

Oral History Workshop

Sylvia Marshall, Archivist

Virginia War Memorial

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What is an oral history?

- Firsthand accounts
- Preserved and shared
- Creating your own sources
 - Captures voices outside the written word
- Recorded with permission
 - Informed consent

Richard Everington, Vietnam



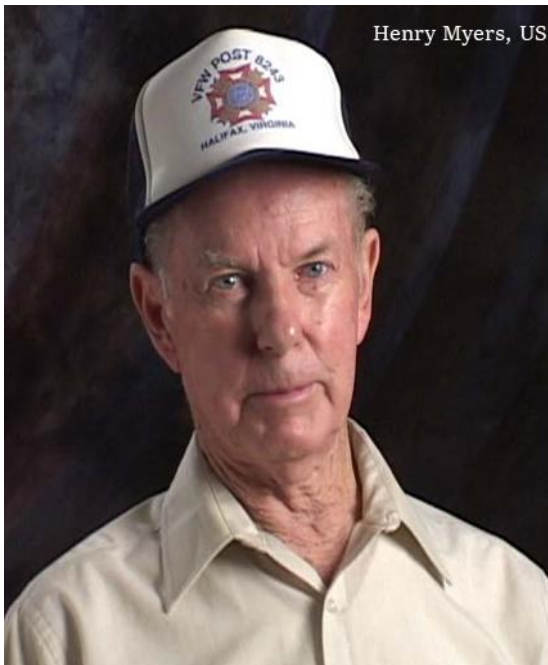
Jarrett Choy Jr, GWOT



The Power of Oral History



- Regional history
- Scouting history
- Veteran experience in their own words
 - *Every veteran has a story. Every story is valuable*
- Forest vs trees
 - Understanding conflict on the ground
 - Support personnel and how our military operates



Henry Myers, US



Edward Farley, US Army, WWII.



Evelyn Kowalchuk
Flight Nurse , WWII



Guy DeGenaro, US Army

How do we use these stories?

- Research and Study
- Exhibits
- Education
- Documentary
- Podcast

Getting Started: Adult Leaders





Guideline for Veteran Interviews

Thank you for participating in SCOVETH (Virginia SCOuting and VETerans Oral History Project), a collaborative effort between the Virginia War Memorial and the BSA Heart of Virginia Council. The purpose of the project is to unite scouts and Virginia military veterans in safe and educational forums to memorialize Virginia's veteran and scouting history through oral history interviews.

Please review the guidelines below as it lists important information about preparing for the interview, its structure, and some pertinent information when being interviewed.

Preparing for the Interview

1. Expect communications to come from adult leaders. They will handle the forms and arrangements for the interviews. If you have any questions, please direct them to the leader reached out to you.
2. A general list of topic areas you will be asked about include:
 - a. early life (family history of scouting or military service)
 - b. joining the Scouts and scouting experience and memories (if applicable)
 - c. joining the military, training; assignments and career
 - d. core memories and key events from Scouting experience and military experience
 - e. discharge/retirement from the military
 - f. life as a veteran and former Scout (if applicable)
3. Complete the biographical form. The form helps the interviewer get to know you and it helps you begin to recall stories.
4. Review photographs, letters, and other related material. Like the biographical form, it will help you recall memories. You might even bring a few of these to the interview.
5. These interviews will be recorded using a camcorder (or another recording device) at various locations (such as libraries, etc.) and typically take 30 to 1 hour. A Scout (along with an adult leader) will ask you questions pertaining to subjects listed in #2.

Things to Keep in Mind

1. Your interviewer will be a Scout (11 to 18 years old) and as such we ask that you avoid the following when sharing your story:
 - a. Profanity and graphic language
 - b. Graphic descriptions of violence or death
 - c. Drugs and Alcohol
 - d. Sexual content/ sexuality

❖ Adult leaders will be with the interviewer and may pause or guide the interview away from such topics.

SCOVETH Veteran Guidelines

Adult Leaders

- Guide and secondary interviewer
 - Communicating with veterans
 - Paperwork (Bio Form, Release Form)
 - Setting up the time and place
 - Zoom invites, etc.
 - Equipment
 - Confirming time and dates

2. These interviews will be made available to the public via the Virginia War Memorial archives.
 - a. Oral history interviews are used for research, educational programming, study, and display.
 - b. If you have more questions about this, please contact the VWM Archivist Sylvia Marshall via telephone (804-786-1468) or email (sylvia.marshall@dvs.virginia.gov).
3. An oral history interview is about the narrator (you). This is your story. You can stop the interview at any time, or you can choose not to answer certain questions.
 - a. Please let the interviewer and their adult leader know before the interview if there are topics you wish to avoid.
4. You will be doing most of the talking. Feel free to tell your favorite memories or stories.
5. Most questions will be "open-ended" questions, that allow you to explain details of your military service and experience as a Scout.
6. You are prohibited from requesting personal contact information of the Scout interviewer and providing personal contact information to them. All communications for this project will be handled by the adult leadership of the project.

