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?
  o 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)
  o
  o
  o
  o
  o
  o

**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?
  o Were there entertainers?
  o What did you do when on leave? R & R?

• Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?
  o 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?
  o Was your education supported by the G.I. Bill?
  o What was your career/professions after the war?
• Did you continue any of the relationships you formed while in the service?
  o For how long?
  o Did you join a veterans’ organization?
  o 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?