

2/15/2008

Examples of questions for oral history interviews. Do your research before you get to the interview.

("Tell me more" will usually get more of an answer than just a "yes" or "no" answer.)

BATTLE FRONT

Please say your name and spell it

When and where were you born?

What rank did you achieve when your service ended?

What division and unit were you in? (example: 168th Infantry-34th Division) (Army, Army Air Corps, Marines)

OR

What ship were you on? (Navy, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine)

Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

Was it clear to you at the time what that attack meant?

Did you enlist or were you drafted?

Tell me about boot-camp.

How long were you in the service?

Tell me about your first deployment.

What did you eat?

How did you stay cool (desert or Pacific), warm (Europe), dry (Pacific) during a Monsoon?

How long did you stay on the line?

What did you do when you came to the rear area?

Tell me about the first time you saw action. Do you remember how the day began?

Did you receive any medals?

If the answer is yes, try a question like:

Tell me about how you earned your Bronze Star?

How do you feel about the people you fought against? (This can be more specific, for example How do you feel about the German people?)

If you know the person has specific stories to tell ask specific questions.
Here are some examples.

Tell me about the sergeant that saved your life.

Tell me about being missed by grenades. Where was that?

How do you feel today about the people you fought against during the war?

What did you do after the war? Did you stay in the military?

Do you ever look back and wonder about how you made it through everything you experienced?

Is there anything I've missed or that you think I should know?

Be sure to thank the veterans for their service.

HOME FRONT

Please say your name and spell it

When and where were you born?

Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

Was it clear to you at the time what that attack meant?

What was it like having everything rationed?

What was something you wanted that was in short supply?

What was it like waiting for letters from a loved one?

What did you do to get through the times when you didn't know where your (husband, father, brother) was?

What was it like knowing that your (husband, father, brother) was not going to come back from the war? (if applicable)

What did you do when your (husband, father, brother) returned from the War?

Is there anything I've missed or that you think I should know?