SCOVETH Veteran Guidelines





SCOVETH A Informed Consent Agreement

Thank you for participating in this collaborative effort between the Virginia War Memorial and the BSA Heart of Virginia Council.

To provide a more detailed record of your experience, please complete the following information.

General Information:

Name _____

First _____

Address _____

City _____

Email _____

Birth Date _____

Where did you spend the majority of your military service? _____

Gender _____

Military Service:

Branch of Service _____

Battalion, Regiment, Ship, etc. _____

Highest Rank _____

Locations of Military Service _____

Did you sustain any combat or other injuries? _____

Medals or awards _____

Project Summary:

SCOVETH (Virginia SCOuting and VETerans Oral History Project) is a collaborative effort between the Virginia War Memorial and the BSA Heart of Virginia Council. The purpose of the project is to unite scouts and Virginia military veterans in safe and educational forums to memorialize Virginia's veteran and scouting history through oral history interviews. Each interview will last approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in length.

This oral history project is a program in collaboration with the Virginia War Memorial. Recordings, transcripts, and other materials collected through this program will be stored and made available in the archives of the Virginia War Memorial. Participation in this program is voluntary.

Interviewee's Name: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Street address _____ Phone _____

City, State, Zip Code _____ Email address _____

I, _____, am aware that participation in this oral history program is voluntary. I understand that in signing, I am donating all recordings, transcripts, and other materials collected during this interview(s) to the Virginia War Memorial. Any and all materials produced by the Virginia War Memorial, including but not limited to audio and visual recordings, transcripts, digital media, or material in any other form will be used by the Virginia War Memorial. These materials may be used for education, research, exhibition, programming, promotion, publication or as seen fit by the Virginia War Memorial.

By signing, I understand that I am assigning copyright, legal title, and all literary rights of these interview recordings and transcripts to the Virginia War Memorial, which may copyright and publish said materials. I understand that my name, image, story, and materials may be used by the Virginia War Memorial in connection with this oral history interview. No rights whatsoever are to vest in my heirs or my estate, now or upon my death.

Interviewee's signature _____ Date _____

Scout Interviewer's name _____

Scout Interviewer's signature _____ Date _____

Adult Interviewer's name _____

Street address (City, state, zip code) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Adult Interviewer's signature _____ Date _____

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Interviewee's signature _____ Date _____



Equipment



- Question Guide
- Notepad, pen or pencil
- A watch or clock
- Oral History Release Forms
- Recording Equipment
 - Camcorder, recorder or camera and any chargers
 - Extension cords
 - SD cards or flash drives
- Cellphone
 - Scanner Apps (Genius Scan)



Location

- Local libraries!
 - [RPL Memory Lab](#) and Rooms
 - [HCPL Digital Labs and Rooms](#)
- Local VFW, AL, etc
- Local community spaces
 - No personal homes

MEETING SPACES

Search Catalog Hours Locations FAQ Get a Card Account Pay a Fee Contact Donate

FREE PUBLIC MEETING SPACE AVAILABLE
All of our Library locations offer free public meeting spaces. These rooms are available for educational, instructional, or civic programs when available. **All meetings must be open to the public.**

MEETING SPACE POLICY

SEE EVENT SPACES SEE STUDY ROOMS

EVENT SPACES

BELMONT	BROAD ROCK	EAST END
GINTER PARK	HULL STREET	MAIN BRANCH
NORTH AVENUE	WEST END	WESTOVER HILLS

Accessibility Tools

<https://rplibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/09-01-Meeting-Rooms-Policy-Reviewed-02-08-2020.pdf>

GENERAL

Check-It Out: Your Blood Pressure Kits Are Now Available!

