U.S. Army Guide to Oral History

By

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Center of Military History
United States Army

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Front Cover: *Oral History in the Field.* Maj. Jack McKenna (*left*), 126th Military History Detachment (MHD), interviews Capt. David Stone (*center*), 3d Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 3d Infantry Division, and an unidentified combat engineer about improvised explosive devices along the infamous BIAP (Baghdad-International Airport) Road in Baghdad, Iraq, December 2005. (*Photographer: Sfc. Patrick R. Jennings, 126th MHD)*

Foreword

The U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) first developed a concept for an oral history handbook in the mid-1980s. Its objective was to provide Department of the Army (DA) oral history guidance for the growing number of historians tasked with conducting interviews. Since that time, Army historians, military and civilian, have conducted thousands of oral history interviews. Because of the increased importance of oral history in documenting the history of the U.S. Army—as exemplified by the efforts to capture the Army's response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the ongoing operations in the Global War on Terrorism—the Center of Military History deemed the time was right to revise its guide to practicing oral history in order to disseminate lessons learned from this wealth of experience.

Washington, D.C.
15 September 2006

JEFFREY J. CLARKE
Chief of Military History

Preface

The U.S. Army has a long tradition of using oral history to preserve historical information and to enrich its official written histories with material otherwise unavailable in the documentary record. In fact, one could say that the Army's oral history program actually began before the Army existed: in April 1775 the Massachusetts Provincial Congress commissioned a series of interviews (called "depositions") with participants in the engagement at Lexington.[1] In doing so, the Provincial Congress harkened back to useful practices at least as old as Herodotus. Since World War II, oral history has been an integral piece in the U.S. Army historian's toolbox. Today Army historians benefit from the increased popularity and institutional acceptance of oral history both within and outside the Army and from the technological advances that make capturing and preserving the spoken word easier than ever before.

Moreover, the demand for oral history has never been greater. In addition to providing important information for official historians to supplement official records, oral histories today are used in a variety of ways ranging from informing soldiers and leaders about their predecessors' experiences to "bringing to life" museum exhibits with the words (and sounds) of participants. The result is a fuller appreciation and understanding of the events and experiences that constitute the history and heritage of the U.S. Army.

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[1] Robert K. Wright, Jr., "Clio in Combat: The Evolution of the Military History Detachment," *Army Historian* 6 (Winter 1985): 3-6. The depositions are listed in Arthur B. Tourtellot, *William Diamond's Drum* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959), 287-89. See also Peter Force, ed., *American Archives: A Collection of Authentic Records, State Papers, Debates, and Letters and Other Notices of Public Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: M. St. Clair Clarke & Peter Force, 1839-1853), 4th ser., 2:487-501. The U.S. Army, of course, was not formed officially until 14 June 1775—*after* the battles at Lexington and Concord bridge.

This publication reflects the Army's long-term experience with oral history, particularly the prodigious work of Army historians to document Army history since 1989 in the words of participants. To create a document encompassing the surprisingly strong thoughts and emotions that oral history evokes among historians can be a perplexing challenge. Stephen Everett prepared the Center of Military History's first oral history guide, *Oral History: Techniques and Procedures*, which was published in 1992 and offered Army historians a common point of reference. This revision builds on that first effort by including updated information and incorporating insights and lessons gleaned from the experiences of Army historians. The purpose of the guide is to provide a concise user-friendly handbook that can aid experienced hands and novice historians alike by offering general guidelines and methods that have proven effective. The focus of the guide throughout is on practical advice and suggestions that will enable the novice to get started with confidence and the experienced user to refine and improve his or her methods and practices.

The U.S. Army Guide to Oral History is in accordance with Army Regulation 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures* (29 January 1999), and FM 1-20, *Military History Operations* (February 2003), yet its primary intent is to suggest procedures that have been proven effective. Obviously, no one method or approach is suitable for each oral history program or interviewer, and readers should pursue those styles and techniques that best suit their own programs, needs, and skills. Proposals for improving the guide or questions concerning its contents should be sent to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, ATTN: DAMH-HDS, 103 Third Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, D.C. 20319-5058.

The author would like to thank the following members of the Army historical community for their assistance in preparing this guide: Diane Sedore Arms, Stephen A. Bourque, Stephen E. Bower, Anne W. Chapman, Patrick R. Jennings, Benjamin D. King, Christopher N. Koontz, John C. Lonnquest, J. Britt McCarley, Beth F. MacKenzie, James C. McNaughton, Richard W.

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ORAL HISTORY IN THE ARMY

Overview

When the U.S. Army Center of Military History first published a guide to oral history in 1992, Chapter One was titled, "What is oral history?"[2] Today few in the Army—and certainly no Army historians—would find it necessary to ask that question. An integral part of the Army Historical Program since World War II, oral history has assumed an even more important role in documenting Army history in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, oral history interviews are at the center of accounts of the Army's numerous, diverse, and challenging operations and institutional initiatives since the end of the Cold War. From Panama and Operation JUST CAUSE through Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, and from the post-Cold War drawdown of the Army to transformation and modularity, Army historians have sought to supplement meager documentary records with the insights and spoken words of knowledgeable participants in these historical events.[3]

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[2] Stephen E. Everett, *Oral History Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1992).

[3] Examples include Frank N. Schubert and Theresa Kraus, general editors, *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1995); Gregory Fontenot, E.J. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005); David McCormick, *The Downsized Warrior: America's Army in Transition* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Walter E. Kretchik, Robert F. Baumann, and John T. Fishel, *Invasion, Intervention, "Intervasion": A Concise History of the U.S. Army in Operation Uphold Democracy* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1997); R. Cody Phillips, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The U.S. Army's Role in Peace Enforcement Operations, 1995-2004* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2005), and *Operation Just Cause:*

Oral history interviews preserve the perspective of the individual. The purpose of oral history, therefore, is to interview individuals in order to capture and preserve their spoken perspectives, judgments, and recollections. As explained in Army Regulation (AR) 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures,* oral history activities "are conducted to obtain historical information that may not otherwise be recorded." Interviews supplement the written record, which all too often slights the role of individuals in important decisions and events and generally omits the detailed information that nonparticipants require in order to understand what happened and why. Command reports, press conferences, and memoirs of senior officers, for example, while useful in providing a high-level perspective, cannot adequately portray the course and confusion of a battle at the level of the soldiers who waged it. Nor can PowerPoint briefings, information papers, and press releases adequately chronicle the complexities and nuances inherent in senior leader decision-making—particularly in this period of sweeping change for the Army. Interviews help elucidate the background of important events and place decisions in context. Interviews that explain, for example, how previous Army Staff and Secretariat principals dealt with problems and issues also can provide insights for current and future Army leaders confronting similar challenges.

It is important to note that "oral history" and "interview" are not synonymous. An interview is the recording of an individual's words in response to the questions of the historian. The interview, in whatever form it is recorded, constitutes an official record and must be treated (and preserved) as such. The "oral history" is a

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The Incursion into Panama (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2004); Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994); Richard W. Stewart, *The United States Army in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, October 2001-March 2002* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2003); James I. Yarrison, *The Modern Louisiana Maneuvers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1999).

collaborative venture that reflects the twin efforts of the interviewer and interviewee to create a unique historical source through reviewing and editing the transcript of the interview. An unedited transcript of an interview is neither an oral history nor a substitute, from the perspective of Army records management, for the original recording.

Like all historical sources, oral history has inherent strengths and weaknesses. The greatest strength of oral history is its ability to capture and preserve information that may not otherwise be saved, particularly personal perspectives and anecdotes that will not be found in official records. The weaknesses of oral history are often overstated and usually attributable to human failings—that is, shortcomings on the part of either practitioners or users. All historical sources—from command reports to after-action reviews (AARs) and unit records—contain biases and shortcomings. The historian's responsibility and obligation is to weigh and compare multiple sources before rendering judgment. The historian must approach a completed oral history, therefore, with the same analytical standards that would be used to assess any source. Interviews will reflect personal biases: interviewees may be unwilling to address directly controversial issues or mistakes and errors they made, while the passage of time may render the interviewee's memory suspect on points of fact. (Evidence of personal bias or touchiness on a particular topic, it should be noted, may prove useful information at a later date.) Similar problems exist with written records, and the historian simply must go about the business of discerning the truth in the old-fashioned way: comparing and analyzing all the available sources to distinguish between the likely and the improbable.

The obligation of the historian conducting an oral history interview is to keep in mind the interests and needs of the historian who will use the oral history. Regardless of the focus or topic of a particular interview, the interviewer should concentrate on eliciting the interviewee's thoughts and opinions as

comprehensively as possible. Statements that reflect the interviewee's belief, for example, such as, "I thought that X would happen," should be followed by questions to determine *why* the interviewee believed that at the time. Similarly, generalizations such as "We always had problems with Y," should be followed by a request for a specific example. Such details will increase the likelihood that an interview proves useful for historians at a future date. A related issue, and one that is often highlighted by detractors of oral history, is the diminished memory of individuals when interviewed many years after the event. Memories are malleable and can be influenced and changed over time. The task of the historian in such instances is twofold: to determine the relative accuracy of the interviewee's account, for example, by asking questions that can be corroborated by other sources, and to focus the interview on topics that are less susceptible to the passage of time. While an interviewee may not remember accurately the specific time or date of an event, certain details about the event itself will be inscribed in the interviewee's memory for all time.

Any interview can produce useful historical information. It is the task of the oral historian to discover and record that information; it is the responsibility of the historian who later uses that information to determine its significance.

Background

Over the years the Army has accumulated a wealth of oral history interviews that have helped preserve the record of its activities in peace and war. Without these materials, reconstructing many events in the Army's history would be difficult. Beginning with World War II, Army historians have interviewed soldiers of all ranks in order to fill holes and discover information not available in unit records. Confronted with the challenge of documenting and understanding the actions of an organization of millions that was spread across the globe, Army historians quickly recognized the value of oral histories for

capturing individual perspectives and supplementing unit records. Perhaps the most important initiative these historians undertook was to interview soldiers immediately after they had been involved in combat actions. Such interviews proved of crucial importance in enabling Army historians to write knowledgeably and accurately about combat operations after the war. "This corpus of Combat Interviews," wrote one author of an official World War II history, "is one of the most valuable sources of information available to the historian. It fleshes out the framework of events chronicled in the unit journals and provides additional testimony to help resolve disputed questions of fact."[4] The final product—the United States Army in World War II series known as the Green Books—demonstrated the value of these historians' work.

