

## Research Tactics for Oral History Essays & Oral Presentations

As some of you are discovering, you can't decide what is important in the way of terms in your transcript. How can I confirm whether something is worthy of research or not? There are numerous ways to do this:

- Ask yourself: Is the term is something that keeps you from understanding what is being said? Is so, then look it up in1) a dictionary, 2) with google, and/or 3) on the reference sheets I have provided. Don't look up 'US Army' or business names or wartime buddies . . . this wastes your time.
- If it is a famous person (Eisenhower, MacArthur, Truman) then look them up in the historical context in which your veteran/civilian is involved. You do not need to read the 900 page bibliography of Eisenhower from start to finish, but narrow it down to the time around the D-Day Invasion in 1944 and you will have more luck
- If it involves historical events, then locate written resources with the aid of online or Media Center catalogue resources.
- Utilize historic newspaper resources to get a better feel for the current times. [ProQuest: *New York Times*] See page 2
- Above all, utilize written resources and their bibliographies in order to identify additional resources. Go back to the 940 section in our Media Center, see Mrs. Lerch for book in 229, go to the Public Library. Written resources are in much more depth than what you will find on-line. Journal articles are excellent – or articles from MHQ (Military History Quarterly) There are on-line sources for specific topics.

### What is the purpose of on-line searches?

- To help narrow a search area
- To quickly identify correct spelling of a term
- To locate online databases (such as DANFS or Air Corps missions, acronyms)
- To locate unit histories and/or other veteran accounts
- To locate periodicals relevant to your topic.

### Too many dead-ends on-line? Then fine-tune your search parameters . . .

Your punch list included the following terms . . . what needs to be added to make them more searchable?

Before	Clarified
Vietnam (too broad)	Vietnam War 1970s
Vietnam War (too broad)	Vietnam War + I-Corps
Pleiku (you'll get a listing of hotels)	Pleiku + Vietnam War
Eisenhower	Eisenhower + SHAEF+ D-Day

**Newspaper Searches – why important? Gives contemporary perspective of events when they happened and impressions.** Try the following dates to get a feel for information that is out there:

<b>Event Date</b>	<b>Newspaper article date</b>
December 7, 1941 US	December 8, 9, 10, 11
August 7, 1942 South Pacific Guadalcanal	August 8, 9, 10, 11
June 6, 1944 England & France	June 7, 8, 9, 10
May 1, 1940 German invasions	May 1-15, 1940
September 15, 1950 Inchon	September 16-20, 1950
December 23, 1950 (Ridgway) Korea	December 24-25, 1950
January 30, 1968 Tet Offensive	January 30-Feb 2 1968
Feb. 12-13, 1991	Feb. 13-17, 1991

**What did you find out when reading newspaper articles? How can you adapt these methods to the events mentioned in your transcript?** You may have to do some general reading from books to narrow down the newspaper parameters. . . .

Good hunting!

### **Notes to Help Me**