CHECK IT OUT: YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AT THE LIBRARY

INNOVATION LAB

JOB SEEKER ASSISTANCE

LAPTOP CHECKOUT

MASTER GARDENER VIRTUAL HELP DESK

MEETING SPACES

MEMORY LAB

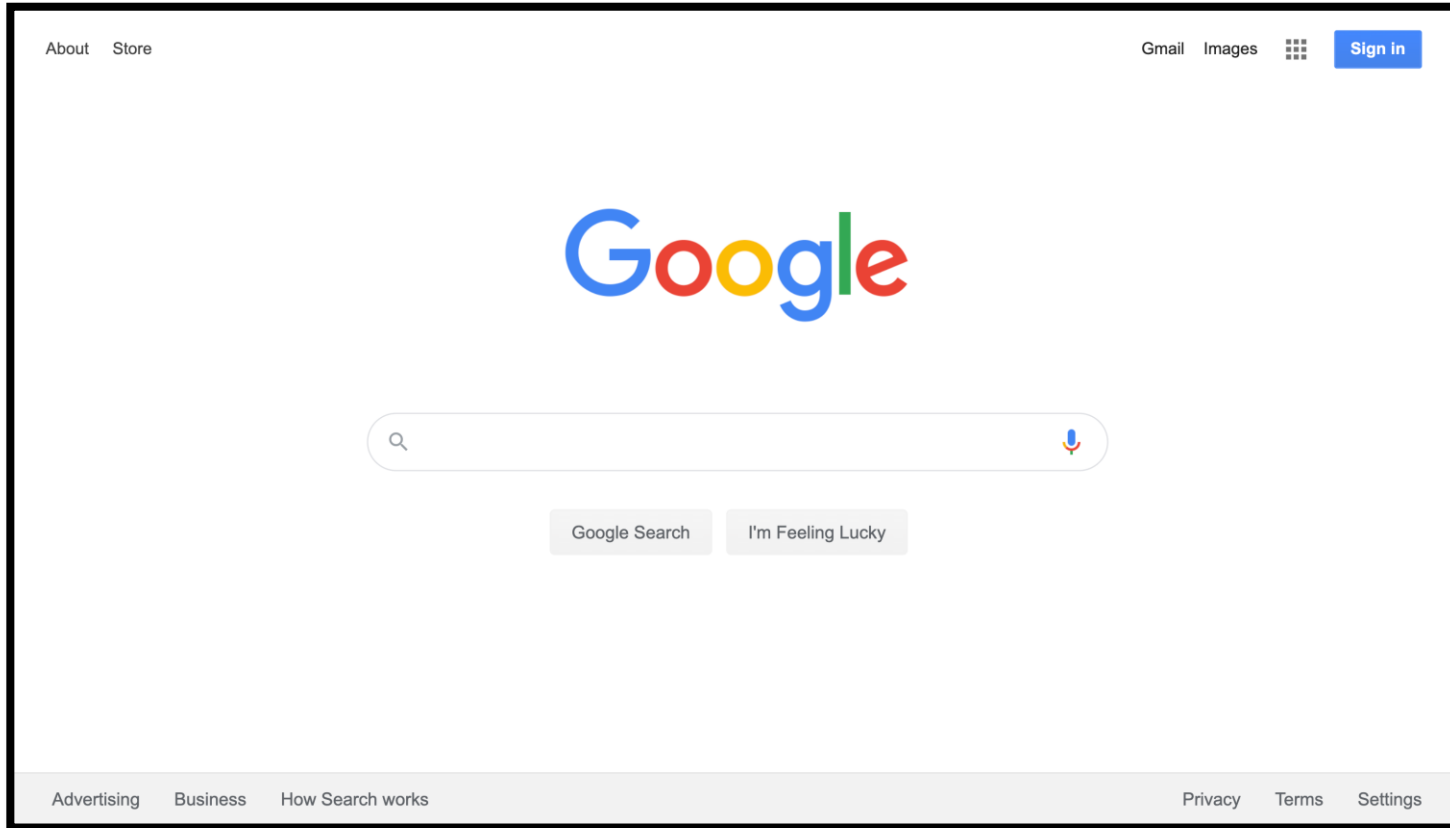
ONLINE RESOURCES

Accessibility Tools

<https://rplibrary.org/services/regions>

Getting Started continued: Scouts





Step 1: Review Biographical Form

- Background research
 - Learn about your interviewee
- Familiarize yourself with terms and timelines
 - What was happening when the interviewee was in the military?
 - Take notes or make a timeline, whatever helps



SCOVETH Biographical Form

Thank you for participating in the SCOVETH (Virginia SCOuting and VETerans Oral History Project), a collaborative effort between the Virginia War Memorial and the BSA Heart of Virginia Council.

To provide a more detailed record for educational and research purposes, please fill out the following form.

