, keep a copy of your work for yourself, for family and friends, or for deposit in a local library or historical society.

IMPORTANT!

Please Use a Commercial Delivery Service!

Please do not send materials to the Veterans History Project through the U.S. Postal Service!

Because of safety procedures, the U.S. Postal Service irradiates all incoming mail to the Library of Congress. This, unfortunately, causes damage to paper and plastic materials.

Please use a commercial delivery service such as UPS or FedEx.

Please send your memoir, together with the required Biographical Data Form and Release Form attached here to

**The Veterans History Project
American Folklife Center
Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20540-4615**

4. Required Forms

**Biographical Data Form
Veteran's Release Form
Photograph Log (if applicable)**



U.S. Coast Guardsman Charles Tyner examines the jagged shrapnel hole in the helmet he wore during the assault on the beaches of Southern France during World War II, ca. 1944.

*Courtesy Still Pictures Branch, National Archives and Records Administration.
NWDNS-26-G-2748.*



Biographical Data Form

To ensure inclusion in our National Registry of Service, this form must accompany each submission. Please use a separate form or additional sheet for service in more than one war.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Veteran Civilian _____
first middle last maiden name

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____

Telephone (_____) - _____ Email _____

Place of Birth _____ Birth Date _____

Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male Female

Branch of Service or Wartime Activity _____

Battalion, Regiment, Division, Unit, Ship, etc. _____

Highest Rank _____

Enlisted Drafted Service dates _____ to _____

War(s) in which individual served _____

Locations of military or civilian service _____

Was the veteran a prisoner of war? Yes No

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

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

Are photographs included? Yes No (If yes, please complete the Photograph Log in this kit.)

Are manuscripts included? Yes No (If yes, please complete the Manuscript Data Sheet in this kit.)

Does the veteran or civilian have field maps (Yes No) or wartime-related home movies (Yes No) that he or she would like to share with the Library of Congress? (If yes, we will contact you shortly.)

Interviewer (if applicable) _____

Partner organization affiliation (if any, i.e. AARP, etc.) _____

Please use reverse for any additional biographical information.



Veteran'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"). I understand that the purpose of the VHP is to collect audio- and video-taped 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) that may be deposited in the permanent collections of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The deposited documentary materials will serve as a record of American veterans' wartime experiences; and may be used for scholarly and educational purposes. I understand that the American Folklife Center plans to retain the product of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication, presentation on the World Wide Web and successor technologies, and for promotion of the Library of Congress and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant to the Library of Congress ownership of the physical property delivered to the Library and the right to use the property that is the product of my participation (for example, my interview, performance, photographs, and written materials) as stated above. By giving permission, I understand that I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant to the Library of Congress my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photograph(s) provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation in the VHP to be used, published, and copied by the Library of Congress and its assignees in any medium.

I agree that the Library may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction, or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I 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 such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to, any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Printed Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____

Telephone (_____) - _____



Photograph Log

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. Slides may be numbered on the frame housing. Photographers should sign a release form when possible. If more than five 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

Person(s) left to right _____

Description _____

Photographer (if known) _____

PHOTOGRAPH # 2

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Person(s) left to right _____

Description _____

Photographer (if known) _____

(Continue on back.)

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

PHOTOGRAPH # _____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Person(s) left to right _____

Description _____

Photographer (if known) _____

PHOTOGRAPH # _____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Person(s) left to right _____

Description _____

Photographer (if known) _____

PHOTOGRAPH # _____

Place _____ Date _____
month/day/year

Person(s) left to right _____

Description _____

Photographer (if known) _____

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tel: 202-707-4916
msg: 1-888-371-5848
fax: 202-252-2046
email: vohp@loc.gov
www.loc.gov/vets/



**An instruction kit for audio and video interviews is available.
Please contact the Veterans History Project to obtain a copy.**