This practice of collecting firsthand accounts continued in subsequent wars and conflicts, particularly in Korea and Vietnam where technology, in the form of the portable tape recorder, facilitated the historian's task. Equally important was growing institutional acceptance in the U.S. Army that oral history was a necessary requirement for capturing the experiences of war and organizational history.

In 1970 Army Chief of Staff General William C. Westmoreland directed the U.S. Army War College and the U.S. Army Military History Institute to sponsor jointly a peacetime interview program. This program, which became known as the Senior Officer Oral History Program, was expressly designed to gather and preserve the memories of selected individuals for the benefit of the Army. Students at the Army War College performed background research on the careers of important retired general officers and then, after oral history training by the staff of the Military History Institute, interviewed them about their experiences and their careers. The students, mostly lieutenant colonels who

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[4] Hugh M. Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1950), p. 617. Cole conducted after-action interviews as a combat historian in the European theater and subsequently used and evaluated many interviews in the preparation of his combat histories. For a brief biography of Cole, see "In Memoriam, Hugh M. Cole (1910-2005)," *Army History* 62 (Winter 2006): 59.

were expected to advance to future leadership positions, learned oral history techniques from the institute's staff. The Senior Officer Oral History Program was the most visible Army interview program during the 1970s, although other historical programs, like that of the U.S. Army Medical Department, had been collecting interviews since the early 1950s.

By the late 1970s the range of Army oral history activities had begun to expand. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers established an active biographical and subject interview program in 1977. During the early 1980s the establishment of full-time historians at most of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's centers and schools provided greater opportunities to record new military developments using oral history. Today, in Army commands, Army service component commands, and direct reporting units historians use interviews to collect data for preparing monographs or to teach lessons learned to young soldiers.[5]

In 1986 the Department of the Army directed that exit interviews be conducted with departing school commandants as well as division, corps, and MACOM commanders. This effort, known today as the End-of-Tour (EOT) Interview Program, is designed to make interviews available to incoming commanders so they can better understand the issues faced by their predecessors. Through the guidance and support of successive Army Chiefs of Staff—Generals Carl E. Vuono, Gordon R. Sullivan and Dennis J. Reimer—an expanded EOT program ensures that selected members of the Army Staff are also interviewed.

Recognizing the expanding role of oral history, the Center of Military History created an Oral History Activity in 1986 to coordinate issues concerning the Army's oral history programs. The Center's oral historians established interview guidelines and oral history policy for Army historians, initiated EOT interviews with

[5] In 2006, the Army reorganized commands and specified headquarters to create the three categories of Army command, Army service component command, and direct reporting unit. The term, *major command* ("MACOM"), ceased to be an official category.

members of the Army Secretariat and Army Staff, and advised the Army on the uses of oral history. In addition to those ongoing responsibilities, today the Center's oral historians monitor the contemporary history of the Headquarters, Department of the Army, and conduct special oral history projects such as interviewing witnesses to and participants in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. They also compile indices of oral histories conducted throughout the Army, assist historians in using proper oral history techniques, and aid researchers searching for oral history resources.[6]

[6] In 2005 the Oral History Activity became part of the Historical Support Branch of CMH's Histories Division. For an overview of oral history in the U.S. Army and current practices, see Stephen J. Lofgren, "The Status of Oral History in the Army: Expanding a Tradition," *Oral History Review* 30 (Summer/Fall 2003): 81-98.

2.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Army historians conduct several types of interviews with names that reflect their focus and content: biographical (sometimes known as career interviews), subject, exit, end-of-tour and after-action. A biographical interview focuses on an individual's life or career. Army historians usually conduct this type of interview after an individual with lengthy and significant government service has retired. A subject interview focuses on a single event or topic, such as the Army's role in providing disaster relief in the aftermath of a hurricane or the formulation and making of a particular Army policy or decision. Exit interviews and end-of-tour interviews are conducted near the end of a person's tour in a particular assignment and concentrate on the issues and decisions unique to that job. Unlike subject interviews, exit and end-of-tour interviews cover many topics because their purpose is to record the breadth of the individual's experiences in a position. After-action interviews are similar to subject interviews, but their purpose is to gather information about military operations in the field while events are still fresh in the minds of participants.

As anyone who has ever been in combat or has tried to reconstruct the events of a battle knows, official records simply cannot tell the entire story. Indeed, the idea of a single "story" itself is a problematic concept, because every individual—whether participant or bystander—has a unique perspective. The phrase, "the fog of war," evocatively describes not only the experience of participants but also the challenge that confronts historians who, after the fact, try to compile a factual narrative account of what transpired. Penetrating the fog in order to gather and preserve the history and heritage of the U.S. Army during its operations, consequently, is the crucial task for historians. One means of doing so is to conduct interviews with soldiers and participants in battles, campaigns, and operations.

The Army historians who bear the greatest responsibility for conducting interviews about U.S. Army operations are the members of military history detachments (MHDs). These three-person units, usually comprised of one officer and two noncommissioned officers, seek to obtain and preserve historical materials that can be used as the basis for official histories. Firsthand accounts of soldiers' experiences during operations are the most perishable historical sources, and MHDs try to collect them as soon as possible after the event. Such wartime interviews are unique and irreplaceable. Interviews conducted months or years after the fact cannot replicate the emotion and details of those conducted within a few days of the actual event.

TIP: Combat historians also should refer to FM 1-20, *Military Operations in the Field*, for fuller discussion of this and related subjects and to augment the material provided in this guide.

Regardless of the type of interview to be conducted, preparation is the key to a successful oral history interview. Preparation encompasses the practice of interviewing (to include familiarization with the equipment to be used) and learning the methodology of oral history, selecting individuals to be interviewed, setting the stage for interviews, acquiring the knowledge necessary to conduct an interview with a specific person, and developing an oral history plan that provides order and direction for the historian's actions.

Topic and Interviewee Selection: What is the Plan?

As all Army historians know (or quickly learn) time and resources always are limited. While everyone has a story to tell, the historian cannot interview everyone. Consequently, before investing time and resources in an interview, the historian must consider the potential significance and usefulness of each interview to the Army and in relation to both the availability of other resources and the historian's ability to conduct the interview.

The means for balancing time and resources with action is an overall oral history plan that establishes priorities and provides direction for the historian's actions. All historians should develop an oral history plan that identifies people and subjects of interest, establishes their relation to other historical projects, and sets priorities for interviewing. Having a plan and knowing why specific individuals are to be interviewed also assists in the preparations for specific interviews and can be of great utility, for example, in covering military operations in the field where interview opportunities may arise suddenly. Creating an oral history plan helps to focus background research efforts, exposes holes in coverage of events or operations (particularly important for historians in the field), and helps the historian understand *why* specific individuals have been chosen for interviews.

For most historians, especially those in MHDs, the development of an oral history plan will be followed by the requirement to prepare a list of prospective interview candidates and relevant discussion topics for each. Although such a list will change over time, the process of generating the list will help determine what background research the historian must conduct as well as provide coherence and direction to the historian's overall actions. Preliminary background research should begin, therefore, with the questions, "Has this person previously been interviewed?" and "What information can I expect to obtain from this individual?" This will help avoid wasted effort and duplicating information that already exists on those persons and subjects in other interviews. After this initial survey, the historian can decide which candidates offer the best return for the effort invested in the project.

MHDs normally will be assigned to major headquarters and larger units in an operation. Although ideally the objective will be to gain as comprehensive an account as possible of the headquarters or unit during an operation, the reality is that MHDs cannot cover everything and will have to make decisions about what to study and document in detail. This is particularly true when choosing individuals to interview because there can be

literally thousands of potential interviewees. In order to determine whom to interview, the MHD commander will have to exercise his or her judgment in assessing the significance of particular events and the roles of individuals along with the capabilities of the MHD. Moreover, "ordinary operations," such as routine convoy runs, in their own way are just as important as uncommon actions, such prolonged firefights, when capturing the totality of a unit's experiences. Similarly the experiences and perspectives of planners and key staff officers must be captured in order to gain a complete appreciation of events. Development of an oral history plan, therefore, is of paramount importance to ensure that priorities are established, that resources are identified and made available, and that there is sufficient coverage in depth and breadth.

Contacting Interviewees

Requesting an interview is an important step in the interview process. After selecting interview candidates, contact them to explain the mission and purpose of the interview. When possible, request an interview in writing, either by letter or memorandum or by email. The written contact should identify the interviewer, the interviewer's agency, the purpose of the interview, the potential product, and the process that will be followed. Use this opportunity to inform the prospective interviewee about the probable number and length of the sessions, as well as what is expected in terms of editing the transcript and signing an access agreement. This is also the time to request assistance from the individual's office to schedule the interview and to help the historian prepare for the interview. (See Appendix B for an example of a CMH contact.)

In many cases, especially when senior individuals with busy schedules are involved, follow-up contacts and effort will be needed to secure an interview date and to arrange access to office files for background research. Be persistent, but tactful. Do not, however, be passive. An initial contact that is followed up on

half-heartedly, or not at all, is unlikely to secure an interview. The historian knows that the interview is of historical significance, and it is the historian's task to convince the prospective interviewee of that fact as well.

TIP: For MHDs and deployed historians, most contacts and interview arrangements will be made face-to-face. Historians should routinely introduce themselves to commanding officers, staff officers, and soldiers of the unit or headquarters to which the historians are assigned. Ensure that the unit understands the purpose of the historian's/MHD's presence.

The interview session should be scheduled at a mutually convenient time to avoid distractions or interruptions. As a general rule, try to schedule a two-hour session. After two hours, fatigue is likely to set in for either the interviewee or the interviewer, and the quality of the interview will suffer. The schedules of some individuals may make this impractical, and the participants may have to arrange several shorter sessions or be content with a single shorter session. If the latter proves to be the case, take what time is available: a well-conducted interview often can fuel the enthusiasm of an interviewee to sit for additional sessions.

