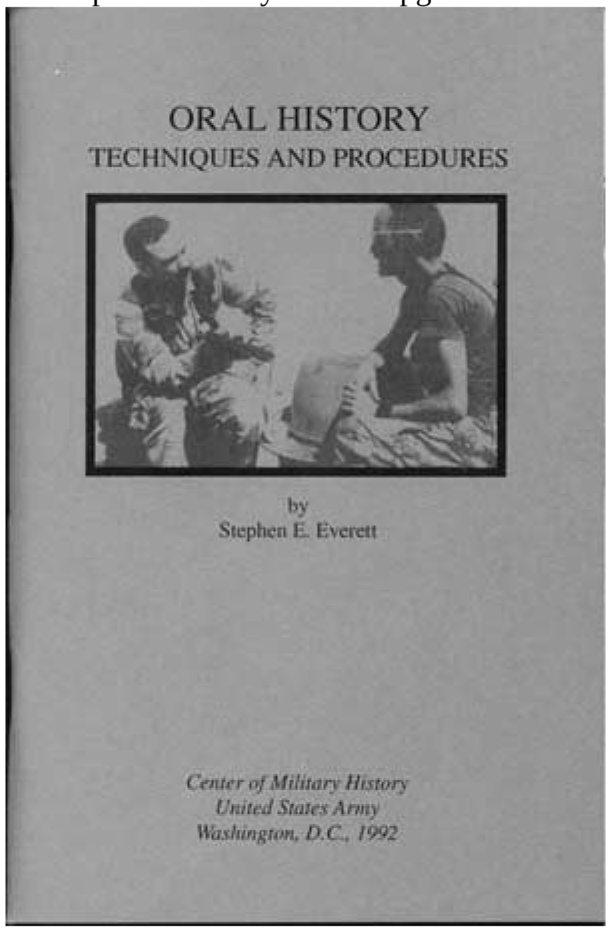

ORAL HISTORY
TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

by
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Foreword

Oral history, in one form or another, has long been an integral part of a historian's trade. The Greek historian Thucydides wrote in *History of the Peloponnesian War:* "And with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war I have made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible." Thucydides set a precedent for the judicious use of oral testimony, and historians following in his footsteps continue to debate the proper handling of evidence offered in personal accounts.

The U.S. Army Center of Military History's concept for *Oral History Techniques and Procedures* developed 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. The principal predecessors to this guide--the Military History Institute's *Interviewer Handbook,* which consists of interview techniques for Army War College students participating in the Senior Officer Oral History Program, and DA Pamphlet 870-2, *The Military Historian in the Field,* which affords suggestions for combat interviews--admirably filled their niches, but a broader approach to oral history was desirable. Army Regulation 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures*, *is* currently being revised to include a chapter on oral history and, when published, will provide higher-level official policy in contrast to this document's procedural guidance.

Washington, D.C.
19 October 1992

RICHARD A. HUNT
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Preface

Oral history is an essential means of preserving the experience of past battles and of imparting that experience to young soldiers. Since World War II oral history has become an increasingly critical adjunct to the more traditional sources of historical documentation. Army historians, in preparing the official histories of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, conducted extensive interviews to uncover the personal insights often lacking in written documentary sources. For the same reasons, present-day historians have recently turned their microphones towards American soldiers participating in military operations throughout the world. These historians have also discovered that the details of planning and execution of military activities are increasingly hammered out by action officers through telephonic or radio communications. This informal process has resulted in less information committed to paper or into permanent electronic databases, again emphasizing the importance of supplementing the written record with oral interviews.

The uses for oral history products also continue to grow. The Army's military and professional historians, archivists, and curators use oral history to support a variety of historical programs. Some museums, for example, currently use interviews to bring a new dimension to their exhibits or to obtain information from veterans about donated artifacts. Army leaders, commanders, and soldiers, faced with the challenges of today's politico-military environment, rely on oral histories to learn from the experiences of their predecessors. And increasing numbers of scholars, both official and unofficial, are taking advantage of the Army's existing oral history collection or using interview techniques to round out their research and create a more complete story

Oral History Techniques and Procedures addresses the needs of this growing and diverse body of Army interviewers, from novices to practiced historians. To aid this diverse audience, the guide is organized into five sections, each with topical subsections. This format allows more experienced users to refer directly

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to that portion of the text addressing their particular question or concern while furnishing basic step-by-step information for beginners.

For historians wishing an introduction to oral history, Part I discusses the medium, its association with the Army, and the histories it has made possible. Part II offers general advice on improving interview techniques and presents guidelines for conducting, transcribing, and using oral histories. It also contains information on video interviews and addresses the particulars of the End-of-Tour Interview Program. Although the procedures described below are specifically directed towards recorded interviews and their related products, historians preferring to rely entirely on interview notes may glean new techniques concerning the basic interview process. Part III deals with procedures for military history detachments conducting wartime interviews. Parts IV and V offer additional information on procedural formats and readings in oral history.

Oral History Techniques and Procedures amplifies the requirements for Army oral history programs outlined in the forthcoming edition of Army Regulation 870-5, *Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures*. Although this guide presents a few mandatory requirements, such as the need for an access agreement or the use of standard size cassettes for all audio interviews, it also suggests recommended procedures. Some of these suggestions are not suitable for every oral history program or interviewer, and readers should pursue the technique(s) that best suits their own interviewing skills. Proposals for improving the guide or questions concerning its contents should be sent to the Commander, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Attn: DAMH-RAO, 1099 14th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005-3402.

It is often a perplexing challenge to create a document encompassing the surprisingly strong thoughts and emotions that oral history evokes among historians. I would like to thank my colleagues at the Center of Military History and in the Army's historical community: Larry Heystek, James T. Stensvaag, William C. Baldwin, Frank N. Schubert, James W. Williams, Lt. Col. Charles R. Shrader, Col. C. Reid Franks, Janice E. McKenney,

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John T. Greenwood, Lt. Col. Gary L. Bounds, Edward J. Drea, Dwight D. Oland, Jeffrey J. Clarke, Col. Michael D. Krause, Col. Joseph M. Gesker, and Morris J. MacGregor. Staff officers in the Office of the Judge Advocate General offered counsel on access agreements and the Freedom of Information Act. Richard A. Hunt supervised the project through many obstacles. Robert K. Wright, Jr., shared the wisdom he gained as a combat historian in Vietnam, Panama, and Southwest Asia, and Part III is largely based on his views of "how to do it right." Melissa D. Hackett took time out from her other duties to retype and reformat the draft manuscript. The project's editor, Joanne M. Brignolo, applied her technical skills with energy and enthusiasm and shaped the manuscript into a more readable product. This guide is greatly improved because of these valued associates, but I alone am responsible for any errors or omissions.

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Part I
Background

1. WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

Oral history is defined for Army historians in the forthcoming Army Regulation (AR) 870-5, Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures, as "interviewing participants or experts in a particular subject or issue and preserving their judgments and recollections. Oral history materials--sound and video recordings, transcribed interviews, interview notes and memoranda--supplement, but do not replace, official written records. Oral history materials contain information not normally preserved in official documents." Oral history preserves through interviews an individual's interpretation or recollection of events. The final product, whether it is an interview tape or transcript, reflects the combined effort of the interviewer and interviewee in the creation of a unique historical account. An interview is subject to the same scholarly analysis and standards that a historian applies to other evidentiary sources. It is the responsibility of the historian to sift and weigh all evidence and to use sources wisely in the preparation of historical accounts.

To use oral history properly, the historian must understand its strengths and weaknesses. Good interviews provide background information, personal insights, or anecdotes rarely found in official documents. These contributions, together with oral history's ability to capture and preserve information that may not otherwise be saved, illustrate some benefits of the technique. Most of oral history's deficiencies are attributable to human faults. Like all historical sources, interviews contain personal biases, but these biases may themselves constitute important data for the historian's consideration. Interviewees may also be unwilling to honestly discuss mistakes or errors even years after the fact. A potentially greater problem is the inability of some interviewees to provide accurate accounts because of the limitations of human memory. This is a special concern when recounting traumatic events or actions that took place years before. As time increases between an experience and its recounting, individuals tend to condense the sequence of events and omit critical actions and judgments. Although historians should consider the elapsed time when weighing oral history materials, a long duration does not automatically diminish the value of an interview. An individual who may not remember events that

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took place yesterday or last week often can recount in detail events that took place twenty or thirty years ago.

An additional liability is the tendency of many to view oral history as a panacea--an inexpensive and instantaneous way to preserve or produce history. When historians take this impulsive approach to oral history, their work may be handicapped by poor planning and personal biases. A well-prepared historian who has carefully considered his project is not guaranteed a good interview, but the chances for success are much greater. In spite of the limitations of oral history, a properly conducted interview can be a precious resource and a special means of preserving the past.

Army historians use four types of interviews: biographical, subject, exit, and after-action. A biographical interview focuses on an individual's life or career. Army historians usually conduct this type of interview after the individual has retired from government service. A subject interview concentrates on obtaining information about a single event or topic, such as the Army's role in providing emergency medical care to disaster victims. Historians often use subject interviews to provide information for command histories and monographs, and their research may require interviews with several persons to obtain complete coverage. An exit interview is conducted near the end of a person's tour in a particular assignment and centers on the issues and decisions unique to that job. Commanders, project leaders, program directors, staff principals, or other key individuals are likely candidates for an exit interview. Although related to subject interviews, exit interviews are categorized separately because they may cover many topics. Depending on special requirements, some may fall under the End-of-Tour Interview Program. An after-action interview is a specialized form of subject interview. It is conducted during wartime, contingency operations, or peacetime military exercises, and its objective is to preserve information about military operations in the field.

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2. ORAL HISTORY IN THE ARMY

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 it would be difficult to reconstruct many events in the Army's history. Some of the books and monographs prepared by Army historians are based largely on oral histories, and a few of these will be highlighted in the following pages. This section also summarizes the Army's efforts to collect and use interviews, and discusses the role of oral history in the Army today.

