



VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

The Veterans Breakfast Club History Project is an oral history initiative dedicated to preserving the stories of our military veterans of all branches and eras.

We thank you for your interest in taking part in this history project! In this packet, you will find technical Zoom interview set-up instructions, example interview questions, tips and tricks for interviewers. Please do not hesitate to reach out to shaun@veteransbreakfastclub.org with any questions you may have.

TECHNICAL ZOOM INTERVIEW SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT: We recommend that all interviewers use laptop or desktop computers to record the interviews. If you are interested in using an iPad or tablet, please let us know and we can help you set it up to record. Interviews cannot be recorded on smartphones.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: You will want to share the Zoom link with the veteran ahead of time. You can find the Zoom link to share by opening the Zoom application, signing into your Zoom account, and clicking “copy invitation” on the right side of the screen. You can paste it into the text of an email and send to the vet you’re interviewing.

STEP 1: Open the Zoom application. Sign into your Zoom account and start a Zoom meeting.

STEP 2: Once the veteran enters the Zoom room, begin recording. To start the recording, click the “Record” button at the bottom of the Zoom screen.

STEP 3: At the end of the interview, click the square “Stop Recording” button at the bottom of the Zoom screen.

STEP 4: To end the Zoom meeting, click the red “End” button at the bottom right hand corner of the Zoom screen. Once clicking “End Meeting for All,” the recording will automatically convert and save to your computer.

TO UPLOAD ZOOM RECORDING TO SHARED DRIVE

STEP 1: Locate the Zoom video recording on your computer by opening your “Documents” folder and finding the folder titled “Zoom.” The video will be in a folder titled “YEAR-MONTH-DAY-TIME NAME’S ZOOM ROOM” (i.e. 2021-09-27 11.24.29 Todd DePastino’s Zoom Room.” The video file will end in .mp4.

STEP 2: Head to www.veteransbreakfastclub.org/historyprojectupload. Click the blue “upload” button to be taken to the shared Google drive. NOTE: in order to upload, you may be asked to sign into your Gmail account if you are not already signed in. If you do not have a Gmail account or encounter any issues with this, please contact shaun@veteransbreakfastclub.org or ellie@veteransbreakfastclub.org.

STEP 3: Once in the shared drive, drag and drop your .mp4 file you have located on your computer and allow it to upload. Or, click the “New” + “File Upload” button in the top left hand corner of the screen. It may take several minutes or hours for the file to upload, so please be patient and do not “X” out of the window until it has finished uploading. After it has uploaded, you’re all set!

If you have any questions, concerns, or issues with any of the steps detailed above, please contact shaun@veteransbreakfastclub.org or ellie@veteransbreakfastclub.org.

NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE? Head to veteransbreakfastclub.org/historyproject to watch our video tutorials of how to set up the Zoom interview and upload your recording.

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS for all branches & eras of service

Try to make the interview a conversation, not a scripted question and answer session. You might ask many of the questions below or only a few. The questions are meant only to lead the veteran into their story.

- When did you join the service? How old were you?
- Why did you join? What inspired you?
- Did you come from a military family?
- Did you go to basic training/boot camp? What was it like?
- Did you serve in combat? If so, what do you remember about your first experience in combat?
- What was your job in the military? Did you enjoy it?
- How long were you in the military?
- Do you remember coming home?
- What did you find challenging about service?
- Do you remember a particularly difficult day in your service?
- Do you have a really good or fun memory from your service?
- Would you do it all over again if you could? Why or why not?
- Would you recommend that young people today join the military? Why or why not?
- What is one lesson you learned from your military service you'll never forget?
- How did you see the military change during your time in service? How has it changed since you served?
- How do you think we can help bridge the military-civilian divide?
- What do you think civilians can learn from veterans or active military service men and women?

Remember, these are just some examples. We encourage you to ask more pointed and specific questions of the veteran you're interviewing!

TIPS & TRICKS FOR INTERVIEWERS

Schedule up a pre-interview Zoom chat to get to know the veteran a bit better! Or, reserve 5-10 minutes ahead of the interview to talk to the veteran and get to know him or her and work out any technical difficulties that may arise.

Be an active listener. Show you're listening by smiling, nodding, and remaining on camera. Focus on what the veteran is saying, rather than what question you may ask next.

Reduce background noise. Try to conduct the interview in a quiet part of your home. You can also use headphones if you'd like.

Avoid Yes or No questions. Keeping questions open-ended allows for the veteran to share more of their stories and experiences.

Embrace silence. Pauses in storytelling are natural--you do not have to feel the need to interject or interrupt a veteran who is sharing his or her story.

Do not be afraid of "Take Twos"! Feel free to restate your thought or question by saying "take two" and then beginning again. Encourage the veteran to do the same if need be.

We thank you for your interest and passion for preserving veterans' stories! It is important that this living history is never forgotten.