As soon as an individual agrees to an interview, the historian should begin developing a draft topic-question list. This list can be provided to the prospective interviewee after the initial contact. This serves several purposes: it initiates a serious dialogue with the interviewee; it allows the interviewee to review and to think about the potential topics and question to be covered (and provides an opportunity for the interviewee to suggest changes or refinements); and it gives the historian a legitimate reason for subsequent contact with the prospective interviewee. The historian can use these additional contacts, if necessary, to schedule the interview as well as to request background information and documents to help the historian prepare.

At times individuals will decline to be interviewed, generally for one of two reasons. A common response is for someone to suggest that his or her experiences are not worthy of an interview. If this happens, the historian can encourage the individual to talk by explaining the purpose of the interview and telling him or her the type of information the historian hopes to gain from the interview and why it is important. Prior development of an oral history plan will help the historian be prepared to counter this sentiment because the historian already will have thought about why this person should be interviewed. Providing the individual with a draft topic-question list can help show why his or her experiences and opinions are worth recording for the record. If the individual still refuses to be interviewed, however, be tactful and leave open the possibility of trying again at a later date.

A second reason that an individual may decline is because controversial events or people are likely to be topics and the prospective interviewee is reluctant to speak about them "on the record." Prior submission of a topic-question list generally resolves this issue by showing the interviewee that the historian does not have a hidden agenda. Also useful is emphasizing to the individual that the purpose of the interview is to record his or her views; that is, the interview is not an interrogation but an opportunity for the interviewee to get his or her opinions and experiences into the historical record.

Conducting Background Research: The Topic-Question List

Thorough preparation is the key to a successful interview that produces useful historical information, and the development of the topic-question list is the historian's central enabling tool for achieving that end. To develop a meaningful list of questions the historian must conduct as much in-depth research on the specific subjects of the interview as is possible.

The availability of time and source material often will determine the quality of the topic-question list. The potential sources for background research are innumerable and often

contingent upon the individual to be interviewed. Again, the development of an oral history plan will help the historian focus his or her efforts—the historian will know why the individual is being interviewed and will be able to prepare accordingly. Has the individual recently retired or completed an important assignment? Was the soldier involved in an important event? If so, in what capacity—combatant? Planner? Observer? Will this be an interview with a World War II veteran conducted in his home or an in-theater interview with a soldier fresh from combat?

TIP: MHD members and deployed historians should attend staff meetings in order to understand events as they unfold and to observe personal interactions. Doing so will result in both better preparation for interviews and knowledge of whom to interview.

The answers to these questions will help the historian identify potential sources of information that can be mined to prepare the topic-question list. Such sources include websites, published accounts, the news media (for example, the DOD "Early Bird," a daily compilation of defense-related news available on the Army Home Page, is a useful tool for gathering information about recent events), unit or office records, and background discussions with other individuals who possess useful knowledge about the individual or his or her experiences. All of these sources can aid the historian in conducting background research. Ultimately, however, the oral history plan will determine the purpose of the interview; the purpose of the interview will determine the topics and questions to be covered, and that will help the historian focus his or her efforts.

TIP: Each historian should keep a notebook in which he or she can write notes, the names of people to contact, questions to ask (or topics about which to ask), bits of information to be remembered, and potential sources of information. Have a place to write down passing thoughts and ideas so they are not forgotten and so they are accessible in case, for example, the

opportunity for a no-preparation interview suddenly arises. Additionally, information collected for one interview often can be useful to the historian in preparing for another interview.

Yet, even though the purpose of the interview will dictate some of the questions to be asked, the historian also should prepare questions that will elicit information useful for both contemporary and future historians. Avoid tunnel-vision on one topic when preparing a topic-question list. A well-prepared interviewer will be aware of gaps and inconsistencies in the available source materials and, as a result, will be able to ask questions to clarify inconsistencies and to fill in gaps. Interviewers should not shy from preparing questions even if they suspect that they already know the answers; the historian never can truly know what an interviewee will say until the question has been asked. An interviewee's response to these queries may shed new light on an issue; if not, the answers may serve as yardsticks to judge the accuracy of other information provided by the interviewee.

When preparing a topic-question list, writing down every possible question is not necessary. (It will be very important, however, during the interview to listen to what the interviewee says and to ask follow-up questions when the interviewee says something that merits elaboration. Sticking to one's question list regardless of the answers is one of the greatest and most common flaws demonstrated by inexperienced oral historians; and, in the field, it is one of the more lamentable.) Be sure that the topic-question list focuses on the individual and his or her experiences—those things about which the interviewee can speak with accuracy and firsthand knowledge.

The topic-question list is a tool: its creation forces the historian to prepare for the interview; its existence shows the interviewee that the historian has prepared. During the interview, the topic-question list helps the historian remember specific questions and topics as well as providing a safety net in case the discussion wanders and leaves the historian at a loss as to what to say next.

For some interviews, however, the historian simply may not feel prepared—perhaps there was not much (if any) available source material for the historian to use or the opportunity for an interview arose suddenly without the opportunity for research. (The latter is particularly likely to happen to historians in the field.) In such cases the historian will conduct historical reconnaissance by fire and then develop the situation as appropriate—that is, asking general open-ended questions, listening to the answers, and then following up and drawing out the interviewee. Knowing who the interviewee is and why he or she is being interviewed will be enough to get the historian started under such circumstances. Once the interview is started, the historian should focus on drawing out the story the interviewee has to tell and use his or her instincts and training to formulate questions that will ensure the story is complete.

3.

THE INTERVIEW

Before the Interview

Before arriving for the interview, the historian should double-check to make sure that he or she has all the necessary equipment and that it is functioning. Familiarity with equipment will avoid any embarrassing moments at the start of the interview.

An interviewer should bring the following items to each interview: a recorder (either digital or cassette) and any necessary microphones and cables; power and extension cords; batteries; an ample supply of cassettes or memory media; pen and paper; question list; access agreement; and any supporting documentation such as maps or photographs. Ideally, run two recorders during the interview, which will eliminate the problems that result if the historian's sole recorder malfunctions during the interview. If traveling to conduct interviews, the historian certainly should have backups for *everything* or at least the means to obtain them on short notice. When traveling on temporary duty to conduct an interview, make sure that the travel orders authorize the emergency procurement of supplies, including a recorder. All your preparation will be wasted if your equipment does not work.

TIP: When using cassettes to record an interview, advance the tape past the leader—the white or clear segment of tape at the beginning and end of most cassettes—to ensure that the initial portion of the interview is recorded. Use a ninety-minute standard-size cassette. (Sixty-minute tapes often prove too short, and concern about the relative strength of ninety-minute cassettes is unfounded.)

Once settled in the interview location, position the recorder so the microphone can register the voice of each participant. The

historian should make sure that he or she is positioned both to take notes and to monitor the recorder so that, for example, recording does not stop during the middle of an answer. Assess the surroundings. If there is, for example, annoying background noise such as an air conditioner or radio, see if it can be turned off. If necessary, use a separate microphone to ensure sound clarity. Place the recorder (or microphone) on a thin piece of foam rubber, such as a mouse pad, or a pad of paper or magazine to insulate it from vibrations. When everything is set-up and working the interview can begin.

The Interview

Before starting the interview, briefly recount the purpose of the interview and general plan for the interview. Explain how the session will be conducted. Tell the interviewee that you may ask follow-up questions to those on the basic list. Remind the interviewee that he or she need not hurry into a response simply because the recorder is running. Do not worry about the interviewee feeling uncomfortable in the presence of a recorder; an interviewee usually forgets about it once he or she begins talking. Answer any questions the interviewee may have, discuss potential classification issues (the time to find out that the interviewee may give classified information is *before* the interview starts), and have the interviewee sign the access agreement. The access agreement in Appendix C is DA Form 7273-R, *Access Agreement for Oral History Materials*. Use this form. AR 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures* (29 January 1999), requires that access agreements be completed for all interviews, and this access agreement meets regulatory requirements and has been approved by the Department of the Army's Office of the Judge Advocate General. Interviewers should explain the implications of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to interviewees *before* the interview session—that also means that the historian needs to understand FOIA and its impact before the interview.

TIP: Be conscious of classification procedures and guidelines. Don't let the conversation reach a classification level that is too high. Tell the interviewee at the beginning of the session the highest level of classified information that you want to cover. Before concluding, discuss the interview's proper classification level with the interviewee. *If an interview contains classified information, be sure to mark the recording media appropriately!*

Turn on the recorder. Begin the interview by identifying the interviewer, the interviewee, the purpose of the interview, the date, and the location of the session. For example:

> This is Dr. John Lonnquest of the Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Today my colleague, Eric Reinert, and I are going to interview Major Kim Colloton, commander of the FEST of the Baghdad FEST-A. The interview is being conducted at the CPA headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq. Today is August 2, 2003.

Ask the interviewee whether he or she is sitting for the interview voluntarily, and then ask whether the interviewee has any objections to the interview being used by historians or researchers (it is helpful to add "with the understanding that the interviewee will be quoted or cited accurately"). Getting this information recorded is important in case the accompanying paperwork is lost. Then, start with the first question or topic on the topic-question list.

TIP: Like with sports, interviews work best when everyone is "warmed up." For the first question, ask something easy to answer, such as an inquiry about an individual's previous assignments. Anything is fine so long as it makes the interviewee comfortable and gets him or her talking.