During World War II the Army decided to play a more significant role in telling its own story. Under Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, the Army established a program to preserve and collect documentary sources that could be used to prepare the Army's official history of the war. The Army's program, which enjoyed the support of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, brought together in each theater of operations many professionally trained historians to collect sources and write historical studies. Shortly after beginning their work, however, they realized they would need to conduct interviews to supplement official written records.

As a historian assigned to cover the Pacific theater, Lt. Col. (later Brig. Gen.) S.L.A. Marshall pioneered the Army's oral history effort. Marshall drew on his experience as a journalist to develop what he called the "interview after combat." Frustrated in his initial attempts to reconstruct a battle's sequence of events, Marshall brought participants together shortly after the fighting (often within a few hours) and conducted group interviews. Marshall asked questions that guided soldiers through the battle, step by step, and elicited personal experiences and detailed information about what occurred during the fighting.

He first used his interview technique after a fierce night engagement on Makin Island in November 1943, with members of the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry. A few months later Marshall used the same procedure on Kwajalein Island to gather material for *Island Victory*, the story of the 7th Infantry Division's invasion of the atoll. Furthermore, *Island Victory* relates Marshall's first detailed explanation of his new approach to gathering information through interviews.

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Marshall went to Europe in 1944 to bring historians in that theater up to date on his interview techniques, and after D-Day he traveled to Normandy to interview combatants from the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions. These interviews constitute the basic record of the airborne assault, because the widely scattered and hard-pressed airborne troops kept few written records. Six months later during the Battle of the Bulge Marshall and his assistants, Capt. John G. Westover and Lt. A. Joseph Webber, interviewed members of the 101st Airborne Division and its attached units in Bastogne, Belgium. The historians conducted their first interviews just four days after the German siege had ended. Their combined efforts, collecting not only oral histories but also official records, produced a wealth of data that was later published in *Bastogne: The First Eight Days*, Marshall's only attempt to produce a fully footnoted work.

Although Marshall was probably the Army's best-known wartime historian, several hundred soldier-historians advanced the Army's historical effort. Their primary focus was the creation and preservation of written documentation, but interviews were used to complement those sources. Historians attached to higher headquarters, as well as members of the Information and Historical Service teams of field armies, moved freely about the battle lines to gather interviews. The collection process occasionally began while units were still in action, but the majority of interviews were conducted about a week to ten days after the action or sometimes even later. After interviewing an individual, part of a unit, or the entire unit, the historians would summarize their interview notes to create a narrative of the specific action.

Historians conducted interviews as close to the actual battlefield as possible in order to stimulate a soldier's recall of events. Although not allowed to land in the first waves of the Normandy invasion, Forrest C. Pogue, a noncommissioned officer with the First Army's 2d Information and Historical Service and future biographer of George C. Marshall, spent D-Day aboard a landing ship interviewing wounded soldiers who participated in the assault. Combat historians assigned to cover the invasion had studied operational records from earlier campaigns to determine what subjects were usually ignored and then made a special effort to cover these subjects in their own interviews. Even under these

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less-than-ideal conditions Pogue collected valuable firsthand information about the assault because of his immediate access to battle participants. The historian's search for information was not always easy. Although not considered "combat" soldiers, three historians were killed in the line of duty and two others wounded by mines while interviewing front-line troops in the European Theater.

Oral histories gave many participants the opportunity to relate their experiences in battle. Historians used the expanding collection of interview notes, terrain studies, maps, photographs, and after-action reports as the basis for wartime historical monographs, many of which were later published as the American Forces in Action series. These popular pamphlets were produced at the request of Chief of Staff Marshall, who wanted histories available for explaining the war to wounded and convalescing soldiers and for training new soldiers. Each pamphlet was based on the best available records, which usually meant extensive use of interviews. For example, researchers for *Small Unit Actions* conducted group interviews with almost all surviving members of the units engaged in two of the four actions covered by the book. Some indication of the detail provided in these interviews is reflected by the fact that some of these group interviews lasted two or three days.

As an example of the size of the oral history effort, historians assigned to the European Theater alone collected over 2,000 interviews by the end of the war. The Army's interview collection was used extensively by authors of the U.S. Army in World War II series, and references to these and postwar interviews are found on many pages. The notes and transcripts from many of these interviews are now in the custody of the Suitland Reference Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. 20409. About 375 interviews are together in one collection, while other interviews are in the operational records of individual units. Some wartime and postwar interviews are also filed with other supporting documents for volumes in the U. S. Army in World War II.

The interviews vary in the quality of coverage. Historians found that they needed to use caution while utilizing the interviews, especially when looking for exact time and dates and when searching for information outside of the interviewees' own unit or combat area. "This corpus of Combat Interviews," wrote one author of an official World War II

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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."* Information garnered from interviews enabled S.L.A. Marshall and other authors to place their readers in the midst of battle and convey the "feel" of war. These impressions would be virtually impossible to recreate without the personal stories collected during interviews.

A special collection of interviews provided historians with a "view from the other side." Captured German and Japanese general officers were debriefed in order to provide intelligence information on successful combat tactics as well as useful historical material. These interviews were invaluable to Army historians, who often lacked the records needed to cover the decisions of opposing commanders.

The Korean War brought new challenges to Army historians. Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward, the Chief of Military History, called many Reserve officers to active duty to collect historical materials. Many of these historians--John G. Westover, Roy Appleman, Russell A. Gugeler, Martin Blumenson, William J. Fox, and Bevan Alexander, to name a few--had served as combat historians during World War II and were familiar with interviewing techniques. Most Army historians were assigned to numbered historical teams, which replaced the Information and Historical Service units of World War II. In an effort to share the wartime experience gained in Korea with new junior officers, many of the interviews conducted by Army historians were compiled by Westover and published in *Combat Support in Korea*, while interviews provided the basis for the narratives in Gugeler's *Combat Actions in Korea*. Other monographs and studies compiled by the historical teams in Korea contributed to the official history of the war and are now located in the Historical Resources Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Vietnam provided another opportunity for Army historians to use oral history. Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson wanted

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* 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.

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the widest possible historical coverage of the war. To meet this objective, the Chief of Military History, Brig. Gen. Hal C. Pattison, realized he would need interviews to fill many gaps in the documentary record. Military history detachments (MHDs) went to Vietnam to do interviews and collect documents. MHDs, which replaced the historical teams, were attached to divisions and separate brigades; assigned to higher headquarters and commands, or pooled to provide special coverage for nationwide programs, such as pacification. The detachments helped document the Army's role in the buildup of Free World Forces in Vietnam, and over the course of the war they conducted after-action and exit interviews with thousands of officers and enlisted men.

MHD historians benefited from changing technology. Their mobility increased through the use of helicopters, which brought them to interviewees in isolated fire support bases or to more secure base camps, and the availability of "portable" tape recorders freed them from having to rely only upon interview notes to remember details. They used the interview tapes to reconstruct events and to prepare combat after-action interview reports (written interview summaries and evaluations), and subsequently sent the tapes and reports to the Office of the Chief of Military History (now the Center of Military History). *Seven Firefights in Vietnam* is an account of small-unit actions based on interviews.

The MHD Vietnam interviews are housed at the Center of Military History. The primary users are historians working on the U.S. Army in Vietnam series, but scholars from the United States, Asia, Australia, and Europe have also employed them. The Army's wartime interviews are unique and irreplaceable. Interviews conducted months or years after the fact cannot replicate the freshness, accuracy, and details of those conducted within a few days of the actual event.

The recent military deployments to Grenada, Panama, and Southwest Asia, although of shorter duration and intensity, were similarly chronicled through oral histories. Individual historians or MHDs continued the traditions of their predecessors in the major conflicts by

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collecting interviews for all three operations. The subjects for these interviews range from soldiers in the area of operations to general officers in the Pentagon. The Center of Military History has a large number of these interview tapes and transcripts, and they are available for use by official historians.

A sign of the growing importance of oral history in the Army was the creation of a new interview program. 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 what has become known as the Senior Officer Oral History Program. Westmoreland hoped that retired officers would convey to younger officers the qualities and experiences that had made their careers successful. The program, which has produced over 100,000 transcribed pages, uses War College students to interview selected retired senior officers about their Army careers. The students, mostly lieutenant colonels who are expected to advance to future leadership positions, learn 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 began 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 each Army major command (MACOM), historians use interviews to collect data for preparing monographs or to teach lessons learned to young soldiers.

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 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 Army

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Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono, 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 history office establishes interview guidelines for Army historians; conducts EOT interviews with members of the Army Staff; advises the Army Staff on the uses of oral history; and biannually reports the status of the End-of-Tour Interview Program to the Army leadership. The office also assists historians in using proper oral history techniques and aids researchers searching for oral history resources.

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Part II
The Spoken Word in Peacetime

3. THE PREPARATORY PHASE

Recording the spoken word is not a "quick fix" for preserving information. An oral history must be well researched and its preparation is a time consuming affair. The guidelines provided below are designed to assist historians in conducting interviews. Special procedures for the End-of-Tour Interview Program and guidance for videotaping interviews are also outlined.

Topic and Interviewee Selection

Before investing time and resources in an interview, remember that not everyone has a story suitable for an official oral history. Key considerations are the significance and usefulness of each project to the Army and the quality and quantity of the resources, both personal and documentary, that are available for study and review. Once a project is approved, prepare a list of prospective interview candidates and relevant discussion topics for each. This list will help determine what information can be obtained from the interviews and also facilitate the development of a concept for the final product. Avoid duplicating information on those persons and subjects that already exists in other interviews. Check with the Center of Military History, or the *Finder's Guide to U.S. Army Oral Histories* (forthcoming), to locate pertinent interviews. After this initial background research, decide which candidates offer the best return for the effort invested in the project.

Contacting Interviewees

Requesting an interview is one of the most important steps in the interview process. A poorly planned and executed approach could dissuade a potential interviewee. After selecting interview candidates, contact them and explain the mission and goals of the project. Initial contact may be made over the telephone if time is short, but it is usually better to write to a candidate during the project's early planning stage. This letter should introduce the interviewer, the interviewer's agency, the purpose of the interview, the potential product, and the key topics to be covered. Openness from the start can help avoid having an interviewee refuse to address certain issues during the interview ses-

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sion. Also use the letter 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.