General Information:

Name John Doe Smith
First Middle Last Maiden Name

Address P.O. Box 16410

City Richmond State VA Zip 23222

Email Johndoe47@verizon.net Phone 804-123-456

Birth Date 12/7/1947 Place of birth Petersburg, VA

Where did you spend the majority of your childhood? Newport News, VA

Gender male Race/Ethnicity(optional) African American

Military Service:

Branch of Service US Army

Battalion, Regiment, Ship, etc. 1st Infantry Division

Highest Rank Sergeant Service Dates 1966 to 1969

Locations of Military Service United States, Germany, and Vietnam

Did you sustain any combat or service-related injuries? yes

Medals or awards National Defense Service Medal; Bronze Star; Purple Heart

Scouting Background and Bio on back page →

If you were a Scout:

What was your Scouting unit? (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, Exploring) _____

Scouts BSA

Highest Rank in Scouting Eagle How long were you involved in Scouting? 5 years

Scouting Dates (approximate) 1958 to 1963

Where were you involved in scouting (state and council)? Newport News, VA

Any other biographical material (on military service or Scouting) you would like to share?

My father was a WWII veteran and was a Scout

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the Biographical Form!

If you have any questions, please contact Tom Bryan via phone (425-466-9749) or via email (tom@bryangedemo.com)

- When did Vietnam War start? When did the Vietnam War end?
- What did the 1st Infantry Division do during Vietnam?
- What is a Purple Heart?

End



Step 2: Add Questions!

- Be prepared to abandon the list or change it!
- It's an interview, but it's also a conversation
 - Actively listen

7. Could you tell me about the others you knew in Scouting?

8. (If the veteran volunteered for military service) Did your scouting experience influence your decision to join the military?

9. How did scouting impact your military service experience?

Conclusion

1. How was that transition from military life to becoming a civilian for you?

2. (If not native to Virginia ask) What is your connection to Virginia?

3. What was your biggest accomplishment or something you were proud of during your service?

Finishing the interview:
Thank the interviewee for their time and announce that you are stopping the recording.

Ensure that you have the signed Release form [asap], bio information, and ask if they would like to send a photograph of themselves from their time in the military to attach to their interview.

SCOVETH Scouts Toolbox 6

Question Guide

Before the interview:

1. Establish informed consent.
 - a. Explain to participants that they will be recorded, that this will be preserved. Send the participant the Oral History Release Form ahead of time.
2. Research
 - a. If they're there to talk about a specific topic, take the time to do some reading so you have the vocabulary to talk to them about the subject.
3. Prepare basic topics and questions
 - a. This will not be a complete checklist of questions as you will be reacting what the interviewee is saying and asking appropriate follow up questions.
 - b. Questions should be open ended. The goal is for the participant to tell their story. These topics can often be hard to speak about, so be mindful.
4. Allow the participant to speak for as long or as little as they like, although keep in mind the time that the participant has set aside for the interview
5. Always start the interview with the introduction to establish who, what, when, and where.

Start of interview:
Today is [full date]. This is [your full name and your title] interviewing [interviewees full name]. Can I get you to say and spell your name? Can you also tell us what branch of the military you served in, the years you served, and the highest rank you achieved?

General Questions:

Background

1. When and where were you born? Could you tell me about where you grew up?
2. Do you have any family history of military service?

Military Service

3. When and why did you to join the military? Were you drafted or did you volunteer?
4. Where did you do your basic training? Can you tell me about your experience?
5. Can you tell me about any training did you receive afterward? (AIT or OCS)
6. Where were you first assigned after you finished basic training?
7. Is there anything about that first assignment that sticks out in your mind?
8. Can you walk me through your other assignments? When and where were they?
9. Do you remember any highlights or key events that happened during your time in the military?

If the veteran was a Scout

1. Were you in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, or Explorers?
2. What was the highest rank in Scouting that you achieved?
3. How long were you in Scouting?
4. Could you tell me about why you became a Scout?
5. Tell me about your Scouting experience?
6. What are some of your favorite memories or events from your Scouting experience?

SCOVETH Scouts Toolbox 5

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1. How was that transition from military life to becoming a civilian for you?
2. (If not native to Virginia ask) What is your connection to Virginia?
3. What was your biggest accomplishment or something you were proud of during your service?

Finishing the interview:

Thank the interviewee for their time and announce that you are stopping the recording.

Ensure that you have the signed Release form [asap], bio information, and ask if they would like to send a photograph of themselves from their time in the military to attach to their interview.



Step 3: Practice! Practice!