Guidelines for Successful Interviewing

There is no way to predict the course of an interview. The personalities of the participants, the material to be covered, even the location of the interview all can affect the nature of the interview. The following guidelines, however, should provide enough general and practical guidance to conduct a successful interview regardless of the circumstances or the type of interview.

a. Do be confident and relaxed. Your background study should have familiarized you with the material to be covered during the interview. Even if you do not feel fully prepared, remember that an oral history interview is just an extended discussion with a subject-matter expert. The interviewee should have information and knowledge that the historian lacks, so do not worry about asking questions or requesting that the interviewee explain something if it is not clear to you. (If it is not clear to you during the interview, then it likely will not be clear to someone reading the transcript at a later date.)

b. Do maintain control of the interview. Responsibility for initiating and directing the course of an oral history interview falls to the interviewer. The historian, while observing military and social courtesies, must maintain control of the interview session despite the rank or status of the interviewee. If the conversation veers off in an unexpected direction, do not worry. Wait for a convenient stopping point (that is, if you do not wish to pursue that course of discussion) and use the topic-question list to get back on track.

c. Do follow the topic-question list but be flexible. Do not blindly follow your topic-question list! Remain alert to the conversation. Listen to the answers. Do you need to ask a question that is not on your prepared list? Historians who will not deviate from a prepared list miss opportunities to collect

information. Keep in mind that the interviewee may have important information that the prepared list does not address.

d. Do not ask questions that can be answered with a "yes" or a "no" without following up. Yes/no questions can be useful for nailing down a specific point, but they generally are best followed with broader questions that permit more expansive answers.

e. Do focus on the interviewee's experiences and firsthand knowledge. If the discussion moves to subjects that did not directly involve the individual, try to develop the difference between fact and conjecture. If, for example, the interviewee says that General X felt a certain way about something, ask *why* the interviewee believes that. Is it just the interviewee's belief or is there some factual foundation for the statement? With a soldier involved in an operation, focus the questions on what he or she saw, did, and felt. Ask about specific equipment that the soldier carried and used. Avoid secondhand stories and accounts; they are hearsay and only pull the course of the interview away from the individual's firsthand knowledge.

f. Do not ask leading questions, suggest answers to questions, or anticipate answers. Instead ask general questions and then follow up with more specific questions if necessary. For example, initial questions like "Was the most feared German weapon that you encountered the 88-mm.?" or "Was the lack of mobilization time the greatest obstacle for your unit to overcome?" suggest particular answers and will usually bring a simple affirmative response from the interviewee. Ask instead a more general question—"What was the most feared German weapon?" or "What was the great challenge your unit faced?"—and then ask follow-up questions. After the interviewee has answered the initial question, you can ask the more specific question (e.g., "What about the German 88?" or "Tell me about your mobilization process.") without influencing the interviewee's reaction to your initial question.

g. Do ask direct questions to focus answers. Use a specific frame of reference, such as "during the drive toward Baghdad," that gives the interviewee a starting point around which to organize his response. Try to maintain a chronology for events; for example, ask when one action occurred in relation to another.

TIP: When interviewing someone about an operation, one of the most useful questions to ask is "What happened next?"

h. Do ask follow-up questions. In addition to making the interview feel more like a real conversation, such queries may help an interviewee to recall specifics otherwise overlooked and also to clarify any possible contradictions with earlier statements or written sources. Asking the interviewee to explain some subject is often a useful means for obtaining useful clarification on a subject. A frequently successful approach is to acknowledge some confusion or incomplete knowledge on your part before asking additional questions. Follow-up questions that request examples are particularly useful after asking general questions. If an interviewee, for example, says, "We always had problems with getting our command to do X," ask for an example so that the interviewee's experiences and thinking are fully understood.

i. Do take notes during the interview. (This is perhaps the part of the job that is most neglected by historians conducting interviews in the field.) Interview notes are often vital sources of information; if an interview is not transcribed immediately, the interview notes will be the only source of information about the contents of the interview. Interview notes are useful during the interview for indicating when follow-up questions are needed, for organizing one's thoughts, and for preparing a preliminary word list of items requiring verification. Writing down key words and topics as they are mentioned during the interview is also helpful for preparing a subject index of the tape.

j. Do not interrupt the interviewee in the middle of an answer. Do not ask the interviewee to explain or spell out a word or acronym while he or she is speaking. This will only disrupt the interviewee's train of thought. Make a note of it and then ask for clarification at the end of the interview.

k. Do be respectful, courteous, and attentive during the interview. Do not argue with the interviewee. Do not confront the interviewee in a manner that challenges his or her integrity. If he or she says something that you believe is incorrect or with which you do not agree, ask the interviewee to explain why he or she holds that opinion. Do remember that the interview is about the interviewee, not you, so keep personal opinions, comments, and judgments to yourself.

TIP: Pay attention to your responses and interview style. Vary your verbal responses and combine them with gestures. Avoid a steady diet of "Uh huh."

l. Do not be afraid of silence. A pause may signify that the interviewee is thinking and perhaps formulating a further response. That information could be lost if the interviewer is too quick with the next question.

m. Do not pretend to be an expert on a subject if you are not. Do not worry if you do not know a lot about a particular interview topic. Your task is to elicit what the interviewee knows about the subject.

n. Do not worry if you find that you cannot cover everything you wanted to cover during the interview. This is a common experience. Focus on getting solid answers to the questions you can ask.

TIP: Be aware that the interview may be stressful for the interviewee. The interviewee may be tired and harried from an exhausting day or preoccupied with current work issues. Moreover, a soldier being interviewed after a combat action may be filled with emotions with which he or she has yet to deal. Pay attention to the interviewee's body language.

o. Do not conduct a marathon interview session. Both the interviewee and the interviewer will become fatigued, so limiting sessions to no more than two or three hours is advisable. Take short breaks (perhaps when changing tapes) as necessary.

p. Do give the interviewee an opportunity to express thoughts that may have occurred to him or her but that did not fit with any of your questions. One of the closing interview questions should provide the interviewee with the opportunity to discuss relevant matters that may not have occurred to the oral historian. This question can be as simple as "Is there some topic that I should have asked you about?" or "Is there anything that you would like to add on this subject?"

q. Do ask the interviewee upon the conclusion of the interview to explain the meaning of acronyms and jargon. This is also the time to request additional information on any unfamiliar subjects or individuals mentioned during the interview. Ask for proper spellings, if necessary. (Again, during the interview, the historian should write down any words or terms that she or he needs explained.) The end of an interview is also a good time to ask "Whom else should I interview?"

r. Do thank the interviewee for his or her time and ask whether there are any questions.

4.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Product Management

After the interview the historian's task is that of product management: summarizing, transcribing, editing, publishing, and storing. The historian's job is not complete until the information contained in the interview is available and accessible to other historians.

a. Label cassettes and digital storage media upon completion of the interview. List the names of the interviewer and interviewee, the date, the place of the interview, and the classification. Digitally recorded interviews should be backed up either on a CD or DVD or on a separate hard drive. If an interview is recorded or stored on multiple cassettes or CDs, indicate that as well: writing "1 of 2" or simply "1 / 2" on a label sufficiently identifies part one of a two-part interview. *Use soft-tip pens to label CDs and DVDs.* If using cassettes, press in the two tabs at the top of each cassette in order to prevent accidental erasure of the interview through re-recording. Documents pertaining to interviews should be listed in the interview notes and stored along with the interview.

TIP: Sufficient digital storage memory is a must for historians in the field. Historians should have, in addition to their own laptop computers, flash drives or external hard drives. Use these to store audio files and for backup copies of interviews. For additional security, backup copies of interviews can also be made on CDs and DVDs and sent to a different location.

b. Prepare the word-term list. This is a list of words, jargon, and terms requiring identification. Then identify them. This is very important if the interview is going to be transcribed by someone other than the interviewer. This is also important because knowledge of acronyms and jargon (such as terms, operational names, and nicknames) is perishable and can be lost unless recorded at the time they are used.

c. Prepare an abstract of the interview. The historian should use the interview notes and word-term list to write the abstract while the interview is still fresh in the historian's mind. An abstract is a brief summary, approximately one to three paragraphs in length, that provides a reader with an overview of the interview. It should cover who was interviewed, the date, the location, and provide a general overview of the interview that includes the major topics of discussion as well as the historian's assessment of the strengths of the interview. Given the number of interviews that are conducted during operations in the field, the likelihood is that many interviews will not be transcribed for a significant period of time. Interview abstracts, therefore, provide the crucial tool for anyone seeking to use the interview collection because reading the abstracts will tell the reader whether the interview is likely to contain enough information to warrant reading or listening to the entire interview. Moreover, properly prepared, the abstracts can provide enough information to serve as the basis for a command report or a narrative account of an operation. Historians intent on producing a written account will find the practice of preparing abstracts to be of great value. Remember that the job of a historian covering an event is not complete until the information that has been collected is available to other historians. Abstracts are an important tool for achieving that goal. Reading an abstract should enable a historian or researcher to determine whether or not the interview is a useful source for a project. (Sample abstracts are in Appendix D.)

d. Review the interview notes. The interviewer should review the interview notes and compare them with the original topic-question list while the memory of the interview is still fresh. Were all the topics covered? Is another interview session warranted?

e. Duplicate the interview to prevent loss if something should happen to the original. With cassettes, the duplicate should be clearly labeled as such and used as the working copy in order to preserve the original.

f. Enter the interview information into the appropriate oral history index (for a history office) or oral history log (for an MHD or historian in the field). *All* interviews conducted by Army historians should be reported to the U.S. Army Center of Military History twice each year with the semiannual report. AR 870-5 lists the required interview information. This reporting system enables the Center to update its index and finding aids in order to assist Army historians and researchers interested in Army oral histories. All historical offices, of course, should maintain indices of their own holdings. Additionally, revised and edited transcripts should be sent to the appropriate Army historical agencies. AR 870-5 directs that copies of all transcribed interviews be sent to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, ATTN: DAMH-HDS, 103 Third Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, D.C. 20319-5058; to the Military History Institute, The Army Heritage & Education Center, 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle, PA 17013-5021; and to the Center for Army Lessons Learned, ATTN: ATZL-CTL, 10 Meade Avenue, Building 50, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1350.