After a few days, follow up the initial contact with a telephone call to arrange an interview date. This is also an opportunity to discuss the planned final product, its disposition, and access policies. Do not let the telephone conversation turn into an interview. Neither party will be prepared at this point, and the interviewee may be tempted to allude to his unrecorded phone conversation during the actual interview.

Occasionally, persons will decline to be interviewed, believing that their knowledge is of little value to anyone else. If this happens encourage the individual to talk by telling him or her what type of information you hope to gain from the interview and why it is important. People are often surprised that historians are interested in their "routine" lives. If the individual still refuses to be interviewed, however, be tactful and leave open the possibility of trying again at a later date.

If you are arranging an interview to discuss controversial events or persons, a candidate may prove reluctant to talk. He may ask: "How will you know whether I'm telling you the whole story or lying?" Do not become defensive, for this will weaken your rapport with the interviewee. Encourage the individual to talk and tell him that the purpose of the interview is to record the views of the interviewee (even if that requires the inclusion of false statements). Remember that through sound research and additional interviews historians will usually be able to substantiate statements or identify falsehoods.

Conducting Background Research

Thorough preparation is the key to a successful interview. Knowledge of important events in an interviewee's career is essential for developing a meaningful list of questions. In contrast to your initial investigations while selecting an interviewee or topic, in-depth research on the specific subjects of the interview is required for this phase.

The availability of sources will vary depending on interview topics. The local or post library is a good starting point for any background study, and basic texts can provide a good foundation for additional research. If interviewing an individual on a World War II topic, for

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example, start your research with the "Green Books," the nearly eighty-volume series comprising the official history of the Army's participation in that war. When preparing for a biographical or exit interview, do not hesitate to contact persons who knew or worked with the interviewee. Other sources of information are unit operational records, rosters, and miscellaneous official records. Sources of specialized information are provided below:

a. The Center of Military History and the Military History Institute maintain large reference collections of books, documents, and privately published unit histories. For additional information on the availability of research material and for bibliographies on selected topics write to Commander, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1099 14th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005-3402, and Director, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa 170135008. Researchers are welcome at both agencies.

b. Unit operational records are probably the best sources of information because they were created by unit members either during or shortly after the events that they chronicle. Official operational records created before 1940 can be found in the Military Reference Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.20408. World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War unit records are in the custody of the Suitland Reference Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. 20409. Morning reports and rosters provide information on unit personnel strengths and are available to researchers. Unit morning reports and rosters created between 1917 and 1974 (the year morning reports were discontinued) are in the custody of the National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Mo.63132-5200. Rosters for RegularArmy units created since 1974 are also located at the National Personnel Records Center, but Army Reserve rosters for the same period are in the custody of the Army Reserve Personnel Center, which is colocated with the National Personnel Records Center.

c. Requests for individual military personnel files (201 files) should be addressed to the Army Reserve Personnel Center, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Mo. 63132-5200. Under the provisions of the Privacy Act, an individual's permission is required to gain access to his or her files.

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d. Official Army photographs produced before 1954 are located at the Still Pictures Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. 20408. Photographs created after 1954 are in the custody of the Department of Defense (DOD) Still Media Depository, Building 168,Naval Station, Anacostia, Washington, D.C.20374-1681. The Military History Institute also maintains a large collection of unofficial pictures that can provide a wealth of photographic treasures.

e. Veterans associations are often a good source of information and potential interviewees. A roster of veterans organizations is prepared annually and can be obtained by writing to Headquarters, Department of the Army, Attn: SAPA-CR, Washington, D.C. 20310.

f. Listed below are the addresses for the historical agencies of the other DOD armed services:

- Naval Historical Center, Building 57, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-5088.

- Marine Corps Historical Center, Building 58, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-5088.

- Office of Air Force History, Attn: AF/CHO, Building 5681, Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C. 20332.

Creating a Question List

The development of an interview question list is the immediate objective of background research, while the second goal is to allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions during the session. The purpose of the interview will determine the nature of the questions. For example, biographical interviews will tend to use broader questions that will illuminate the important facets of the interviewee's life. Subject interviews require more focused questions. These interviews are not intended to be complete accounts of an individual's career, but additional sources of information for specific research projects. Ideally, the interviewer needs to draft questions that will elicit information useful for both contemporary and future historians.

A well-prepared interviewer will be aware of gaps and inconsistencies in the available source materials and will ask questions to clarify or, in some instances, to confirm the record. Interviewers may occasionally

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ask questions even if they suspect that they already have the answers. An interviewee's response to these queries may shed new light on an issue; if not, their answers may serve as yardsticks to judge the accuracy of other information provided by the interviewee.

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 anything else I should ask you?" or "Is there anything that you would like to add on this subject?" It may also be appropriate for the interviewer to ask for the names and addresses of any other individuals that should be interviewed concerning the interview topic. The final query for the interviewee to address is the proper security classification for the interview.

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4. THE INTERVIEW

For most historians, the interview becomes the "moment of truth." Adequate preparation allows the interviewer to focus his abilities on the interview session. Primary responsibility for initiating and directing the course of an oral history falls to the interviewer. The latter, while observing military and social courtesies, must maintain complete control of the interview session despite the rank or status of the interviewee.

An interviewer should bring the following items to each interview: standard-size cassette recorder and any necessary microphones and cables; power and extension cords, or an ample supply of batteries; an ample supply of cassettes; paper and pencil; question list; access agreement; and supporting maps, photographs, charts, as appropriate. Be sure to test the recording equipment and batteries prior to leaving for an interview. Some experienced interviewers prefer to have an extra recorder for insurance. If conducting interviews while traveling on temporary duty, it is a good idea to have the orders authorize the emergency procurement of cassettes, batteries, or even a recorder. Your preparation will be wasted if your equipment does not work.

Setting the Proper Atmosphere

The interview session should be scheduled at a mutually convenient time to avoid distractions or interruptions. If possible, reserve a whole morning or afternoon for the session. The schedules of some individuals may make this impractical, and the participants may have to arrange several shorter sessions. Because recording equipment is very sensitive to room noises, it is advisable to conduct the interview in a quiet office or room.

Before starting, relax and put the interviewee at ease. Briefly 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. Try to make the interviewee feel comfortable in the presence of a recorder. Use either a sixty- or ninety-minute standard-size cassette to record the interview (see Appendix A). Ad-

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vance the tape past the leader (the white or clear segment of tape at the beginning and end of most cassettes). Position the recorder so the microphone can register the voice of each participant. The interviewer, however, should still be able to see the recorder and monitor it periodically. When using built-in or tabletop microphones, isolate the recorder from noises passing through the furniture by placing the recorder or microphone on a thin piece of foam rubber. (A pad of paper or a magazine will suffice as well.) Lapel microphones should be securely fastened to the interviewer and plugged into the recorder. Make a brief test recording to see if the microphone is registering the voices and adjust the recording volume. When everything is working the interview can begin.

The Payoff

Start the interview with a brief introduction that, at a minimum, identifies the interviewer, the interviewee, the date, and the place of the session.* For example, "This is an interview with Maj. John Smith, S-4 of the 75th Ranger Regiment, conducted by Mr. Joseph Jones, Infantry School historian, in Smith's office at Fort Benning, Georgia, on 25 August 1990." During the interview:

a. Be confident. Your background study should have familiarized you with the material to be covered during the interview.

b. Maintain control of the interview. Try to pace the session so that you have sufficient time to ask all of your questions. You know what you want from the interview.

c. Avoid asking leading questions, but phrase queries to elicit detailed responses. For example, a question like "Is it correct that during the Battle of the Bulge you had a great deal of responsibility while serving as a company commander?" already implies the desired answer and will usually bring a simple affirmative response from the interviewee. Asking instead "What duty position and responsibilities did you have during the Battle of the Bulge?" facilitates follow-up questions and may provide a wealth of detailed information.

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*Some interviewers prefer to record their introductions ahead of time or leave the first few minutes of the tape blank and record the administrative details after the interview. If choosing one of these methods, remember to adjust the length of time available before turning over a cassette (that is, twenty-five minutes versus thirty minutes when timing an interview).

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d. Ask direct questions to avoid ambiguity. Use a specific frame of reference, such as "during the Battle of the Bulge" in the example above, that gives the interviewee a starting point around which to organize his response.

e. Ask follow-up questions. Such well-timed queries may help an interviewee to recall specifics otherwise overlooked and also to clarify any possible contradictions with earlier statements or written sources. Be careful not to confront the interviewee in a manner that challenges his integrity. A frequently successful approach is to acknowledge some confusion on your part before asking additional questions.

f. Take notes. Interview notes are useful 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 key words and topics as they are mentioned during the interview is also helpful for preparing a subject index of the tape. Do not become so immersed in taking notes that it distracts the interviewee or interferes with the conduct of the interview.

g. Have the interviewee explain the meaning of acronyms and jargon, as well as provide additional information on any unfamiliar subjects or individuals mentioned during the interview. Ask for proper spellings, if necessary.

h. Do not interrupt the interviewee in the middle of an answer. Be respectful, courteous, and attentive.

i. Do not be afraid of silence. A pause may signify that the interviewee is thinking of additional information. That information could be lost if the interviewer is too quick with his next question.

j. If the discussion digresses from the subject of the interview, return to the interview plan by tactfully asking a question from your list.

k. Both the interviewee and the interviewer will become fatigued, so it is advisable to limit sessions to no more than two or three hours and to take short breaks (perhaps when changing tapes).

