

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History Program
_____ – Korean War
Interview Outline¹

Introductory Information: State the following at the beginning of the interview:

- Your name (as interviewer)
- Date and place of the interview
- Name of the person being interviewed
- “This interview is part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library’s *Veterans Remember* Oral History project”

Interviewee Background:

- When & where were you born?
- Where you grew up?
 - What did your parents do for work?
 - Do you remember growing up during the Depression?
- Any early interest in the military?
 - Do you remember Pearl Harbor?
 - What was it like growing up during WW II?
 - How closely did you follow the events in Europe? Pacific?
 - Your thoughts about Atomic Bomb?
- Where were you living at the time of draft?
 - What were you doing at the time?
- Tell us about being drafted/inducted?
 - Why did you pick the Army?
 - Were you married at the time? Girlfriend?
 - Your parents’ reaction?

Initial Service & Training:

- Tell me about your boot camp/training experience(s).

- Do you remember your instructors?
- How thorough and effective was your training?
- What helped you cope with the experience?
- What was your military specialty & special training you received?
- Did you get leave before shipping to Korea?

Wartime Experiences:

- When did you deploy to Korea, and how were you shipped overseas?
- Do you remember arriving in theater, where you debarked, and what it was like?
 - Initial impression of Korea? Visually, sounds & smells.
- What was your unit of assignment? When did you find out?
 - Your specific job/assignment/MOS?
 -
- Impressions of your first day on the line?
- (Questions specific to veteran’s own experiences, developed after the pre-interview session)
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -

Reflections:

- The experience of COMBAT:
 - Were you afraid when going into combat? Can you describe your emotions at that moment?
 - How did you deal with your fear?

- What motivated you to keep going?
- Are there any other memorable combat experiences we've not already covered?
- Were you injured? When, Where & How of injury?
- Were you awarded any medals or citations? If so, for what?
- [Higher ranking personnel may be asked about tactics & battle planning, etc.]
- The toughest part about your service in Korea?
- Impressions of the (segregated / integrated) military?
- What do you think about your fellow soldiers/sailors/airmen?
- What was your impression of the NCOs and officers over you?
- How was the morale for your unit? It's fighting ability & effectiveness?
- KATUSAs. Other UN forces you encountered?
- Opinions about the enemy you faced?
- Opinions/comments about civilians you encountered?
 - Work with an orphanage?
 - Adopt (formally or informally) any Korean children?

Military Life: Ask questions about life in the service and/or at the front or under fire.

- How did you stay in touch with your family?
- What was the food like? What was your favorite C or K ration?
- Did you have plenty of supplies?
- What did you do when you/your unit was not in combat?
 - Were there entertainers?
 - What did you do when on leave?
 - Where did you travel while on leave?
- Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?

- What were some of the pranks that you or others would pull?
- Were you on the point system? A rotation policy?
- Describe your rotation home: When? How?
- Can you describe your reunion with your family when you came back home?
- Do you have photographs? Letters? Personal diary?

Life After Service: Appropriateness of questions will vary if the veteran had a military career.

- Tell us a little about the friends you made while in the service.
- Discuss your release from service, where it was, what you experienced, and what you were feeling?
- What did you do in the days and weeks afterward?
- Did you work or go back to school?
 - Was your education supported by the G.I. Bill?
 - What was your career/professions after the war?
- Did you continue any of the relationships you formed while in the service?
 - For how long?
 - Did you join a veterans' organization?
 - Do you attend reunions?

Later Years and Closing:

- Do you think your sacrifice during the war was justified? If so, why?
- How did your experience change you / your outlook on life?
- Did your military experience influence your thinking about life; about our current situation?
- What do you think people today should know about what you went through? Or “What lessons could we today learn from your experiences?”
- What do we need to remember about the war & America’s involvement?
- What advice or wisdom would you pass on to future generations?

¹ This questionnaire is a revision of the Library of Congress’ Veteran’s History Project, dtd 2007.