

Civilian Interviewee Questions

(WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf)

Conduct interview in a quiet environment; let the interviewee respond, and keep your own comments out of the interview process.

Segment 1: For the record

Give introduction (sample follows based on Biography Data Sheet):

"Today is _____. I am _____ and I am interviewing
(interviewee's name) _____ at
(address) _____. (State relationship to interviewee) Mr/Mrs
_____ is _____. Mr/Mrs. is _____ old and was born on
_____. Mr/Mrs. _____ served in (war) _____. Mr/Mrs. was
in (unit) _____ and held the following rank: _____.

Segment 2: Jogging Memory

What is your name? For married women, what was your maiden name?

Age?

What was your family background? Educational background?

What is your current occupation? Current address?

At the time of the war, were you in a relationship, married or single?

What was your spouse's or partner's name and wartime occupation (if interviewed for that reason)?

If married, when and where were you married?

Did you have children at any time during the war?

Segment 3: Wartime Work [large amount of interview time]

Where did you live/work during the war?

What was your main wartime activity? Were you employed outside the home? In industry?

Why did you choose that activity?

What kind of training were you given?

What was your title? What kind of activities did you perform?

Who was your supervisor?

What was your specialty at work? What did you like and dislike about it?

What special rules or conventions did you have to follow?

With whom did you work?

If you had children, was there child care at work? If not, what arrangements did you make?

Were you unionized? Were you an organizer? How did you feel about the unions?

Did you develop friendships during training or the activity itself?

Did you have family and friends in the service or doing war work?

Segment 4: Life During Wartime

General:

How did you feel about the war? What were your family's or friends' feelings?
Did you live with family, friends, or coworkers?
In what ways did the war change your activities or habits?
Were you or others in your community treated differently because of your gender/ethnicity/race of other factors? If so, how did you or others react?
What were some of the first changes in your life after the war started?
What different responsibilities did you have to take on?
What social activities were you involved in at work or after work with coworkers?
How did you entertain yourself outside of work?
Did you or others get married during wartime? What were the weddings like?
Did you worry that our side might not win?
Did you know anyone who was killed or wounded in the war?
Tell me about corresponding via letters or otherwise with friends or family in the service.
What effect did the war have on your physical and mental health or others you knew?
Do you think that medical care changed because of the war?
Did you have any worthwhile experiences because of the war?
What was the most memorable experience? Most memorable character? Most humorous experience?

World War II:

Was there a lack of social opportunities and friends because of the war?
How did your community respond to the war and civil defense (or other home front) initiatives?
Did child care activities change for mothers?
Tell me about shortages and rationing for food and gas.
Did you have a victory garden or other ways to get enough food?
How did you cope with wartime shortages?
Talk about recycling or rubber, grease, or other commodities.
To what extent was there hoarding or black market activity in your area?
How did you feel about war news from newsreels or radio?

Segment 5: Post War Experiences

How did you feel when the war ended? What did you do when you heard the news? (For WWII: Where were you on V-E Day? V-J Day?)
Did you keep your job or continue other wartime activities after the war?
Is there one thought about your wartime experience that you want to share with future generations?

Segment 6: Later Years and Closing

Is there anything else I should ask you?
Is there anything that you would like to add on this subject?