Access to Interviews

Interview participants are encouraged to make their oral histories (tapes or transcripts) as accessible as possible, but some persons may prefer to restrict access to their interviews. Interviewees should indicate any restrictions they wish to place on their interviews by completing an

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access agreement similar to that provided in Appendix B. Agencies may use their own letterhead and addresses, but the basic format and text should reflect the requirements set forth in AR 870-5 . The access agreement in Appendix B meets regulatory requirements and has been approved by the Department of the Army's Office of the Judge Advocate General. Access agreements will be executed for all interviews (see AR 870-5). It is recommended that access agreements be completed at the conclusion of the interview session while the interviewer is present to answer any questions. Obtaining signatures at the conclusion of the interview should preclude any problems that may arise if an interviewee becomes unavailable to complete the agreement.

The Army regards its oral histories as internal reference papers and will do its best to honor any restrictions placed on an oral history, but can make no firm guarantee because of the changing case law surrounding access to government information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Before conducting interviews, agencies may wish to contact their local judge advocate general's office or records manager for the latest FOIA information. Interviewers should explain the implications of the

FOIA to interviewees *before* the interview session.

Post-Interview Responsibilities

Interview tapes should be labeled with the names of the interviewer and interviewee; the date, place, and classification (if appropriate); and the total number of tapes in the interview. As an example of the latter, identify tape number one of a two-tape interview by placing "1 of 2" or simply "1 / 2" on the cassette label. Press in the two tabs at the top of each cassette (see the illustration in Appendix A) in order to prevent accidental erasure of the interview through re-recording.

The interviewer should listen to the interview tapes shortly after the session, while the memory of events is still fresh. This review enables the interviewer to determine if a follow-up session is required and, accordingly, proceed with the necessary arrangements; to expand upon the interview notes; to clarify any garbled sections of the tapes; and, if not already prepared during the interview, to make a word list of terms requiring identification. A word list is also an excellent tool for making the transcription process easier. The preparation of an interview summary that records the topics discussed, the interviewer's personal

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evaluation, and any unusual circumstances will be valuable to future researchers who will appreciate having access to the interviewer's insight. If it is decided not to transcribe the interview tape, this summary can be the basis for a memorandum for the record. Finally, send a letter thanking the interviewee for participating in the session. If possible make a copy of the interview tapes. It may not always be feasible to make a duplicate at the office, but many home stereo systems have dual cassette players that can easily reproduce tapes. The duplicate should be clearly labeled as such and used as the working copy in order to preserve the original.

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5. PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

After the interview the historian's task is that of product management--transcribing, editing, publishing, and storing. Some oral history programs routinely consign between forty and sixty hours to completely transcribe and edit an hour interview. An essential first step is deciding whether or not an interview should be transcribed. Not all interviews are worth the commitment of time, manpower, and money. Before beginning, consider the following:

a. Is transcription mandated by regulation or official tasking?

b. What resources (both financial and personnel) are required? What resources are available?

c. What is the significance of the interview? Does it merit becoming part of the Army's historical reference collection? Does it fill a void?

d. What is the final product to be derived from this interview? Is the outgrowth of the venture intended to be an archival resource for an official history or monograph? Is the interview text itself to be included in a larger publication such as an oral history anthology?

e. What is the interview's potential audience? To reach that audience, is it necessary to transcribe the interview?

There are alternatives to producing a complete transcript. By reviewing the tape and using interview notes, the interviewer can prepare a memorandum for the record that distills the session's important issues and information, even though it may lack the detail and color of a transcript. Although a memorandum needs to be signed only by its author, it may be advisable to have the interviewee read the text, especially when covering detailed or controversial subjects. After making any necessary changes, the interviewee should add his signature to that of the interviewer--thus validating the memorandum. Another alternative is to place a key word or subject index on file so that researchers may at least have a list of topics covered during the interview.

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Transcribing

Transcribing is a demanding job. Interviewers seldom have time to transcribe their own interviews and, therefore, usually rely on transcribers who may be unfamiliar with the contents of the interview. This makes transcription all the more difficult and time consuming. It takes an estimated ten to twelve hours to transcribe one hour of tape, although an experienced transcriber familiar with the subject and using a word processor can probably finish in about two to three hours. To meet their transcription needs, some oral history programs use outside contractors and others employ secretaries or in-house transcribers (full- or part-time employees) to produce transcripts.

In-house transcription offers the advantage of closer supervision of the transcription process and readily permits the transcriber to ask questions about unclear words and phrases. In addition, using the same individual to transcribe interviews provides continuity, a benefit that an oral history program will appreciate only after it has had to train several transcribers.

Using an outside contractor is often the fastest means, but may involve extensive procurement and contract administration duties. Contractors can also be expensive. For example, a bill can include the actual cost of transcription plus additional expenses for postage/messenger service, for floppy disks, and for short suspenses.

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. Some large companies may be willing to designate one transcriber to work on military interviews, but smaller contract transcribers, who usually work in their own homes, offer the best guarantee of having one transcriber work on related subjects.

It is important to be able to track an interview as it progresses to a completed transcript. Attaching an interview transcription/production status sheet (see the example in Appendix C) to the working copy of

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each tape is one way to track the progress of an interview, but an automated database or log will also suffice. Develop a standard format for interview transcripts and pass the appropriate instructions to your transcriber. The format listed below provides an easily read transcript:

a. Use one-inch margins on each side of the page, with double-spaced text.

b. Number each page and use a header--"FOR HISTORICAL REFERENCE PURPOSES" or "FOR REFERENCE ONLY"--above the interviewee's name.

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

Transcribers should provide a verbatim transcript. Omit such filler expressions "um" or "ah." Record such expressions as "uh-huh" or "um-hum" as Yes in response to a specific question. Expressions of disagreement should follow the same rule. False starts usually represent a change in thinking and should appear in the transcript separated from the rest of the text by two dashes (--). When the interviewee reads these statements, he may recall the original train of thought and perhaps clarify or expand upon his recorded remarks. If the false starts appear to be insignificant, they can be deleted during the editing phase. Unusual or regional speech patterns and characteristics (that is, accents/ dialects and use of phrases like "you know," etc.) should be transcribed, whenever possible. These phrases may reveal much about the interviewee's personal character. The interviewee, however, should have an opportunity to delete these expressions during his review of the transcript, or the interviewer and/or editor may omit them during the editing phase after imparting some of the flavor by including a few examples.

Transcribers should use standard symbols within the transcript to convey specific messages to readers. Place a question mark before and after a word or phrase to indicate any uncertainty about imprecise language or terms (for example, ?destroyed?). Bracket details explaining why the interview was interrupted or why the tape recorder was turned off (for example, [Interview interrupted by a telephone call]). Indicate the end of a side in capital letters, (for example, END OF SIDE

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ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE.) Portions of a tape may be garbled or simply inaudible. Identify these sections in the transcript. If one word is inaudible, the transcriber should indicate the gap with a "___ " and multiple words by inserting " ___+." If a significant passage is inaudible, the transcriber should estimate the elapsed time using the indicator "___ .... (___seconds)."

Editing

Following the return of a rough transcript, the interviewer should read the text while listening to the tape. Because the nature of a transcript 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 use of acronyms. Corrections can be made quickly and easily when a transcript has been typed on a word processor. When making corrections on a typescript, it is advisable to use standard editorial or proofreading marks, such as those found in the Center of Military History's *Style Guide.*

Send a copy of the edited transcript to the interviewee for review, noting any passages that may need his/her special attention or explanation. This revision is the interviewee's opportunity to clarify and develop comments, to correct inadvertent errors of fact, and to improve grammar and syntax. Discourage any deletions from the text, whenever possible. Interviewees may be slow to return their edited transcripts, so it is crucial to impose a reasonable suspense date. Once returned, the statements in the transcript are considered to be "on the record." At this time a second review to check for any remaining spelling errors or other editorial oversights is advisable before printing a clean transcript.

Publishing

Oral histories can provide a wealth of information to researchers, but most interviews for one reason or another receive limited circulation. All revised and edited transcripts should be bound in some fashion and placed in the appropriate archives. AR 870-5 directs that copies of all transcribed interviews be sent to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Attn: DAMH-RAO, Washington, D.C. 20005-3402; to the

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U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 170135008; and to the Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, Kans. 66027-7000.

Some agencies publish interviews in order to reach the widest possible audience. Interviews may be published separately (for example, the Military History Institute's, *Changing an Army: An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired*) or in a series (for example, the Corps of Engineers' *Engineer Memoirs*). 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. Intended to be useful to a wide audience, the DePuy oral history includes footnotes, pictures, maps, and charts to clarify the text. Oral histories as published in the *Engineer Memoirs* relate the career of one senior engineer of ficer. Aimed at a specialized audience, the engineer interviews are not as heavily edited as the DePuy interview.

Another format is an anthology of related interviews. An anthology may contain selections from various interviews or entire transcripts. Westover's *Combat Support in Korea* is an example of this popular format.

Storing

Before storing interview tapes and transcripts (or memoranda for the record) make sure that each copy of the interview tape is properly labeled and its tabs pushed out. (This should have been done immediately after the interview or after the interview was dubbed.) Ideally, tapes should be stored in a dust-free environment that is kept at a constant temperature between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, with a relative humidity of 40 to 50 percent. Environmental conditions at government facilities are seldom ideal, making it difficult to store the tapes in the proper climate, but try to keep the conditions as constant as possible. Rewinding can create uneven tension within a tape; therefore, store tapes (both cassette and reel to reel) after they have been played. Do not rewind the tape before storing. The storage life of reel-to-reel tapes is generally longer than that of cassette tapes. If the equipment is available, duplicate the original cassette onto a reel to reel and then designate the reel-to-reel version as the archival copy. All interview

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tapes, transcripts or memoranda for the record, and supporting materials (maps, photographs, documents, and access agreements) should be stored together. To prevent wear and tear on the original tape, let researchers use the working copy (the cassette copy that was dubbed for the transcriber).

All interviews conducted by Army agencies are reported to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Attn: DAMH-RAO, at least twice each year with the semiannual report. AR 870-5 lists the required interview information, or agencies can simply use the status form in Appendix D. This reporting system enables the Center to update its index and finding aids, such as the *Finder's Guide to U.S. Army Oral Histories* (forthcoming), in order to assist researchers interested in Army oral histories. This requirement, however, does not preclude local oral history programs from maintaining their own catalogs.