Transcription

Transcribing and editing an interview can be an arduous process. It can take up to ten hours to transcribe and edit one hour of tape. The first step is to decide whether an interview

should be transcribed. Ideally, every interview will be transcribed, edited, and reviewed by the interviewee—thereby creating a true oral history. Nevertheless, not *all* interviews are worth the commitment of time, manpower, and money, nor will the historian always have the ability to transcribe every interview. The historian will have to decide whether to transcribe interviews based on available resources and the value of the interview. (The means for transcribing interviews, particularly for deployed or deploying historians, should be addressed in the oral history plan.) The following questions will help determine whether an interview should be transcribed or if a summary (that is, a detailed abstract) will suffice:

a. Is transcription mandated by regulation or official tasking?

b. What is the significance and quality of the interview? Is the interview with a particularly noteworthy individual, or does it contain useful information (such as a detailed account of an operation)?

c. What is the purpose of the interview? Is it intended to be read in the near future (as with, for example, an exit interview)? Does the interview support a current project such as an official history? Is the interview itself intended for publication?

d. Are resources (both financial and personnel) available to transcribe the interview?

Transcription is time-intensive and demanding work. Ideally, the individual who conducted the interview will transcribe it soon after the event. This practice produces the highest quality transcript. Historians who conduct many interviews, however, seldom have the time to transcribe all of their own interviews. The primary options are to use other individuals in the agency or unit

or to employ outside contractors to produce the initial transcripts of interviews.

In-house transcription offers certain advantages such as the ability to closely supervise the transcription process and the opportunity to develop trained transcribers who know the subject matter. Few offices or units, however, will have enough people to transcribe large numbers of interviews. Use of outside contractors, therefore, often becomes a necessity, particularly when large numbers of interviews are involved. Outside transcribers offer the benefit of speed, but there are other considerations. Cost can be an issue. (The cost of transcription usually is related to how quickly the transcriber is required to produce a transcript.) Letting a contract for transcription services will involve a significant amount of paperwork and administrative oversight requirements, yet a contract can be an efficient means for dealing with large blocks of interviews. Today, the accepted use of government credit cards to pay for transcription services, particularly when the requirement is sporadic, makes obtaining outside transcription services a much easier process than in previous years when contracts, with their lengthy lead-time and administrative paperwork requirements, were necessary.

Although some companies specialize in transcribing oral histories, most large transcribing firms function primarily as court reporters who only transcribe interviews as a sideline. They may subcontract to other organizations or randomly assign transcription jobs to any available worker. Thus it may be hard for a transcriber working for a large contractor to develop expertise with military interviews, which often have a unique vocabulary of words and acronyms. Preparing a word-term list for each interview to assist the transcriber will lead to transcripts that require significantly less editing than ones for which the transcriber had to guess at the spelling of strange words, terms, and place names. Smaller companies or individuals also will require word-term lists, but often offer the advantage of working with the same transcriber.

When using outside transcribers, decide upon a simple standard format for interview transcripts and pass the appropriate

instructions, along with the word-term list, to the transcriber. Instructions do not need to be extensive. For example:

a. On the first page of the transcript, identify the interviewee, the interviewer, their respective organizations, the date and place of the interview, and the interview number.

b. Use one-inch margins on each side of the page with double-spaced text and number each page.

c. Identify each speaker at the start of his or her comments by typing the participant's name in bolded capital letters, followed by a colon.

d. Provide a verbatim transcript.

e. Use standard symbols within the transcript to convey specific messages. Within parenthesis place a question mark before and after a word or phrase to indicate any uncertainty about what was said. Example: (?destroyed?).

f. Place in brackets details explaining why the interview was interrupted or why the tape recorder was turned off. Example: [Interview interrupted by a telephone call].

g. Garbled or inaudible portions of an interview should be indicated. If one word is inaudible, the transcriber should indicate the gap by underlining (example: "___ "); if multiple words are inaudible, use " ___+." If a significant passage is inaudible, the transcriber should estimate the elapsed time by underlining and estimating the length of the passage. Example: "___ .... (# of seconds)."

h. Indicate recording breaks in capital letters. For example (for a cassette recording): END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE: BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE. For digital interviews,

indicate the conclusion of a sound file and give its name. For example: END OF OIF-XX-SMITH-PT1: BEGIN OIF-XX-SMITH-PT2.

TIP: It is important for historians to maintain an oral history index or log in order to have visibility of the status of their collections. Methods range from simple Word documents and spreadsheets to databases. Use the index or log to track the status of individual interviews as they progress toward being a completed oral history. Simple annotations, or codes, noting the status of each interview—such as "at transcribers," "transcribed," "edited," or "out for review"—will prove of great value in managing the historian's oral history collection.

Whenever possible, MHDs should transcribe an interview before sending it to CONUS. If time does not permit this—and, generally, it will not—then the abstract, the interview notes, and the word-term list should be sent along with the interview. If an index sheet of topics covered in the interview has been prepared, that should be sent as well. The information on an index sheet is listed in the order that it would be on the interview tape, together with the corresponding counter reading or an estimate of the elapsed time.

While some interviews will warrant transcription in the field (for example, the commander of the unit to which an MHD was attached), it is likely that historians in the field will lack the time and resources to carry out much transcription. This should not be a cause for alarm because the collection of information is the primary objective of historians in the field. (To make a point again, proper preparation of abstracts will resolve most requirements for information in the field. Abstracts enable the historian to identify which interviews require transcription or should be listened to when preparing a report.) Historians deploying to the field are advised to locate sources of transcription support prior to deployment. Interviews can be mailed or emailed from anywhere

in the world with relatively brief delays. If arrangements have been made ahead of time, a historian can mail interviews with supporting materials (the interview notes and the word-term list) to CONUS for transcription. The interview transcript then easily can be mailed or emailed back to the historian for editing and use in preparing reports. This is an option that previously did not exist, but that has been tested and proven effective during recent operations. The primary requirement, however, is planning ahead to secure both a receiving office and transcription support (to include funding for the transcription).

MHDs periodically should forward their oral history log or inventory, with interviews and related supporting materials, to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Attn: DAMH-FPR, 103 Third Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, D.C. 20319-5058. The Center's Oral History Team will catalog all interviews and, as necessary, endeavor to transcribe tapes. The Center of Military History will provide storage space for all wartime oral history materials.

Editing

Once a transcript has been produced, the historian/interviewer should read and edit the text while listening to the tape. Editing an interview transcript invariably will require the editor to exercise his or her judgment when deciding just how much to modify the verbatim transcript. While there is no single "right way" to edit, being consistent in making changes is important.

Because the nature of an interview is conversational, sentences often are disjointed or run on for many lines. Decide whether to leave them alone or to form several sentences out of separate or incomplete phrases. Be sure to check spelling and the use of acronyms. The transcript, however, should reflect what actually was said. Contractions should be transcribed as spoken. Do not change "I'm" to "I am." Acronyms, jargon, and similar expressions should be left as they were said. Similarly, the transcript should not use rank abbreviations if they were not

spoken. For example, "General" should not become "GEN." If the speaker said, "Colonel," the transcript should not show "LTC" or "COL." If a Lieutenant General is called "General," that is what the transcript should reflect (not "LTG").

Any recorded conversation will contain a number of "filler expressions." Omit filler expressions such as "um" or "ah," unless they suggest confusion or hesitancy or something similarly substantive. Change such expressions as "uh-huh" or "um-hum" to "Yes" when the interviewee is responding to a specific question. More fine-tuned changes, such as substituting "yes" for "yeah" will be the editor's decision; again, consistency should be the rule. Expressions of disagreement should follow the same rule. False starts, which often represent a change in thinking, should appear in the transcript separated from the rest of the text by two dashes (--) when the change is abrupt; when the change in thinking results in a sentence trailing off, use ellipses (. . . .). When reviewing the transcript, the interviewee may recall the original train of thought and perhaps clarify or expand upon his recorded remarks. If a false start is insignificant, it may be deleted during editing.

Speech patterns and styles (for example, the dropping of pronouns such as in "Deployed to theater," or the use of phrases like "you know," etc.) should be transcribed, whenever possible. These phrases may reveal something about the interviewee's personality or conversational manner. Some filler expressions—with "you know" being a prime example—actually serve as punctuation during extended conversation. Thus, an interviewee may indicate the start of a new sentence or a change of topic with "so" or "you know." Sometimes extensive use of filler expressions can dominate a transcript; some individuals are simply more articulate than others. The historian will have to judge how extensively to edit out such filler expressions, although they should not all be deleted in order to avoid dramatically changing the flavor of the interview. If they add to the substance of the interview, however, they should remain in the text. Remember

that the interviewee should have an opportunity to delete these expressions during his or her review of the edited transcript.

Interviews that are intended for publication as an oral history are likely to be edited more thoroughly than the average interview. Published oral histories will differ significantly from the original interview and transcript. Editorial changes—for reasons ranging from clarity and readability to interviewee review—are part of the process. As long as the editorial process does not alter the substance or meaning of the original interview, the historian has remained faithful to the task. Published oral histories that are broadly disseminated should include the word-term list as a glossary. Glossaries are useful to readers, particularly when the oral history is long or laden with jargon. Annotating names and terms the first time they appear in the interview is also helpful to the reader. Material inserted into the transcript should be placed within brackets. Similarly, the historian may include explanatory footnotes to briefly explain to a reader, for example, the meaning of a term or to clarify a reference that is not clear in the transcript.

TIP: When editing a transcript, write the corrections and changes on the paper copy of the transcript. Use standard editorial or proofreading marks, such as those found in the Center of Military History's *Style Guide*. Maintain a record copy of the edited transcript that documents all editorial changes made to the transcript.

Some historical offices publish interviews in order to reach the widest possible audience. These interviews may be published individually or as part of a series or anthology. Examples of published biographical interviews include the Military History Institute's *Changing an Army: An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired*; and *Engineer Memoirs*, which cover the careers of senior engineers and are published by the Historical Office, Corps of Engineers. The historical offices of the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command and the Army

Materiel Command routinely publish exit interviews. On occasion the Center of Military History has published end-of-tour interviews and other general officer interviews. One such publication is *Air Assault in the Gulf: An Interview with MG J. H. Binford Peay, III, Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).*[7] To merit publication, an interview should contain information that is unique and important, appeal to a substantial audience and be able to stand as a separate publication.

After editing the interview, send a copy of the edited transcript to the interviewee for review. Be sure to note any passages that may require the attention of the interviewee as well as passages about which the historian has questions. This review is an opportunity for the interviewer to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and for interviewee to edit, revise, or supplement the text with additional information. Discourage deletions from the text. Providing interviewees with a professionally edited transcript often reduces the amount of time they will hold on to it. When the interviewee returns the transcript, make the requested changes, edit again for errors, and then print a clean transcript. The process is now complete.

