

# Korean War Veteran Oral History Outline

**Introductory Information:** Interviewers should state the following at the beginning of each interview:

- Your name (as interviewer)
- Date and place of the interview
- Name of the person being interviewed
- “This interview is part of the Korean War National Museum Oral History project”

## **Interviewee Background:**

- When & where were you born?
- Where you grew up?
  - What did your parents do for work?
  - Do you remember growing up during the Depression?
- Any early interest in the military?
  - Do you remember Pearl Harbor?
  - What was it like growing up during WW II?
  - How closely did your parents follow the events in Europe? Pacific?
- Please talk about being drafted/inducted into the service?
  - Were you married at the time? Girlfriend?
  - Your parents’ reaction?

## **Initial Service & Training:**

- Tell us about your boot camp/training experience(s).
  - Do you remember your instructors?
  - How thorough and effective was your training?
  - What helped you cope with the experience?
- What was your military specialty & special training you received?

- Did you get leave before shipping to Korea?

### **Wartime Experiences:**

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

- The experience of COMBAT:
  - Can you describe your emotions during your baptism of fire in combat?
  - What motivated you to keep going, of doing your duty?
- Are there any other memorable combat experiences we've not already covered?
- Were you injured? When, Where & How of injury?
- Were you awarded any medals or citations? If so, for what?
- The toughest part about your service in Korea?
- Impressions of the (segregated / integrated) military?
- Did any Korean soldiers serve with your unit? If so, your impression of them?
- Your impression of other UN forces you encountered?

- Your impressions/thoughts about the enemy you faced?
- Did you have an opportunity to see or work with Korean civilians?
  - Work with an orphanage?
  - Adopt (formally or informally) any Korean children?

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

- How did you stay in touch with your family?
- What was the food like? What was your favorite C or K ration?
- Did you have plenty of supplies?
- What did you do when you/your unit was not in combat?
  - Were there entertainers?
  - What did you do when on leave? R & R?
- Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?
  - What were some of the pranks that you or others would pull?
- Were you on the point system? A rotation policy?
- Describe your rotation home: When? How?
- Can you describe your reunion with your family when you came back home?
- Do you have photographs? Letters? Personal diary?

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

- Tell us a little about the friends you made while in the service.
- Discuss your release from service, where it was, what you experienced, and what you were feeling?
- What did you do in the days and weeks afterward?
- Did you work or go back to school?
  - Was your education supported by the G.I. Bill?
  - What was your career/professions after the war?

- Did you continue any of the relationships you formed while in the service?
  - For how long?
  - Did you join a veterans' organization?
  - Do you attend reunions?

**Later Years and Closing:**

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