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6. END-OF-TOUR INTERVIEW PROGRAM

The End-of-Tour Interview Program described in AR 870-5 consists of exit 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 pass on command experience to incoming commanders and to preserve the institutional memory of major events occurring in an organization during a particular commander's tenure.

The procedures for an EOT interview differ little from procedures for other official interviews, except for the following:

a. When an officer assumes a command position included in the EOT Program, the appropriate interviewing agency or command historical office will request in writing that an EOT interview be conducted with that individual prior to the conclusion of his or her tour. This letter 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 EOT interview question list.

b. The interviewee's office is responsible for selecting a point of contact for the EOT interview. This point of contact is charged with assisting the interviewer with the preparation of a question list and scheduling the interview session. In some cases, the point of contact may also help conduct the interview.

c. EOT Interviews use standard core questions as well as queries specifically tailored to local issues. The core questions provide a basis for comparison when analyzing common leadership qualities and command problems. Core questions for EOT interviews are listed in Appendix E.

d. EOT interviews should be transcribed and edited by both the interviewer and interviewee within sixty days of the interview session. A quick turnover time is required in order to increase the usefulness of

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the EOT interview to the next commander. The interviewing office will handle the distribution of the transcript. 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 Chief of Military History may determine if additional distribution is warranted in order to further the interests of the service. The interviewer 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 Military History Institute.

f. The Oral History Activity, U.S. Army Center of Military History, maintains a database of general officers who have served in positions covered under the EOT Program. This inventory indicates which general officers have been interviewed and the production status of the interviews. At the Army Chief of Staff s request, reasons for not conducting interviews are also registered. The Chief of Military History updates the Army Chief of Staff on the EOT Program twice a year. This report necessitates input from historical offices concerning the status of their EOT interviews. Agencies unable to conduct required EOT interviews should provide the Oral History Activity with a written explanation.

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7. VIDEOTAPING INTERVIEWS

Videotaping interviews adds a new dimension to oral history. The final video product can juxtapose an interviewee to an object or setting that is the subject of the interview, such as a battlefield, where the combination of sight and sound allows for a clearer perception of the interviewee or subject. It also facilitates the use of visual enhancements, such as photographs and maps.

Not every interview is suited for a video format. Various factors come into play for determining the suitability of video recording interviews. Some of these include inappropriate subject matter, inaccessible interview locations, and special lighting and sound adjustments often required for certain settings. In addition, without at least one assistant, it is nearly impossible to run a video camera and conduct a good interview.

The medium of video recording also places greater responsibility on the interviewer, who must now be a director as well. The video camera should not be used simply as a tape recorder that also takes motion pictures. This creates what is known as the "talking heads" syndrome and does not take full advantage of the medium. Assessing the interviewee's discomfort level before a video camera is critical; for some, the experience is too overwhelming and results in "stage fright. " A final consideration is that the intimacy and openness achieved in a one-on-one interview is nearly impossible, primarily due to the distractions caused by a video crew. Unless these factors are addressed at an early stage of the process, the quality of the oral history product will be less than satisfactory.

Video equipment is currently too expensive for most oral history programs. The local Training and Audiovisual Support Center (TASC) or Media Support Center, however, should be able to provide some equipment as well as a trained video crew. Most audiovisual offices have video recording capability, using professional production-quality 3/4-inch and 1-inch tapes. These choices offer the best quality recording but require more resources than a standard VHS camera. Before fixing on a course of action, consult your TASC to determine which equipment will produce the best results for your particular project.

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Part III The Spoken Word in Wartime

8. PENETRATING THE "FOG OF BATTLE"

One soldier's description of the events of battle is oftentimes different from that of the soldier who fought next to him, because each is aware of only the activity in his own immediate area. The jumble of individual and incomplete perceptions contributes to what is referred to as the "fog of battle. " To discover or confirm what actually happened in battle and also to preserve unique insights that cannot be recaptured after the conflict, the Army has in place a wartime interview program. By thoroughly conducting background research and by methodically questioning battle participants, an interviewer can hope to come close to reconstructing a complete and accurate account.

In a wartime theater of operations the military history detachment, with a strength of one officer and two enlisted men, is usually charged with the mission of preserving the historical materials that can be used to prepare monographs and official histories. Attached to major command elements as well as to divisions, tactical regiments, and separate brigades, MHDs routinely conduct interviews to supplement information contained in other sources. General guidelines are discussed below, but combat historians will develop their own special interview techniques as they gain experience and encounter various wartime conditions.

Combat After-Action Interviews

MHDs cannot cover every battle and must select which operations to study. Knowledge of current military doctrine, operational objectives, tactics, organization and equipment, together with an awareness of combat and combat support applications, will help the MHD commander choose which actions to document. Ordinary operations may be just as important to record as unusual actions, and examples of both should be preserved for the historical record.

The MHD commander must exercise initiative to cover events. It is his job to obtain operational details and continually seek out fresh sources of information in an effort to compile a complete account. Routinely used sources for unit operations include:

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a. Documentary Sources

1. Division/brigade situation reports (SITREPS)
2. Division/brigade intelligence summaries (INTSUMS)
3. Daily staff journals (DA Form 1594)
4. Operation Plans (OPLANS)
5. Messages and facsimiles

b. *Staff Briefings and Meetings*. These sessions provide insights into operational plans, activities, and problems; help answer *why* a specific action took place; and allow historians to stay abreast of operations. Attendance at staff meetings is also important because the historian may not always have time to collect documents and may have to conduct interviews based on the information gained from the briefings.

c. *Personal Contacts*. Good rapport is critical. Develop contacts within units and gain their cooperation and trust. If the officers and soldiers of a unit already know the MHD members, it will be easier to conduct interviews and collect information. MHD members should routinely introduce themselves to commanding officers, to staff officers (especially those dealing with operations, logistics, and intelligence), and to unit adjutants and historians. These officers plan and execute combat operations and will often collect maps, photographs, documents, and eyewitness accounts for their own official reports.

Once a battle is selected for coverage, the MHD interviewer will have to determine what information is required to create a complete historical account of the action. While some documents may furnish only limited information, the "skeleton," combat after-action interviews (CAAIs) should provide the "flesh." For example, entries in a daily staff journal, which usually contain brief one- or two-line summaries of events, are a good starting point and are useful in combination with other documents or interviews to tell the complete story. Also, CAAIs are effective for verifying any detail, element, occurrence, or sequence of events that are questionable. Verification allows soldiers to elaborate on data and is not necessarily a duplication of effort. Some operational details, however, will emerge only through well-planned questioning.

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Be sure to cover specific items of information that may be missing from other documents. Examples include:

a. Terrain and weather conditions

b. Mission goals and reasons, as conveyed to the participants

c. Enemy situation and order of battle

d. Type and effectiveness of enemy fire

e. Problems of communications, morale, and supply

f. Rationale for actions of the forces engaged

In deciding who to interview, rank is not the sole criteria. An individual's duty position and closeness to an action are often more relevant to the historical record. Interview as many participants as possible because the nature of battle limits the quantity and quality of each individual's information. If key participants have been wounded, it may be necessary to visit hospitals to conduct interviews. Always coordinate the scheduling of interviews through the chain of command; history does not take precedence over immediate tactical considerations. Below is a generic list of interview subjects:

a. Planners

b. Participants

1. Commanders

2. Officers/soldiers who were present. Soldiers with second-hand knowledge of events should be interviewed only if direct participants are unavailable.) Participants from other services or allied nations

c. Participants from other services or allied nations

When conducting CAAIs, consider the following suggestions:

a. Be familiar with the recording equipment. Check the recorder's batteries and make a test recording before leaving to conduct an interview. Carry an ample supply of cassette tapes (use only C-60 and C-90 standard-size cassettes) and batteries.

b. Check in with the host unit's commanding officer. Combat historians are often forced to "sell" themselves to unit commanders and soldiers who may be justifiably more concerned with current or

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future operations than with history. Offer to provide commanders a copy of your findings for the unit's use. Stress that your job is to preserve the historical record, not critique the unit's performance. If officers and men show a concern over the possibility of their critical comments reaching their superiors, emphasize that interview tapes will be sent back to the continental United States (CONUS) through historical channels, rather than through command channels.

c. Because military protocol may be a hindrance to building rapport, officers should interview officers and NCOs should interview NCOs and other ranks, whenever possible. Although not an axiom, NCOs may relate facts and opinions to other NCOs that they would never tell an officer.

d. To discover what the interviewee did during a battle, prepare an interview plan and question list. Although it is impossible to develop questions to cover every situation, use the sample questions included in Appendix F to generate a preliminary list.

e. At the start of each interview, identify the date, the interviewer, the interviewee, and briefly describe the topic. For example:

"Today is 30 January 1988. This is Major John Smith of the 27th MHD interviewing Capt. John Doe, commanding officer of Troop B, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, concerning his participation in the 27 January 1989 engagement near Hammelburg, Federal Republic of Germany, during REFORGER exercises."

Your first question, however, should reconfirm this information. Ask the interviewee to state his name, rank, social security number, MOS, unit designation, and duty position (that is, squad or fire team leader, etc.). Also ask the interviewee to spell his name for you on the tape to ensure that you have the correct spelling. These straightforward questions offer a good way to "break the ice."

f. Become familiar with the general course of a battle and basic combat tactics, thus making it easier for you to identify any questionable comments and ask follow-up questions. Establish the vantage point of an interviewee in relation to a particular action and learn what

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the soldier actually saw. Compare the responses with information provided in planning documents, particularly in regard to fire support and logistics.

g. Ask questions about the specific equipment (both authorized and unauthorized) that was carried or used during a battle. Do not be satisfied with vague responses, such as "the same as everyone else" or "the standard stuff." Practices vary from unit to unit, and it is important to know what the soldier felt was beneficial to him during combat and what was not. Asking about what personal items he carried will help develop a "picture" of the individual's personality.

i. Always seek additional sources. Ask the interviewee for the names of other individuals that could clarify or corroborate certain points.

j. 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. Have a secure area to store classified tapes during non-duty hours or while in the field.