Storage

Before storing interview recordings and transcripts make sure that recordings are properly labeled and encased. (This should have been done immediately after the interview or after the interview was duplicated.) Ideally, cassette tapes should be stored in a dust-free environment that is not subject to great fluctuations of either temperature or humidity. Digital recordings should be stored away from items with magnetic fields that could disrupt the stored electrons. Rewinding can create uneven tension within a tape; therefore, do not rewind tapes before storing. All interview

[7] Conducted by the XVIII Airborne Corps historian, then-Maj. Robert K. Wright, Jr. The General Peay interview is a good example of how to conduct an operational interview with a senior commander.

tapes, transcripts, and supporting materials (maps, photographs, documents, and access agreements) should be stored together.

TIP: Store duplicate copies of recordings separately from the original. Let researchers who wish to listen to an interview use the duplicate copy.

Digital recordings also should be duplicated and stored separately from the original. Although storing recordings and other digital records (such as photographs) on storage media (CD-ROMs, DVDs, and external drives) will work, the best long-term solution is to store such records on a server that is regularly backed up.

5.

END-OF-TOUR INTERVIEW PROGRAM

The End-of-Tour Interview Program described in AR 870-5 consists of interviews with the principals of the Secretariat and Army Staff, MACOM commanders, commanders of Army specified commands and Army components of unified commands, commandants and deputy commandants of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) schools and of the Army Medical Department Center and School, corps and division commanders, and commanders of theater and corps support commands. The program is designed to collect the experiences of individuals in important positions and to ensure that the information is preserved and available to the Army.

An EOT interview differs little from other official interviews, particularly exit interviews, but the following considerations should be noted:

a. When an individual assumes a position covered by the EOT Program, the appropriate historical office should notify the individual or the appropriate office of the requirement for an EOT interview and request that an individual be designated as the point of contact. This notification also provides an opportunity to request the retention of important documents by either the historian or the interviewee's office. These documents will be useful when developing the topic-question list for the EOT interview.

b. The interviewee's office is responsible for selecting the point of contact (POC) for the EOT interview. The POC should assist the historian with the preparation of the topic-question list, provide pertinent documents, and schedule the interview session. In some cases, the point of contact may also sit in on the interview.

c. To develop a topic-question list, the historian must know the interviewee's tenure in the position about which he or she is to be interviewed. To further assist the historian in developing a topic-question list for an EOT interview, a set of core questions is provided in Appendix F. These questions, however, form only the skeleton of a topic-question list and should be considered only a starting point.

TIP: Use the POC to help develop a topic-question list. One useful technique is to ask the POC for a "Top Ten List" of issues about which the interviewee should be asked. Once you have a draft list, provide a copy to the POC, or someone else in the office, and ask that person to review it. Ask whether you have neglected any significant issues.

d. EOT interviews should be transcribed, edited, and reviewed by both the interviewer and interviewee as soon as is possible. Timely completion of an oral history helps ensure availability for the next individual to occupy that position. Additionally, AR 870-5 requires that the interviewee, the incoming commander, the Center of Military History, the Military History Institute, and the Center for Army Lessons Learned all receive copies. The historian should inform the interviewee that his interview may be sent to other offices. The cover or title page for each EOT interview will contain the following statement: FOR REFERENCE ONLY. NOT TO BE RELEASED OUTSIDE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE ORIGINATING AGENCY.

e. The interviewing historical office will maintain the original tapes, supporting documents, and transcripts. When the historical office can no longer retain these materials, it will transfer them to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, ATTN: DAMH-FPR, 103 Third Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, D.C. 20319-5058. The

Center's Oral History Team will catalog the interviews, if that already has not been accomplished.

f. Army historical offices should inform the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) periodically about which EOT interviews have been conducted. The CMH maintains a database of general officers who have been interviewed under the EOT Program. This inventory also serves as a resource for Army historians and other researchers—for example, a historian may learn whether an EOT interview was conducted for a specific individual. Additionally, the Director of Military History uses this information to update the Army Chief of Staff on the EOT Program. This report necessitates input from historical offices concerning the status of their EOT interviews. Historical offices encountering difficulty in securing agreement to conduct EOT interviews should contact CMH and request assistance.

6.

VIDEO-RECORDING INTERVIEWS AND GROUP INTERVIEWS

The availability and ease of use of video-recorders have created additional opportunities for historians charged with collecting data. Video records not just the words and sounds of an interview, but also captures the facial expressions and nonverbal communication of interviewees. The result is a richer historical source. Interviews that are recorded on video also can be used by museums in creating historical displays.

Although the preparation for a video interview (i.e., contact, scheduling, and preparation of a topic-question list) is the same as for audio interviews, there are other considerations. A prospective interviewee should be asked about video-recording prior to the interview. Do not spring a surprise on the interviewee. Additionally, a video interview requires two people: one to ask the questions and run the interview, and the other to record the interview. Decide beforehand how to "shoot" the interview. For example, should both interviewer and interviewee face the camera, or should the camera remain focused on the interviewee? While either option is appropriate at times, remember that the purpose of the interview is to record the responses of the interviewee, not the interviewer. Video-recording is also the best way to record a group interview because identifying individual speakers is easier. Transcribing a group interview for which there is only a sound recording often is an exercise in frustration as the transcriber struggles to identify each speaker.

Conducting individual interviews is always preferred. Group interviews are difficult to record and harder to control for reasons ranging from the sheer number of individuals involved (many of whom will want to speak at the same time) to the fact that shy individuals are often inhibited from speaking. Nevertheless, time and logistical considerations often require interviewing groups. In such cases, try to limit the number of

participants as much as possible and ensure that two historian-interviewers are present. One historian will concentrate on leading the discussion, asking the questions, and ensuring that everyone is involved. If one or two individuals start to dominate the session, the historian should involve others by directing questions to them. The second historian will focus on taking interview notes, particularly identifying speakers and noting jargon and terms that later will require identification or explanation in the edited transcript. If a third individual is available, that person should observe the participants and examine their reactions. By reading body language and other nonverbal cues, the observing historian often can identify soldiers who have something substantive to contribute but will remain quiet unless someone prompts them.

Group interviews are more work than individual interviews, but they also can provide historians with more information. Group interviews often generate their own momentum as individuals react to the comments and observations of others, remember potentially important details, and offer corrections—or, at least, differing positions—to the statements of others. While exaggeration is less likely to occur in a group environment, the opposite—excessive modesty—may become more of an issue. Some individuals may be reluctant to take credit for actions or ideas in front of friends and colleagues out of concern that doing so will be viewed as bragging. Additionally, sometimes as a particular "story" develops during an interview, interviewees, in the spirit of camaraderie, may downplay or ignore their own opinions, perspectives, and experiences if they differ from the developing "group story." The resultant silence can hide potentially significant information from the historian, who may complete the interview unaware that there is a different way of explaining events. Although there is no perfect solution to these issues that stem from group dynamics, by being aware of their possibility the historian can take various steps. The historian should watch for potential signs of a different story—this is the purpose of reading body language, as noted above. Another profitable technique is to

conduct group interviews only after individual interviews that allow the historian to determine where the inconsistencies lie in the various accounts. If that is not an option, the historian can follow up a group interview with one-on-one interviews with selected individuals. These interviews can be used both to pursue additional information and to ask the individual about the content of the group interview.

TIP: Audio group interviews create problems for the transcriber by hiding the identity of the speaker. Interviewees will not remember to identify themselves each time before speaking. If a group interview is not videotaped, historians must engage in the labor-intensive method of outlining the interview and identifying each speaker as he or she participates in the conversation. Noting everything that is said is not necessary, but enough should be written so that the transcriber can identify each speaker.

Post-interview actions should be the same as with other interviews. Be sure to duplicate the recording and store the two copies separately. Many outside transcribers will gladly provide transcripts of video interviews; those that specialize in this area can provide a transcript that is keyed to the running time of the interview, although there likely will be an additional charge for doing so.

7.

APPENDIXES

A. AUDIO EQUIPMENT

Army historians should use either standard cassette recorders or digital recorders when conducting interviews. Adherence to this policy will facilitate the transcription process and the exchange of interviews between Army historical offices. The use of proprietary software for digital recorders, as well as the use of microcassettes, is discouraged. The Center of Military History will transcribe only standard cassettes.

Cassette Recorders

Although most Army historians will want to use digital recorders, standard cassette recorders remain widely available, relatively inexpensive, and portable. If using a cassette recorder, be sure to:

a. Purchase a recorder that has a jack for an external microphone, in addition to a built-in microphone. An external microphone can help cut background noise, and the jack can be used to connect two recorders in order to duplicate tapes.

b. Use a recorder that operates with both direct current and batteries. Remember that most batteries will only power a recorder between four and six hours. Monitor the usage of batteries. Develop a system for tracking battery usage.

c. Use a cassette cleaner on the recorder heads and tape drive mechanisms after every 20 hours of recording or playback time. This procedure helps maintain the recording quality of your recorder.

Cassette Tapes

Use 90-minute cassettes (C-90). An advantage of cassettes is that, if properly treated and stored under good conditions, they should last for at least twenty years. Use only new tapes. Purchase quality tapes made by reputable companies. Do not erase and reuse cassettes for your interviews. After completing the interview, break in both tabs at the top of the cassette in order to prevent accidental erasures of an interview. Clearly label cassettes after each interview. If clearly labeled, a cassette is much less likely to go missing. Do not rewind tapes after each use. Store cassettes in their plastic boxes at a constant temperature away from high heat, humidity, and magnetic fields. Duplicate interviews onto other cassettes and then use the duplicate copy for transcribing and editing and for researchers to use. The original can remain protected in storage.