- Practice with the equipment
- Ask family and friends for mock interviews
- Review the script



Conducting the Interview



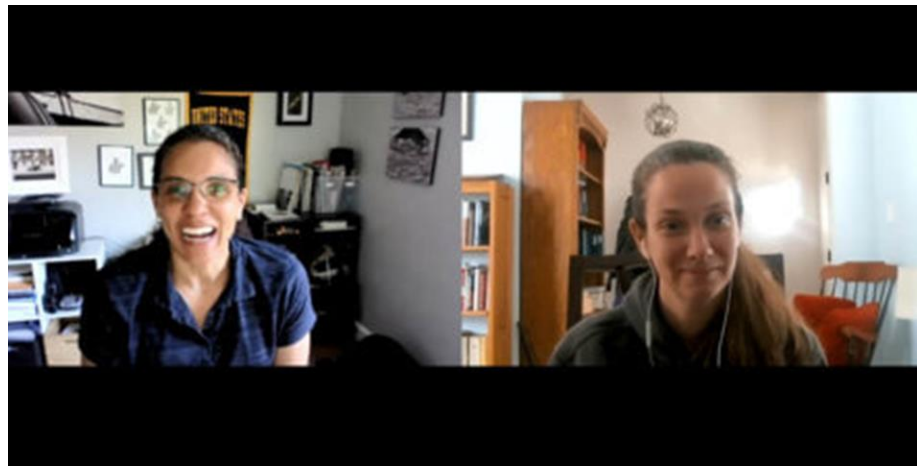
Step 1: Setting up (In-person)

- Look for a quiet place
- Check light, sound, equipment!
- Turn off or silence all phones.
- Position the chairs to face each other with the camera to the side



Step 1: Setting up (Virtual)

- Make sure everyone is in a quiet place
- Use headphones if possible
- Test audio settings





Step 2: Before the Interview

- Explain the structure
 - Informed Consent
 - What will happen? How will the interviews be used?
- Ask if there are topics or questions they would not like to answer
 - Shared Authority
- Let them know when you press record!

Scout Interviewer's name

Scout Interviewer's signature

Date

Adult Interviewer's name

Street address (City, state, zip code)

Phone

Email

Adult Interviewer's signature

Date

Question Guide

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2. Research
 - a. If they're there to talk about a specific topic, take the time to do some reading so you have the vocabulary to talk to them about the subject.

Step 3: Conduct the Interview!

- Between 30-45 minutes
 - Second interview?
- Activate Memory
- Active Listening
 - Take notes
 - Write out follow-up questions
- Conclusion
 - Thank them for their time

5. Tell me about your Scouting experience?
6. What are some of your favorite memories or events from your Scouting experience?

Step 4: After the Interview

- LOCKSS: Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe
 - Create at least two copies!
 - Save in more than one place!
- Name the files with the interviewees first and last name and date
 - CrantCarson_7-20-2023_video
 - CrantCarson_7-20-2023_release form
- Transfer to the VWM
 - Submission Cover
 - HOCV

Submission Cover

Date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Donor/ Adult Interviewer Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Enclosed, please find a total of _____ interviews conducted with the following Virginia veterans:

Veteran's Name	Materials Enclosed
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I have checked this submission to ensure that all requirements have been met, such as the following:

Original, unedited video and audio recording of interview

Consent and Release Form

Biographical Data Form

Cover Letter

SCOVETH Adult Leader Toolbox 8

Things to Keep in Mind

- Allow the interviewee to do the talking, but don't be afraid to re-direct
- Do not ask leading questions such as “was it this or that?”
 - Example: “I thought that the most important thing was.....” .
- Oral histories are rarely linear!
 - We all remember differently, and we tell stories how we remember it
- Non-verbal feedback
 - Nodding, smiling, listening attentively.
- Be curious!
- End the interview by asking if the interviewee has any final words or story to share.
 - Don't forget to thank them for their time!

The Virginia War Memorial Oral History Project

The Virginia War Memorial's Oral History Project has collected and preserved the story of Virginia's veterans in their own words since 1999. The archives at the Virginia War Memorial houses a robust collection of first-hand accounts from veterans who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, and the Global War on Terror. This collection reflects recent interviews conducted by the Virginia War Memorial beginning in 2020.



George F. Bland Sr. oral history...

Virginia War Memorial

Abstract: George F. Bland Sr., an African American



Stephanie Villalobos oral histor...

Virginia War Memorial

Abstract: A female, Latina veteran of the Army Military



John Ketwig OHP Interview 6 O...

Virginia War Memorial

Abstract: A Vietnam War veteran (1966-69), author,



Chris Knaggs oral history inter...

Virginia War Memorial

Abstract: A career Navy veteran and volunteer docent

Examples!

[Virginia War Memorial Vimeo Page](https://vimeo.com/showcase/10376632)



Questions?



Practice

Question Guide

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