Generally, it is best to have soldiers recount an action in chronological order, whenever possible, providing hours and dates. This procedure, however, often brings forth contradictory times for important events, such as the start of an operation. As explained by one combat historian, these details are things which the soldier, living in twelve hour periods, quickly forgets.* Another problem area that requires verification relates to time periods, which most soldiers seem to condense. For example, when a soldier reports that his unit set off on patrol at 1800 hours and, after marching five miles over rough terrain, engaged in combat at 1830 hours, you must ask yourself "Could this have happened within the specified amount of time?"

Wartime interviews tend to be more stressful for the participants. Unlike peacetime interviewees, soldiers will not have time to consider participation in an interview. Most probably will be willing partici-

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* Cole, Loraine Campaign, p. 617.

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pants; however, others may be reluctant to talk about their experiences in combat for personal reasons. If they have recently returned from combat, they could be exhausted and not inclined to share their ordeal with someone they may perceive as a "rear-echelon type." A soldier cannot be forced to be a helpful interviewee, but by being courteous and respectful you may gain his cooperation.

Occasionally, a soldier may prefer to provide some details of his story off the record and ask you to turn off the tape recorder. Explain that all details should be recorded. If, however, the soldier insists that you turn off the recorder, let him tell his story and take careful notes. Your notes will afford the chance to double-check the details through other sources.

Conducting an interview with a single individual is the preferred scenario, but tactical considerations and the shortage of time will often necessitate interviewing many participants in a group session. Remember that assembling large numbers of soldiers is not an easy task. Also, group interviews are hard to record and difficult to control because of the number of soldiers involved in the session and the likelihood of having to deal with a barrage of diverse information from numerous sources. A possible way to circumvent these drawbacks is to limit the size of the group--preferably no more than fifteen, which would permit the assembly of an entire squad/tank crew or of key individuals from several platoons and their supporting units.

For optimum results, two interviewers should be present for each group session. While one asks questions, the other should observe the participants and examine their reactions to specific statements made by their comrades. Soldiers will often show signs of disagreement without necessarily voicing their comments. Note the reactions and direct follow-up questions to the soldiers that may have disagreed. Do not let one or two soldiers dominate the discussion by directing queries to others in the group. Properly done, collective interviews can provide historians with more information than individual interviews. For example, the comments of one soldier may refresh the memory of another and cause him to remember important details. Soldiers are also less likely to exaggerate or lie about their actions in the presence of their peers. Thus other group members will often correct mistakes and contribute additional details.

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Combat After-Action Interview Reports

Combat historians prepare combat after-action interview reports (CAAIRs) to synthesize and organize the vital data collected not only during the interview but also after. A well-written after-action report enhances the interview by tying together all supporting materials (such as the interview synopsis or index, tapes, photographs, and maps) for packaging and forwarding to the Center of Military History.

CAAIRs present the vital data in an orderly and logical manner. Their basic organization is derived from the format of the Army's operational orders (see Field Manual 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, for an explanation). Historians, however, should tailor CAAIRs to specific situations and append additional information, as appropriate. The reports should be objective, factual, and written in clear, concise language. Avoid acronyms and jargon unless these terms are clearly defined in the text or a glossary. Appendix G contains detailed instructions for preparing a CAAIR.

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9. EXIT AND SUBJECT INTERVIEWS

Both exit and subject interviews are conducted during times of conflict, but usually under less stressful conditions than CAAIs. Interview techniques resemble the procedures discussed in Part II. Summarize and evaluate each interview in a written report, and ensure that the report is sent along with the tape to the Center of Military History.

Exit interviews provide a forum for preserving standard operating procedures (SOPs), innovations, problems areas, solutions, and lessons learned. They are conducted with commanding officers at the battalion/ squadron, brigade/regiment, division, corps, and army levels. As a rule, officers below the battalion level are not interviewed due to insufficient time. Company-grade officers, however, should be interviewed for lessons learned during CAAI and subject interviews.

To facilitate the process, contact the interviewee's staff to schedule appointments and to obtain assistance in preparing a question list. Remember that these staff officers probably will have little time for historians, and any personal contacts that you have made may make a difference in the level of cooperation you receive. Submit a question list prior to the interview, and avoid scheduling the interview too close to the officer's actual departure. This will allow time for the officer to consider the questions before he becomes preoccupied with moving on to his next assignment.

Subject interviews comprise almost any conceivable topic. They may be as simple as recording the standard operating procedures used by the unit or as complex as covering a combat support/combat service support operation to learn what was normal or unusual about that particular mission. Be creative. When interviewing members of the Army Reserve or National Guard, ask about mobilization. Information on specialized training programs is also important. Even ordinary functions may be worth covering with an interview. For example, routine intelligence-gathering missions in Vietnam received little coverage from MHDs. Many of the details of these operations and techniques were lost to historians and the Army, but fortunately the 18th MHD interviewed soldiers involved in one type of intelligence operation--a "people sniffer" mission. The Center of Military History sent

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the 18th MHD's interview to Army officers studying intelligence gathering techniques. The interview has now become the " institutional memory" for this type mission.

MHDs attached to major command elements and to single functional branch brigades are responsible for documenting the various operations of their organizations. For example, in a military po1ice brigade that provides command and control for units charged with guarding prisoners of war, with traffic control, and with other security missions, MHD historians would, under ideal circumstances, interview key commanders, staff officers, and representative individuals from every organizational level within the brigade in order to cover all of these functional areas. Since conditions are seldom ideal, they will have to be more selective when choosing interview candidates. One means of narrowing the list of potential interviewees is to survey the records-keeping program and practices of the various units in the command. A well-managed program that retains unit SOPs, training schedules, and other documents significantly reduces the requirement to supplement official records with oral histories. MHDs attached to divisions, tactical regiments, and separate combined arms brigades are responsible for recording the support operations for these organizations.

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10. PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

At the conclusion of each interview session, break all cassette tabs and properly label the tapes (see Part II). Put as much information as possible on the cassette tape *and* its box in case the interview tape is separated from the rest of its documentation. At the very least, include the name(s) of the interviewee and interviewer; the interviewee's unit and duty position; the MHD designation; the date of the interview; and the classification.

Whenever possible, transcribe the interview tapes before sending it to CONUS. If time does not permit this, then prepare a written summary for each interview and attach it to the appropriate CAAIR as an annex. As a minimum, an index sheet (see Appendix H) and word list should accompany each tape. An index sheet contains a list of the topics covered or a basic description of the subject matter. This information 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.

MHDs may want to keep a log or inventory with information on their oral histories. Periodically forward inventories, interview tapes, CAAIRs, and supporting materials to the U. S. Army Center of Military History, Attn: DAMH-RAO, Washington, D.C. 20005-3402. The Center's Oral History Activity will catalog all interviews and, as necessary, endeavor to transcribe tapes; it also will review CAAIRs and, when appropriate, send copies to the Center for Army Lessons Learned. The Center of Military History will provide storage space for all wartime oral history materials.

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Part IV
Appendixes

A. AUDIO EQUIPMENT

Army historians, when conducting official interviews, will use standard cassette recorders. Adherence to this policy will facilitate the transcription process and the exchange of tapes between Army historical offices, as well as simplify the procurement of tapes and recorders. The Center of Military History will transcribe only standard cassettes.

Microcassettes are not as common as standard cassettes, and not all transcribers have the equipment to transcribe the smaller cassettes. Reel-to-reel recorders are large and unwieldy, and significantly more expensive than cassette recorders. Reel-to-reel tapes provide the best format for long-term archival storage, because the estimated shelf life is longer than that for a cassette. If possible, historians and archivists should duplicate interviews onto open reels for long-term storage of their oral histories.

Cassette Recorders

Standard cassette recorders are widely available, relatively inexpensive, and portable. These advantages obviate the purchase of an expensive recorder, unless, of course, an oral history program has specific requirements for the production of broadcast-quality recordings. Before procuring your equipment, check with your local Training and Audiovisual Support Center for what may be available in its inventory.

For best results under diverse conditions follow these guidelines:

> a. Purchase a recorder that has a jack for an external microphone, in addition to a built-in microphone. Although an external microphone may not be necessary for a particular program's interviews, the jack can be used to accommodate cables that connect two recorders together while duplicating tapes.
>
> b. Use a recorder that operates with both direct current and batteries. Oftentimes power cords are sold separately from recorders, so know what accessories are available. When conducting interviews without access to direct current, remember that most batteries will only power a recorder between 4 and 6 hours. Monitor the usage of batteries.

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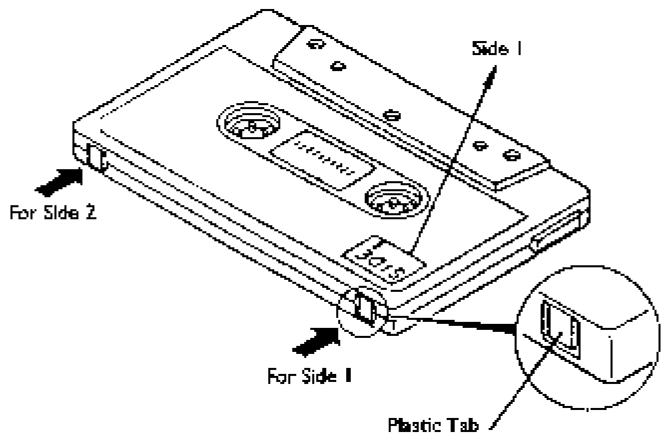
At the end of an interview, mark each hour of use on a small strip of masking tape attached to each power cell.