Digital Recorders

There is a profusion of high quality digital recorders available to Army historians, and their use is encouraged. How historians choose to record interviews will be determined partly by their equipment and, especially in the field, partly by memory constraints. The following guidelines are provided as minimal recommended recording standards:

PCM: sampling rate: 48,000, 44.1 kHz

MP3: bitrate: mono, 32 kbps*
sampling rate: 48,000, 44.1 kHz

(* Consider recording at a higher rate if it is possible that the sound file might be used in the future in ways that would benefit from greater fidelity, such as on a website, in a documentary, and on the radio.)

Transcription Machines

If you decide to transcribe your own interviews you will need a transcription machine. Most are equipped with headphones and foot pedals that allow transcribers to play or rewind the tape while keeping their hands free for typing. Some transcription machines also allow the operator to lower the playback speed and reduce background noises on the tape. A comfortable set of headphones is a necessity when transcribing in a noisy work environment. There are commercially available software packages that, together with the foot pedals, will allow you to turn your personal computer into a transcription machine for audio files. They are relatively inexpensive and easy to use.

B. SAMPLE EOT INVITATION LETTER

Dear _____,

I am writing to request an End-of-Tour (EOT) interview with you regarding your time as _____.

The purpose of the U.S. Army Center of Military History's EOT interview program is to capture the personal perspectives of senior leaders in key Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), positions in order to supplement the sometimes sparse documentary record. To give you an idea of how the process generally works, we contact your office beforehand to obtain information about your tenure in the position. We customarily receive a certain amount of documentary material—ranging from email and internal reports to PowerPoint briefings—after which we discuss the material with the point of contact for your office. Subsequently, we produce a topic-question list to serve as a rough game-plan for the interview; at the same time we try to schedule one or more interview sessions, depending on how much material there is to cover and the time you are able to devote to the interview.

Clearly you served in a key position in HQDA at a significant moment in U.S. Army history. I believe that you can provide a unique perspective on _____. I hope that you will consider sitting for an interview at a time that is convenient for you.

Attached is an information paper that describes the EOT interview program. I, of course, would be glad to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

INFORMATION PAPER

DAMH-HDO
27 September 2004

SUBJECT: End-of-Tour Interview Program

1. Purpose. To provide an overview of the End-of-Tour (EOT) Interview Program.

2. Facts.

a. Program. Since the EOT program began in 1989, Army historians have interviewed more than 300 senior Army leaders. The requirements of the EOT program are set forth in AR 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures* (29 Jan 99), chapter 8.

b. Purpose. The goal of the EOT program is to help document important events and to capture the perspective of individuals in key positions on major issues. Interviews supplement the written record, which all too often slights the role of individuals in important decisions and events. Nor can PowerPoint briefings, information papers, and press releases adequately chronicle the complexities and nuances inherent in senior leader decision-making—particularly in this period of sweeping change for the Army. Interviews help clarify the background of important events and place decisions in context. Additionally, interviews that explain how previous ARSTAF and Secretariat principals dealt with problems and issues also can provide insights for current and future Army leaders confronting similar challenges.

c. Process. Each interviewee's office designates a point of contact (POC) to handle administrative details and to assist in gathering background materials for the historian. Drawing on these background materials, CMH historians draft interview questions,

which then are submitted to the POC and the interviewee prior to the interview. The interview itself is taped and then transcribed and edited by CMH. The interviewee subsequently has the opportunity to review the edited transcript to ensure factual accuracy and, if desired, to provide additional commentary. Interviews have varied in length and been classified or unclassified.

d. Point of contact. To submit the name of your office POC, or for additional information, please contact Mr. Stephen Lofgren, Chief, Oral History Activity, tel. 202-685-2315/DSN 325-2315, email: stephen.lofgren@hqda.army.mil.

Mr. Stephen J. Lofgren/202-685-2315
Approved by: Dr. Brown

C. DA 7273-R, Access Agreement

DAMH-HDS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

1. I, _____, am voluntarily participating in an oral history conducted by _____ of the _____ on the following date(s): _____.

2. I understand that the recording(s), transcript(s), and photograph(s), and any materials resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. Government to be used in any manner, consistent with federal law, deemed in the best interests of the U.S. Army, as determined by the Chief of Military History or his/her designee.

3. I understand that the recording(s), transcript(s), photograph(s), any other materials, and information and material derived from them, may be made available to members of the public, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, and DA Information Security Program.

4. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the recording(s), transcript(s), photograph(s), and any other materials resulting from the oral history to the U.S. Army. This grant, release, and discharge of rights to the U.S. Army is made without the expectation of recompense of any kind. This voluntary grant and release will not be made the basis of a future claim of any kind against the U.S. Government. Finally, I

understand that this does not preclude my personal use of these materials, subject to security restrictions.

_____

_____

(Name of Interviewee)

(Date)

Accepted on behalf of the U.S. Army by _____

_____

(Date)

Privacy Act Statement

Authority: Title 10, USC 3013, Secretary of the Army; Army Regulation 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures.*

Principal Purpose: To obtain historical information that focuses on persons, events, and topics of historical interest to the U.S. Army.

Routine Uses: This information may be used by Department of Defense as source material for publications or other historical works.

Disclosure: Voluntary; however, failure to provide the requested information may preclude participation in the Army oral history program.

DA 7273-R, XXX 05

D. SAMPLE ABSTRACTS

There is no set length for an abstract. The length of the interview and the amount of information it contains will determine the length of the abstract. Each historian will have to decide what the proper length should be. The abstract is intended to be neither a substitute for reading the interview nor a condensed version of the interview. Rather, the abstract should be a descriptive summary of the interview that allows a researcher to quickly gain an idea of its contents and to decide whether the interview seems worth reading. To that end, include a commentary on the quality of the interview when it is appropriate. (Try to avoid comments that would make the interviewee feel uncomfortable if he or she were to read the abstract.)

Describe only the major contents of the interview. Summarize what the interviewee said; do not repeat all the details. Lines such as "SGT Jones provides substantial information about x, y, and z" will allow the abstract author to cover a lot of ground with just a few words. Include brief quotes if they are striking or memorable. If the interviewee made a lot of quotable statements, mention that in the abstract!

The following are abstracts of interviews at CMH. They were randomly selected from several collections: Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Operation JUST CAUSE, Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, and Operation NOBLE EAGLE.

IFIT-102-049:
Abstract: CSM Robert Gallagher describes the training his brigade underwent in the United States and in Kuwait before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. He stresses the importance of rigorous training and the ability of lower-echelon soldiers to make decisions in combat. CSM Gallagher, a veteran of Task Force Ranger and former light infantry soldier, discusses his personal conception of leadership, his role as a brigade CSM, and the value of mechanized infantry to the Army. The interview focuses heavily upon pre-combat training rather than combat operations,

which are treated in a sketchy and non-chronological fashion. The interviewer asks questions about the initial thrust into Iraq, the battle at Objective Curly in downtown Baghdad, and the transition from maneuver warfare to occupation. The brigade suffered chronic problems in maintenance and logistical re-supply even during training, and these intensified after crossing the line of departure. The discussion of Objective Curly centers upon CSM Gallagher's slight wounding in the battle, the importance of first aid training, CSM Gallagher's praise for selected soldiers in his task force, and his defense of the actions of the brigade chaplain, who armed himself and fired back at the objective. The interview ends with a discussion of presence patrols and attempts to restart public works in Baghdad after the city was taken. The interviewer's reliance upon pre-planned questions and lack of adequate follow-up questions limits the value of this interview.

JCIT-268:
Abstract: This is an interview with the operations sergeant (S3 NCOIC) from the 5th Battalion, 87th Infantry (193d Infantry Brigade), conducted by the 49th Military History Detachment. The interview begins with background information about the rising tensions leading up to the final crisis. He relates about the preparations for the operations including creating improvised facilities for training in military operations on urban terrain (MOUT), and the reconnoitering of targeted sites. When the hostilities began the battalion had the mission of seizing four locations in the Alcon vicinity: three were Panamanian police activities and the fourth was an Engineer Battalion. The initial objectives were seized by 0200 hours during the first night. Thereafter members performed sweeps of the populated areas of the city, establishing a presence and searching for PDF members. He also discusses the function of the battalion tactical operations center (TOC) and the jump TOC used by the commander to be more mobile. He also discusses the communications and intelligence capabilities of the organization. Families living in Panama were especially heroic, in that they were near the fighting

and the children knew that their parents were leaving home to go to war. The interview concludes with him crediting the improvised MOUT training during the fall of 1989 with teaching the soldiers the skills they needed to survive without any fatalities.

JEIT-FWD-005

Abstract: MAJ Vincent Fields, Special Troop Battalion (STB), V Corps, discusses the mission of the pre-deployment site selection survey team he led and lessons learned from the mission. MAJ Fields was on the initial site survey group sent to Hungary. The group was divided into four teams, each with a specific survey mission: airfields, railheads, bridges, or billeting. The initial survey was completed in five days. The teams returned to Heidelberg to review the information and make recommendations on which sites to use. After the recommendations were reviewed, the teams returned to Hungary to verify the initial information and make the final site selection. The senior US representative, a brigadier general, had no authority to sign contracts or to commit funds to have the selected facilities prepared for occupation before US troops arrived. He noted that Morale, Welfare, and Recreation funds were adequate and were important for maintaining troop morale. Soldiers were under stress, however, due to being "locked down" (i.e. restricted to the base camps) without being told why. The STB is the administrative cell for USAREUR-FWD. It does all of the administrative duties and life support for the headquarters. MAJ Fields' concludes the interview by stating that it would be cheaper and quicker to establish a traditional rear area logistic base by renting an open field and putting everything and everyone in tents instead of renting vacant buildings. He also recommends using Army assets instead of civilian contractors for those mission requirements for which the Army has trained soldiers and units.

NEIT - 504

Abstract: Mr. Joel B. Hudson, the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, is in charge of all administrative offices that

support the Army Secretariat and General Staff. He was on leave in Florida when he heard about the attack on the World Trade Center. He called his deputy, Ms. Riley, at 0915 to ask about the protective status of the Pentagon. After hearing about the attack on the Pentagon, he drove back from Florida and arrived at the Army Operation Center (AOC) around midnight on 12 September. His immediate focus was on re-establishing telephone and computer connections in the building. Secretary of the Army White's guidance was "do what needs to be done." Forty-five of the Army personnel who were killed worked for him in the Resource Management Directorate (RS-W) and IMCEN. His biggest challenge became taking care of his people. Other significant challenges were finding space, furniture, computers, communications equipment, and re-staffing RS-W. The re-staffing of RS-W was especially critical because the attack occurred only nineteen days before the end of the fiscal year. Many retired RS-W personnel came back to work and other offices loaned people to help.