> 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

Cassette tapes are designed for various purposes, such as recording music or voices. Tapes designated Type I, Normal Bias, are well suited for recording interviews. Cassettes are sold in several time lengths. 30 (C-30), 60 (C-60), 90 (C-90), and 120 (C-120) minutes. A C-60 cassette contains a total of 60 minutes of tape, or 30 minutes on *each* side. Many interviews have been ruined because interviewers thought a C-60 cassette had 60 minutes on oneside. Regardless of tape length, all standard cassettes are the same size, so manufacturers make up the difference by using thinner tape. Tape in C-120 cassettes is thinner than the tape in either C-60s or C-90s. Thin tape is more prone to break or jam, and sounds recorded on one side of the tape will often bleed through to the other side. As a general rule, sound quality and the time that recorded sounds remain audible on the cassette decreases with thinner tape.* The C-30 tape is too short (15 minutes on each side) to



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* Microcassette recorders also use thin tape and should be avoided by Army oral historians.

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allow for an uninterrupted interview session. The recommended lengths to use are C-60s or C-90s.

One of the principal advantages of cassettes is that they are small and self-contained. If properly treated and stored under good conditions, a cassette should be audible for at least 20 years. Here are some methods that you can use to increase the durability of your interviews l recorded on cassette tapes:

a. Use only new tapes. Purchase quality tapes made by reputable companies. Avoid "offbrands" or low-priced specials. Do not erase and reuse cassettes for your interviews.

b. Before starting to record or play, make sure that you take up any slack in the tape. Too much slack can create problems for the tape as it travels through the cassette. In addition, the sudden motion that is often created when the recorder takes up the slack can stress or stretch the tape.

c. Buy cassettes that have their plastic casing screwed together, rather than molded or glued into one piece. This allows you the chance to fix a problem tape. By unscrewing and removing the casing, you have direct access to the tape inside the cassette and can untangle or splice the tape just as you would an open-reel tape.

d. Break in both tabs at the top of the cassette in order to prevent accidental erasures of an interview (see illustration above).

e. Clearly label your cassettes as soon as possible after each interview. Identify the interview participants, the date, and other important data. A clearly labeled cassette is also a protection against accidents and mistreatment.

f. 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. These fields can be created by personal computers and word processors, as well as by magnets. Storing cassettes in plastic boxes protects them from dirt and dust, but this effort will be squandered if they are played in a recorder that is not cleaned on a regular basis.

g. Dub interviews onto other cassettes. Use the dubbed copy for transcribing the interview, for editing, and for listening by researchers. The original can remain protected in storage.

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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.

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B. ACCESS AGREEMENT*

Office Symbol Agency Letterhead

MEMORANDUM FOR (title of agency head)

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

1. I, _______________, participated in an oral history conducted by (name of interviewer) of the (name of agency) on the following date(s):_________________

2. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the U.S. Army, as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative. I also understand that subject to security classification restrictions I will be given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my origina1 thoughts. The Army will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the U.S. Army, with only the following caveat: (please initial one).

____None.

____(Other)____

I understand that the tapes and transcript resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and, therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the U.S. Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested be placed on these materials.

(Name of Interviewee)________________________(Date)___________

Accepted on behalf of the U.S. Army by_______________________(Date)___________
____

*The forthcoming edition of AR 870-5 contains an access agreement form that may be used instead of this memorandum.

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C. PRODUCTION STATUS SHEET

Name of Interviewee:

Name of Interviewer:

Date of Interview:

Number of interview tapes (___)

Estimated length (___ minutes)

Word list prepared: Yes__ No__

Date sent to transcriber:

Name of transcriber:

Date transcript was returned:

Floppy disk requested Yes_ No_

Word processing system used _______________

Document name ________________

First edit by:	Date:
Corrections made by:	Date:
Date reviewed by interviewer:	
Interviewer's corrections made by:	Date:
Date reviewed by interviewee:	
Interviewee's corrections made by:	Date:
Final edit by:	Date:
Final corrections made by:	Date:
Access Agreement Yes_ No_	
Approved for storage and distribution by:	Date:
Catalog number:	

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D. INTERVIEW REPORT FORM

U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW REPORT

NAME/RANK OF INTERVIEWEE(S): ORGANIZATION/UNIT: POSITION:	NAME/ORGANIZATION OF INTERVIEWER: DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW:
ACCESS AGREEMENT SIGNED: YES ____ NO ____	ACCESS (CHECK ONE): OPEN ____ RESTRICTED ____ CLOSED ____ CLASSIFICATION _____
SUBJECTS COVERED IN INTERVIEW:	

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW ____ MINUTES TRANSCRIBED: YES ____ NO____ TRANSCRIPT EDITED: YES ___ NO ___ LENGTH OF TRANSCRIPT ____ PAGES	LOCATION OF OTHER COPIES:
TYPE OF INTERVIEW (CHECK ONE): EXIT ____ BIOGRAPHICAL ____ SUBJECT ____ DA REQUIRED END OF TOUR ____	
AGENCY INTERVIEW CATALOG OR COLLECTION NUMBER: DO YOU WANT THIS INTERVIEW INCLUDED IN A CMH GUIDE TO ORAL HISTORIES: YES ____ NO ____	

LOCAL REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED.

RETURN TO COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY, ATTN: DAMH-RAO
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3402

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E. EOT CORE QUESTIONS

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 area/responsibilities consumed most of your time?

4. 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?

5. What were your major initiatives during this assignment? What were the major problems you faced in getting these initiatives accepted?

6. What was your greatest challenge?

7. 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?

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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 fifteen years, thirty years? Are the Army's long range plans appropriately focused to meet future needs?

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F. MHD QUESTION LIST

The sample questions below are both general and specific in nature and are for use by MHD interviewers, as deemed appropriate, during wartime.

1. *Administrative Questions* (All Interviews)

   a. Full name (spell phonetically if necessary), rank, and social security number

   b. Unit of assignment

   c. Duty position

2. *Introductory Questions* (All Interviews)

a. During the period of the operation where were you located?
b. Describe the terrain and any problems it caused.
- Natural features
- Roads, buildings, and man-made features
- Fortifications and military obstacles

c. Describe the weather and its effect on the operation.
d. Identify your chain of command, from squad to division level, providing relevant names of commanders.
e. Immediately prior to the operation, what was your mission and *where* were you located?
f. Describe your mission tasking for the operation:
- *When* was it received?
- *How* was it received?
- *Who* provided this guidance?
- *What* was the task organization?

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g. Discuss the commander's concept of the operation:
- As communicated from the next higher headquarters
- Your unit's role, how it was determined, and *who* made the decision

h. Were there any SOPs explicitly in force or of relevance to the operation?
i. Were any special rules of engagement announced?
j. In your own words, using any reference map you require or even creating a sketch map of your own, please discuss the execution of the operation *as you witnessed* it from start to finish.

3. Initial Follow-up Questions (All Interviews)

a. For your unit at the *start* of the operation, explain:
- Your internal organization and dispositions, giving call signs and boundaries
- The strength of the unit and its elements
- The number of personnel assigned within the preceding thirty days
- Basic weapons and major items of equipment organic to the unit, their status, and any shortages or maintenance problem

b. For *your* unit *during* the operation:
- Were there any internal reorganizations?
- Did the unit strength or that of any of its elements decline or increase significantly?
- Did weapons and equipment levels change?
- Were there any significant maintenance problems?

c. Describe *in your own words* the personalities of the commander and key staff personnel *you had direct contact with* during the operation.
d. What was the basic uniform and individual equipment carried by members of your unit during the operation? *Be specific.*

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e. What was the basic ammunition load carried by members of your unit during the operation? *Be specific*.

f. During the operation, discuss the status of:
- Food (Class I)
- Clothing and organizational equipment (Class II)
- Fuel/POL (Class III)
- Construction materials (Class IV)
- Ammunition (Class V)
- Personal items (Class VI)
- Major end-items (Class VII)
- Medical supplies (Class VIII)
- Repair parts and components (Class IX)
- Materiel for nonmilitary programs (Class X)

g. Indicate specifically your unit's various dispositions during the operation and particularly indicate where major weapons were positioned.

h. When and how did the operation terminate? Explain:
- How your unit turned over responsibility for its area of operations?
- How your unit redeployed?
- How your unit accomplished reconstitution?

i. Was the operation executed as planned?
- If not, why?
- How were changes in planning communicated?
- What OPLANS (Operational Plans), OPORDS (Operational Orders), FRAGOS (Fragmentary Orders) were issued?

j. Indicate any support furnished to your unit during the operation by the following (give designation and call sign):
- Artillery
- Aviation
- Air Force

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- Other maneuver elements
- Combat support forces (Engineers, MP, Signal)
- Combat service support forces

k. Can you provide specific locations for:
- Command posts (CPs)
- Artillery, armor, anti-armor and air defenses
- Forward line of own troops (FLOT), assembly areas, rally points
- Train areas, ammunition points (ASPs), dumps
- Obstacles, roads, bridges
- Alternate lines of communications

l. Did your unit capture or detain any POWs or civilians? If so, how were they processed and was any combat information obtained from them that influenced the operation?

m. What awards were made?

4. *Special Questions--Small-Unit Leaders*

a Trace the exact route and give times at key points.

b. What knowledge of enemy positions existed at the start and how was it changed as a result of the patrol?

c. What knowledge did the patrol gain?
d. Explain why contact with the enemy was/wasn't made.
e. Did the patrol keep in contact with its main force?

5. *Special Questions--Fire Support Personnel*

a. What were the liaison arrangements for the operation?
b. Were there problems with coordination or communications?
c. What preparatory fires were conducted?
d. Discuss each individual fire mission, indicating:

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- Elements providing supporting fire
- Position of firing unit
- Type of supporting weapon or aircraft
- Times of the mission, from request to delivery
- Type and quantity of munitions delivered
- Impact zone
- Fire adjustment
- Assessment of effectiveness

e. Did supporting elements displace during operation? If so, what impact did this have?
f. What impact did enemy counterfire or air defense measures have?
g. What ammunition restrictions were in effect? Did these have any impact?
h. Assessment of overall effectiveness

6. *Special Questions--Engineer Personnel*

a. Discuss resources available and their distribution.
b. Describe any countermobility operations.
c. Describe any mobility operations.
d. Describe any demolition operations.
e. Discuss friendly and enemy minefields and booby traps.
f. Describe the condition of roads, bridges, etc.
g. Discuss any operations relating to water supply.

7. *Special Questions--Communications Personnel*

a. What radio equipment was used? How well did it function?
b. Discuss the role of land lines and messengers.
c. Discuss the communications security. Was it compromised?
d. Discuss the impact of jamming and countermeasures.

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e. Specifically indicate effectiveness of contact with:

- Subordinate units
- Higher headquarters
- Adjacent units
- Supporting arms and services

f. Identify key messages, especially when/how received.

8. *Special Questions--Intelligence Personnel*

a. Source(s) of intelligence/means of collection involved.
b. What knowledge existed of enemy plans, objectives, and order of battle?
c. What knowledge was gained regarding enemy plans, objectives, and order of battle?
d. Were any enemy or documents captured? If so, how were they handled and what did they reveal?
e. What enemy materiel was captured?
f. Personal observations relating to enemy uniforms, equipment, and weapons; levels of training; and ability to react to change.
g. Assess enemy intelligence, electronic warfare, deception, and counterintelligence.
h. Assess friendly intelligence, electronic warfare, deception, and OPSEC (operations security).

9. *SpecialQuestions--Medical Personnel*

a. Numbers of casualties
b. Ratio of killed to wounded
c. Weapons causing most casualties
d. What was the medical unit chain of evacuation and means of casualty evacuation?
e. How did triage function?

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f. Were there any shortages of medical supplies?
g. Discuss NBC casualties.
h. Any losses due to disease or noncombat casualties?
i. Any missing in action? Explain why.

10. *Special-Condition Questions*

a. Describe any NBC operations (friendly and hostile).
- Assess the impact of training on each side
- Explain any equipment issues

b. Discuss any night combat issues.
c. Discuss any urban combat (MOUT) issues.
d. Discuss any special issues relating to civilians, especially the soldiers' attitude towards them.
- How were refugees handled?
- Did they impede operations or cause problems?

11. *Assessment Questions* (All Interviews)

a Give your personal evaluation of the operation:
- In general
- Your weapons and equipment
- Your basic load (equipment and ammunition)
- Command and control

- Combination of arms and services
- Allied interoperability
- Intelligence
- Supporting fires
- Communications
- Personnel and administration
- Logistics and Maintenance
- Enemy

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b. Evaluate the relevance of current training, doctrine and organization to this operation, indicating any positive or negative "lessons" that can be learned.
c. Did *you* observe any innovations by either friendly or hostile forces?
d. Did your unit rehearse the operation, or did it have previous experience with this type of operation?
e. Had the unit received any new types of equipment just before or during the operation? If so, did it cause problems or contribute to the success of the mission?
f. Evaluate your unit's morale at the start of the operation and any changes that may have taken place during the operation.
g. Evaluate the impact of casualties on your unit.
h. Do you *personally* feel that any specific individuals were important to the success of the operation? Why?
i. Can you suggest other individuals we should interview?
j. Do you have any other comments?
k. Thank you (Rank, Last Name). This concludes our interview.

Note: Additional questions may be suggested by reviewing Field Manual 34-52, *Intelligence Interrogation.*

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G. PREPARING CAAIRs

Following the general format for an Army memorandum, type the designation of the military history detachment and its supported headquarters and the unit address, center, at the top of the report; the date of the report, flush right; and the subject (namely, Combat After-Action Interview Report), flush left. When appropriate, place the proper classification on each page and in each paragraph or subparagraph.

The body of the report consists of the fifteen paragraphs, numbered and titled as follows:

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION: If possible, include any officially assigned code name (provided its use does not necessitate assigning a higher classification level). Also reflect the type of engagement (that is, delaying action or night ambush).

2. (U) DATES OF OPERATION: Use inclusive dates. Specify local time in the appropriate military format.

3. (U) LOCATION: Include the civilian name for the area, any common military slang or nickname given

to the area (such as "The Bloody Angle"), and the grid coordinates from the standard map being used by the participating units (together with the proper map identification data, such as sheet and series numbers and map scale). If possible, attach a copy of the standard map to the report and reference and its enclosure.

4. (U) CONTROL HEADQUARTERS: Identify *all* unit headquarters involved, as well as the relevant times that each was in control.

5. (U) PERSONS INTERVIEWED: Identify each interviewee's full name, rank, social security number, duty position, and unit. For more than seven individuals, include the information as an enclosure.

6. (U) INTERVIEWER(S): Give your full name, rank, social security number, duty position, MHD designation.

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7. (U) TASK ORGANIZATION: List each unit involved in the action, and organize according to the actual task groupings that show combat command and control relationships. Include a unit's distinctive designation (such as the 27th Infantry's "Wolfhounds") or radio call sign referenced during the course of an interview. Also, identify a unit's primary weapons systems or functional mission titles--for example, the 1st Battalion, 3d Field Artillery (155-mm. howitzer, SP) or 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry (Infantry, M-113APCs). Remember that cavalry units are also organized as infantry, armor, and aviation.

8. (U) SUPPORTING FORGES: Provide the same information as above for combat, combat service, and combat service support units attached for additional support.

9. (U) BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Give a concise overview of the friendly force's mission. A detailed account of the operations is inappropriate.

10. (U) INTELLIGENCE: Organize your information as follows:

> a. *Enemy*: Include all known data on enemy forces (strength, dispositions, intentions, and unit designations). If possible, compare what was known about the enemy prior to an operation and what was learned after the battle. Attach intelligence summaries and interrogation reports as enclosures, when appropriate.
>
> b. *Terrain*: Include a complete assessment of terrain conditions affecting the battlefield. Attach available terrain photographs as enclosures.
>
> c. *Weather*: Include the official weather forecasts made at the start of the operation, together with any changes. Highlight unexpected weather changes if they played a significant role in the course of the operation.

11. (U) MISSION: Briefly identify the *specific* mission assigned by the controlling headquarters to the participating units.

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12. (U) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS: As concisely as possible, explain how the controlling headquarters expected the mission to be accomplished. Attach operational orders as enclosures.

13. (U) EXECUTION: On the basis of your interviews and other source materials, explain in narrative format the actual conduct of the operation. Ensure that the relationship between events is clear from the sequential order of your presentation.

14. (U) RESULTS: Objectively evaluate the operation. Also provide information relating to total enemy and friendly casualties and equipment losses.

15. (U) ANALYSIS: Present your judgments, comments, and opinions. Most importantly, explain how your report was compiled, outline the conditions surrounding the interviews, and identify the factors that may have influenced the information contained in the interviews. For example, if certain facts made you believe that a company commander had made serious mistakes and the officer insisted on being present at the interviews of his subordinates, his presence should be noted due to its possible effect on his subordinates' responses.

Attach enclosures (all available photographs and negatives; maps, charts, and overlays; statistical information on supporting fires or air sorties; and interview transcripts or summaries) to the report, as well as copies of all relevant documents. When in doubt, the rule is to include, rather than exclude, information for future use.

Both the MHD interviewer(s) and the commander sign the report.

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H. SAMPLE INDEX FOR CAAIs

This is an index of a combat after-action interview conducted by MAJ John Doe (CO, 21st MHD) on 17 September 1989 with members of Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division. The interview concerns an action at Hill 142 and the tape is UNCLASSIFIED.

Tape 1 of 2 Cassettes

Counter Readings for Side One

000-020 Introduction and background information.

021-025 Begin interview with CPT William Smith (CO, Company A, 1-15 th Infantry).

026-059 Intelligence reports, plan of operations, background information concerning unit strength, supporting forces, morale, and weather.

060-086 Movement to combat at Hill 142.

087-102 PT Smith describes how he was wounded and evacuated.

103-110 Begin interview with 1LT Jeffrey Green (1st Platoon leader).

111-167 LT Green relates how he took over command of Company A and continued with the execution of the original plan.

168-192 After the failure of their initial attacks, LT Green explains how and why he reorganized his company for its next plan of attack.

193-215 Calls in air and artillery support.

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216-270 Company advances by fire and movement. Discusses weapons usage (contains interesting comments concerning M-60s and LAWs).

271-309 Final assault on Hill 142 and actions at objective area.

310-340 LT Green discusses logistics and unit resupply.

341-359 LT Green offers his insights into what went wrong and lessons learned.

360-368 Begin group interview with SSG Stephen Thomas (1 st Platoon Sergeant); SGT Jack Turner(leader, lst Squad, 1st Platoon); PVT Ronald Scott (machine gunner, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon) and PVT Leo Anderson (rifleman, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon).

369-399 A discussion of the battle for Hill 142 as seen by members of the 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, that lead the assaults.

400-450 Interviewees offer interesting comments on the battle as seen by "grunts."

Continue with this format while clearly indicating the sequence number and side number for each tape. If the recorder does not have an index counter, estimate any elapsed time instead. Interview descriptions need not be elaborate, but they should give the reader an idea of what is discussed during that particular segment of tape. In the absence of a CAAIR this index will provide historians with the first substantial information they have to evaluate the interview.

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Part V
Suggested Readings

GENERAL

Allen, Barbara, and Montell, Lynwood. *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources for Historical Research.* Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981.

Baum, Willa K. *Oral History for the Local Historical Society.* Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1974.

Davis, Cullom; Back Kathryn; and MacLean, Kay. *Oral History: From Tape to Type.* Chicago: American Library Association, 1977.

Dunaway, David K., and Baum, Willa K., eds. *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984.

Hoopes, James. *Oral History: An Introduction for Students*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Hoyle, Norman. "Oral History." *Library Trends 21* (July 1972): 60-82.

Moss, William W. "The Future of Oral History." *Oral History Review 3* (1975): 5-15.

_____. *Oral History Program Manual*. New York: Praeger, 1974.

Olch, Peter D., and Pogue, Forrest C., eds. *Selections from the Fifth and Sixth National Colloquia on Oral History* (1970,1971). New York: Oral History Association, 1972.

"Oral History Guidelines." *Oral History Review* 8 *(1980):* 6-19. Reprinted as a pamphlet by the Oral History Association in 1980.

Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

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METHODOLOGY AND THEORY

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