He praises the initiative shown by his people on the both the 11th and in the weeks afterward and mentions SGT Chris Braman who pulled three people out of the rubble. He also mentions Eric Jones, a student at Georgetown University and EMT, who helped that day and after, and later went to New York City to work at ground zero. He mentioned several other people who were killed. Mr. Hudson also discusses his responsibility for the Defense Post Office that services the building. With the office shut down because of the anthrax letters, he had to devise measures to deal with the threat of anthrax and other hazardous materials. He discusses the decision to create a central facility to for all Pentagon mail and the special equipment designed for it. Additionally, he covers how the improvements in Wedge One saved lives, his decision to move his organization into the Taylor Building, and how the attack has affected the Pentagon renovation plan.

NEIT-535

Abstract: BG Eikenberry was in his E-ring office receiving a briefing from MAJ Andrew Mueller (NEIT-544) when the plane hit the Pentagon on 11 September. He had not heard about the attack on the World Trade Center. The plane hit the building near his office, throwing both him and MAJ Mueller against the wall. He remembers seeing a fireball outside his window. They left his office and saw MG Wood's secretary, Ms. Linda Moore, who told them that General Wood was trapped in his office. BG Eikenberry told her to get out of the area, and then he broke open the door to Wood's office and got him out. They entered the E-ring corridor, which was filled with smoke, and could see flames. They headed away from the flames toward the 4th corridor, crossing over broken fractures in the floor. He said that these fractures were the break points where the floor collapsed. He joined LTC Mark Volk and searched for people in the E-ring. He remembers hearing a rumbling ten to fifteen minutes after the impact and thinks that it might have been the area near the fractures collapsing. After finding no one he went to the Pentagon courtyard and then to South Parking. Once in South Parking he began accounting for the people in his division. He accounted for 95% of his 120 people and sent them home about 1230. He got home to his quarters at Ft. Belvoir, VA about 1400. On September 12th he went to work at the Army Operations Center (AOC) in the Pentagon. In the AOC he helped organized the night shift and headed it through the 15th when he returned to his normal duty as the Deputy for War Plans and assisting MG Wood develop the Army strategic campaign plan for the war on terrorism.

E. EOT CORE QUESTIONS

The following questions provide a basic core or structure for devising a topic-question list. Each topic-question list, however, should be unique as a result of the background research performed prior to the interview. The core questions must be modified or tailored to fit the particular circumstances of each interview and the duties, responsibilities, and achievements of each interviewee. Additionally, each of these questions will logically lead to additional questions as the historian reacts to the interviewee's answers.

(Note: While many of the questions that follow are presented here in groups, the historian should ask them individually during an interview.)

1. When you assumed your duties, what guidance did you receive from your superiors? Were you charged with accomplishing specific objectives? If so, what were they? Did you have the opportunity to discuss your duties with your predecessor? How was the transition handled? How could the transition be improved?

2. Looking back at your career, which assignment best prepared you for this position?

3. What issues, events, or responsibilities consumed most of your time? Why? Did you anticipate this would be the case when you began this position?

4. Please explain the operations of your office (or agency). With which other offices or agencies did you work on a regular basis?

5. Please describe your style of management. What were your techniques for handling the vast spectrum of information and

ideas that you needed to understand in order to carry out your duties? What criteria did you use for making tough decisions? *(Note: If one is not volunteered, ask for an example.)*

6. What issues or events occupied your time? What were your major initiatives during this assignment? What were the major problems you faced in getting these initiatives accepted?

7. What was your greatest challenge? What were your most significant accomplishments?

8. Did you make any major organizational changes? If so, why? Do you see a need to change the organization, staffing, budget, or responsibilities of your office?

9. As you leave for your next position (or retire), what areas still cause you concern and what things did time not allow you to complete? How has your own perception of your duties changed since assuming this position?

10. What major issues will your successor face?

11. What advice would you like to pass on to your successor?

12. What do you see as the course of the Army in the future? What will be the major challenges in your area of responsibility [that is, the interviewee's current position] over the next five to fifteen years?

13. If you were "king for a day," what would you change?

14. Is there a topic that I should have asked you about, but did not?

F. FIELD INTERVIEWS

Historians conducting operations-focused interviews face many challenges. These will include finding the time—and a suitable location—to interview individuals who, in all likelihood, will be tired and very busy. If an individual recently has been involved in combat, or any other stressful situation, be aware that the person is probably dealing with a range of extreme emotions. Additionally, some issues may be sensitive, so the historian must pay attention to how questions are phrased. Pointed or leading questions about, for example, command decisions (and the reasoning behind them), the specific actions of individuals, or the influence of personalities can be interpreted by the interviewee as evidence that the historian already has formed an opinion. The historian must remember that the course of any interview can be influenced by how the interviewee "reads" and responds to the Interviewer, so the historian's demeanor should emphasize the task—and the responsibility—of objectively gathering information. Any opinions expressed during the interview should come from the interviewee.

As for all interviews, the historian should begin preparations for an interview in the field by formulating an interview plan. One way to develop an interview plan is to answer the following series of questions. While more time for preparation and research is always preferable, even a short period of focused thinking about these questions will pay dividends. With time and experience, this technique will become second-nature.

1. *"Why is this person being interviewed?"* That is, what is the objective of the interview? Is the historian trying to document a platoon-level combat action or the history of a unit for a period of time (to include its mobilization, training, and deployment)? Is the purpose to learn how a tactical operations center functioned during a battle, or how a transportation company operated during several months in a combat theater? Is the intention to learn

about the experiences of senior commander and the environment in which he or she operated?

2. *"Who is the interviewee?"* What does the historian know about him or her? (If the answer is, "Nothing," then the next question should be, whom can the historian ask for information?) What sort of firsthand information is this person most likely to possess? What is the interviewee's rank or grade and position? For how long? Does this person have twenty years of Army experience, or is this the soldier's first enlistment? Is this the interviewee's first deployment? What information would another historian want to know about this individual in order to give broader context to the information contained in the interview?

3. *"What sort of information do I hope to obtain?"* Answering this question after thinking about the first two questions should serve as an azimuth check for the historian. How does this interview fit into the historian's plan and purpose? Where is *this* interviewee's firsthand knowledge likely to overlap with what the historian is seeking?

Because the "right" question list rarely will be the same for more than one interview, answering the foregoing questions before the interview will enable the historian to develop a line of questioning appropriate to each interview. By bringing into focus the three issues of the historian's objective, the individual to be interviewed, and the germane information that individual may or should have, the historian will have identified many of the questions to ask. If, by chance, the historian finds it necessary to start an interview before having the chance to answer some of these questions, then it makes sense to begin the interview with questions designed to elicit those answers. Indeed, questions about the interviewee—history, position, experience—should be asked to get the information on the record and because the historian never can really know what an interviewee will say. Each interview, in essence, is a request for an individual to tell his

or her story; the historian wants to capture that story while keeping in mind the larger purpose for the interview.

From this point, conducting the interview is a relatively straight-forward process. Start with the customary introductory questions to get the interviewee talking and to record basic information about the individual. Then, set the stage. Ask appropriate questions about the individual's environment: the unit or command, the mission, the people with whom the interviewee worked, the challenges encountered. Ask about routine procedures or SOPs, specialized equipment and training, and how the individual lived day-to-day. This last category, that of life in the field, is perishable information that is easy to overlook. If the focus is a headquarters, ask about policies and guidance that were in place. (For many interviews with commanders and staff officers, the EOT questions in Appendix E will be a useful starting point.) If the focus of the interview is a particular activity or action, lead the interviewee to that point, and then have the interviewee recount what transpired. "What happened next?" will keep the interviewee speaking. Focus on the individual: what did the interviewee see or think? Ask for specific details and evidence as follow-up questions: how does the interviewee know something? Who made the decision? What time did an action begin? What was the interviewee thinking at a particular moment? Ask about reasoning or motivation if it is unclear. If the story becomes confused or the historian does not understand something, ask the interviewee to elaborate. Remember, if the historian does not understand the story being told in the interview, later readers of the interview transcript probably will not understand, either. At the end of the interview, ask the interviewee who else should be interviewed on this subject. Then thank the interviewee for his or her time and for helping to document the history of the U.S. Army.

Even when a solid question list exists, the historian should seek to tailor the list for each interview. Not all questions will be appropriate for each interview. As field historians conduct interviews and observe events, their knowledge will grow, and they should confidently use that knowledge to modify their

question lists in order to ask questions that are personalized for the individual interviewee. Any question list is only a starting point; the interviewer must "develop the situation" based on what he or she encounters and learns during the interview.

Regardless of the specific questions, however, the interviewer should focus on the experiences of the interviewee—what he or she actually did or witnessed. Additionally, the interviewer should be alert to cues from the interviewee that follow-up questions, perhaps departing from the original list, should be asked. As a safeguard against missing potentially important information, always give the interviewee an opportunity to offer information. One method of accomplishing this is to remind the interviewee that he or she is the real subject-matter expert on the topic and then to ask an open-ended question. This often works best toward the end of an interview. One such question is, "What is something I should have asked you, but have not?" Another is, "If you were a historian writing about X [that is, whatever has been the main subject of the interview], what would you emphasize?" Or, "What can you tell me about your experience that will not appear in the official reports?" Asking such questions shows the interviewee both that the historian is not merely following a pre-determined agenda and that the historian is genuinely interested in what the interviewee has to offer. The resulting responses often can be pleasantly surprising.

Finally, remember that interviewing in the field is a learned skill. As with any skill, performance will improve with practice. Practice developing question lists beforehand. After an interview, engage in self-critique. Which questions worked? Which questions did not? Why? Review interviews that have been conducted, particularly those conducted by other historians. Borrow questions and techniques that appear worthwhile, and ask, "What would I have done differently?"

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